

Hope and Sorrow of Displacement

Diasporic Art and Finding Home in Exile

Mediya Rangi

Abstract: Rushdi Anwar is a Kurdish artist in exile who references his personal experiences of genocide, situated within the modern history of his homeland, Kurdistan, to reflect on the region's sociopolitical issues. His conceptual art demonstrates that exilic consciousness may be articulated and continuously developed through diasporic artistic expressions. Rushdi's artwork installation 'Irhal [Expel] – Hope and Sorrow of Displacement' (2014–2015) aims to draw attention to the commonalities of human experience by narrating the journey from sorrow to hope. It invites audiences to understand displacement from a common perspective, the search for a safe home. Through a Deleuzian lens, this article explores Rushdi's nomadic journey by looking at his diasporic artwork that connects the Australian context with the global crisis of conflict and displacement.

Keywords: art, Deleuze, diaspora, displacement, exilic consciousness, home, homelessness, Kurds

In Australia, as a free human being I love my exile – it
is my home and my home is my exile.
(Rushdi Anwar 2013: 120)

Introduction

Rushdi Anwar is a Melbourne-based artist from Kurdistan whose artistic expressions reflect on sociopolitical and cultural matters in and of the Middle East. His mixed-media artworks, including paintings, sculptures, installations, photo-painting and video, explore these issues through an investigation of forms, materials and processes. Rushdi's works address and negotiate the complexities of war, conflict, displacement and the politics of othering. By drawing



on personal experiences and memories, as well as the history of his homeland, he signifies ideas of transformation, contemplates the past and present, and invites us to explore what we share as part of our human condition. It is the commonalities in human experience that Rushdi seeks to highlight through the narration of the journey from sorrow to hope. Rushdi's artwork and his nomadic journey, fleeing genocide, is explored here through a Deleuzian lens, utilising concepts such as the smooth space and lines of flight in order to demonstrate an alternative form of diasporic identity. Rushdi's diasporic activism does not seek to influence homeland politics or to maintain identity boundaries in his new hostland. Instead, Rushdi's lines of flight direct us towards an understanding of commonalities in our existence such as homelessness, a condition not limited to zones of conflict in 'the Middle East', but a worldwide sorrow that scars the social landscape of Australia. Instead of drawing lines separating himself as a Kurd from his hostland compatriots, Rushdi's work invites his audience to reach a broader understanding of human suffering.

Methodology

This article is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Australia in 2015 as part of my doctoral research at the University of Melbourne, for a dissertation exploring the ethnic repression of Kurdish people through a narrative ethnography. A total of 40 unstructured narrative interviews were conducted with first- and second-generation Kurds from Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria residing in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. My fieldwork also includes observation and community involvement in a range of Kurdish cultural and political activities. Through an online inquiry I discovered Rushdi Anwar's artwork on display at the Australian War Memorial in the nation's capital, Canberra, providing an alternative narrative of war and violence and reflecting the 'Past in the present' (Australian War Memorial 2012). Intrigued by the use of this medium to raise awareness of the Kurdish experience on a national scale, I was compelled to contact the artist to find out more about why and how his Kurdish identity, personal experiences and collective history are expressed through his artwork.

The following discussion is only one component of the larger research project. This article draws on material collected from my conversations with Rushdi Anwar, as well as visits to his exhibitions and in-depth analyses of his artworks. Rushdi's styles of expression and the messages embedded in his work have changed over the years, reflecting different points in his journey. He is conscious of the shifts in his perception and the changing methods through which he narrates transformation. In his earlier expressionist work Rushdi articulates the deep emotional effect of violence on the 'innocence' of life and the living pain his 'motherland' has endured (Figure 1). Rushdi's work then progresses into conceptual art, particularly from 2009 onwards. His

investigation of form, material vocabularies and transformations is informed by his past experiences, referencing the ongoing sociopolitical unrest in his homeland. Rushdi's art carries the broader messages of becomings, hope, encouragement, compassion and redemption. He calls for a collective understanding of the commonalities of the human condition.

