Resisting from Manus Prison: Refugee Resistances in No Friend but the Mountains

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Refugee Resistances in *No Friend but the Mountains*

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Middle Eastern Studies (MA)

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Leiden University, Leiden the Netherlands

Date of submission: June 2022

Word count: 18200

You broke the ocean in

half to be here.

only to meet nothing that wants you[1]

    -    Immigrant

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[1] Nayyirah Waheed, *Salt* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 5.

Acknowledgments

Who would have ever thought I would do it again? And who had ever thought the second time would be a bigger challenge? Writing this thesis has been a more difficult challenge than I could ever have foreseen, and I learned so much from this process because of that.

I could not have written this thesis without all the support that I have received and the trust that I was given.

First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor Dr. Tsolin Nalbantian, who trusted me to find my own way throughout the thesis process, while supporting me and providing me with feedback wherever possible. I changed subject over five times, and nonetheless you trusted me with the process. I am grateful to you for that. It has taught me how to construct a good study, in spite of difficulties.

I want to thank my parents, for all their support, even when they did not exactly know what I was working on; for their motivational words and inspirational advice and most importantly, for supporting me all along the way. You are the reason I stand where I stand right now, and no words of acknowledgement can describe my appreciation for this.

I want to thank Hanan, and Eva for the constructive feedback on my thesis; Zeynep and Mursal for providing me with good coffees and long walks that helped me throughout this period; Lara and Mohammed for being who they are, always present to give me a good laugh.

Finally, I want to thank you especially, Hassan, for always being there while I was stressed; for always listening to my long speeches about how the process was going; for making me laugh and supporting me, and always maintaining trust in me. I could not have done this without you.

Content

1. Introduction

'Spaces of detention', René Kreichauf writes, are 'sites of political activity and […] political arenas'. 'Detained refugees [in such spaces, should be perceived as] agents in the exercise of power'.[2] Based on this line of thought, I will investigate the ways in which refugees assert their agency in "zones of detention" by focusing on refugee novels. By conducting a qualitative content analysis on one such novel, *No Friend but the Mountains* by Behrouz Boochani, I will identify the different types of resistance in which refugees have engaged within the zones of detention. I will place these findings in the broader context by showing how this impacts the securitization of migration

The focus on novels in this thesis stems from the assumption that novels can represent reality, especially novels that are semi-autobiographic. Norman Friedman argues that if art 'has any value at all, it must be because it shows us somehow what is true'.[3] The number of books such as *No Friend but the Mountains* that engage with the experiences of refugees has grown particularly in the past decade. As Claire Gallien makes clear, they '[have] a lot to say with regard to the violence and unevenness of the current world order'.[4] It is therefore important to analyze the resistance of refugees to this violence and unevenness.[5]

I will study the ways in which refugees perform acts of resistance within zones of detention in *No Friend but the Mountains*. I will take the term 'zones of detention' to include both literal zones of detention but also 'protracted periods of state-enforced waiting', such as refugee camps.[6] I will consider the acts of resistance in light of the securitization of migration, which has led both refugees and the act of migration to be perceived as existential threats. The main aim of this thesis will be to analyze the different types of resistance in which refugees engage to assert their agency. The question that I will aim to answer in this thesis is:

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[2] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 748, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.

[3] Norman Friedman, "Reality and the Novel Forms of Fiction Theory," *The Sewanee Review* 83, no. 1 (1975): 172.

[4] Claire Gallien, "'Refugee Literature': What Postcolonial Theory Has to Say," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 722, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2018.1555206.

[5] Claire Gallien, "'Refugee Literature': What Postcolonial Theory Has to Say," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 721–26, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2018.1555206.

[6] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 747.

Through what different manners have refugees resisted zones of detention?

This thesis will show that there are several categories of resistance that we can identify, including active resistance and passive resistance, of which the use of self-harm, violence and rehumanization are only a few examples. Although refugees oftentimes have been depicted as mere victims of asylum policies, this thesis will emphasize how the exercise of power is not unilateral but instead a process in which the refugees play a central role. I will do so based on one specific case, namely the case of refugee resistance in Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains.*

1.1 No Friend but the Mountains

The focus of this thesis will be on the novel *No Friend but the Mountains* by Behrouz Boochani. The book came out in 2018 and was translated from Farsi to English by Omid Tofghian. Placing the work of Behrouz Boochani in a particular genre is difficult if not impossible. *No Friend but the Mountains* has, for example, been described as combining 'memoir, poetry, realism, surrealism, and a powerful personal narrative that underscores the inhumanity of the refugee detention system'.[7] Omid Tofighian, makes this description even more complex, saying that the book 'resists many examples of genre', but that he interprets the work as 'horrific surrealism'.[8] The book is strongly influenced by the experiences of Behrouz Boochani while in prison, while implementing poetry and interpreting lived experiences. As if to confirm this split identity of *No Friend but the Mountains*, the book won both the Victorian Prize for Literature – a price for fiction – as well as a price for non-fiction in the same year, namely 2018.

The book can arguably be considered a form of autofiction, a form of literature which distinguishes itself from other forms of fiction, because it is strongly influenced by the life of the author, and the author is represented as a character within the work. It differs from pure autobiographical accounts because the book is not a perfect report and instead infused with fiction.[9] Indeed, Tofighian states that although 'the book has been written to (…) convey a truthful first-hand experience of what it has been like to be detained within [the Manus Island

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[7] Vanessa Francesca, "Book Review: No Friend but the Mountains by Behrouz Boochani," ArtsHub Australia, November 1, 2020, https://www.artshub.com.au/news/reviews/book-review-no-friend-but-the-mountains-by-behrouz-boochani-261291-2368836/.

[8] Behrouz Boochani, Omid Tofighian, and Richard Flanagan, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison* (Toronto: Anansi International, 2019).

[9] Marjorie Worthington, "Introduction Autofiction in an American Context," in *The Story of "Me": Contemporary American Autofiction* (University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 1–21.

Regional Processing Centre]', the characters through which this story is told 'are entirely manufactured'.[10] Indeed, '[t]hey are composite characters: a collage drawn from various events, multiple anecdotes, and they are often inspirited by the logic of allegory, not reportage.'[11]

The book tells the story of Behrouz Boochani himself, who flees the Iranian revolutionary regime in fear of being prosecuted. He travels by boat via Indonesia with as final destination Australia. When the unsafe boat full of refugees, of which Behrouz is one of them, is rescued by a British ship, the refugees believe that their 'gruelling odyssey has come to an end'.[12] Contrary to what the refugees believe, this rescue mission does not bring them to 'the lucky country of Australia' but instead leads them first to Christmas Island and then to Manus, an Island part of Papua New Guinea (PNG), the island on which a future in the Manus Prison is awaiting them. This is where Boochani stayed for many years and it was only in 2019 that Boochani was granted asylum, not in Australia, however, but in New Zealand.[13]

The story in *No Friend but the Mountains* is the story of Behrouz Boochani during his time in the Manus Prison system. The book consists of twelve chapters, starting from the moment Behrouz Boochani heads to Australia by boat until the moment in which the refugees organize a riot which is knocked down by the prison guards. *No Friend but the Mountains* gives voice to the refugee experience, that, according to many, the Australian government has attempted to keep silent. It describes the 'despair, boredom, humiliation, hunger, thirst, pain, toothache, heat, humidity, filthy conditions, insomnia, and psychological pressure' that the refugees are experiencing.[14] It provides the reader with a vivid account of the experiences that refugees go through.

The circumstances under which this book was written are noteworthy. Indeed, since Behrouz Boochani was imprisoned in the Manus Prison himself during the period of writing, he wrote all the text fragments for this book on his phone and sent these fragments to a

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[10] Behrouz Boochani, "A Disclaimer," in *No Friend but the Mountains* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2018).
[11] Ibid.
[12] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 49.
[13] Amnesty International, "Nieuw-Zeeland: Asiel Voor Iraanse Vluchteling Behrouz Boochani," Amnesty International, 2020, https://www.amnesty.nl/actueel/nieuw-zeeland-asiel-voor-iranier-behrouz-boochani.
[14] Angie Thom, "No Friend but the Mountains," Freedom Socialist Party, August 2019, https://socialism.com/fs-article/book-review-kurdish-refugee-from-iran-lays-bare-australian-detention-cruelties/.

companion who combined all the fragments into a book. [15] Behrouz Boochani would never know when his phone would get confiscated again, and so one can imagine he was writing under circumstances of pressure. Furthermore, to protect his fellow refugees, Boochani has decided not to provide any names nor accurate descriptions of involved characters. This has led the book to get a fictional dimension.

1.2 Literature

I will consider *No Friend but the Mountains* as cutting across different literary genres, but I am mainly interested in the refugee dimension of the book. This has implications for the lenses through which we can view the work. Indeed, based on postcolonial theory, refugee literature can be considered as intervening and disrupting the 'power dynamics as embedded in discourse as they regulate the relationship between north and south'.[16] Studying novels, in this perspective, creates a better understanding of the dominant power relations that are present in the discourses and migration, and it helps to dismantle foci of power that for long have remained ignored. Indeed, many of such literary works on refugee experiences focus on the circumstances in zones of detention. Gallian mentions several examples, many of those works emphasizing the notoriously inhumane conditions in the zones of detention, others countering the 'dehumanizing' discourse presented by focusing on the (in)visibility of refugees. As Gallian describes accurately, 'the intervention of artists, writers and activists […] expose what is not visible to the mainstream media or what is deliberately kept invisible'.[17]

Furthermore, refugee literature and its transcultural nature 'challenge the collective identity of a particular community, dispute traditional notions of home and narrate experiences of border crossing'.[18] Often, the writers of such books have experienced transpatriation firsthand and have undergone changes in their identity because of these

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[15] Odile Heynders, "Literary Activism: Behrouz Boochani's No Friend but the Mountains," Diggit Magazine, November 17, 2020, https://www.diggitmagazine.com/column/literary-activism-behrouz-boochani-s-no-friend-mountains.

[16] Claire Gallien, "Forcing Displacement: The Postcolonial Interventions of Refugee Literature and Arts," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 722, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2018.1551268.

[17] Claire Gallien, "Forcing Displacement: The Postcolonial Interventions of Refugee Literature and Arts," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 722, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2018.1551268.

