

Reckoning with the divide in Cyprus: The performativity of borders

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the genealogy of ethnic separation in Cyprus, with emphasis on distribution, relocation and regulation of the physical divide. It is argued that, with the opening of the checkpoints on the Green Line on April 23, 2003, cross-ethnic mobility has been facilitated, but state border controls have also been enacted which reinforce rather than overturn the divide. Pointing out the productive rather than constraining power of borders, the paper discusses how legal regulation of the Green Line at the European level and its securitization at the national level have contributed to its transformation from an ethnic divide to an external border. The Greek Cypriot polis solidifies itself today by containing outsiders in a state of exemption and subjecting insiders to the securitization of the life-world.

Introduction

The wall of a Greek Cypriot military post at the west outskirts of Nicosia still bears the inscription, “*Den einai edó ta sýnora mas. Einai stin Kerynia*” (Our borders are not here. They are in Kerynia.). The military post (*fylákio* [φυλάκιο], from the verb *fyláo* [φυλάω], to guard, to be on guard), is located on a round-about known as the Kolocasides or the Airport Round-About. The first exit used to lead to the Nicosia Airport, which has been closed since 1974. Now blocked by a UN bar which controls traffic to and from a UN Sector, it is bypassed by the new Nicosia peripheral highway. The second exit, a dead end right on the Buffer Zone, is blocked by debris and barbed wire. You can hardly tell that there used to be a road there. The third exit leads to Kyriakos Matsis street, named after a hero of the Anti-colonial Liberation Struggle. The same road is most commonly known as the Coca-Cola street because the main factory of Coca Cola in Cyprus is located on that street. This is the exit you must take if you are driving to

the north. At the Coca-Cola traffic lights, you turn left, drive another kilometer down Demokratias Avenue, and there it is, right in front of you, the way to Kerynia.

From afar, it looks like another road block, as the cars line up to pass through the checkpoint. Even if you want to rush, the road bumps and the narrowness of the lane remind you that you are entering a controlled zone and you must slow down. As you enter, the Greek Cypriot policeman marks down your license plate number. There is no need to hail you to stop; you have already been drawn into the slowness of a border-crossing ritual. You drive slowly about 200 meters down this passage and you stop at the Turkish Cypriot checkpoint. You apply for a Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) entry visa, which is usually issued immediately. You also purchase car insurance from the booth of a Turkish Cypriot insurance firm (unless you have done so already some other time). You are now set to go. Having passed through several controls, though, you are not sure (at least your first time) whether that was it, or whether you must pass through some other checking procedure. A few meters down the road, another motto hails your entrance into the TRNC: "*Ne Mutlu Türküm diyene*" (How happy I am to say I am a Turk).

The experience of crossing the Green Line checkpoint, like other experiences of the divide in Cyprus, cannot be described and analyzed from a bird's eye view, unless you are not a Cypriot and you are just writing a historical overview of the "Cyprus Problem." The divide and its cultural semiotics, the experience of ethnic separation, and the political desire for reunification are mediated through local knowledge and collective memories. These are acquired or filtered through one's belonging to a particular ethnic community and one's positionality as a political subject on one of the two sides of the divide. Writing about the divide as a Greek Cypriot, which is the case of this analysis, enables me to engage in a phenomenological analysis of the divide. It provides privileged access to some of the discourses that represent and produce the divide, but it also assumes the risk of iterating without critical reflection an ideological language that has become reified in one's language and political community. Limited access to Turkish Cypriot genealogies and discourses of the divide will definitely be reproduced here and perhaps be perceived as a politically biased representation of the divide. While acknowledging the limits of my discursive positionality and the inadequacy of my account to speak "for the other," I cannot pose epistemic modesty or "respect for the other" as my alibi for not attempting to cross the boundaries of my native language or the perspective of my perception. The displacement of such boundaries also implicates other kinds of struggling with borders: the pastiche of genres, the intertwining of theory with textual play, the rupture of speculative discourse with a thick description of ordinary life experience and vice versa, the swinging between the political and academic comforts of meta-discourse and the uncertainty of performative writing. One can only hope that such an attempt will trouble the immanence of the divide, disturb its cultural reification, reveal some of its multiple faces and functions, and multiply the responsibilities for border-crossing that a politics of reunification poses.

The opening of the Ledra Palas checkpoint on the Green Line on April 23, 2003, one week after the signing of Cyprus' EU Accession Treaty, was heralded by the international community as the historical catalyst for a spontaneous reunification process. Today, however, two years after this ambivalent "easing" of restrictions on the crossing of the Green Line, the island continues to be divided, and Greek and Turkish Cypriots live separately. Collective identity is construed through the projection of different malignant or benign "others"; the appeal to security is justified through the projection of different fears; and the negotiation between nation-building and European mobility is articulated through different borders or flows. The articulation of the "Cyprus Problem" (*Κυπριακό Πρόβλημα/Kıbrıs Sorunu*) by the state as an issue of national security has often served to regulate what is discussed and what must not be discussed in the public sphere, what kinds of loss are publicly mourned and what kinds of loss must be endured in privacy and in silence. Demarcating the nature of the Problem has always been linked to normalizing certain narratives of victimization and solidifying national identity. As Constantinou and Papadakis point out, the Greek Cypriot side's emphasis on the violations of international law and the Turkish Cypriot side's focus on the internal dimension have promoted two rival definitions of the problem, "a problem of invasion and occupation" or "a problem of ethnic persecution" (2001:140). Derrida's textual play with the multiple significations of the ancient Greek word "Πρόβλημα" illustrates how the projection of borders is implicated in the articulation of problems:

...*problēma* can signify projection or protection, that which one poses or throws in front of oneself, either as the projection of a project, of a task to accomplish, or as the protection created by a substitute, a prosthesis that we put forth in order to represent, replace, shelter, or dissimulate ourselves, or so as to hide something unavowable—like a shield (Derrida, 1993:11).

Furthermore, Derrida's analysis points out the productive effects rather than the prohibitiveness. After 1974, the nationalist orientation to motherlands (Greece and Turkey) would not have survived the emergence of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot identities and the mutual reclaim of Cypriotness if the border, as national wound and shield, did not continue to feed the irredentist sentiments of old nationalisms. This border is re-inscribed into multiple boundaries. Greek and Turkish Cypriots speak different languages, commemorate different collective histories, understand differently the politics of reunification and, though they both think of the *European future*, they dare not dream of a *common future*. The daily crossings of the Green Line have not sufficed to overturn partition, inscribed across Cyprus by the 180-kilometer-long, barbed-wired buffer zone. New occupants, on both sides, opened the doors and let in, kindly in most cases, the old tenants who returned to see their birthplaces: displaced Greek Cypriots (refugees) visiting their homes and birthplaces in the north; displaced

Turkish Cypriots visiting their homes and birthplaces in the south.¹ Though empathetic and moving, these encounters seem to have had little efficacy towards erasing the memories of terror, the repugnant sense of injustice and the uncanny feeling of distrust. For the post-1974 generation of Greek Cypriots, this re-turn has been a particularly ambiguous and traumatic experience. The youth have joined the elders as pilgrims at the sites of parental birth, but also as silent witnesses to their parents' distress (Gregoriou, *Forthcoming*).