Diasporic/Nomadic Identity

Whatever takes place inside the homeland – imagined and real, past and present, directly and indirectly – impacts the diasporic experience. The exilic consciousness developed by past generations of displaced peoples and refugees lives on in continuous flows of movement and continues to grow and advance into the future. Much of contemporary literature on diasporic populations is concerned with the 'politicized ethnic consciousness' (Baser 2013: 107) of the members who maintain strong ties to their countries of origin and consciously sustain a sense of belonging to the homeland. Diasporas are also characterised in relation to boundary maintenance (Brubaker 2005), the quest to form and maintain identities and gain respect and recognition in host societies. Kurdishness in particular, as 'a politicized collective identity' (Baser 2013: 107), is (re)constructed, preserved, reproduced and exercised in order to fulfil a dual role. Members of Kurdish diasporas are viewed as nation



Figure 1: Motherland, 1997 © Rushdi Anwar (courtesy of the artist)

builders, influencing the politics of the homeland, and as Othered subjects who constantly struggle for identity and place in the host country (Bengio and Maddy-Weitzmann 2013: 68).

Nevertheless, within diasporas there are multiplicities of political, cultural and artistic rhizomatic formations that operate through several lines of flight. Far from fixed, these transnational communities are projects and ideas in constant motion and renewal. Diasporans may exercise and express their transversal subjectivities in the smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari 2004) of art, where possible translations are varied and multiple. Limitless directions may be taken; hence the fluidity and flexibility of meanings that allow us to escape confinements and borders. This smooth space allows for growth, movement and becomings. Thinking of art in terms of a transformative experience, there is potential for new connections where 'new percepts and affects' are generated (Parr 2005: 147).

In relation to transversal identity, if we understand the meaning of 'to transverse' as encompassing 'to progress', a diasporic artist's expressions become points in his or her journey of becoming. Here it is the journey that matters; continuously moving forward and becoming, without an endpoint, *is* the nomad's purpose. The nomad is one who defies the state by deterritorialising the territories (Deleuze and Guattari 2004), escaping 'with trembling steps through minefields towards the impossible, unknown tomorrow' (Anwar 2013: 120). The nomad moves out of necessity, though he is not limited to physical movement: 'the nomad moves, but while seated' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 420). The diasporic/nomadic artist continues the movement, the becoming, the renewal, the process of changing form – from repressed, denied and murdered to free, celebrated and at peace. The artist's empowering lines of flight deterritorialise space in order for him to feel at *home* in *exile*. This possibility is due to what Deleuze and Guattari present as nomadic absolute movement, entailing mobility within immobility. 'Absolute movement', according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the intensive, vortical, swirling movement (2004: 412) that allows for 'exilic mobility', which acts 'both as a challenge and an opportunity' (Soguk 2008: 180) for the diasporic artist. The artist is in a constant 'mode of struggle' (2008: 190) in his new society. Yet he finds *home* in his exile, as it provides him the opportunities he is denied in his *homeland*: the freedom to be and to become, and freedom of expression.

Rushdi Anwar may not fit perfectly within the dominant conception of a diasporic individual, because of his relatively minimal interaction with the wider Kurdish community in Australia and his professed disinterest in politics in general. Arriving in Australia, withered and pained by constant conflict and turmoil, social and political 'uncertainty and instability' (Anwar 2013: 120), Rushdi was determined 'to leave the chaos behind', start anew and work towards achieving his goals, long obstructed by political flux (Anwar 2016, field notes). However, upon settling in Australia, he found the Kurdish diasporic community to reflect the internal divisions back home. As a result,

he decided 'to keep away from the community', a decision he is proud of (2016 field notes). Disappointing as the community divisions were for him, the distance allowed Rushdi to build foundations in the new society on his own and to find new ways to express who he is and fulfil his responsibility as a Kurd and, indeed, as a human being. His painful yet fruitful journey and the plateau on which he continues his artistic flight are all too relevant to the human condition today, with an estimated 59.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world (UNHCR 2015: 2).