[18] Margarete Rubik, "Refugee Experience in Alan Gratz's Refugee and Gillian Cross' after Tomorrow Margarete Rubik Summary as a Response to Recent," *Acta Neophilologica* 52, no. 1-2 (December 17, 2019): 5–29, https://doi.org/10.4312/an.52.1-2.5-29.

experiences.[19] This is also the case for the writer whose book will be studied for this thesis, namely Behrouz Boochani. Another characteristic of this type of transcultural literature is that it tends to blur the lines between the different types of people on the move: refugees, migrants, asylum seekers.[20]

By conducting a Qualitative Content Analysis on a refugee novel, I will be able to identify different types of resistance that are employed by refugees. The reason for choosing to perform a Qualitative Content Analysis lies in the versatility of this analysis, since it allows for the identification of different categories, while maintaining an eye on the qualitative content. Indeed, this analysis involves 'systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material. It is done by classifying material as instances of the categories of a coding frame'.[21] Such a coding frame, as Schreier points out, is typically derived based on literature and empirical data, the latter which in this case will stem from the novel under study. It is indeed this 'mixed method' that I have employed to set up the coding frame for this thesis. The final coding scheme, based on the work of Kreichauf as well as the instances of resistance presented in the novels, is presented in Appendix A.

No Friend but the Mountains (2018) was written by the Kurdish-Iranian writer, film-maker, journalist and scholar Behrouz Boochani. Boochani fled to Australia in 2013 but never reached his country of destination as a result of a change in the so-called 'Pacific Solution'. In this alteration of the Australian asylum policy, the Australian Government established so-called 'offshore processing centers' at Islands of Manus (PNG) and Nauru in order to process *and* settle asylum seekers outside of Australian territory, 'if found to be genuine refugees'.[22] In other cases, this adaptation of the law allows the Australian Government to detain asylum seekers indefinitely.[23]

The result of this is that many refugees heading for Australia would be exiled to Manus and Nauru Island indefinitely.[24] Behrouz Boochani, too, was first taken to Christmas Island and then to Manus Island where he resided until 2019. Throughout his detention on Manus Island, Boochani wrote the fragments for his book on his phone and shared those in

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[19] Arianna Dagnino, "Re-Discovering Alessandro Spina's Transculture/Ality in the Young Maronite," *Humanities* 5, no. 2 (June 9, 2016): 42, https://doi.org/10.3390/h5020042.

[20] Gil Loescher, "Human Rights and Forced Migration," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3120.

[21] Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (London: Sage, 2013), 1.

[22] Eberhard Weber, "The Pacific Solution – a Catastrophe for the Pacific!?," *Environment and Ecology Research* 3, no. 4 (July 2015): 96, https://doi.org/10.13189/eer.2015.030404.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Behrouz Boochani and Omid Tofighian, "No Friend but the Mountains and Manus Prison Theory: In Conversation," *Borderlands* 19, no. 1 (2020): 8–26, https://doi.org/10.21307/borderlands-2020-002.

the form of text messages and sent it out 'bit by bit'.[25] The book was described by the Guardian as a form of 'strategic resistance',[26] and Boochani himself too, notes that the writing of this book itself was indeed performed with this intention.[27] The book *No Friend but the Mountains* describes the extreme circumstances with which the detainees have had to deal. The book was awarded with several literary prizes and caused discussion in Australia concerning its migration policies. Since the book was written by Behrouz Boochani but also tells his own story, I will distinguish between the writer and the character in the book by referring to the former by 'Boochani' and to the latter by 'Behrouz'.

The book plays an important role in making visible the lives and agency of the refugees detained on Manus Island. As several scholars, including J.M. Coetzee and Claudia Tazreiter, have argued, the Pacific Solution has not only meant a change in detention policy but also changed radically the extent to which the circumstances of detention are visible. According to their line of reasoning. the Australian government has adopted laws 'whereby all workers on the island are forbidden to circulate any photographs or information about what goes on in the detention centers'.[28] The aim of *No Friend but the Mountains*, according to Boochani, is to make public the circumstances of Manus Prison 'from the viewpoint of people who have been subject to systematic violence' of the immigration detention centres, and whose voices the government has tried to marginalise'.[29]

The reason for choosing this specific novel, then, lies in the fact that it deals concretely with the subject of refugee resistance in a zone of detention, namely the Manus Prison. The book has been considered 'a call for justice and dignity', and shows, to quote the words of Pilar Royo-Grasa, that 'asylum seekers are not disposable objects, but active agents who should be treated in a more humane and ethical way all around the world'.[30] By explicitly aiming to make visible the agency of refugees, this novel is useful to study the different ways in which this agency is asserted.

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[25] Helen Davidson, "Behrouz Boochani, Manus Island and the Book Written One Text at a Time," The Guardian, August 2, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/02/behrouz-boochani-manus-island-and-the-book-written-one-text-at-a-time.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Mark Isaacs, "Behrouz Boochani: Writing as Resilience and Resistance," in *Creative Writing Practice : Reflections on Form and Process* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 241.
[28] Pilar Royo-Grasa, "Behrouz Boochani's No Friend but the Mountains: A Call for Dignity and Justice," *The European Legacy* 26, no. 7-8 (July 30, 2021): 751, https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2021.1958518.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid, 750.

1.3 Definitions

Although academic scholars do not agree on what a 'migrant' exactly entails, I will consider migrants to be defined by their mobile nature, and to be an umbrella category. We can split the migrant category into two other categories, namely refugees and economic migrants. The main focus of this thesis will be on refugees, so this definition needs further explication. I will use the definition posed by Amnesty International for 'refugee', namely that they are 'a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there. The risks to their safety and life were so great that they felt they had no choice but to leave and seek safety outside their country because their own government cannot or will not protect them from those dangers. Refugees have a right to international protection'.[31] Many refugees can be considered asylum seekers. As Amnesty International defines it '[a]n asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim'.[32]

1.4 Zones of Detention

Since the focus of this thesis are so-called zones of detention, I will dig into this subject deeper in this section. One of the most prominent scholars on this subject, Giorgio Agamben, conceptualized zones of detention as 'zones of exception' where people are forced to live a 'bare life'.[33] According to Agamben, detention zones are 'the materialization of the state of exception and… subsequent creation of a space in which bare life and juridical rule enter into a threshold of indistinction'.[34] Said differently, detention zones are the result of a process in which the subject of migration has been made into an issue that needs exceptional measures, an issue, thus, that was securitized.

In the perspective of Agamben, zones of detention are expressions of state power in the form of 'inclusion by exclusion': the state exerts its power to exclude refugees from the political community. The notion of 'inclusion by exclusion' seems counterintuitive, but it becomes clear when we consider the fact that the refugees reside within a state's sovereign

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[31] Amnesty International, "Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants," Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2022), https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/.
[32] Ibid.
[33] "Bare Life: Asylum Seekers, Australian Politics and Agamben's Critique of Violence," Australian Journal of Human Rights 10, no. 2 (2004): 1–10.
[34] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer : Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 174.

power structures (inclusion) which gives the state exactly the power to withhold particular rights from these refugees (exclusion).[35] Refugees are, as De Sousa Santos describes it, included 'in structures where non-citizens can be dealt with as 'dangerous colonial savages'.[36]

In this line of reasoning, zones of detention are often assumed to solely function to express state violence and punishment in order to control migration and to keep the refugees separate from the rest of society by restricting their movement to within the detention zones specifically designed for foreign nationals.[37] The main goal of these facilities is to 'facilitate expulsion and to encourage the willingness of foreign nationals to return (to their presumed land of origin).[38] Other scholars have taken a different stance, for example arguing that detention is used as a 'system of punishment', its main goal being to make migration to a particular country as unappealing as possible.[39] The main difference between these two stances is that whereas the first group believes that detention actively aims to 'push out' refugees, the latter group is of the opinion that detention is meant to prevent refugees from coming in the first place. Still other scholars take a more economical perspective, and perceive the detention as a 'warehouse', to be used for financial gain.[40] What all of these perspectives have in common, however, is their lack of engagement with lives of those who actually find themselves in the detention centers.[41]

Kreichauf deals with this lack of engagement by reconceptualizing refugees as *actors* instead of *passive subjects*. He contends life in the zones of detention is not defined by state exercise of power, but instead is 'characterized by the emergence of social relationships and manifold tactics that reinterpret and contest detention functions, often in seemingly mundane and invisible ways'.[42] Contrasting the ideas of Agamben, Mary Bosworth asserts that studying the ways in which refugees exercise agency is important since we need to

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[35] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 747, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.

[36] B. De Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 30, no. 1 (2007): 22.

[37] Mary Bosworth, *Inside Immigration Detention* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, Cop, 2014).

[38] Mary Bosworth, Katja Franko, and Sharon Pickering, "Punishment, Globalization and Migration Control: 'Get Them the Hell out of Here,'" *Punishment & Society* 20, no. 1 (December 21, 2017): 42, https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474517738984.

[39] Ibid, 34–53.

[40] Alessandro Spena, "Resisting Immigration Detention," *European Journal of Migration and Law* 18, no. 2 (June 17, 2016): 201–21, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718166-12342099.

[41] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 747, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.

[42] Ibid, 746.

acknowledge that even though those who seek asylum are 'exceedingly vulnerable, [they] have not been reduced to ''bare life'', [but] they continue to act, to feel, to talk'.[43]

Zones of detention, are an expression of state power, but are also places where resistance takes place. Inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Kreichauf states that we can consider a zone of detention as a 'field of forces', 'a space of domination and resistance to domination that represents the struggle between divergent social interests'.[44] Creative resistance can take place to contest the rules imposed in the zones of detention[45], for example by making sections of these zones their own.[46] It is clear, then, that zones of detention can be employed as spaces in which resistance takes place. Now I have briefly discussed how zones of detention will be conceptualized in this thesis, it is time to relate these zones to the so-called securitization of migration, to understand how resistance within these zones can be considered resistance to the securitization process.

1.5 Securitization of migration

If zones of detention are spaces in which refugees are held because the states consider their situation one outside the ordinary, then these zones can be considered as the consequences of the process of securitization of migration. To understand this intimate relationship better, I will briefly touch upon securitization theory in general, and then move on to discuss the more specific works related to migration in this field.