What kinds of inertia have emptied the opening of this 29-year-old wall of its transformative force? What kinds of reticence continue to keep the communities apart and the divide in place despite the opening of passages? It is argued in this paper that, with the opening of the checkpoints on the Green Line, various cross-ethnic flows have been facilitated, but, at the same time, new kinds of border control have been enacted that reinforce rather than demolish the divide. In entering the scope of the law, the passage through the divide is signified as a formal border-crossing and the motives for crossing are put under the microscope of patriotic loyalty. Mobility and cross-ethnic collaboration are mediated through border-crossing ceremonies which remain susceptible to state signification and control. State rituals of border control (e.g., passport checks, issuance of visas), securitization (e.g., disinfection of crossers and crossing points when the virus of avian flu was identified on dead birds found in the north; customs control) and intervals of ritualized delay and distress are instances of a performativity which bestows political seriousness upon the supervising authorities and hypostasis upon the threats such controls are supposed to protect "us" from.

After offering a glimpse of some of the political developments that accompanied the opening of the checkpoints, this paper challenges the reified meanings of the Green Line in national narratives and recounts some critical moments from the genealogy of the physical ethnic separation in Cyprus. I then illustrate how the Greek Cypriot government's response to the opening replicated its tactics of non-recognition of the TRNC and absorbed the force of the event. It is suggested that regulation of the Green Line marks its shift from an ethnic divide to an external border against which the securitization of the Greek Cypriot polis and the exclusion of the Turkish Cypriots are normalized. I conclude by drawing some links between the problematics of the border in Cyprus and Derrida's attempt to re-think the experience of *aporia* (non-passage) as the ethical condition of politics. It is suggested that, in order to revitalize democracy, a politics of border-crossing would have to break from the given conceptual and legal context.

1 The distinction between refugees and re-territorialized people does not imply that there are variations of degree in the pain, sense of loss or rupture of community ties caused by violent uprooting of people. It registers, however, how public mourning for loss was differently managed by the authorities in the north and in the south.

The ambiguous opening

The lifting of restrictions on crossings of the buffer zone on April 20, 2003, marked the end of ethnic apartheid and inaugurated an era of European mobility across the ethnic divide in a country that is still partitioned. The Turkish Cypriot administration a year later invested the divide with the power (and dangers) of an internal European border. Since April 31, 2004, the Green Line separates not only the two communities, but also the European Greek Cypriot “south” from the Turkish Cypriot “north.”²

On April 22, 2003, following the presentation of the UN Secretary-General’s “Plan for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem” (dated February 26, 2003; henceforth, the Annan Plan) and anteceding the new circle of negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaderships, the Denktas regime announced its decision to waive restrictions on movement across the Green Line. The lifting of restrictions was heralded by the international community as a premiere to reconciliation and a catalyst for reunification. British journalist Christopher Hitchens’ report, “Another wall falls,” reflects the sentiment of those first days:

Without any warning, this forbidding obstacle was thrown open by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, and it was announced that any Cypriots could travel freely on the island as long as they were back at the frontier by midnight. Since Cyprus is about twice the size of Long Island, New York, and has a population of no more than 800,000, this meant that almost anyone could get to almost anywhere within the allotted time. About 200,000 Greek refugees haven’t seen their old homes for almost thirty years, and about 45,000 displaced Turkish Cypriots come from places that lie to the south of the partition line, so there have been plenty of applicants (Hitchens, 2003).

Hitchens’ report is one of the most highly quoted texts when policy researchers allude to the impetus of that first opening. In celebrating the opening, all those historically displaced people became re-signified as potential border-crossers; those separated by cultural nationalism could become reunited through constitutional patriotism and constitute a new, post-nation of border-crossers. “I wish I’d been there to see it,” he goes on.

The sense of exhilaration and liberty was extraordinary, as if people indefinitely confined in a cramped cell had suddenly been allowed to stretch and exercise. And

2 Article One of Protocol No. 10 (ON CYPRUS) of the Accession Treaty states that “The application of the *acquis* shall be suspended in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control” (AA2003/ACT/P1/en, p. 4705).

also as if a “no talking” rule in a barren jail had suddenly been relaxed. Conversation that had been impossible for decades was suddenly and volubly resumed (Hitchens, 2003).

The proposed Foundation Agreement of the Annan Plan, as finalized after a three-phase negotiation and consultation of the Secretary-General with the parties, was submitted to separate simultaneous referenda on April 24, 2004. It was rejected by the Greek Cypriot electorate by a margin of three to one, and approved by the Turkish Cypriot electorate by a margin of two to one. According to Jan Asmussen, the international community had never taken into consideration the possibility of the Plan’s rejection by the Greek Cypriot side: “Today, the international community is in a state of shock and has clearly not developed an alternative plan to cope with the new situation” (2004:2). In his report to the Security Council, almost a month after the watershed, the Secretary-General expressed his regrets that “little was done by some participants in the negotiations to prepare the people for a compromise” (United Nations, 2004a:§86, 18-19). But for the Secretary-General, the sheer size of the Greek Cypriot “No” vote raised even more fundamental questions:

This is the first time that the Greek Cypriot public has been asked to vote on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federal solution of the Cyprus problem. Such a solution means not just two constituent states, but also political equality and the sharing of power. Yet the situation today is very different from that which existed in the 1970s, when the leaders of the two communities agreed to seek such a solution. The contrast between economic stagnation in the north and prosperity in the south is visible and palpable. A generation or more of Cypriots have no memory of life on a unified island. Most of the dispossessed in the south, by hard work and enterprise, have carved out a prosperous livelihood, as have many others who are not originally from the north. While they strongly state their wish to reunify, many see in a settlement very little gain, and quite a lot of inconvenience and risk (United Nations, 2004a:§85, 20).

It was perhaps the first time since 1974 that, in an official UN document, the nature of the “Cyprus Problem” was recognized as fluid and changing, and extended ethnic separation was acknowledged as a significant factor for that change. Collective memory was acknowledged, also for the first time, as influential to the kind of solution the people of Cyprus envisioned (or the kinds of solution apprehended by the people). What the Secretary-General’s analysis failed to acknowledge, however, was that, in addition to the blind spots in the youth’s memory (i.e., no memory of life on a unified island), living-with-the-divide had provided new memories for collective identities.

Another report to the Security Council on the UN operations in Cyprus, four months later, foregrounds the crossings of the Green Line as the historical catalyst for reconciliation. The Secretary-General comments on the opening of the four crossing points through the Green Line as “[p]erhaps the single recent event to have the most impact on the relationship between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots” (United

Nations, 2004b:§7, 2). Despite the absence of direct relations at the official level, the report comments, “contacts between ordinary Cypriots have continued to grow. Since April 2003, there have been over four million crossings of the buffer zone without major incidents” (United Nations, 2004b:§7, 2).

If the ethnic divide is deep and the economic gap between south and north makes its even deeper, what potential do “over four million crossings of the buffer zone without major incidents” have for triggering the reunification of Cyprus? Let us submit Hitchens’ apocalyptic title to the native’s gesture of anti-colonial mimicry. If “another wall fell” but ethnic separation is still in place, does it mean that Cypriots have failed the test of internationalism and thus turned out to be “people long written-off as hopeless victims of ‘ancient hatreds’ and tribal feelings” (Hitchens, 2003)?