As a Kurd, Rushdi has seen his identity denied at worst, and abjected at best. In his own words: 'I've been seeking freedom all my life; suffering the reality of non-fulfilment and the denial of my existence for many years' (Anwar 2013: 120). Known as the largest stateless nation on earth, Kurds have been subject to systematic repression for over a century. Following the First World War, the Allies began experimenting with new ways of indirect colonisation and exploitation of the *Other*. Subsequently, the Ottoman Empire was violently transformed into the emerging nation states of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Armenia (Abrahamian 2008). As a consequence, Kurdistan was divided under the rule of new centralised states, including Iran, which have denied and suppressed Kurdish identity and continue to repress ethno-political and cultural expressions by violent and arguably genocidal means (Vali 1995, 1998, 2011). Turkish, Arab and Persian nationalist ideologies are used to legitimise suppression of ethnic diversity, seen as a threat to homogenous national identity and security (Entessar 2010).

Most recently, history recalls the Kurds' mass exodus in 1990, fleeing genocide in Iraq, and yet again since the rise of the terrorist organisation known as IS (in Iraq and Syria) in 2014. With a population of approximately 35 million worldwide (Hassanpour 1998: 55; Skutnabb-Kangas and Fernandes 2008: 43), Kurdish diasporic communities traverse borders, in continuous movement, creating deterritorialising networks (Galip 2015; Soguk 2008). In Europe alone, there are approximately 1.3 million Kurds, who have escaped repression in their homelands (Council of Europe 2006). According to the only state-sponsored source available on the Kurdish population of Australia, the estimated figure in 1995 was 9,000–11,000 (Batrouney 1995: 36). The numbers have only increased since these estimates, due to ongoing conflict in the region. However, no precise data is available, since Kurdish is not recognised as an ethnic nationality and Kurds' citizenship is generally recorded as Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian or Syrian.

Arriving in exile, Rushdi recalls negotiating feelings of anxiety and helplessness in the new 'unknown' world, along with hopes for a fresh start. Adjusting to exile included mediating between feelings of happiness and relief at having successfully reached safety in Australia and a simultaneous feeling of guilt for escaping and leaving behind his family, friends and fellow Kurds in chaos. Despite frustration caused by the language barrier, coupled with loneliness and isolation, feelings of 'being reborn again' encouraged him to

embrace the exilic experience. Speaking of the process of becoming-exile, Rushdi references Mahmoud Darwish's 1999 poem, 'Who am I, without Exile?' (2007). Elaborating on this collective condition, Darwish claims 'Exile is not a geographical state. I carry it everywhere, as I carry my homeland' (see Jaggi 2002). After 26 years in exile, Darwish's home had become language, a 'country of words' (Jaggi 2002). Similarly, Rushdi's exile is more a state of mind than a physicality. In Australia, Rushdi finds 'peace' while creating art: 'as a free human being I love my exile – it is my home and my home is my exile' (Anwar 2013: 120). Rushdi's nomadic journey is discussed below, followed by an analysis of his art installation *Irhal*. This analysis will demonstrate how a diasporic artistic line of flight can extend our understandings of common human conditions.

Rushdi's Nomadic Flight

Rushdi's nomadic journey began from Halabja, Kurdistan, where he barely escaped Saddam Hussein's chemical attack that killed at least 5,000 civilians in one afternoon (McDowall 2004: 358). Immediately after the chemical attack, on 16 March 1988:

Dead bodies – human and animal – littered the streets, huddled in doorways, slumped over the steering wheels of their cars. Survivors stumbled around, laughing hysterically before collapsing ... Many children died along the way and were abandoned where they fell. (Human Rights Watch 1993: 106)

Only 17 at the time, Rushdi had left the village six months earlier with his mother, because of the ongoing attacks of the Baathist regime on Halabja and the surrounding villages. As a collective punishment for the Kurdish uprisings against repression, approximately 4,000 Kurdish villages were destroyed (McDowall 2004: 360). Rushdi's grandfather's house and factory were among the hundreds of thousands of homes run over by military tanks, 'taking revenge against Kurds' resistance' (Anwar 2016, field notes). Fourteen members of his family perished in one day. The USA- and German-supplied mustard and sarin chemical gases (Timmerman 1991) used by Saddam Hussein left at least 10,000 injured (ibid.: 23) and continue to cause long-term health complications, almost 30 years on. The attack on Halabja was only one episode out of an extensive genocidal project named 'al-Anfal campaign', initiated by Saddam Hussein in 1986, targeting non-majority ethnic communities, mainly the Kurds, as well as Assyrians, Shabaks, Turkmens and Mandeans (Human Rights Watch 1993). It is estimated that a minimum of 182,000 people were killed, many buried alive in mass graves that continue to be found years later, while the fate of many others is still unknown (1993: xii).