Securitization Theory (ST) was first coined by the so-called Copenhagen School,[47] which argues that crises cannot be understood as natural phenomena. Instead, they are the result of an intersubjective process, in which an issue is *defined* as existential threat. Stated differently, if an actor – the securitizing actor – pronounces something as an existential threat (e.g., 'migrants are detrimental for Dutch culture') and the intended audience agrees with this claim, an issue becomes securitized. The process of securitization is significant to consider since it has implications for measures that are taken to deal with the threat. Indeed, once an issue becomes securitized, measures become legitimized that would normally not be accepted

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[43] Mary Bosworth, *Inside Immigration Detention* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, Cop, 2014), 53.
[44] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 749, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.
[45] Y. Jewkes, "On Carceral Space and Agency," in *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishers, 2013), 128.
[46] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley Univ. Of California Press, 1984), 26.
[47] The Copenhagen School refers to first-generation Securitization Scholars. The most prominent amongst them (and simultaneously also the founding fathers of Securitization Theory) are Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver en Jaap de Wilde.

within democratic frameworks, such as the use of detention without involvement of a court.[48] Indeed, special measures are deemed necessary. The rationale behind this legitimization is that 'If we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our own way)'.[49]

ST has been applied to the case of migration by many scholars. The process in which migration has become securitized, for example, has been studied extensively by scholars such as Philips Bourbeau[50], Didier Bigo[51] and Jef Huysmans[52] and there is no need to revise these studies here. It suffices to say that the securitization of migration should be perceived as a 'transversal political technology, used as a mode of governmentality by diverse institutions to play with the unease, or to encourage it if it does not yet exist, so as to affirm their role as providers of protection and security and to mask some of their failures'.[53] The securitization of migration allows such governmental security providers to take drastic measures, such as creating zones of detention to separate asylum seekers, under despicable circumstances, from society.

Furthermore, securitization has many facets, which become clear in the work of Jef Huysmans. Indeed, he points out that the concepts of migration, statehood, and identity should be perceived as related to understand the securitization process better.[54] According to him, the securitization of migration has three political functions. First, securitization of migration helps to sustain security policies and the need for a strong state. Second, it is a useful subject for competition between political parties. Third, the securitization of migration helps to define what a political community entails, and more specifically, *who* it should entail. The structure of state and international relations helps to define migrants. Indeed, the

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[48] Other considerably non-democratic measures that have resulted from the securitization of migration include the building of walls to prevent the entrance of refugees; indefinite detention and the use of forced waiting as a tool to encourage refugees to return to where they came from.

[49] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colo. Lynne Rienner, 1998), 24.

[50] In his work *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order*, Bourbeau provides a framework for studying the securitization of migration, while also showing elaborately how this issue became securitized in France and Canada.

[51] Didier Bigo has focused mainly on the issue of biopolitics, and how the securitization of migration has led to the normalization of invasive security measures, such as the use of fingerprints. See for example his essay *Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease*.

[52] The work of Jef Huysmans especially has focused on the securitization of migration on the European level. See for example *The European Union and the Securitization of Migration* and his book *The Politics of Insecurity*.

[53] Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 1 (February 2002): 65, https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754020270s105, 65.

[54] Jef Huysmans, The Politics of Insecurity : Fear, Migration, and Asylum in the EU (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006), 30-31.

way in which states define their sovereignty as well as how they understand the concept of nation affects and is affected by the way in which migrants are defined and dealt with.[55]

Huysmans bases himself on Bigo when he claims that the securitization of migration is not an end in itself but instead a technique of governments. Both scholars use the Foucauldian notion of governmentality to explain this idea. Taken broadly, governmentality refers to the notion that states are not naturally existing entities, and instead, are constituted through techniques of government.[56] 'It is a domain and principle of application of different methods of governing insecurity that inscribe various conceptions of political community, i.e. arrangements of the conduct of freedom, into the domain of the state'.[57] The securitization of migration is characterized by its inherent relation to the way in which political communities are defined. Especially in current times, in which migration and refugees seem to be a particularly salient reason for concern in many countries, this makes for an interesting subject of study.

This securitization, however, has not occurred without resistance, and it is this resistance that will be the focus of this thesis. In light of securitization theory, there are two main ways in which securitization can be resisted, namely through desecuritization and through counter-securitization. As Baysal argues, 'counter-securitization emerges as a resistant counter move against the securitizing move of the primary securitization'.[58] He distinguishes counter-securitization from desecuritization, which he explains as follows: 'in addition to rejecting and resisting the securitization argument of the primary securitizing actor, the counter-securitization move also securitizes this actor. It presents the primary securitizing actor as a security threat, and it proposes and, if accepted by the relevant audience, takes extraordinary measures against it'[59]. Although the concept of counter-securitization is not new and has for example been used in the works of Aradau[60] and Stritzel and Chang[61], it has been left understudied, and only seems to have gained serious attention again with the appearance of *Contesting Security: Strategies and Logic* by Thierry Balzacq.[62]

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[55] Ibid, 31-32.
[56] Ibid, 40.
[57] Ibid, 42.
[58] Başar Baysal, "20 Years of Securitization: Strengths, Limitations and a New Dual Framework," *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations* 17, no. 67 (2020): 11.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Claudia Aradau, "Security and the Democratic Scene: Desecuritization and Emancipation," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 7, no. 4 (December 2004): 388–413, https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800030.
[61] Holger Stritzel and Sean C Chang, "Securitization and Counter-Securitization in Afghanistan," *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 6 (September 2, 2015): 548–67, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010615588725.
[62] Thierry Balzacq, Contesting Security Strategies and Logics (Routledge, 2014).

Throughout this thesis, I will draw on this latter work to create a better understanding of how resistance by refugees within zones of detention can be understood as forms of desecuritization and even counter-securitization.

1.6 Relevance

With the increased use of detention zones as a way to control migration, academic literature on this subject too has increased.[63] Most of the research has focused on the ways in which states exercise their control in these zones. By doing so they have not engaged, however, with the power of refugees within zones of detention, and the ways in which they use this power to assert their agency and to resist the state exercises of control, thereby also resisting their securitization.[64] The scientific relevance of this thesis lies in the fact that it investigates a different direction, namely into the refugees. Indeed, research on resistance within detention zones is scarcely present,[65] and no previous study has tried to identify the main types of resistance within such zones yet. Research on this subject is important if we are to understand the power dynamics within zones of detention within the broader picture of securitization.

This thesis also has societal relevance, since refugees are still a major concern for governments and are dealt with partly through the creation and maintenance of zones of detention. It is for this reason that understanding better how refugees assert their agency is highly relevant. Furthermore, the writing about refugee resistance, as has been done by Behrouz Boochani but also within this thesis, can be considered resistance in itself since it counters the seemingly neutral approach that is often taken toward the securitization of migration. Especially since securitization and desecuritization are largely regulated through speech, writing about the resistance of securitization is by itself a form of desecuritization, since it points out the flaws in the securitization discourse.

1.7 Structure of this thesis

This thesis is structured in the following manner. I will start off, in Chapter 2, by discussing the system of detention present on the Manus Island, the so-called Kyrarchial system. I will

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[63] For an introductory overview of such literature in a variety of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, politics and criminology, I refer the reader to Lucy Fiske, Human Rights, Refugee Protest and Immigration Detention. (Sydney: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2.

[64] Lucy Fiske, Human Rights, Refugee Protest and Immigration Detention. (Sydney: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2.

[65] Annalisa Lendaro, "Nothing to Lose: The Power of Subtle Forms of Resistance in an Immigration Detention Centre," in *Governance beyond the Law*(Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 309–22.

thereby discuss how this system is a colonial one, and how it can be considered the extreme result of the securitization of migration. In Chapter 3 I will consider the first category of acts of resistance, namely active resistance, elaborating on the main ways in which refugees have actively tried to counter the rules imposed by the system. In Chapter 4, I will engage with the same question, now considering passive forms of resistance. Each of the chapters will include a partial analysis of *No Friend but the Mountains*, as well as interpretations and conclusions. It is in that manner that I want to be able to answer my research question. In the closing chapter, Chapter 5, I will summarize the findings of this thesis , and discuss the implications for the field of study.

2. Manus Prison System

This chapter analyzes "the zone of detention" described in *No Friend of the Mountains*, and the resistance that takes place. I will begin by discussing the context of detention on Manus Island in broad terms, and then zoom in on the system as it is meticulously described by Behrouz Boochani. I will look at this zone of detention through two lenses: ST and of postcolonialism. I will furthermore show how the Australian government implements surveillance and biopolitics in Manus Prison System in order to control the refugees. The aim of this chapter is to answer the question: how is the Manus Prison System structured as a zone of detention?

2.1 The 'Pacific Solution'

The Manus Prison is a consequence of a change in the Australian asylum policy, more precisely the revision of the Pacific Solution in 2012-2013. The 'Pacific Solution' was first introduced in 2001 under Australian Prime Minster John Winston Howard, 'to discourage refugees from undertaking dangerous journeys by sea and to prevent trafficking'.[66] The 'Pacific Solution' was implemented following an incident in which a Norwegian cargo ship, the MV Tampa, rescued more than 430 asylum seekers who were attempting to get to Australia through the sea. The Australian government deployed its military to prevent these refugees from reaching Australian land. The incident was strongly intertwined with the rising securitization of migration in Australia in 2001[67], and the oft-repeated narrative that 'we will decide who comes to this country, and the circumstances in which they come'.[68]

The officially stated reason why this policy was implemented is because the Australian government wanted to implement a so-called 'no-advantage principle', in which people who arrive to Australia on unauthorized boats are treated equally to people who arrive in different manners. Furthermore, this solution follows a widespread feeling amongst

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[66] Gursimran Kaur Bakshi, "Australia's Pacific Solution for Asylum-Seekers Neglects Human Dignity," Social Policy, September 1, 2020, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/socialpolicy/2020/09/01/australias-pacific-solution-for-asylum-seekers-neglects-human-dignity/.

[67] Matt McDonald, "Contesting Border Security: Emancipation and Asylum in the Australian Context," in *Contesting Security: Strategies and Logics* (London: Routledge, 2015), 154–68.

[68] Katharine Gelber and Matt McDonald, "Ethics and Exclusion: Representations of Sovereignty in Australia's Approach to Asylum-Seekers," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (April 2006): 269–89, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210506007029.

Australians that 'asylum-seekers arriving on boats are violating their sovereignty; that is, 'these asylum-seekers are choosing us rather than we are choosing them'.[69]

In 2012, the Pacific Solution was revived and implemented in altered manner in 2013. One of the consequences of this new version of the Pacific Solution was the establishment of the Operation Sovereign Border, which is aimed to prevent illegal migration and encourage refugees to enter Australia 'the legal way', namely by obtaining a visa first. This whole operation is meant to scare refugees away from the decision to attempt reaching Australia by boat. The main slogan used for this operation – 'Stop the boats!'- clearly dehumanizes the refugees.[70] Indeed, by referring to refugees in terms of 'boats', their humanness is being denied. This form of dehumanization is referred to as 'mechanistic dehumanization', which represents the refugees 'as cold, robotic, passive and lacking in depth'. The result of this type of dehumanization is often indifference,[71] therefore contributing to the acceptance of the non-democratic measures taken to counter the arrival of refugees.