Reckoning with the genealogy of the divide: Its faces, phases, phrases

Faces

From a Turkish Cypriot perspective, until the opening of the checkpoints, the ceasefire line signified the vanishing point of a history of persecution (by Greek hegemony) and rescue (by mother Turkey). As a double limit—territorial and national—the ceasefire line anteceded the final border, an internal border that would distinguish the north from the south on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal settlement of the Cyprus Problem. From a Greek Cypriot perspective, “the Attila line” (η γραμμή του Αττίλα, *i grammí tou Attíla*) was the mark of assault and the frontline for a continuous and uncompromising struggle. As years passed and the lived memory of 1974 gave way to the second generation’s inherited memory, the need to guide the gaze to the north and feed the yearning for return became politically pressing. The educational goal to “Never forget and struggle,” introduced in elementary schools in the mid-1980s, became the moral horizon for a didactics of post-trauma and an agonistics of memory. The unanimous declaration of TRNC in 1983³ induced the introduction of a new patriotic duty: the legality of TRNC should be denounced at every level of inter-cultural contact,

3 After the proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983, the Security Council, in Resolution 541 (1983), announced that it considered the declaration legally invalid, and called on all States not to recognize any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus. In Resolution 550 (1984), the Council reiterated this call and called upon all States not to facilitate or in any way assist the secessionist entity. The Turkish Cypriot leadership has, over the years, denounced the restrictions and barriers they face as embargoes. The Greek Cypriot side has consistently denied the existence of embargoes, insisting that the nub of the problem is the failure of the Turkish Cypriots to accept the validity of the Republic of Cyprus (United Nations, 2004a:21.). So far only Turkey has recognized the TRNC and developed trade and other exchanges with it.

in every instance of reference to the other. The struggle for liberation was becoming indistinguishable from tactics of non-recognition. Blocking TRNC's attempts to achieve international recognition and emptying the TRNC's *quasi* state rituals of legal seriousness became indistinguishable from emptying the Turkish Cypriots' existence of reality.

Figurations of the partition—the barbed wire, the crouching child grieving next to the wire, the blood-dripping line, even the very term “divide”—imply that there are two sides, two corresponding “halves,” which share common experiences of dislocation and corresponding structures of perception. This analogy—the two sides, the two halves, the two displacements—has rendered incomprehensible, from the perspective of most Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriot experience of isolation. At the same time, the tactics of non-recognition rendered unsignifiable the community's entrapment in an illegal state. “How is life here?,” I asked back in 1998 an old woman from Mari whose family had been relocated to Pella-Pais during the post-1974 period of ethnic cleansing. “How are we supposed to live? Don't you see? Layers of mold have been piling up on our skin.”

Addressing the issue of Turkish Cypriot identity in the 1980s, Cypriot poet Mehmet Yaşın contemplated the intertwinings of marginality and subalternity, marginality and alienation. He identified in the emergence of Turkish Cypriot identity a politics of locality and subaltern resistance against the hegemony of Turkish nationalism. At the same time, however, he exposed the totalizing and exclusionary effects of identity building when a historically rooted “we” is reclaimed at the expense of demonizing the foreignness and annihilating the otherness of the newcomer “others,” i.e., the immigrants/settlers from mainland Turkey (Yaşın, 1988:11):

*Cesetleriyle verildi yeni evlerimiz
kış uykusuna in bulan aylar gibiydik
hatta yeni dogum belgesi alırken ve kimlik
“biz” diyorduk yine—ama hangi biz?—
Hiç var olmuş muyduk aslında
göçen komşulara olmaksa tek tanımımız
(Mehmet Yaşın, “Sığınaktan Çınkınca,” 1984).*

Together with the dead bodies, our new houses were given to us,
we were in winter sleep, like bears in their den
we received new birth certificates and IDs
“We,” we were asserting once again—who was this “we”?—
Did we really exist?
Were the immigrants our new neighbors?
That we did not ask.
(Mehmet Yaşın, “Coming out of the trenches,” 1984).

Though the marginality of Turkish Cypriots is reclaimed as local identity, as “Cypriotness,” self-recognition is still shaped by historical conflict and a politics of commemoration that frames the Greek Cypriot other as the national enemy. To the dominant trope of the divide—used more often in Greek Cypriot discourse to refer to the apartheid, but also bearing witness to the violence of uprooting and the yearning for return—we can juxtapose the trope of the embrasure. Yaşın uses the figure of the embrasure to explain how the structures of perception which are built in Turkish Cypriots’ political isolation are reinforcing exclusionary structures and feelings of animosity against the outside other: “How wide can a person’s horizon be if that person has been staring at the world through the loophole of the same embrasure [*mazgal*] for thirty years now?” (Yaşın, 1988:10).

Phases

When was the physical ethnic divide first erected in Cyprus? By whom? How? Was there an inaugural event that established its political and cultural meaning? These questions aim not to trace and enumerate “objectively” a series of empirical events, but rather to suggest that there are multiple ways to tell the story of the divide, as well as multiple entry points in the genealogy of ethnic partition in Cyprus. Each entry point will unavoidably privilege some ethnic narratives over others, as well as some regiments of discourse over others.

Adopting the linguistic regiment used by the UN to describe the “historical background” of the “Cyprus Problem” appears to be a middle course. It alleviates the cultural critic from the burden of having to adjudicate or maneuver between rival historical accounts, relieves the author from the burden of responsibility of speaking for the people and fashions a kind of ideological neutrality that renders the analysis inviting (or at least not suspicious) for a broader audience. Thus, one could simply tell the story of the divide by reviewing and reciting a series of UN mandates on the Green Line. Such an approach, however, would fail to account for the collective memories on the emergence of the divide, the symbolisms and interpretations through which the understanding of the divide—and the relation to the ethnic other—is mediated.

The other approach, to present rival accounts side by side, is no more helpful for this inquiry, for it can easily slide into a recitation of reified nationalist accounts, particularly the way these have been galvanized and normalized by official state or other authorities to serve claims over the nature of the “Cyprus Problem” and to provide ideological apparatuses for nation-building. Implicated in this approach is also the risk of reducing the genealogy of the divide to a story of an irreconcilable conflict between historical enemies. This presentation of the conflict becomes complicit with the colonial gesture of indigenizing natives and establishing an authorial position for conflict-resolution specialists to recognize the “different” claims, mediate them through the humanistic idiom of inter-ethnic understanding and administer the “conflict.” But as Lyotard explains, it is exactly this treatment of the conflict as a litigation that obliterates

the “differend” and, along with that, the claim for justice: “As distinguished from a litigation, a differend [*différend*] would be a case of conflict, between at least two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments” (Lyotard, 1988:xi).

While to avoid grand narratives (international/imperialist and local/nationalist) is impossible, not to provoke them is undesirable. These are the narratives which are usually cited and reproduced both in International Policy Reports on Cyprus and local national media and educational material. Troubling them, instead, might be an alternative approach towards a more reflective genealogy of the divide. Reiterating, intertwining and supplementing them in ways that expose some of their contradictions, elisions and discontinuities would be one way to destabilize the epistemic certainty of collective memories. On the one hand, tracing multiple entry points in the genealogy of the divide exposes the inauguration of the dividing Green Line as a national myth. On the other hand, recollecting the multiple instantiations of physical separation before 1974—town sectors, enclaves, ethnic cleansing, embargoes—reveals the productivity of the divide as an external border.

The Green Line refers to the territory, the military status and the UN-supervised civilian activity and state-controlled mobility across the UN buffer zone in Cyprus. The buffer zone cuts across the island, lying from the northwest to the East coast. It is a narrow strip of land between the two ceasefire lines drawn on August 16, 1974. It is 180 kilometers long and covers about three percent of the island’s surface area. It varies in width from less than four meters in Nicosia to some seven kilometers near Athienou. There are five inhabited villages and about 8,000 people who live and work there. The current military status quo was clarified and adjusted in numerous local agreements between the United Nations Peace Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the two sides, and most of those agreements were eventually consolidated in a set of rules, which UNFICYP communicated to the military forces on both sides in early 1989. Agreement on the military status quo of the buffer zone, however, does not translate into consensus about the potential, promise or threat that the dividing line holds for the future.