The genocidal campaign displaced one third of the Kurdish population of Iraq, which was approximately 3.5 million at the time. Rushdi's family was no

exception. After three months of wandering on the border of Iran and Iraq in 1991, he recalls going back to Halabja for the first time after the attacks and witnessing a deserted ruin of a town. After finding Halabja uninhabitable, Rushdi and his family settled in Slemani, the cultural capital of Kurdistan, where he remained from 1991 to 1997. After working with various NGOs in Kurdistan, Rushdi decided to take his next line of flight towards his dream of studying art. As a non-member of the Baathist party and as a Kurd in Iraq, he was prohibited from studying at the art college, the police and military academy, journalism school and sports institutes (Anwar 2016, field notes). Accordingly, he took a chance and left Kurdistan for Turkey in 1997, remaining there for eighteen months before being recognised as a refugee by the UNHCR office. Months later, his 'unknown tomorrow' began in Sydney. It took Rushdi a few years in Australia to find his ground. On reflection, he suggests that 'romanticizing and glorifying the past caused pessimism about the present' (Anwar 2016, field notes). He had to break the destructive cycle and maintain optimism by embracing his freedom in exile. Appreciating the process of becoming free, Rushdi welcomes failures along the way and works towards future success. The art installation discussed below (Figure 2) has been a major success for Rushdi, receiving international acclaim and on display in 2016 at Canada's Artist Project Contemporary Art Fair (Artist Project 2016).

***Irhal* – Hope and Sorrow of Displacement, 2014–2015**

Confronted by a tall mass of burnt chairs on a blackened floor, my immediate thoughts at this scene are of dislocation, loss and pain. Such an iconic domestic object – chairs – are discarded, destroyed and transformed to explore fragility, uncertainty and the limitations of our existence. The object in its original form would signify comfort, stability, a locus and a centre. However, distorted and deformed, it can only send a chill down our spines as we feel the force of the violation that has damaged such a steady and homely item. As a precise example of conceptual art, this installation was displayed at the 2015 Melbourne Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, demonstrating different associations in both context and content. Knowing already what a chair may symbolise, we are presented with an investigation of forms, materials and processes that deals with the complexities of war, displacement and othering.

Upon closer inspection, one can distinguish between the types of chairs used. There is a dining chair, a desk chair and parts of a bench. Whatever purpose they may have had in the past, they are now useless, piled on top of one another, upside down, off balance, in no particular order, with no particular shape – at least at first glance. The variety of chairs makes me even more uneasy as I make the connection not only with the home but with the family institution as a whole through the dining chair, with the education system through the desk chair and, of course, with social life through what could have

been a park bench. The pile of disfigured burnt chairs narrates the destruction of a society's entire social infrastructure.

This installation highlights Rushdi's subjective expression of his people's narrative. The historical context that influences *Irhal* is the Anfal operation in Iraq, as a result of which 219,828 families were deported from Kurdish villages by mid-1988. An estimated 1.5 million people were forcibly removed from 4,000 destroyed villages (McDowall 2004: 366). The family unit was torn apart



Figure 2: *Irhal* [Expel] – Hope and Sorrow of Displacement, burnt chairs and black pigment © Rushdi Anwar (courtesy of the artist)

by the physical destruction of the 'home', followed by displacement. Similarly, schools were shelled, bombed, burnt and flattened by tanks. The destruction of educational infrastructure systematically produces future generations of illiterate masses and under-developed communities. In fact, during its climax, the Anfal operation had destroyed 1,757 schools, 2,457 mosques and 271 hospitals (2004: 366). Although the inspiration behind the *Irhal* installation is the historical events of the Kurdish genocide, the conceptual significance is applicable to a wide range of contexts. This is what allows Rushdi's work to appeal to a wide audience. One does not necessarily have to be Kurdish to appreciate this diasporic artistic expression. By engaging the viewer with the concept of 'the home', one of the most common elements of human social existence, people from all backgrounds are invited to extend their understanding of displacement.