These updated asylum policies consequences are that refugees who try to reach Australia illegally by boat are intercepted on the sea and redirected towards so-called offshore processing centers either Manus Island (Papua New Guinea) or Nauru, which are framed as 'regional processing countries'.[72] A total of 3,127 people have been detained in such offshore processing centers since then.[73]

2.2 Introduction to the Kyriarchal System

In his book, Boochani introduces the concept of the Kyriarchal system to understand the way in which the detention center is structured. The term Kyriarchy refers to 'a theory of interconnected social systems established for the purposes of domination, oppression and submission'.[74] The theory was developed as part of the feminist tradition of theories and was

[69] Gursimran Kaur Bakshi, "Australia's Pacific Solution for Asylum-Seekers Neglects Human Dignity," Social Policy, September 1, 2020, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/socialpolicy/2020/09/01/australias-pacific-solution-for-asylum-seekers-neglects-human-dignity/.
[70] Refugee Council of Australia, "Stop the Boats - Refugee Council of Australia," Refugee Council of Australia, January 19, 2019, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/stop-the-boats/.
[71] Nick Haslam, "Dehumanization: An Integrative Review," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10, no. 3 (August 2006): 252–64, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1003_4.
[72] Neha Prasad, "Lessons from Australia's Pacific Solution," *Forced Migration Review*, 2021, https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/externalisation/prasad.pdf.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 124.

meant to deal with the complex structures of power concerning gender.[75] Boochani takes the concept, however, and applies it to the power structures in which refugees on the Manu Island find themselves. As Boochani describes it, the principle through which the Kyriarchal System is governed is set up in such a way 'to turn the prisoners against each other and to ingrain [deep] hatred between people'.[76] In the book *No Friend but the Mountains* we learn that at Manus prison, all rules are calculated in such a way to maintain the hierarchy of power in which the refugees, in this context the prisoners, are fully deprived of power.

According to Boochani, the main principle followed by the Kyriarchal system 'is to turn the prisoners against each other and to ingrain even deeper hatred between people'. This principle contradicts the intuitive unity that one would expect to result from fenced enclosures. Indeed, this is what we would expect based on Boochani's claim that such circumstances 'can even pacify the most violent person'. Therefore 'the prison's greatest achievement might be the manipulation of feelings of hatred between one another.[77] Boochani adds to this that '[t]he goal of this system is to drive prisoners to extreme distrust so that they become lonelier and more isolated, until the prison's Kyriarchal Logic triumphs with their collapse and demise'.[78] The Kyriarchal system is meant to prevent the prisoners from uniting, potentially out of fear for the consequences of such a unification.

The Kyriarchal system, then, is structured in an almost dystopic manner. It does not only encourage its prisoners to hate each other but is structured in such a way to reinforce the worst behaviours in the prisoners, for example by giving the best food to those who manage to get first in row, and by making sure there is always a scarcity of everything, putting the prisoners in a position of competition with each other. Yet, the prison provides its inhabitants with food, clothes, and a place to sleep; indeed, it does not leave them there to die. In that sense the detention center on Manus Island can arguably be considered a form of hostile hospitality, a phrase coined by Shahram Khosravi, which refers to a complex and seemingly self-contradictory policy to deal with refugees, in which direct deportation does not take place but 'a funnel of expulsion is created to encourage voluntary departure[79]. Since this strategy of hostile hospitality can be considered part of biopolitics, I will return to this aspect

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[75] Natalie Osborne, "Intersectionality and Kyriarchy: A Framework for Approaching Power and Social Justice in Planning and Climate Change Adaptation," *Planning Theory* 14, no. 2 (December 30, 2013): 132.
[76] Behrouz Boochani, Omid Tofighian, and Richard Flanagan, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison* (Toronto: Anansi International, 2019), 124.
[77] Ibid, 125.
[78] Ibid, 126.
[79] Nicolay B. Johansen, "Governing the Funnel of Expulsion: Agamben, the Dynamics of Force, and Minimalist Biopolitics," in *The Borders of Punishment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

in more detail in the concerned section. Before doing so, I will look at another characteristic of the Kyriarchal system, namely surveillance.

2.3 Surveillance

One of the core features of the Kyriarchal system is the all-encompassing forms of surveillance it utilizes to fulfill its goals. To start off, the prison is organized in a way that seems inspired by the Benthamian notion of the panopticon. Indeed, the prison is set up in such a way that the prisoners feel watched at any moment by security officers. According to Boochani, 'there is no chance of avoiding [the security officer's gaze's] pervasive scope'.[80] The translator of the novel, Omid Tofighian, confirms this, and writes in the foreword how 'the prisoners were under constant surveillance and always in danger of having their mobile phones confiscated' and that '[r]umours always circulated regarding the prison system's plans to conduct a phone search, so refugees lived with constant fear and dread'.[81]

The use of CCTV cameras is prominent in the Manus prison and form a part of the panoptic system: they are everywhere, including the toilets, intrusively invading the privacy of the prisoners. Boochani connects the intrusive measures of surveillance to the securitization of migration: 'The securitized gaze of those officers on our bodies and all that surveillance under the watch of the CCTV cameras is making me worried. I feel that I am a criminal or a murderer (…)'.[82] The use of CCTV cameras logically follows the securitized perspective that refugees in fact are criminals, allowing measures normally reserved from criminals to be applied to refugees as well.

2.4 Biopolitics

The concept of biopolitics[83] was first coined by Foucault to describe a new form of governmentality, in which the involved population is a perceived as a 'political problem'.[84] As Caludia Aradau and Martina Tazzioli write, [t]he concept of biopolitics has been mobilized to explain the modalities of power emerging with modernity and constitutive of

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[80] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 142.
[81] Ibid, 397.
[82] Ibid, 86.
[83] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979* (New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[84] Claudia Donoso, "The Biopolitics of Migration: Ecuadorian Foreign Policy and Venezuelan Migratory Crisis," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 37, no. 1 (January 17, 2020): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2020.1713854.

our present, which take 'life' as the object of power'.[85] In biopolitics, political power is no longer exercised in a directly coercive manner, but instead is meant to 'structure the possible field of action of others'[86]. In this way, subjects are allowed to maintain their agency to some extent but only within a constrained environment. In relation to this, Carl Death points out that the agency of the subjects is 'not in opposition to modern government but is rather an essential technique, or product, of power'.[87] Biopolitics functions 'together with other technologies of power – repressive and disciplinary power – which operate more directly on the body and on subjectivity'.[88]

In *No Friend but the Mountains*, the different facets of the biopolitical governance of the Manus Prison are written about elaborately. Boochani describes several ways in which biopolitics is conducted and in which norms are created in implicit manners. One of the technologies used for this end are queues. Indeed, for supplies such as razors, food, and cigarettes, the prisoners are forced to stand in long queues, under 'a sun that penetrates each cell with its stinging rays'.[89] Boochani wonders how prisoners can endure the harsh circumstances of the queue: '[H]ow can a human stay put and wait for hours without leaving that spot? How can he just stay there, not moving an inch? [They are] [b]ehaving like professional beggars'.[90] The use of queues pushes the prisoners to behave according to the norm that the Kyriarchal system promotes, namely a norm in which prisoners are dehumanized, deindividualized and treat each other with hatred.

The way in which this latter norm is promoted through the technology of queues becomes clear when we examine at the rules of the queue more closely. Especially the queues for food are exemplary in this regard. As Boochani writes, the food queue is 'a raw and palpable reinforcement of torture'[91], that conditions the prisoners, 'forcing them to behave badly'.[92]

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[85] Michel Foucault, "The Mesh of Power," Viewpoint Magazine, September 12, 2012, https://viewpointmag.com/2012/09/12/the-mesh-of-power/.

[86] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 790, https://doi.org/10.1086/448181.

[87] Carl Death, "Counter-Conducts: A Foucauldian Analytics of Protest," *Social Movement Studies* 9, no. 3 (August 2010): 238, https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2010.493655.

[88] Rachel Adams, "Michel Foucault: Biopolitics and Biopower," Critical Legal Thinking, May 10, 2017, https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/05/10/michel-foucault-biopolitics-biopower/.

[89] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 192

[90] Ibid, 195.

[91] Ibid, 193.

[92] Ibid, 167.

The rules governing the queue state that the further back in the row you are, the worse the food quality.[93] So, whereas the people who enter at the beginning get 'beautifully coloured cake along with trays of fruit',[94] the people at the end of the queue 'are left with only black pieces of meat and rice that seems to have been made using seawater'.[95]

Furthermore, skipping the line is not punished. As Boochani writes, 'there are always those among us who are like stray dogs looking to pounce and steal a piece of meat'. Such leaping behaviour, as well as the use of violence to claim a position in the queue, 'interestingly (…) end without interference by G4S guards'. The role of the queue in shaping the behaviour of the prisoners along the desired norms of the Kyriarchal system, then, is to 'establish something: any person in the prison who behaves in a more despicable and brutish manner has a more comfortable lifestyle'[96].

Another technique of governance used to exercise biopower concerns the aspect of accountability for inhumane treatment within the prison. Indeed, each 'boss' refers to a higher 'boss'. This makes it impossible to point out who performed which violation, rendering the violations within the system the work of the system itself. To take Boochani's words: 'Whatever the question, whoever you ask within the prison, the answer is the same: 'The Boss has given orders'. Whenever a stubborn prisoner makes inquiries and finds the boss of that individual who has said 'The Boss has given orders' and then confronts that person, that person also responds with 'The Boss has given orders'. It is just pointless effort. All the rules, all the regulations, and all the questions about those rules and regulations are all referred back to one person: "The Boss."[97] The impossibility of holding anyone accountable forces the prisoners to stop questioning who is behind the inhumane circumstances they find themselves in. It governs them to understand what is happening to them as something they cannot counter, since they do not know the source of their sufferings.

The final way in which biopolitics is utilized to govern the refugees is through what Johansen refers to as 'the funnel of expulsion'.[98] The method of governing used is one in which refugees are not directly but indirectly expelled. The strategy used to achieve this aim is 'locking these people in a situation that is so unbearable that they 'choose' to leave' and to

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[93] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 197.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid, 215.
[98] Nicolay B. Johansen, "Governing the Funnel of Expulsion: Agamben, the Dynamics of Force, and Minimalist Biopolitics," in *The Borders of Punishment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

go return to the country they came from.[99] Although they have freedom to make their own choice, the government is 'nudging' as it were, the refugees in the desired direction. We see this form of biopolitics reflected in the Manus Prison System's aim to push refugees 'to [return to] the land from which they came'.[100] The biopolitics of the Manus Prison is effective to such an extent, that arguably the power of the Australian government is diffused and the refugees themselves become the main actors in encouraging their own return.