The attempt to navigate between the two rival narratives is reflected in the excessive use of citations and passive voice, and in the omission of metaphors, allegories and emotionally charged language. In reporting rather than telling, neutralizing rather than inflating, such kind of presentation aims to establish a discursive buffer zone. The detachment fashioned by such a zero degree of writing, however, reinforces rather than subverts the status quo of the divide. In this account, the divide is presented as the effect of historical events. The multiple significations of the divide and its participation in the production of national subjects and nationalisms are eliminated. The idiom of meta-discourse flattens out the genealogy of the divide, neutralizes collective memories and responsibilities, and diffuses the meaning of local agency by presenting a succession of events as historically inevitable. Terms such as “following” and “invoking” are frequent markers of transition. Let us follow for a moment this syntax of inevitability.

Following a coup d'état instigated by the Greek Junta against the Cyprus government on July 15, 1974, Turkey, invoking the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960, launched an extensive military operation on the north coast of Cyprus, which resulted eventually in the occupation of northern Cyprus. Though presented as a "peace operation" by both Turkey and "TRNC," the military operation imposed de facto territorial division of the island, re-inaugurated the residual ceasefire lines of 1963 as community boundaries and finalized the frontiers of two separate nation-building processes: the ceasefire line as the south nation-state border of the yet-to-become TRNC, and the coasts of Kerynia as the imaginary frontier of the Greek Cypriot national goal of return. Separation was solidified through ethnic cleansing by forcing the displacement of 160,000 Greek Cypriots to the south and the re-territorialization of 65,000 Turkish Cypriots to the north (Eschenbächer, 2004:15). Immediately after the events of 1974, the UNFICYP inspected the areas of confrontation and recorded the deployment of the military forces on both sides. Lines drawn between the forward defended localities became respectively the National Guard's and the Turkish forces' ceasefire lines. In the absence of a formal ceasefire agreement, the military status quo, as recorded by UNFICYP at the time, became the standard by which it was judged whether any changes constituted violations of the ceasefire.

Though countersigned by the UN and phrased in the seemingly neutral meta-discourse of international politics, the account above omits some phases from the discontinuous genealogy of the divide and normalizes the memorialization of the divide around the central stem of an inaugural apocalyptic event. Narrativizing a disjuncture of collective memories by taking up those excluded phases becomes imperative for restoring the dispersed genealogy of inter-ethnic separation. Ethnographic research carried out by Papadakis in the early 1990s in Kato Enories, an area lying between the medieval Venetian walls of the Old Town of Nicosia and the Green Line, points to an age differential in the way young and old Greek Cypriots conceptualize the chronology of the Line. When the elders referred to the creation of the Green Line, or to the beginning of the division of the two communities, they meant some time at or before 1963; the young, however, associated "division" exclusively with 1974 (Papadakis, 1993). Taking into consideration the triple marginality of these "elders" (age, locality, and socioeconomic status), Papadakis suggests that those who place the divide at the time of the Turkish invasion constitute not just the "young," but also the majority of Greek Cypriots. But while narrativization of the divide's chronology varies, the topographic anchoring of the divide in the Line across the old Town of Nicosia remains stable across generations of Greek Cypriots. Historical accounts of ethnic separation from a Turkish Cypriot perspective suggest not only a different chronology, but also a different topological territorialization of the divide. Instead of a singular and continuous line of partition, these accounts configure a variety of ethnic clusterings behind walls of fear, securitization and restriction: night watches at the outskirts of Turkish Cypriot villages anticipating possible attacks, relocation from mixed villages to all-Turkish villages

(e.g., from Potamia/Dereliköy to Louroutzina/Louroujina), bodily searches at road blocks, withdrawal from public domains of mixed-ethnic participation (e.g., the English School, civil service). It is only with the solidification and securitization of the enclaves that these multiple controls become consolidated into an ethnic divide.

Morag (2004) locates the beginning of the Enclave Period immediately after the inter-communal violence that started in December 1963. However, he identifies a radical shift in the solidification of separation as early as the beginnings of the twentieth century. The geographic dispersal of rural ethnic communities gives way to the national polarization of separate town quarters. This shift entails two kinds of flow: the centrifugal flow of urbanization (from rural areas to towns) and centripetal movement (from mixed villages to ethnically homogeneous quarters). Morag attributes this shift to the forces of modernization rather than to nationalism. According to the author, in 1911, there were 230 mixed villages and 85 exclusively Turkish villages. In 1921, the number of mixed villages had decreased to 221, and by 1946, there were only 192 mixed villages and the number of exclusively Turkish villages had increased to 110. By the years just prior to the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, the number of mixed villages had decreased to only 33 (Morag, 2004:599).

The enclaves provided two structural elements for the nationalization of solidarity and the solidification of the border: an imaginary center and besieged external borders. After December 1963, the majority of Turkish Cypriots (about sixty percent) retreated to the enclaves. Surrounded and isolated from the rest by paramilitary Greek Cypriot forces, the 39 enclaves amounted territorially to about four percent of the island. The government established an asphyxiating security fringe around the enclaves and interrupted any flow of jobs, food, medicine or even housing construction materials towards the enclaves. Greek Cypriots recall this policy as a security measure against the “Turkish mutiny.” The embargo would force the Turkish Cypriots into an exodus and would terminate their isolation. But in fact, their isolation was treated as another opportunity to establish Turkish Cypriots’ supplementarity as other, that is, as different and inconsequential for the Republic. In the words of former president Glafkos Klerides,

We the Greek Cypriots have full control of the government today. We do not have the vice-president and his vetoes, neither the three Turkish ministers. All ministers are Greek. Our government is the only one internationally recognized. Why bring in the Turks again? (cited in Kizilyurek, 1999:43).

Turkish Cypriots in the enclaves developed legal, political and other institutions that included defended borders, public services and even institutions like a Football Federation (Stavrinides, 1975, cited in Çolak, 2004:8.). Çolak locates in such institutions the emergence of Turkish Cypriot nation-state building. He characterizes these enclaves scattered throughout the island as the “arms” of a bodiless state and a yet-to-become nation. Çolak’s analysis partly echoes Kizilyurek’s thesis that Turkish Cypriot

nationalism was secondary and reactionary, fed by the fear and threat that Greek Cypriot nationalism first posed. Morag's sociological analysis of nationalisms in Cyprus, however, points out that the borders were also produced from *within* the enclaves:

The congestion and tension within the Turkish Cypriot enclaves led to an externalization of tensions within the community and an exaggeration of national unity, with the authorities constantly reinforcing the belief that the Greek Cypriots were a serious threat (Morag, 2004:601).

With the removal of the encircling forces around the enclaves in the summer of 1968, the Turkish Cypriots inside were not quite eager to venture out. Faced with the humiliating prospect that the Greek Cypriots had prospered during their years of economic stagnation, Turkish Cypriot "tried to emphasize the fact that they still enjoyed 'sovereignty' over their own areas—and were therefore 'powerful'—and were free to deny Greek Cypriots admission to their enclaves" (Morag, 2004:602).