While displacement certainly carries the burden of sorrow, it also marks the beginning of hope as one pursues renewal. Rushdi is concerned with the transformation of objects, 'when objects become damaged or decayed, beauty arises' (Anwar 2013: 122). This process applies well to our condition of becoming, as human beings, that is the continuous transformation and renovation, from pain, loss and despair, moving towards hope and freedom. Admittedly, the element of 'hope' is not quite as forthcoming as the sense of loss and sorrow when I first experience this artwork. I have to look past the darkness to find how, from a well of despair, I am led to the surface and beyond. Though the chairs are piled up on top of each other in what seems to be a tall arbitrary deformation, once I step back and view the entirety of the installation from



Figure 3: *Irhal* – Hope and Sorrow of Displacement © Rushdi Anwar (courtesy of the artist)

a corner, the ascending movement becomes apparent. There is movement emerging from destruction and suffering, climbing from the ground on an angle, a wave rising above and pointing to the sky (Figure 3). This wave-like motion suggests the process of repair, renewal and ultimately resilience that follows devastation and loss. Of course, the forward movement of a wave rises and falls, rises and falls, until the waves reach the shoreline. Once your home is destroyed, whether because of war and conflict or poverty, you must look for alternatives. The search for a better home, a more secure and stable base for your family's safety and future, begins in the moment of displacement.

Rébwat Saeed

By way of comparison, a brief examination of the works of another Kurdish artist is useful in providing a different approach to the representation of exile in art. Rébwat Saeed, born in 1962 in Slemani, moved in the mid-1990s to London, U.K., where he completed a Masters and a PhD in Fine Arts (Abdullah 2015). Like Rushdi, Saeed creates work that is influenced by strong political conviction, in response to the context he is from. Having witnessed and suffered from the chemical bombings of the late 1980s, he finds himself bearing a responsibility towards the victims to represent them, the life they had and the hope that remains. Saeed's principles are similar to Rushdi's in relation to their shared sense of responsibility towards their people as Kurds and as human beings (Pitts 1997; Saeed n.d. [a]). Additionally, both artists work in negotiation with experiences of tragedy, loss and hope, by tracing Kurdish narratives.

Rébwat Saeed's work '5000 Portraits, 5000 Victims' (1997) symbolically illustrates the victims of Halabja through a 'repetitive graphic process' (Pitts 1997) by drawing every individual's face with vivid linear outlines and bright colours, on narrow, identical ceramic blocks. The use of bright colours to paint the victims' faces is an element that characterises Saeed's work as specifically Kurdish art. Vibrant colours symbolise celebration of life, making communities strong by keeping individuals 'alive' (Pitts 1997). Saeed's other artworks also incorporate various elements of Kurdish culture such as wildlife, for instance birds and fish, as well as patterns and colours drawn from Kurdish rugs (Fatah 1999). This is in contrast to Rushdi's artwork to date, which does not claim to be particularly 'Kurdish' as far as immediately identifiable cultural elements are concerned.

Saeed's motivation can be linked to his clear dedication to the Kurdish struggle for freedom. In a series of ceramic figures inspired by the ancient art of Mesopotamia (Saeed n.d. [b]), the 'mute expressions [...] articulate with absolute precision the thought that eludes words' (Mooney n.d.). The figures are of draped bodies, 'bent and exaggerated', outlined with 'deeply incised lines [that] convey the tenor of loss' (Mooney n.d.). The linear definitions in Saeed's work have symbolic value as they signify the search for defining boundaries

and frontiers and the urge for the establishment of a sovereign Kurdish nation state (Mooney n.d.). This is also in contrast to Rushdi's approach to his exilic art. As discussed above, Rushdi's work is not geared towards homeland politics or the cause of an independent state of Kurdistan. Rather, he aims to invite the audience to begin to understand the commonality of the human condition of loss, suffering and hope, while also raising awareness of the Kurdish cause through narratives.