2.5 Deindividuation and dehumanization

Deindividuation and dehumanization are characteristics too of the Kyriarchal system. Indeed, the system takes way anything that reminds the refugees of their individual being. This is done in several manners, starting with the labelling of each prisoner with a code, upon entering the prison. Each prisoner is assigned a series of letters and numbers, such as MEG45,[101] which will now replace their name, at least, for the prison guards. The prisoners themselves refer to each other through nicknames, such as 'The Cow' and 'The Minister'. Furthermore, they are given clothes that 'don't match the size of the person in any way whatsoever'[102], that 'transform [their] bodies, [and] utterly degrade [the prisoners]'.[103]

The Kyriarchal system dehumanizes the prisoners. Boochani often refers to this feeling of dehumanization in terms that render him either an object, such as meat, or an animal, such as a cow. After his first month in the Manus prison, for example, Boochani reports that he 'is a piece of meat thrown into an unknown land.'[104] This reference to the prisoners as pieces of meat is one that occurs frequently throughout the book. Besides that, the prison system encourages animal-like behaviour by the prisoners. In relation to the queues, Boochani emphasizes how the hours under the sun to obtain food turns the prisoners into animals: 'I always imagine them with the features and forms of domestic animals. It's bizarre how their personalities are reduced to gluttonous pack animals. The personalities of each one reflects heritage with the mule; it is all over their faces, no integrity, no dignity. Cows. Greedy and gluttonous cows'.[105]

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[99] Nicolay B. Johansen, "Governing the Funnel of Expulsion: Agamben, the Dynamics of Force, and Minimalist Biopolitics," in *The Borders of Punishment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 258.
[100] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 164.
[101] Ibid, 96.
[102] Ibid, 85.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid, 121.
[105] Ibid, 195.

2.6 Colonial structures

In his foreword written for *No Friend but the Mountains*, Omid Tofighian, translator of the novel, writes that 'the book functions to move readers to resist the colonial mindset that is driving Australia's detention regime and to inspire self-reflection, deep investigation and direct action'.[106]

In the book *No Friend but the Mountains*, the coloniality of the detention system is pointed out. Indeed, the system is governed through a strict ethnicity-based system. Indeed, the Australians are at the top of the hierarchy by which the Kyriarchal system is organized, the locals are at the bottom. Even below that, are the prisoners, which are deprived of any power. 'Kyriarchal Logic', Behrouz Boochani writes, 'has imposed this … a message to all: 'Let it be known that in this prison local people are nothing. They simply get instructions and follow them'. This configures the relationships among the three basic elements in the prison: the prisoners, the local people, the Australians'.[107]

Related to the colonial system is the clear divide between barbarism and civilization that Boochani describes. Indeed, the Kyriarchal system is set up in such a way that both the Papus and the prisoners are described as barbaric, to make sure that the Prisoners and the Papus fear each other. About the prisoners, the Australians tell the local people: '[they are] dangerous criminals and terrorists; at any moment they could initiate something dangerous and attack'[108]. The local people in turn, 'are cannibals'[109], and people of 'primitivism, barbarism, and cannibalism'.[110] Not only the local people and the prisoners are made to fear each other. Australian employees taking care of the security in the prison, are taken along in the securitized discourse on migration. The Australian security guards are told that 'You're an army here to protect the nation, and these imprisoned refugees are that enemy. Who knows who they are or where they're from? They invaded your country by boat'. For those guards, 'the situation is completely clear to them – here, in their sights and their enemies, rounded up from all over the place. My god, you should see the look in their eyes: cold, barbaric, hateful'.[111]

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[106] Ibid, 398.
[107] Ibid, 145.
[108] Ibid, 167.
[109] Ibid, 83.
[110] Ibid, 168.
[111] Ibid, 141.

2.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to analyze the zone of detention that refugees in *No Friend but the Mountains* are dealing with, namely the Manus Prison System. The main question of this chapter was: how is the Manus Prison System structured as a zone of detention? Using ST and postcolonial theory, I have provided a perspective of security and coloniality concerning this system. What has become clear from this chapter, is that the Manus Prison is structured in a way that Boochani refers to as a Kyriarchal system, which aims to create circumstances so unbearable for prisoners that they will wish to return to the country they came from. The way in which this system functions is through intrusive and inhumane methods of surveillance and biopolitics. The Manus Prison System is exemplary for the extraordinary measures that are taken to deal with the securitized issue of migration.

3. Active Resistances

This chapter focuses on the forms of active resistance that refugees against their detention. I will first touch upon the meaning of active resistance, and concepts that are important to understand the acts of resistance. I will then go on to discuss each type of resistance, while relating it back to the literature of ST and postcolonialism. Finally, I will draw conclusions based on this chapter. The question at the core of this chapter is: What types of active resistances by refugees can we identify in *No Friend but the Mountains*?

3.1 Introduction

The first category, active resistance, includes several types of resistance to the Kyriarchal system which can all be understood as forms of movement that go against the rules and aims of the system, and that include acts of active change of a situation in order to resist the system of detention. To get a better overview of the types of resistance that occur within *No Friend but the Mountains*, I want to propose a subdivision for the variety of acts of active resistance which occur, namely: the use of violence; the use of self-harm; disobedience or circumvention of the rules, the creation of a micro-economy, and rehumanization, based on the Qualitative Conduct Analysis that was conducted.

Acts of daily resistance are important to the refugees since they allow them to assert their agency in the highly controlled environment, they find themselves in. Indeed, following Foucault's line of thought, since the moment they arrive in Australia, they are in a struggle for power with the Australian government.[112] This power relation between the refugees and the Australian government is characterized by submission, transformation, subversion and resistance, the latter often not being centralized nor institutionalized. For this reason, Lucy Fiske argues, we should speak about detainee 'resistance*s*'.[113]

3.2 Violence

One of the active types of resistance employed by the refugees is the use of physical force and violence. One clear example is the resistance shown by Lebanese refugees when brought to board the airplane to Manus Island. Indeed, the 'refugees stood up and defy the guards who wanted to load them on board. But the guards smashed them and beat them down. They

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[112] Lucy Fiske, *Human Rights, Refugee Protest and Immigration Detention.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 50.
[113] Ibid, 53.

annihilated them'.[114] Not only physical violence is used by the refugees. Indeed, a less straightforward example of emotional violence occurs when one of the prisoners starts 'crying out with fury', and the guards 'might even piss their pants'. The prisoner's aim is to frighten the guards, and according to the spectator, Behrouz himself, it is working.[115] The unexpectedness of the event indeed shocks the guards and all the prisoners.

The explicit use of violence, physical or emotional, can best be understood as a form of counter-securitization, in which the refugees are redefining who is threatening who. Indeed, even if not uttered explicitly, the behaviour of refugees – engaging in violence – implicitly confirms the supposed legitimacy of this extraordinary measure against the state apparatus.[116] To explain it more elaborately, the refugees have securitized the prison system, now perceiving it as an existential threat against which they should defend themselves at any cost. The use violence follows logically from this perception. Through the employment of violence, refugees are counter-securitizing the prison system, thereby resisting their own role as a securitized subject.

The dynamics of securitization and counter-securitization becomes especially clear when we consider the occasion of the outbreak of a riot in Manus Prison. The prisoners had planned an escape and felt a strong sense of power as they were united. The language employed within the context of this riot is one of war, showing the way in which both sides have securitized each other. About one of the leaders of the riot, Boochani writes that '[l]ike a wrestler preparing for combat, he beat his chest with his fists'.[117] When both the prisoners and the guards started throwing pillows and hard metals, '[t]his announced the beginning of the war'.[118] After the riot was suppressed, the prison becomes 'like a land of ghosts, an abandoned territory, a former battlefield. Once upon a time a war took place here'.[119]

3.3 Self-harm

The infliction of self-harm is another type of resistance that recurred in *No Friend but the Mountains.* This type of resistance is particularly complicated because of the different layers of meaning ascribed to it. The work of Fiske is insightful in this regard. As she points out,

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[114] Ibid, 90.
[115] Ibid, 272.
[116] Başar Baysal, "20 Years of Securitization: Strengths, Limitations and a New Dual Framework," *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations* 17, no. 67 (2020): 10.
[117] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 338.
[118] Ibid, 339.
[119] Ibid, 352.

self-harm has been used as a form of resistance within zones of detention since the early 1990s. As she argues, based on the work of Foucault, it is because states in contemporary time engage in 'economy of suspended rights' that refugees feel the need to make their pain visible.[120] By the term 'economy of suspended rights', Fiske states that through the use of 'detention, the state exercises power in a way that leaves no traces on the body, for its target is the soul of the transgressor'.[121] The aim of the state with such a form of violence is to prevent discomfort on the side of the general public, while maintaining power over the influx of refugees.[122]

The use of self-harm, in this perspective is a way to embody the state violence, since it makes visible the state violence performed onto them, a violence that usually remains hidden.[123] Indeed, if left without marks, pain is not noticed and the suffering is not acted upon.[124] The words of the detainees are not being heard, and when they make statements about the violence, it is their word against that of the state, rendering their voices easily discredited since the state is most powerful in what Foucault refers to as the power-knowledge paradigm.[125] As a result, the detainees only found themselves left with one instrument to send their message, namely through their bodies. [126]

An example of such resistance in *No Friend but the Mountains* occurs right after the Minister of Migration visits the Manus Prison to make clear to the refugees that 'you have no chance at all, either you go back to your countries, or you will remain on Manus Island forever'.[127] One of the detainees, slits his wrists, and the prisoners 'express their moral sentiments out loud. They spit futile profanities at the […] system'.[128] The detainee attempted to show the pain caused by the statement of the Minister of Migration through the embodiment of the pain by slitting his wrists. Simultaneously, he mobilized social support to deal with this pain, since his fellow detainees start swearing in support of the detainees'

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[120] Lucy Fiske, *Human Rights, Refugee Protest and Immigration Detention.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 134-135.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid, 132.
[123] Ibid, 135.
[124] Ibid, 135.
[125] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended : Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76.* (1976; repr., London: Penguin Books, 2020).
[126] Lucy Fiske, *Human Rights, Refugee Protest and Immigration Detention.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 135.
[127] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 313.
[128] Ibid, 316-317

complaints. It can be argued, then, that self-harm amongst refugee detainees does not only have a political function, but also a social one.