Besides the solidification of ceasefire lines and the fortification of enclaves, a third kind of mobility control was naturalizing ethnic partitioning while rendering its function as a border invisible: the convoy. This entailed the restoration of mobility across enemy ground through the securitization of a scheduled traffic flow. Unlike the other two, this border was dispersed and immersed in "ordinary" daily life. With the development of a Turkish enclave after 1963 along the old Nicosia-Kerynia street, Turkish Cypriots closed the road to Greek Cypriot traffic. Controlled mobility across this "block" was regulated by the UN:

On 25 September, U Thant announced in the Security Council that agreement had been reached for the reopening of the road under the exclusive control of UNFICYP, and for the unimpeded rotation of the Turkish national contingent. The road was reopened on 26 October 1964, and UNFICYP continued until 1974 to supervise the movement of Greek Cypriot civilians on it and to ensure that no armed personnel except those of UNFICYP were allowed to use it (<http://www.unficy.org>, accessed September 2, 2005).

Greek Cypriots recall that kind of settlement as "the convoy":

Every morning, at 8:00 a.m., a convoy of Greek Cypriot vehicles would depart from Nicosia and head to Kerynia. UN vehicles were accompanying us at the front and rear ends. The convoy would leave Kerynia at 5:00 p.m. and return to Nicosia in the evening (personal communication with middle-aged Greek Cypriots).

The narrative memorialization of the convoy demonstrates the ceremonious character of this mobile, yet recurrent partition. Whereas the formalist, passive voice (it was

reached, it was reopened, it was allowed) of the UN rhetoric announces a technocratic regulation of control, the local narrative suggests that, through the temporalization of regular activity, people are hailed into the control of mobility and life becomes complicit with the normalization of ethnic division. The divide is not imposed through an inaugural and exceptionally violent event which separates ethnic subjects (which supposedly exist before their discernment and separation). Rather the divide grows through the discernment of ethnic subjectivities which are enacted *through* the temporal and spatial regulation of everyday life. The effectiveness of the divide relies on the normalization of ethnic subjects and their being hailed into regulations that increase efficiency, what Foucault calls the microphysics of power.

These multiple phases of the divide are also omitted in the official Turkish Cypriot account. The narrative intertwining of the divide with the chronicle of the invasion is discredited. Instead, the historical threshold that marks the territorialization of the divide is the beginning of armed ethnic conflict in 1963 and the establishment of a neutral zone between the ceasefire lines in Nicosia on December 26, 1963. The following excerpt, cited from a recent Letter of the UN Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Security Council, illustrates how this rival genealogy of the divide is anchored to a very different analysis of the “Cyprus Problem”:

With regard to the reference by the Greek Cypriot representative to the alleged “invasion” and “occupation” of the island, I would like to recall that the division of the island both territorially and ethnically came about in 1963 as a direct consequence of the Greek Cypriot onslaught on the Turkish Cypriot people. Hence, the creation of the “*Green Line*” by the British contingent on the island and the arrival of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus in 1964 (United Nations, 2001:Agenda item 62).

The “epic” of the “Green Line” holds a particularly prominent position in the official Turkish Cypriot borderology. The authorial signature for the epic is re-cited from Robert Stephens, *Cyprus: A Place of Arms*. According to Stephens, under the chairmanship of Duncan Sandys (the British Secretary for Commonwealth Relations who was assigned the task “to consolidate the ceasefire”), a truce liaison committee drew an agreement on the Green Line: “a neutral zone dividing the Turkish and Greek sectors of Nicosia—so-called because it was marked on the map with a green chinagraph pencil which happened to be on the table” (Stephens, 1966:185). The official website of the “TRNC” highlights the drawing of this line by a British officer and attributes to this act the performative meaning of a political baptism. By being inscribed on a map used by the truce force, the Line was politically (re)enacted and recognized. But for that act to bear any performative force, the identity of the scribe should also be foregrounded. Thus, his identity as a British “Commander” of a quasi truce force is invoked in order to bestow supra-state significance upon the graphic systematization of the representation of the divide.

The narrativization of this act, with emphasis put on details which would have otherwise remained insignificant—the ink, the map, the uniforms, the decisiveness of the gesture, the gesture of inscription in the fashion of the signature—produces the dramatic effects which, retrospectively, bestow upon the event the seriousness of a ritual. What kind of singularity does this event hold, and why does this commemorating reference aim to preserve and radicalize specifically this singularity? The assignment to the divide of a symbol and, later, a name marks its insertion in the economy of the sign and the structure of iterability. The “line” that was originally meant “to consolidate the ceasefire” eventually became a “Line,” i.e., a proper name used to institute, distribute and regulate the peace force; a singular and stable semiotic anchor used to consolidate diverse meanings of different kinds of partitions; a self-referential sign used to consolidate physical separation and ethnic conflict.

Among various ceasefire lines set in place in various localities of inter-communal fighting across Cyprus, this one became differentiated, named, proper-ized. Among a sea of common names used to describe common divides, variant across multiple localities and biodegradable in the context of historical and cultural change, the name “Green Line” bestowed to the specific divide the monumentality of an epic. It codified the singularity of the specific divide as new, exemplary and archetypical, and enacted a structure of iterability. After its “baptism,” the Divide would almost always be referred to as “the Green Line.” Iterated in various discourses across various local and international contexts (local and international media, diplomatic negotiations, military agreements, the UN Security Council), “the Green Line” has enveloped with a nominal “normalcy” the anticipated recurrence of fighting. It has also promoted a commonsensical stance towards the permanence of the separation and the militarization of the conflict. The mandate of the Peace Force in Cyprus, “[m]aintaining the military status quo and preventing a recurrence of fighting,” has not changed since 1964.

The proper “singularity” of the Green Line has anchored in its own body the delineation of rival nationalisms, the plausibility of a final partitioning, and the seriousness of its acting as a territorial border. The nominal “straightness” of the “Green Line” and its ceremonial militarization have also been influential in concealing gaps of legitimization in claims over its authorship and the arbitrariness in its inscription (thus also concealing the possibility of a potential re-appropriation of this arbitrariness of the Line’s inscription in order to challenge the divide). The figurative straightness of the Line is one of the representational devices that assist its performativity as a border. This “straightness” is deconstructed in the narratives of those who live with the Line, including UN troops who have been assigned the “tough task of monitoring the so-called Green Line, which snakes through the divided capital of Nicosia” (McDonald, 1989:24).

The epic of the Line’s origin is further destabilized as we explore how different powers, colonial and post-colonial, state and supra-state, act out their authority by defining and administering “neutrality.” The “Green Line” was already supervised,

before the arrival of UNFICYP, by a British truce force. It was re-territorialized under UN jurisdiction only months later, when the UNFICYP was established operationally at the end of March 1964, upon the recommendation of UN Security Council Resolution 186 (March 4, 1964).⁴ By the time of its re-territorialization as a UNFICYP *topos* (*topos*, in its double meaning of place/post and figure of speech), the so-called “Green Line” was already anchoring opposite meanings in its body. Outlining the guiding principles of UNFICYP’s operations in Cyprus, the UN Secretary-General underlined that the force’s mandate was to facilitate the return to normal conditions: “[S]eeking to prevent a recurrence of fighting, and contributing to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions” (United Nations, 1964). But the efforts of UNFICYP to carry out its mandate were often “impeded” by “the parties”’ conflicting interpretations of the force’s duties under that mandate (United Nations, 1964). To the Cyprus government, UNFICYP’s task was to assist it in ending the rebellion of the Turkish Cypriots and extending its authority over the entire territory of the Republic. To the Turkish Cypriots, “a return to normal conditions” meant having UNFICYP restore, by force if necessary, the status of the Turkish Cypriot community under the 1960 constitution, while the Cyprus government and its acts should not be seen as legal. In his reports, the Secretary-General rejected both these interpretations, which, if followed, would have caused UNFICYP to effect basically the final settlement of the Cyprus problem. This he considered to be the province of the mediator, not of UNFICYP.