Beyond Zones of Conflict

To demonstrate the relevance of Rushdi's work, a quick glance at the scope of global displacement today is useful. In 2015, there were over one million (1,015,078) refugee arrivals in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea, compared with the previous year's 216,054 arrivals and 59,421 arrivals in 2013 (UNHCR). According to a statement released by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on 18 December 2015, International Migrants Day, in 2015 alone 'more than 5000 women, men and children lost their lives in the search of protection and a better life. Tens of thousands more have been exploited and abused by human traffickers' (UN 2015). Further, as of 9 February 2016, there have been at least 80,754 arrivals in Europe by sea and 403 dead or missing, 41 per cent of whom are from Syria (UNHCR 2016). The so-called European refugee crisis is, of course, not limited to countries in Europe. Here in Australia, our physical distance has not 'deterred' displaced people from reaching our shores, to the disappointment of government officials. According to statistics, one in every 122 people in the world is now displaced from his or her home (UNHCR 2015). Yet Australian policies insist on taking 'tough action to try to deter desperate people from seeking our help' (Refugee Council of Australia 2015).

By the end of November 2015, there were 1,852 people in Australian immigration detention facilities and a total of 1,469 people in offshore detention centres, on Nauru and in Manus Province, Papua New Guinea (Asylum Insight 2016). In addition, as the latest High Court decision on 3 February 2016 found Australia's offshore detention regime lawful according to the domestic legal framework (Hasham 2016), 70 children remained in detention on Nauru. There have been numerous reports submitted to the Australian government indicating the inhumane conditions of the detention centres and demonstrating the devastating impact that prolonged immigration detention has on these individuals' mental and physical health, particularly children. For instance, the *Forgotten Children Report 2014* found 233 assaults in detention involving children, 33 incidents of reported sexual assault with the majority involving children, and 128 children who harmed themselves in a period of 15 months (Australian Human Rights Commission 2015: 62). Tony Abbott, then Prime Minister, responded by calling the report a 'blatantly partisan politicised

exercise' and warned the Commission to be 'ashamed of itself' (Griffiths and Woodley 2015). Despite receiving international and domestic criticism, the Australian government continues with its anti-asylum-seekers rhetoric, while spending over one billion dollars annually to hold asylum seekers in offshore detention centres (ABC 2015). Following the artist's cue, Rushdi's diasporic expression of displacement is extendable beyond zones of conflict, by focusing on the 'home' within the domestic Australian context.

While popular rhetoric provides ample temptation to approach the global displacement crisis as one devoid of national and personal responsibility, a quick fact-check on the issue of internal displacement and homelessness inside Australia can help put matters in perspective. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), there are currently 256,000 people in Australia who 'face a daily battle for survival', having to seek assistance from homelessness services: 'they are young and old, mothers and children, families and single people' (AIHW 2015). Further, official figures indicate 105,237 people were homeless on the 2011 Census night (ABS 2012). That is, on any given day, one in every 200 people is homeless in Australia, an 8 per cent increase from the previous census (2006). Furthermore, 60 per cent of homeless people were under the age of 35, 27 per cent under 18 and approximately 17,845 were children under 12 (ABS 2012). The dominant causes of homelessness in Australia include economic deprivation, poverty and domestic violence, which are indeed correlated.

Though aesthetically dry, these hard facts shed light on the prevailing condition of homelessness in Australia. Those impacted are 'lawful citizens' who, due in part to unequal distribution of medical, educational and economic resources, are left marginalised and socially excluded. This desperation extends to the lives of those trying to reach our shores, appealing for asylum and refuge, in search of a safe home. Whether caused by war and conflict in a zone of chaos or from economic deprivation and insufficient access to adequate support systems, the essence of the condition is the same; homelessness is not a choice.