This perspective is confirmed when we view the following fragment: 'Self-harm has become established for some in the prison as a kind of cultural practice. When someone cuts themselves, it elicits a form of respect among the prisoners. However, the criterion for status pertains to the depth of the slit, the severity of the wound. The more terror inflicted, the greater the credibility. It is unwritten and cryptic – but it is real'. In this fragment, Boochani emphasizes how self-harm has become a ritual within the prison culture, a tradition through which prisoners communicate and establish a hierarchy. Self-harm, for these detainees, becomes a way to reveal the violence done unto them.

3.4 Disobedience

A third type of resistance that was described in the work of Boochani concerns the disobedience of refugee detainees of the prison system rules. Such disobedience, oftentimes, involved small transgressions of the rules. Indeed, as Fiske recognizes, 'resistance may take many forms, not all of which are readily recognizable as resistance, but which nonetheless seek to subvert, disrupt or manipulate the state's power. The stealing of cigarettes is an especially revealing example in this regard. When the refugees arrive in the Manus Prison, they are carefully searched. After these searches, one of the refugees 'pulls out a smoke and lights it using the lighter fixed to the wall. It is curious, how is it possible that he kept that cigarette intact through all those body-searches? They even frisked his underwear and that piece of meat contained underneath'.[129]

This refugee, who claims he has been a prison warden back in Iran, does this trick several times. As Boochani writes, 'the guy who had been a prison warden performs a magic trick and produces another cigarette. He pulls it from the pocket of his polyester shorts. It is truly unbelievable. How could he have done that! That single cigarette – it distracts us from the warnings of the nurses and our preoccupation with the tropical mosquitoes'.[130] What is happening in this cat-and-mouse game is notable for several reasons, since it shows the absurdity of the prison circumstances. Indeed, it seems that body search goes as far as to look into every corner of the body but omits the place where people usually put things, namely in their pockets. It also brings up questions about how acts that we normally consider 'normal'

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[129] Ibid, 85.
[130] Ibid, 86.

outside of the prison context, suddenly become criminalized within the prison. Indeed, the carrying of cigarettes into the prison is changed from a simple act into smuggling.

The hiding of cigarettes performs several functions to the detainees. Not only does it form proof that resistance to the prison rules is possible; it also performs a social function by distracting the fellow detainees from their everyday suffering. The subject of cigarettes also lays at the core of the micro-economy that develops within the Manus Prison. To this next form of resistance – the development of a micro-economy – I will turn to now.

3.5 Micro-economy

The social space of the zones of detention are not only structured alongside social interactions, but instead are also affected by the microeconomics that develop within these zones. Within this micro-economy, support, services and goods are exchanged, and relationships are developed based on mutual usefulness. What develops from this micro-economy are 'social hierarchies between those that have and are able to accumulate resources, and those that do not'.[131] We see this represented in the behaviour of one of the prisoners, who is referred to as the Cow: *'Even though he doesn't smoke, it is bizarre how The Cow is always the first in line again. An amazing sight. Maybe The Cow has discovered the best approach to life. He knows how valuable the smokes are, how desperate the inmates are to have them. The Cow queues and collects them so that he can use them for personal gain'.[132]*

The Cow clearly belongs to the group who is able to accumulate resources, and he thereby gains a benefit over those who are on the receiving side of this economical transaction, namely those addicted to cigarettes: 'On Sundays when the smokers are bustling around, these prisoners are slowly but surely morphing into beggars. A cultural stratum of beggary forms in the prison, a subaltern group within the system. A new social chasm forms; new social divisions take shape. Prisoners who smoke become dependent on prisoners who do not'.[133]

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[131] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 755, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.

[132] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 213.

[133] Ibid, 217.

As Kreichauf points out, the development of a micro-economy often crosses boundaries along which people are traditionally divided, such as ethnicity.[134] This is reflected in the exchange of cigarettes across detainees from different ethnicities, but more importantly, in the exchange of cigarettes with the Papu prison guards. As Boochani points out, 'the Papus are crazy about cigarettes. This is their Achilles heel. One can win over their kind hearts by offering them a single cigarette. The cunning prisoner knows this and manipulates it'.[135] Through the creation of a micro-economy, the prisoners restructure their social relations to resemble the world outside the prison again. They create an opportunity to obtain the goods they want and need through exchange with others, while remaining within the boundaries of the prison system.

3.6 Rehumanization

The concept of rehumanization is inspired by works such as by the work of Kelly Wilz who argues that rehumanization is about reasserting similarities between the ingroup and outgroup, while emphasizing the differences between members of the dehumanized group.[136] One of the ways in which the Kyriarchal system attempts deindividualize and dehumanize the detainees is by assigning each of them a 'code' by which they will be referred to.[137] More concretely, Behrouz Boochani receives the code MEG045. By attaching a story to the number, Boochani attempts to make the code personal and meaningful again: At least I could try to relate it to an important historical event, but although I rack my brain I can't come up with anything except the end of World War II – the year '45. Regardless of who I am, regardless of what I think, they are going to call me by that number'.[138] At the same time, he acknowledges the limits of his agency, namely that those working for the Kyriarchal system will call him by the codename in spite of his resistance.

A second way in which the detainees resist their dehumanization is by holding onto their dignity in spite of the demeaning circumstances. This type of resistance is not only

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[134] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 755, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.

[135] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 217.

[136] Kelly Wilz, "Rehumanization through Reflective Oscillation in Jarhead," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 4 (2010): 581–609, https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2010.0209.

[137] Mark Isaacs, "Behrouz Boochani: Writing as Resilience and Resistance," in *Creative Writing Practice : Reflections on Form and Process* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 240.

[138]

meant as a display to the outside world but also as a way to hold on to the feeling of self by the detainee. A good example of this form of resistance occurs when Boochani is transferred into a plane which will fly the detainees to Manus Island. Boochani is dressed in 'a yellow shirt twice my size that drapes down over my knees [and] flip-flops that make a slapping sound when I walk [.]'[139]As he points out 'they transform our bodies, they utterly degrade us'.[140]

At the scene are journalists, trying to capture a picture of the refugees. According to Boochani, 'they take pleasure from shattering the dignity of a human being'.[141] To counter the demeaning circumstances, Boochani engages in several physical acts. While the guards guide him to the plane, Boochani holds his 'head up high, dignified' and takes 'long steps (…) to end this painful scene as quickly as possible'.[142] Once on the plane, there is not much left of this attempt to maintain dignity: his head 'dropped down low. A crushed person. Someone extremely degraded'.[143] Boochani does not give up however, and he tries to regain his sense of worth, first by taking a 'few deep breaths, trying to breathe some dignity back into [his] spirit'[144] and then by reminding himself that he is 'the same person who conquered this great expanse of ocean on a rotting boat, the same person who crossed this infinite volume of water (…) looking out over the natural landscape (…) [he] can erase all the sinking feelings of weakness, of demoralization, of inferiority'.[145] In this fragment of the book we see the complexity of the power relations that detainees find themselves in. Both the officers and the journalists are in a position in which they take away the dignity of the detainees, but they cannot do so without the detainees' submission. And many, indeed, do not submit, at least not without resistance.

The final way in which the detainees rehumanize themselves is by emphasizing universal human values they have in common with other, non-detainees, such as the Australian officers. A striking example is the incident with a detainee referred to as the Father Of The Months-Old Child, in short referred to as the Father. He is standing in queue to make a phone call, since he wishes to talk to his own father, who is 'old and ill'. The Grandfather

[139] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 136.
[140] Ibid, 85.
[141] Ibid, 94.
[142] Ibid, 97.
[143] Ibid, 98.
[144] Ibid, 99.
[145] Ibid, 100.

has sent his son a message that his last days have arrived, and he would love to speak to his son once more, to say farewell.

Upon hearing this message, he hurries to the phone. Although many of his fellow prisoners show empathy and agree to let the Father use the phone, the Australian officers do not agree to this, and by extension, the Papus that regulate the use of the phone do not either. one fellow detainee, The Man With The Thick Moustache tries to explain the situation to the Australian officer, calling upon the officer's feelings of morality and humanity. It is in this act of The Man With The Moustache, that we can distinguish an act of rehumanization. Indeed, The Man With The Moustache emphasizes to the officer that 'You might be a father yourself and then you certainly would understand the relationship between a father and son very well. Or at least if you're not a father you're a son, and so you have a father, or you had a father before'.[146] This instance is one in which the detainees are trying to capture a shared human value with the Australian officers and to build upon this value. The officers, in response, only provide a standardized answer: 'I understand how you feel, but unfortunately this would be a violation of the rules. I'm sorry,'[147] thereby rejecting the act of rehumanization.

A final noteworthy aspect that occurs throughout the book concerns the use of names. Indeed, prisoners are referred to by names such as 'The Cow' and the 'Father of the Months-Old Child'. There are several ways to interpret this way of speaking about the prisoners. In the one hand, it can be considered a form of rehumanization, since it steps away from the use of codes to refer to people, and instead makes use of characteristics. On the other hand, however, it could also be interpreted that Behrouz Boochani is, potentially unknowingly, contributing to the dehumanization of the prisoners, exactly by referring to them by only using a nickname instead of real of fictionalized human names.

The prison guards, too, are not referred to by their names, and instead Boochani chooses to leave them completely nameless. The only distinction made between the guards is the local/Australian distinction. Besides that, no more distinctions between the prison guards are made. This too, we can understand in two ways. First of all, we can understand this anonymization as a form of dehumanization of the security guards by Behrouz Boochani. It may be the case that he is trying to counter the dehumanization of the prisoners by casting doubt on the humanity of the dehumanizers as it were, thereby almost invalidating their

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[146] Ibid, 225.
[147] Ibid, 225.

dehumanizing acts. We can also understand this anonymity in which Boochani renders the security guards as something that is imposed onto them by the Kyriarchal system, which indeed may not only dehumanize the prisoners but also the prison keepers, thereby putting them into similar circumstances.

3.7 Creative resistance

The refugees in Manus Prison also take part in forms of resistance that can be considered creative resistance. Such resistance implies the use of resistance by refugees to create their own places within those places [of detention]; making them temporarily their own as they occupy and move through them'.[148] Refugees have the power according to scholars like Kreichauf and Jewkes have the power to contest the 'given order of a space'[149] in creative ways. One such way in which the prisoners of Manus Prison resist the zones of detention is through the performance that are on the edge of what is allowed. Indeed, whereas the prisoners are not allowed to play games, rendering one of the only ways to pass time a painstaking reconsideration of their youth[150], the prisoners create a new form of entertainment, namely through the performance of dance.