Phrases

A Greek Cypriot usually refers to the “north” as “the occupied territories” (τα Κατεχόμενα/*ta Katechόμεna*). At the level of official political discourse, the referents used by the other side are cited in ways that discredit their validity and deny the political reality such referents aim to effect: “the so-called state,” “the pseudo-state” (το ψευδοκράτος/*to pseudokrátos*), “ΤΔΒΚ” (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus). The Commission and the European Parliament avoid engaging in any kind of naming that might echo local national narratives or imply a political demarcation between “north”

4 Contingents were deployed throughout the island and all districts were covered according to the intensity of the armed confrontation. In Nicosia, UNFICYP troops were positioned for an observation role along the length of the “green line.” In two other districts, Kerynia and Lefka, UN posts were deployed between the two defense lines. On the rest of the island, UNFICYP troops were generally deployed in areas where confrontation was likely to arise, and they were so positioned as to enable them to interpose themselves between the opposing sides in areas of tension and wherever incidents might cause a recurrence of fighting.

and “south.”⁵ Referencing is mediated through a technocratic language, which in saying something (e.g., about the partition in Cyprus), performs nothing but to enact the accession. The suspension of the *acquis* beyond the Green Line is outlined in an algorithmic language, whereas the political reality of the divide is dispensed with by addressing technical problems “as regards agriculture and facilities for persons crossing the line.” Regulation (EC) No. 293/2005 of February 17, 2005, amending Regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 on a regime under Article 2 of Protocol 10 to the Act of Accession, refers to “the line between the areas in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control and those areas in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus exercises effective control” (*Official Journal of the European Union*, February 23, 2005, L50/1). This language suspends the multiple historical narratives, eliminates their disjunctures and discontinuities by supplanting a linear, concise and totalizing narrative, insulates meaning from metaphor, and protects supra-state legalist locution from the specters of local memory. It can delineate limits, establish quality controls and promote mobility while overstepping the paradox of an intra-European border. It can legitimate the suspension of the *acquis* while avoiding recognition or refutation of either the illegal state of the TRNC or the authority of the Government of Cyprus to speak for all the Cypriots even though it is a *de facto* Greek Cypriot government. Thus, it enables the EU to speak about and regulate “the line” while easing the responsibility of inaugurating a new European political idiom that might destabilize the divide.

The term “Green Line” has become vernacularized within local discourses as “Πράσινη Γραμμή” (*prásini grammí*) and “Yeşil Hat.” The properization of the term “Green Line” has accompanied the semiotic and physical consolidation of multiple borders and has directed oppositionally both fears and life interests. In the international conflict discourse, the term Green Line has also become a proper name, connoting extended ethnic division along ceasefire lines. The Green Line is often referenced as “the Cyprus way” of discerning the *differend* and sustaining the peaceful non-settlement of a conflict. Considering the future of Kosovo’s Serbs, for example, several analysts suggest that they should “try to divide what still might be divided.” Cedomir Antic, a historian and member of the liberal group G17, proposed “drawing a ‘green line’ as in Cyprus.” On the basis of the Cyprus “green line” as a model for territorial ethnic division, he also suggests a Security Council resolution to divide the province according to the

5 In his report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (UN, 2004a), the UN Secretary-General did not hesitate to use the terms “north” and “south.” There are several references to the politics in the north, “the December vote in the north of the island” (§52), “the referendum in the north” and Turkish Cypriots’ concern about Greek Cypriots “establishing residency in the north” (§62), as well as comparisons between “economic stagnation in the north” and “prosperity in the south” (§85).

census data from 1991 (European Stability Initiative, 2004:14). References to the “Cyprus model” also come up in the minutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Interrogated on the issue of their objection to the arrival of UN troops, a discussant reports that they objected to the mandate of the UN’s jurisdiction rather than their overall presence: “We didn’t oppose their coming but the way in which they were to come. The deployment was envisaged according to the so-called green line, based on the Cypriot model.” Asked to clarify what this “Cypriot model” means, he replied: “It meant separation of the warring parties, that is, the Croatian and the Serbian side, and not demilitarization of the area as a whole” (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, 2002:13203).

The process of the Green Line’s becoming a proper name in both domestic and international discourse has established the Green Line as the dominant signifier for the divide. Yet this proper stability of the dividing line has come to both assist and undermine the politics of reunification. Constituting both representation and instantiation of separation, the Green Line has been the privileged site of many performative events on the Greek Cypriot side. Student rallies that commemorate 1974 and protest the ongoing invasion almost always terminate at the Green Line. “Green Line walks” and organized school visits at the Green Line military posts are some of the more experiential activities recommended by the Ministry for promoting the goals of Den Xecho. The symbolic or surrogate crossing of the Green Line has been the quintessential step of/for peace in the political imaginary of the youth. “Do you remember that time when we let the pigeons fly free on the Green Line?” a young member of a women’s NGO recalls, as she lays her finger onto a 1976 black-and-white photo in NGO’s photo album. Although the young woman was born after the historical time of the event that she describes, its integration as post-memory and its re-narrativization is conscripted for surviving the NGO’s collective memory. Memories of the un-lived past are invoked in order to mobilize responsibilities in the present: the group must become politically active again, as it used to be. In post-memory, the symbolic contestation of the divide at the Green Line emerges as an inaugural event of political activism. Reiterated again and again, across a broad range of genres, from children’s drawings to the political rhetoric of electoral campaigns, the signification of such Green Line events appear to be incontestable. As if repetition implicated no difference, as if the performative recitation of the gesture was immune to any parodic displacement, the performative politics of the Green Line were not controlled by any authorial agency. As recent developments have shown, however, the political meaning of the symbolic crossing of the Green Line is not immanent but contingent.

The Green Line can be a common referent in multiple phrases on the divide. Yet this does not mean that all phrases (including performatives) which refer to the Green Line have the same meaning, address the same ideal audience or pursue the same politics. The symbolic planting of an olive tree next to the Venetian walls of Nicosia during a night vigil by a support group for the Annan Plan had a different meaning than the

commemorative installation of a tree bearing yellow ribbons with names of the missing set up by PAK (Pan-Cypriot Liberation Movement) next to the Greek Cypriot checkpoint at Ledra Palas. These performatives aim to change the public perception of the divide by projecting a certain vision for the future or bringing up memories from the past. Both are inaugurated next to the Green Line and both propose a certain politics for its overturning. Yet, they do not share the same acceptance among the Greek Cypriot community. The olive tree was uprooted in a symbolic act of discernment the same night it was planted; the tree for the missing is still there.