Reflections

Rushdi's installation *Irhal* does not explicitly address homelessness in Australia. However, that is where the lines of flight ascending from this artwork lead us. In my recent interview with him, Rushdi explains his aim to highlight displacement by drawing attention to the common experience of losing a home, which is not necessarily a direct result of war and conflict. Art as 'an "affective system" of change' (Parr 2005: 147) may help the audience not only understand what they are experiencing through that particular representation, but also to challenge what they already 'know', arrive at shared commonalities and move forward from there. Diasporic art carries transversal consciousness forward

and potentially allows us to think differently by ‘generating new percepts and affects’ (Parr 2005: 147). This is the political power of art; whether or not the artist is explicitly involved or interested in politics, our social fields are transformed in negotiation with the politicised energy, confrontation and force inherent in works of art (2005). Rushdi’s diasporic art with its ever developing exilic consciousness functions as ‘a line of flight, traversing individual and collective subjectivities and pushing centralised organisations to the limit’ (Parr 2005: 148). Although Rushdi does not formally act on behalf of homeland politics in his hostland, he draws attention to a common human condition by referencing a Kurdish narrative. ‘*Irhal* – Hope and Sorrow of Displacement’ invites a better understanding of the circumstances that lead to displacement and, subsequently, encourages a more humane attitude towards those in search of a safe home.

Mediya Rangi is a migrant from Iran, who lived in New Zealand for ten years before moving to Australia to continue her higher education. She is currently completing a PhD at the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Mediya holds an MA in Sociology from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her primary research interests are sociocultural and political resistance against repressive regimes, with particular focus on Iranians and Kurdish people.

References

- ABC (2015), ‘Fact Check: Does Australia Spend More on Offshore Processing than the UN Spends on Refugee Programs in South East Asia?’, 21 July, www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-14/cost-of-offshore-processing-united-nations-fact-check/6609764 (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Abdullah, D. (2015), ‘Kurdish Painter Rebwar Saeed on his Colorful Career’, 10 January, <http://english.aawsat.com/2015/01/article55340273/kurdish-painter-rebwar-saeed-on-his-colorful-career> (accessed 16 March 2016).
- Abrahamian, E. (2008), *A History of Modern Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press).
- ABS (2012), ‘Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, Category 2049.0, Summary of Findings’, <http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2049.0Main%20Features22011> (accessed 12 February 2016).
- AIHW (2015), ‘Specialist Homelessness Services 2014–15’, www.aihw.gov.au/homelessness/specialist-homelessness-services-2014-15/#toc (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Anwar, R. (2013), ‘Rushdi Anwar’, *Artist Profile*, no. 25: 120–122.
- Artist Project (2016), ‘Rushdi Anwar’, www.theartistproject.com/gp_artists/rushdi-anwar (accessed 12 February 2016).

- Asylum Insight (2016), *Facts and Analysis Statistics*, www.asyluminsight.com/statistics/#.Vr125_196Uk (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Australian Human Rights Commission (2015), *The Forgotten Children: National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014*, www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/forgotten_children_2014.pdf (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Australian War Memorial (2012), *Past in the Present*, www.awm.gov.au/collection/ART96035/ (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Baser, B. (2013), 'Diaspora and Imported Conflicts: Turkish and Kurdish Second-generation Diasporas in Sweden', *Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security* 3, no. 2: 104–125.
- Batrouney, T. (1995), *Kurdish Immigration and Settlement in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services).
- Bengio, O. and Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2013), 'Mobilised Diasporas: Kurdish and Berber Movements in Comparative Perspectives', *Kurdish Studies* 1, no. 1: 65–90.
- Brubaker, R. (2005), 'The "Diaspora" Diaspora', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1: 1–19.
- Council of Europe (2006), 'The Cultural Situation of Kurds', <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/xref/x2h-xref-viewhtml.asp?fileid=11316&lang=en> (accessed 8 February 2016).
- Darwish, M. [1999] (2007), 'Who Am I, Without Exile?', in *The Butterfly's Burden*, (trans.) F. Joudah (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon), 89–92.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (trans.) B. Massumi (London: Continuum).
- Entessar, N. (2010), *Kurdish Politics in the Middle East* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield).
- Fatah, R. (1999), 'Kurdish Art – Internationalisation of the Kurdish Issue', www.rebwars.com/kurdish-art---internationalisation-of-the-kurdish-issue (accessed 16 March 2016).
- Galip, Ö. (2015), *Imagining Kurdistan: Identity, Culture and Society* (London: I.B. Tauris).
- Griffiths, E. and Woodley, N. (2015), 'Tony Abbott Labels Human Rights Commission Report into Children in Detention "Blatantly Partisan Politicised Exercise"', *ABC*, 14 February, www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-12/human-rights-immigration-report-blatantly-partisan-abbott/6087148 (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Hasham, N. (2016), 'High Court Finds Offshore Detention Lawful', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 February, www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/high-court-finds-offshore-detention-lawful-20160202-gmk5q6.html (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Hassanpour, A. (1998), 'Satellite Footprints as National Borders: MED-TV and the Extraterritoriality of State Sovereignty', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1: 53–72.
- Human Rights Watch (1993), *Genocide in Iraq: The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds* (NY: Human Rights Watch).
- Jaggi, M. (2002), 'Poet of the Arab World', 8 June, www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jun/08/featuresreviews.guardianreview19 (accessed 18 February 2016).
- McDowall, D. (2004), *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris).