The refugees show agency through denying the Kyriarchal system the power to take away all forms of pleasure from the prisoners. Indeed, although the Kyriarchal system has made games prohibited, the prisoners still create activities that bring pleasure, namely by using their bodies to perform dances. More specifically speaking, Boochani describes one prisoner, referred to as Maysam the Whore, who dances. As Boochani writes: The Kyriarchal System of the prison is set up to produce suffering. These celebrations, according to Behrouz Boochani, are a form of resistance that says, 'It's true that we are imprisoned without charge and have been exiled, but look here, you bastards… look at how happy and cheerful we are'.[151] The way in which Boochani puts this gives an indication of an absurd form of sarcasm, in which prisoners are dancing cheerfully in the most terrible of circumstances.

The prisoners in *No Friend but the Mountains* are representative of Kreichauf's claim that prisoners tend to engage in social activities that do not match their interests or skills,

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[148] Y. Jewkes, "On Carceral Space and Agency," in *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishers, 2013), 128.

[149] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley Univ. Of California Press, 1984), 26.

[150] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 131.

[151] Ibid, 136.

simply to be in contact with others.[152] Indeed, Maysam the Whore never used to be a performer in his life before his flight, although Boochani does note that 'his spirit could be part of a legacy, inherited from the soul of the kowli peoples of Iran, peripatetic people who conduct street performances and dance along the roadsides of strange cities'.[153] During his performances in prison, 'Everything is interconnected: joy, fear, hate, envy, revenge, spite, and even kindness. All these moving pieces revolve around Maysam The Whore, and he revolts against everything. There is no secret underlying his popularity other than an accumulation of suffering endured by all the prisoners, which shines through his rhythmic movements. Like a mirror, the prisoners see themselves reflected in him'.[154]

The guards stand by silently, unable to do anything, since '*they have no excuse to break up the festivities'*.[155] Although the guards regard the dance performances with a 'abhorrence, envy and barbarism', there are no rules against dancing in the prison. The refugees, to take the words of Julie De Dardel, are using the 'leeway between the inmates and prison authorities which gives space for manoeuvre in which the inmates can negotiate part of the rules in the total institution'.[156] They are using the bare space between what is allowed and what is not allowed to engage in this creative form of resistance. To specify a bit further, the reason why I consider types of acts resistance instead of a coping strategies is because they are intended to disrupt the power imbalance that is imposed onto them via the Kyriarchal system. Indeed, instead of rendering themselves helpless victims of the system, the refugees are taking up their agency and exploring the grey zones of what is allowed and not allowed, thereby explicitly triggering the security guards.

3.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to answer the question: What types of active resistance by refugees can we identify in *No Friend but the Mountains*? Using Qualitative Content Analysis, I identified six main ways through which refugees have attempted to assert their agency within the Manus Prison, namely through the use of violence and self-harm, through

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[152] René Kreichauf, "Detention as Social Space: Waiting, Social Relations, and Mundane Resistance of Asylum Seekers in Detention," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (November 30, 2020): 754, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520977644.

[153] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 134.

[154] Ibid, 137.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Julie De Dardel, "Chapter 13: Resisting 'Bare Life': Prisoners' Agency in the New Prison Culture Era in Colombia," in *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 183–98.

disobedience and through the creation of a micro-economy, through so-called attempts for rehumanization, and finally, through the employment of creative strategies of resistance, such as the performance of dance. Through these different forms of resistance, refugees have not only contested the order of the Manus Prison System, but also their securitization, and even provided grounds for the counter-securitization of the Prison System.

4. Passive resistances

The focus of this chapter is on the second category of resistance under study, namely passive resistance. I will start off with a brief introduction into passive resistance, followed by a discussion of the different types of passive resistance that I identified are described by Behrouz Boochani. Similar to previous chapter, I will relate the identified types of resistance to ST and postcolonialism, to create a better understanding of these acts. The question answered in this chapter is: What types of passive resistances by refugees can we identify in *No Friend but the Mountains*?

4.1 Introduction

This second category, passive resistances, includes resistances which do not actively 'change' situations so they contest the Manus Prison System, but instead such resistances act either in line with the system, albeit in extreme manners, or hold onto characteristics and behaviours that were present before entering the prison, such as personality traits. Through conducting Qualitative Content Analysis, I identified three types of passive resistances, namely avoiding prison facilities and prison-led activities, rehumanization by holding on to identity and personality and engaging in extreme compliance to the rules of the prison.

4.2 Avoidance

The first form of avoidant resistance found in *No Friend but the Mountains* concerns the intentional avoidance of prison facilities. In the book, this happens amongst others with the medical facility, the IHMS. According to Boochani, the IHMS 'feels like the blades of the fans in the prison – if some tangled hair from my head were to become stuck in there it would pull me in'.[157] For this reason, 'it is a place [Boochani] is determined to avoid'.[158] As he writes, this is 'a proclivity for resistance against this system/ trying not let any part of my body get caught up in it'.[159] By avoiding facilities such as the IHMS, detainees such as Boochani are resisting getting caught up (further) in these systems.

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[157] Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains : Writing from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (Sydney: Picador Australia, 2018), 310.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

Interestingly, alternatives for the health facility of the prison are sought for by turning to the local guards. Indeed, Boochani decides to let his tooth be taken out by the Papu guards rather than making use of the IHMS facility. He writes: 'a few traditional surgeries in the style of the Papus kill off all the nerves in my tooth. I know it. This I know all too well – if I had confronted the IHMS system my soul would have been engulfed in thousands of IHMS letters, reports and forms … and then annihilated'.[160] Refugees like Boochani are caught between a rock and a hard place, and choose the hard place instead.

This type of resistance is based on the presumption that the system is not to be trusted. The prison, as it were, is the enemy, and one should avoid engaging with them. Considered in this way, the avoidance of facilities such as the IHMS, similar to the use of violence, can be considered part of the counter-securitization of the prison system. Indeed, it renders us reconsidering who is the threat and who is being threatened. Interestingly, this counter-securitization is only focused on the Australian part of the Manus Prison System and seems to exclude the local guards working under the supervision of the Australians. Stated differently, it seems that resistance against the colonial system and counter-securitization become intertwined at this point. By counter-securitizing *only* the Australian guards, the refugees are simultaneously resisting the colonial hierarchy that the Australians have imposed.

Refugees do not only avoid facilities, however, but also engage in resistance by avoiding prison-led activities. This avoidance may have several aims, for example the maintenance of dignity. An example of this type of resistance can be found in the following situation. Sometimes, Boochani writes, a friendly officer would come up to the prisoners holding a number of 'beautifully coloured cakes'.[161] Boochani continues that this event is part of 'a special function of the Kyriarchal system in operation'.[162] The officer holds the cakes in a box on his shoulder, clearly visible to the prisoners. The effect of this display is that prisoners quickly start moving toward the officer, all wanting to take their share. In fact, however, the officer does not divide the cake, and those who arrive sooner get the best and the most pieces: 'during these moments the prisoners are transformed into something way beyond sheep – maybe more like a group of predatory wolves, hungry wolves in the middle of winter, transformed into starving wolves pouncing on their prey with no mercy'.[163]

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[160] Ibid, 308.
[161] Ibid, 233.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid, 234.

Behrouz refuses to engage in this hunt on the coloured cakes: 'On no occasion do I ever take even a step in the direction of the mayhem. It's not that I'm an extremely proud person (…) 'What influences my decision is the feeling of weakness that takes hold of me. My body is faint; I am just like a hungry fox.[164] It seems that through choosing not to attempt to get a piece of cake, even while craving it, Boochani is preventing himself from the pain he will feel when he is unable to take any. Indeed, he writes From the very first moment when the officer begins his kind gesture, I know I am an animal that has already lost the game. For this reason I always watch the spectacle from a distance. I simply watch the gorging of all those beautiful, delicious cakes'.[165] Boochani is protecting himself from the systematic violence inflicted by the Kyriarchal system, through which the system encourages the detainees to behave like animals, in this case sheep, as Boochani writes.

This passive form of resistance also seems to have a component of self-harm inherent to it, since Boochani notes that he imagines that feeling like a hungry fox is 'evidence of maintaining a basic sense of what it is to be human'.[166] The act of denying himself a piece of cake, then, seems a matter of asserting control over this seemingly chaotic situation, of maintaining his humanity in spite of the animal-like engagement of the others with the situation, and of maintaining a feeling of self through self-inflicted harm. In light of the latter component of this act of resistance, we could also consider it part of 'rehumanization', the type of resistance I will now turn to.

4.3 Rehumanization

Rehumanization, as noted earlier, is the process of countering dehumanization. This process mainly includes emphasizing the individuality of the detainees while also emphasizing the similarity between the detainees and others. There are several ways in which refugees have attempted rehumanization – successfully or not – in *No Friend of the Mountains,* for example by holding onto the person they were before fleeing their homeland, and by creating a personal space for themselves. Whatever their form, acts of rehumanization always revolve around the subjects of dignity and identity, forming the very basis of the detainee's humanity.

One clear example of holding onto one's identity and personality concerns the case of one refugee referred to as 'the Prime Minister'. The Prime Minister is someone who was a 'trained engineer' and is known in the prison for being 'an honourable person, a true leader, a

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[164] Ibid, 235.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

businessman, a bankrupt merchant – in general, a skilled expert who knows exactly what he is doing'.[167] Boochani continues to show us how the Prime Minister's personality is in direct opposition to the Manus Prison System. Indeed, he writes that the Prime Minister's 'incarceration is a contradiction. In the chaotic and conflicting landscape of the prison, he is a man in search of routine and formal behaviour – in a prison that does not tolerate any sense of collective responsibility or propriety, not even a scent of ethical order'.[168] The Prime Minister, by holding onto his dignity and respected identity resists being dehumanized like the other prisoners. He behaves in such well manner that even other prisoners 'don't lie around as usual or spread out their legs in front of him. [They] are in most cases careful not to say something ill-mannered in such a person's presence'.[169] Not only, then, does the Prime Minister's behaviour contradict the Manus Prison's aim to encourage bad behaviour in prisoners; he also influences others to behave in good manners as well.