Phrases on the Green Line which have prevailed for years in the Greek Cypriot public sphere are those phrases which align themselves with a redemptive politics of liberation (Bryant, 2001), that is, the idea that the Cyprus Problem is strictly a problem of invasion and occupation and it will be solved when the Turkish troops withdraw and refugees return to their homes. In the rhetoric of this politics, the Turkish Cypriots are included only as an internal exception. The enunciating subject of these gestures that oppose, resist or even performatively embarrass the power of the Green Line to discern and separate is an ethno-national Greek Cypriot subject. It is assumed that the Turkish Cypriots are not excluded from such politics to the extent that a politics of liberation, in accordance with the decisions of the Security Council on Cyprus, seeks to restore the legal effectiveness of international law and human rights. Though not included as subjects at the level of enunciation, Turkish Cypriots are included as joint subjects at the level of the *énoncé*. In other words, they are assumed to belong to the people of Cyprus in the name of whom the principle of sovereignty is evoked as the source of legitimization for a politics of liberation. They are also included as political subjects whose legally effective rights as equal citizens in the Republic of Cyprus would be restored through the liberation of Cyprus.⁶ Performative contestations of the divide in the north, however, which figure Turkish Cypriots as the subjects of enunciation, are often ignored if not downplayed by the Greek Cypriot media and party leaders. The massive demonstrations of Turkish Cypriots against the separatist politics of leader Denktaş constituted a catalyst for the opening of the checkpoints. Most Greek Cypriots, however, did not know about these developments. But even when the Greek Cypriot media started covering some of the political events in the Turkish Cypriot community, the rallies for reunification were seen as calculative acts and were directly linked to the economic benefits that would ensue from Cyprus' European accession. What is most interesting, though, from the perspective of this paper, is that these demonstrations, rallies and night vigils were staged in squares, in the heart of the community, and not

6 Ένας λαός/*Tek halk* (a single people) is the kind of bi-communal logo that usually figures at the background of AKEL's (Greek Cypriot communist party) political rituals. The supplementary function of this logo to AKEL's shift to the rhetoric of liberation illustrates this split between enunciation and *énoncé*.

next to the Green Line. For the first time, troubling the divide was becoming associated with revitalizing democratic participation and re-inventing identity, without recourse to an imaginary national border.

Troubling the divide: The politics of (non)recognition and the ambivalent performativity of “border crossing”

Crossing the Green Line: Disowning or inaugurating the border?

The lifting of restrictions on mobility across the Green Line has been articulated by the government as another challenge for the politics of non-recognition. As early as the first day, a spokesman warned that while the government welcomed any lifting of restrictions by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, such moves could not substitute for reunification of the island. Frozen by the rush of Greek and Turkish Cypriots to cross over to the other side, the government employed tactics of recriminations. The Minister of Interior’s advice to the public to “avoid engaging in any procedures that would recognize the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’” was followed by explicitly prescriptive inductions to the public not to cross in the name of patriotism. By issuing “visas” to Greek Cypriots to enter the TRNC, the government spokesman argued, Rauf Denktaş wanted to give the impression there were borders between the north and south and that there is a “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.” Appealing to the risk of TRNC’s recognition, the spokesman stated that he was “counting on Greek Cypriots’ patriotism so that they would refuse to be subjected to passport control by the Turkish Cypriot authorities.” “Not to swallow ... Denktaş’ bait,” as the leftist Greek Cypriot newspaper *Xaravgi* put it, was the new trial of patriotism staged at the antipodes of the ambivalent crossing.

The tension between two incommensurable duties seemed to block the efficacy of crossing the Green Line. On the one hand, there was a duty to cross the “border” and, in the very act of passing through and enacting a unified civil space, to refute the effectiveness of an illegal border that blocked free movement and inter-ethnic cooperation. From this viewpoint, crossing the Green Line appeared as a performative act that troubled the divide’s efficiency to discern, administer, separate, control identities and regulate the production of competing ethno-nationalisms and communal loyalties. On the other hand, a second duty appeared to emerge and put on hold the first one. This duty obliged the refusal to cross because the terms under which such crossing was becoming possible compromised return. This duty does not perceive the opening of the checkpoints as a singular event that ruptures division, but rather as part of a well calculated series of political processes that lead gradually to the recognition and legal regulation of the divide as a formal, quasi nation-state, border. Thus the crossing, this sense of duty reckons, would contribute to the normalization of the partition. Furthermore, to cross the Green Line like a visitor would mean to accept the terms of a state whose authority is imposed through invasion and ongoing occupation. Such an

act would not only be complicit with the violations against the sovereignty of Cyprus, but would also delegitimize the identification of liberation with return.

The recrimination of the new mobility was relayed in various international sites of the Republic. When the Embassy in Helsinki announced the upcoming opening of two additional crossing points (Zodia and Ledra Street) on its website, the news was supplemented with warnings of ensuing dangers.⁷ The opening of additional passages was included in the first package of Measures for Turkish Cypriots announced by the Republic of Cyprus.⁸ Following the headline link, “Commission says list of crossing points extended in Cyprus,” the visitor to the Embassy website reads:

Nicosia, Apr 20 (CNA) — The European Commission has announced today that the list of crossing points where persons and goods may cross the ceasefire line on the island has been extended and it is now up to the two communities to agree on their actual openings (<http://www.cyprusembassy.fi>, accessed April 23, 2005).

The announcement is phrased in the same idiom of meta-discourse we encounter in the Accession Treaty. In fact, it is phrased as a citation of the Commission’s report. The tone of bureaucratic detachment stands in tension with a “WARNING” on the side which lists several security issues, some linked to moralistic stories of illegality and danger “in the north of Cyprus” and others linked to information about the opening of passages. The “Measures for Turkish Cypriots” link is adjacent to the “Travel Advice” link, which refers potential visitors to warnings about “Potential Problems and Risks when Visiting the non-Government controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus”:

Recent developments in Cyprus following the partial lifting of restrictions on the freedom of movement, that have been imposed by the occupation regime over the last 29 years in the occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus, have wrongly created the impression that the occupation has ceased and a solution to the Cyprus problem has been reached .

As this is not the case, the purpose of this document is to make people aware of the situation as regards visits to the occupied area and to alert them as to the potential problems and risks they may face (<http://www.cyprusembassy.fi>, accessed April 23, 2005).

7 The same Travel Advice was also given by the Cyprus Embassy in Sweden. Both Finland and Sweden constitute major markets for Cypriot tourism.

8 In the same package, the Cypriot Government proposed that the two sides clear the mines at a distance of 300 meters on either side of the relevant routes or any other distance recommended by UN experts. Though the demining of the buffer zone by the United Nations started in November 2004, following a ceremonious detonation of the first mine, the two sides never reached a bilateral agreement on demining.

Usually, the visitor of an embassy website expects to find under “Travel Advice” information about travel, visa requirements or local conditions that might necessitate pre-emptive measures such as immunization or medical treatment. The “Travel Advice” in question, however, alerts visitors to the condition of illegality and warns them that, if they travel, they risk becoming involuntary accomplices. The 572-word text features the word *hygienic* once, the word *illness* once and the synthetic words *-legal* or *-law* ten times.

Travel advice addressed to international audiences as potential border-crossers (to the north) brings about the illegal aspects of potential financial contacts in the north. In contrast, civil advice addressed to domestic audiences as the potential receivers of the border-crossers warn against moral and health-related risks. Border-crossings that implicate violations of the law can be spotted, judged with objectivity and punished severely and paradigmatically in a court of law (regardless of or despite the transgressor’s nationality). Border-crossings, however, which implicate ‘moral’ transgressions, open bodies (national and physical). Mobile viruses and viruses of mobility are difficult to judge, to expose and to control. Instead, they demand a continuous state of alert as well as peer- and self-surveillance. “Greek Cypriots infected with AIDS in the *katechómena* [the occupied territories],” reads the title of a cover story on the Greek Cypriot *Phileleftheros* (March 7, 2005). According to the article, the number of new incidents of HIV/AIDS infection has increased over the last few months in “Cyprus” and “one of the possible reasons for this, could be, perhaps [sic], the careless sexual conduct which a small segment of the Greek Cypriots demonstrate during their visits [sic] to the occupied areas.” “Some of the new carriers,” we read some lines below, “were hanging out in the *katechómena*.” The Commission’s algorithmic delineation of controls and their limits is replicated here in order to delineate between order and disorder, between “those areas in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus exercises effective control” and that monstrous other that lies beyond the walls of the polis. The references to *katechómena* do not allude to a state of occupation but to a state of exemption (Agamben, 1998). The *katechómena* is located inside the territorial imaginary of the island but outside the moral, legal and cultural universe of the Republic of Cyprus.