- Mooney, J. (n.d.), 'Transformative Dialogues – The Work of Rebwar Saeed', www.rebwars.com/transformative-dialogues-the-work-of-rebwar-saeed (accessed 16 March 2016).
- Parr, A. (2005), 'Lines of Flight + Art + Politics', in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, (ed.) A. Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 147–149.
- Pitts, M. (1997), '5000 Portraits 5000 Victims', www.rebwars.com/5000-portraits-5000-victims-1 (accessed 16 February 2016).
- Refugee Council of Australia (2015), 'Australia's Harmful Policies Exacerbating Refugee Challenges as Global Displacement Reaches Record Levels', www.refugeecouncil.org.au/media/australias-harmful-policies-exacerbating-refugee-challenges-as-global-displacement-reaches-record-levels (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Saeed, R. (n.d. [a]), 'About Me', www.rebwars.com/about-me (accessed 16 March 2016).
- Saeed, R. (n.d. [b]), 'Ceramics', www.rebwars.com/galleries/ceramic (accessed 16 March 2016).
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Fernandes, D. (2008), 'Kurds in Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan – A Comparison of Kurdish Educational Policy in Two Situations of Occupation', *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 3, no. 1: 43–73.
- Soguk, N. (2008), 'Transversal Communication, Diaspora, and the Euro-Kurds', *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 1: 173–192.
- Timmerman, K. R. (Prepared by) (1991), 'The Poison Gas Connection: Western Suppliers of Unconventional Weapons and Technologies to Iraq and Libya' (Special Report commissioned by the Simon Wiesenthal Center from Middle East Defense News (Mednews), in *Germany and Genocide in Iraq: Persecution and Extermination of Kurds and Assyrian Christians, 1968-1990, Report No. 4*, (ed.) T. Zülch and I. Geismar (Göttingen: Society For Threatened Peoples), 21-24, www.kurdipedia.org/books/78824.PDF (accessed 20 February 2016).
- United Nations (UN) (2015), 'On International Migrants Day Secretary General Calls for Commitment to Human-rights-based Responses Guided by International Law', www.un.org/press/en/2015/sgsm17421.doc.htm (accessed 12 February 2016).
- UNHCR (2015), 'World at War: UNHCR Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2014', http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html#_ga=1.181853095.1298944025.1455072407 (accessed 5 February 2016).
- UNHCR (2016), 'Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean', <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php> (accessed 12 February 2016).
- Vali, A. (1995), 'The Making of Kurdish Identity in Iran', *Critique: Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 7: 1–22.
- Vali, A. (1998), 'The Kurds and Their "Others": Fragmented Identity and Fragmented Politics', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 1, no. 2: 83–94.
- Vali, A. (2011), *Kurds and the State in Iran: The Making of Kurdish Identity* (London: I.B. Tauris).