The way in which his behaviour is rehumanizing is the fact that he resists the inhumane circumstances which the prison is pushing onto him and the others. In fact, he is showing how a person can remain structured and dignified in spite of the terrible prison circumstances. By maintaining his educated character and manners, he is giving an example for the others, as it were. On the other hand, however, he is also contributing to the dehumanization of the other prisoners. Indeed, by showing the others how well he is coping with the circumstances, he is in fact also emphasizing how bad the others are handling it. This may certainly explain the reaction of the other refugees when the Prime Minister finally breaks: 'The prisoners unconsciously identify with the shattered character of the distinguished Prime Minister – their sense of self re-imagined in another. As a result, the ridiculing and joking coincide with humiliation and shame. (…) [T]hey feel a kind of liberation in the defamation of the renowned expert'.[170]

Another way in which the detainees in the Manus Prison try to rehumanize themselves is by claiming a personal space for themselves, thereby contributing to their individuality again. An example of such resistance is present in an act that may initially seem insignificant. It is in the very act of greeting, namely. In the prison system, which is by far not large enough to provide prisoners with private spaces, it is the case that 'in every corner of the prison, people are always watching. One is always in their crosshairs'. Boochani continues to explain that

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[167] Ibid, 180.
[168] Ibid, 180.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid, 185.

'when gazes meet, replying with the word 'hi' is a quick way to get away from the people who have been forced to be part of one's life'. After a while, however, every 'hi' becomes a source of affliction, since the repetition of this greeting emphasizes the invasion of the detainees' personal spaces. Many detainees choose, as a result, to 'pass each other [and] pretend they don't see anyone'.[171] They thereby create a space for themselves again: as long as they don't greet anyone and look anyone in the eye, they can pretend others are non-existent for that moment.

That is one way to interpret this act of not locking eyes, but one could also interpret it differently, namely as adding to the dehumanization of one another. This is the case because by passing each other without acknowledging the other person, the prisoners in fact are taking part in the dehumanization. They act as if their fellow prisoners do not exist, and if they exist, as if they are not worthy of the treatment humans normally give each other – namely by greeting. The act of looking away when passing each other, then, can both be interpreted as rehumanizing the prisoner engaging in the act, while simultaneously dehumanizing other prisoners. In that sense, the prisoners become part of the execution of the Manus Prison system.

4.4 Extreme compliance

The final category of resistance which I identified concerned the acts that are meant to comply with the Kyriarchal system, in order to survive. One refugee that is exemplary concerning this type of resistance is referred to in the book as 'The Cow', who waits first in line for each meal: 'This individual seems to transcend the queue. Every day, at the same hour, he waits (…) for hours'.[172] Boochani writes indeed that '[t]his is a guy whose suppressed libido is redirected to his guts and, ultimately, between his jaws'.[173] Boochani even wonders: 'Who knows, maybe The Cow has the best methods for enduring the prison as the rest of us try to get by on near starvation. Living within the pointless cycle of three courses: breakfast, lunch and dinner'.[174] 'Isn't it better to be just like The Cow (…), to cooperate with the system? Yes. This might be the simplest and easiest method. This method may reduce the suffering; it may mean there is less to endure. And this is exactly what the system is based on and is designed to accomplish'.[175]

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[171] Ibid, 165.
[172] Ibid, 200.
[173] Ibid, 199.
[174] Ibid, 203.
[175] Ibid, 210.

This final type of resistance is particularly interesting, since it does not seem like a form of resistance in the first place, since it includes the compliance of refugees. Yet, by complying to an extreme extent with the rules of the prison, the refugees are resisting the underlying reasons why the prison was structured like this, namely, to encourage the refugees to return to where they came from. By complying in extreme ways, the refugees are resisting the goal of the inhumane circumstances, namely, to make life unbearable in the prison. They are giving a message to the prison system in which they make clear that they can and will not be broken nor will they be forced back to their home country.

4.5 Conclusion

The main question under study in this chapter was the question: What types of passive resistances by refugees can we identify in *No Friend but the Mountains*? I identified three different types of resistances employed by the refugees in Manus Prison, namely the avoidance of prison facilities and activities, rehumanization and the exercise of extreme compliance. All these forms of resistance were used to contest the system of detention and thereby also the securitization of migration.

5.   Conclusion

In this final chapter, I will draw conclusions based on previous chapters, and answer the research question. To start off, I will touch upon the theoretical basis on which this study was built, and I will then move on to answer the research question: *Through what different manners have refugees resisted zones of detention?* I will then go on to describe the extent to which this study is generalizable and conclude the chapter by providing suggestions for further research on the subject of refugee resistances.

5.1 Summary of findings

Although zones of detention have been subject to much research, the way in which refugees have resisted these zones have been left understudied. Indeed, although there are some studies that theorize about resistances, the different types of resistances employed by refugees were not systematically assessed until this thesis. The aim of this thesis is to fill this gap in the literature, by identifying different categories of refugee resistances. To fulfill this aim, I focused on the descriptions of Behrouz Boochani given in his book *No Friend but the Mountains* in the case of one specific zone of detention, namely the Manus Prison.

This study was mainly based on the work of Kreichauf to provide insights into the ways in which zones of detention are social spaces in which resistance is possible. Furthermore, this thesis builds on the work of Buzan et al., Balzacq and Baysal to provide a perspective from the framework of Securitization Theory, in which it is argued that securitization never occurs without resistance and that there are different ways in which securitized subjects can choose to counter the securitization process. Finally, I have used the work of Gallien to obtain a lens through which I can understand the colonial aspects of the system. Based on this framework of literature, I have been able to both identify different types of resistances as well as to put those into the context of security and coloniality.

Based on this research, I draw the following conclusions. To start off, two main types of resistances were identified, namely active resistances and passive resistances. Concerning the active resistances, six variants of resistances were found, namely the use of violence; the use of self-harm; disobedience or circumvention of the rules, the creation of a micro-economy, rehumanization and creative resistance. Each of these types of acts countered the rules or rationale of prison system in their own manner. To start off, the use of violence implicitly means the counter-securitization of the prison system. Indeed, by employing

violence the refugees are in fact saying: the prison system is an existential threat to us, and we need to do whatever is in our power to protect ourselves.

The second type of active resistance is related to violence, but this time used against oneself in the form of self-harm. In this thesis I showed that self-harm, too, can be considered a form of resistance against the detention system, namely by making visible the harm done unto the refugees by the system. The third type of resistance I identified was disobedience, for example to rules concerning cigarettes. The fourth type of resistance includes the creation of a micro-economy, in which prisoners trade goods and services with each and with the local guards. The fifth category concerns rehumanization, attempts to counter the deindividuating and dehumanizing effects of the Manus Prison System. The sixth and final type of resistance includes creative resistance, for example in the form of performing dances to contest rules the prison.

The second main category of resistance concerns passive resistances. Within this category, I identified three forms of resistance, namely avoiding prison facilities and activities, rehumanization and extreme compliance with the prison rules. The first form of resistance consists of the avoidance by prisoners of for example the health facility but also for example not taking part in activities which dehumanize the prisoners. The second form of resistance includes acts to avoid the dehumanization, for example by holding onto personality traits were characteristic of the prisoner before they fled their homeland. The third and final type of resistance is potentially the most surprising, and occurs through the extreme compliance with the prison rules.

Summarizing the findings of this study, refugees have employed different strategies to resist the zones of detention and thereby resist their securitization. In this research I have looked at the different ways in which refugees use the zone of detention as a social space in which they can assert their agency. Through both active and passive forms of resistances, refugees have been able to contest the system they were forced into.

5.2 Implications of this study

This study, by investigating the different types of refugee resistances, has added to the literature on refugee resistances since no such systematic study has been performed yet in relation to this subject. In this thesis, I have integrated several theoretical frameworks, more specifically related to ST and postcolonialism, in order to make sense of the different forms of refugee resistances. The findings of this study impact several fields. To start off, the findings obtained in this study add to the field of studies related to migrant detention by

examining the lived experiences of refugees. Indeed, in this study I identified a variety of everyday ways in which the refugees engage with the system of detention.

5.3 Generalizability

The outcome of this study is, I argue, generalizable to other cases of migrant detention in the Western world. Indeed, many countries have set up migrant detention centers similar to the ones employed by Australia, and for that reason, we can expect the same types of resistances to occur. What sets Australia out as a potentially extreme example of migrant detention is the fact that the processing center is placed outside of Australian territory, thereby creating a physical distance between the zone of detention at which the refugees are kept and country of Australia. This renders the violence done unto the refugees relatively 'invisible' to the Australian population, potentially encouraging the refugees to perform resistances in more extreme ways than they would do usually. Although the resistances found in this thesis, then, can be considered generalizable, we should take into account the extreme circumstances in which the refugees kept at the Manus Prison find themselves.

5.4 Limitations of this study

This study, like any academic study, has its limitations. To start off, one potential limitation concerns the fact that the source used in this thesis was written by a refugee himself. This carries the possibility of bias in the data. Indeed, some of the forms of resistance may have been exaggerated. Although I consider this bias a serious one, I want to argue that the types of resistances I have identified still hold in spite for correcting for cases of exaggeration.

5.5 Final conclusion

Refugees, as I have shown, are not passive victims of the inhumane circumstances of zones of detention. Instead, they assert their agency in so many ways. Indeed, even if 'to make someone wait [is] the constant prerogative of all power',[176] to take the words of Roland Barthes, refugees can still *choose* how to take the waiting: and in this case, they decide to take it *badly*.

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[176] Dina Nayeri, *The Ungrateful Refugee.* (Canongate, 2020).

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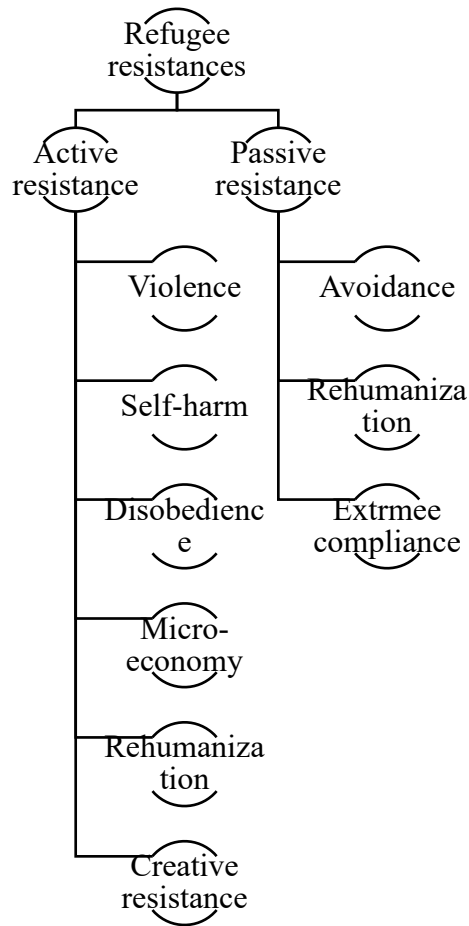
Appendix A: Coding Scheme

Figure 1. The hierarchical levels of the coding frame for the category 'Refugee resistances'.