Globalization has shown that mobility, cultural interaction and expanded markets have the capacity to wear down boundaries which were once taken for granted. Despite the new mobilities and flows across nation-state borders, however, economic uncertainty and fear of others are recoiling into a new dialectic of xenophobia and national security, what Richard Kearney has called “a *cordon sanitaire* around the nation-state (1999:258). Since the opening of the checkpoints, the Green Line is being redeployed as a *cordon sanitaire*. Only that Cyprus was never a nation-state. The foundation of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 as a state with two national communities put on hold the separatist movements, but also signalled the beginning of post-independence irredentist nationalisms. For Greek Cypriots, the events of 1974 marked the transformation and relocation of the national horizon, from irredentism to state sovereignty, from motherland

Greece to home, to the coasts of the north city of Kerynia (“*Den einai edó ta sinoras. Einai stin Kerínia*”). This national border stands in tension today with the Green Line as a state border. Whereas the former supplements the imaginary constitution of the national self with narratives of roots and war, the latter provides legitimization for the securitization of the life-world. The legalistic regulation of the movement of goods and people across the Green Line (which has been the focus of the Commission and the European Council since Cyprus’ accession) has been accompanied by another array of local, ideological and moral regulations. The object of these controls is not the other, but the Greek Cypriot polity. The daily reference to the risks ensuing from the crossing of the Green Line has given a patriotic aura to the moralistic assessment of civilian life. Providing an empirical threshold for distinguishing between weak (or sentimental) patriots (i.e., crossers) and strong patriots (i.e., non-crossers), between safe promiscuity (within borders) and dangerous promiscuity (outside the borders), between the polis and disorder, the crossing of the Green Line and its securitization serve the solidification of the Greek Cypriot polis against the very divide it wants to overturn.

In conclusion: Sustaining the aporia of the passage

Against the securitization of the public sphere and the adaptation of globalization to the market, Jacques Derrida has proposed revitalizing and radicalizing the institutions of democracy. The nation-state cannot respond to the idea of radical democracy—the principle of sovereignty and its appropriation by geopolitical othering, the restriction of rights to citizens, and the grounding of citizenship on autochthony being some of its historico-political limitations. What we need, Derrida suggests, is multiple new politics. But for this re-politicization to defy giving in to the nationalism of the nation-state or to the representation of socioeconomic hegemony, a necessary turn to philosophy is required. “The ‘true’ political action always engages with a philosophy. All action, all political decision making, must invent its norm or rule,” says Derrida:

If the whole political project would be the reassuring object or the logical or theoretical consequence of assured knowledge (euphoric, without paradox, without aporia, free of contradiction, without undecidabilities to decide), that would be a machine that runs without us, without responsibility, without decision, at bottom without ethics, nor law, nor politics. There is no decision nor responsibility without the test of aporia or undecidability (Derrida, 2000).

Literally translated, the Greek term “aporia” means without passage (*a poros*): the experience of non-passage, “not knowing where to go.” Derrida inverts this negativity: aporia is the experience of the passage (and the urgency to take a decision) without recourse to calculative thinking and a ready-made set of rules. Thus, aporia combines

the experience of the border (the *peras*, the limit; the experience of verging on the impossible) with the urgency of taking a step. This is a coming, or even a crossing, without a *pas* (passage), that is, without the possibility of applying a ready-made algorithm. And yet, at the same time, it involves a certain *pas* (“*il y a va d’un certain pas*”; Derrida, 1993:6). Aporia is paralyzing us before a limit, a border, before a separation, “in a way that is not necessarily negative”:

before a door, a threshold, a border, a line, or simply the edge or the approach of the other as such ... in the very place where *it would no longer be possible to constitute a problem*, a project, or a projection, that is, at the point where the very project or the problematic task becomes impossible and where we are exposed, absolutely without protection, without problem, and without prosthesis, without possible substitution, singularly exposed in our absolute and absolutely naked uniqueness, that is to say, disarmed, delivered to the other, incapable even of sheltering ourselves behind what could still protect the interiority of a secret. There, in sum, is this place of aporia, *there is no longer any problem* (Derrida, 1993:12).

Before the opening of the checkpoints, before the new border, the national subject finds refuge in the projection of a problem, a prosthesis, which relieves him/her of the aporia of decision: the display of “our” passports would equal “their” recognition. The politics of (non)recognition but often too, the politics of rapprochement and bi-communal activism, depends on such exchanges and substitutions. An avalanching number of bi-communal programs are now organized all over Cyprus, inviting youth to participate in workshops, camps, tours, joint research projects. The idea is to leave behind “our” differences and discover our common culture and common humanity: we suffered; they suffered; “we” all suffered. In both cases, responsibility becomes subsumed to the application of determinable knowledge.

Not to engage in any political program, always in the name of some absolute alterity that defies re-presentation and demands our respect, would substitute the violence of absolute silence for the violence of metaphysics. In order “to avoid the worst violence, the violence of the night which precedes or represses discourse” (Derrida, 1978:117), measures, policies, programs, calculations and deliberations are needed. Not to authorize and not to enact programs would not be just an instance of violence; it would be the worst kind of violence. Yet for the crossing/non-crossing of the border to be able to perform something new, to radicalize democracy, to enact a politics of reunification, it must remain indissociable from aporia. The new experience of the border (crossing it, debating it, living with it, parodying it) must be addressed as an event and not as a determined case. “You need to recommence,” writes Lyotard, underlining the urgency that is enacted when the habitual repetition of the pedagogical is ruptured by the philosophical moment. The experience of the event must invent passages other than the repetition of familiar formulas: “we know that commencing does not mean proceeding genealogically” (Lyotard, 1993:100-101).

The endurance of aporia, an endurance that, as Derrida insists, is not a passivity, interrupts judgment and creates the conditions for experiencing the event. The decision, “if there is one, must interrupt causality, be revolutionary” (Derrida, 2002:129). One cannot make a decision in the way one makes a theoretical judgment, obeying a rule, abiding by a norm or applying a determinant form of knowledge. A decision must implicate an opening to the event, the coming of the other. For there to be a decision, it must be heterogeneous to a chain of causes and effects, which is both predetermined by the context and re-confirms the effectiveness of that context by bestowing it with ritualized permanence through circles of repetition. The event, which ruptures both exchange and judgment, happens “under the aegis of the impossible” (Derrida, 2002:194). This kind of event is yet to invent its step across the divide.

“Wouldn’t such a step be politically premature?”, technicians of reconciliation might suggest. “Wouldn’t such a step violate security standards and compromise the *acquis*?”, designers of the Rule for the Regulation of the Trade across the Green Line might object. But how else could the aporetic passage preserve its structure of urgency and its pedagogical moment of newness if it didn’t reside in the ethical time of the premature?

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