

Re-signification of “Cyprus” with the Opening of New Lines of Communication

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ABSTRACT

Cyprus has lived through important changes in the last decade. These changes have been, and are, influential in the re-construction of the meaning of the island and of things and peoples related to it. The ongoing de-linking and re-linking of new lines of communication results in the re-articulation of the meaning of all things “Cypriot.” Since 1974, communication between the two main communities on the island was limited as the two were separated not only with a border but with a wall as well. In the meantime, lines of communication have been changing. The significance and authority of the mass media of both sides have been diminished, and the meaning of their messages has been over-determined, with the opening of additional lines of communication. We can count the Internet and the World Wide Web, as well as the formation of bi-communal groups on the island among these. The last and, perhaps, most significant change has been the opening of the border gates on the island (23 April 2003) which allowed interaction and face-to-face communication between hitherto isolated communities. In my dissertation I study how the opening of these and other lines of communication have/are leading to a re-signification of things and peoples related to Cyprus. I principally take the signifiers “Cyprus issue,” “peace,” “solution,” “European Union,” “Annan Plan,” “Turkish Cypriot,” “Greek Cypriot,” “Cypriot,” “Turkish,” “Greek,” and “European Cypriot” as cases, and observe both the temporal (from time to time) and spatial (from place to place) changes they are undergoing. The migration stories of Turkish Cypriots, their memories about the ‘home’, the ‘homeland’ and the re-turning ‘back’, the transfer of

these stories from older generations to the youth and the experiencing of “new” Cyprus are also discussed in this dissertation. I performed textual analysis of the main newspapers in the Turkish Cypriot Print Media. These newspapers are; Kıbrıs, Halkın Sesi, Afrika, Yenidüzen and Birlik. However, my analysis is not limited to the representations of the printed text, but covers the representations in the social, historical, and cultural text as well. I, therefore, also look at bi-communal activities, demonstrations, web sites, and virtual communities.

Keywords: communication, Cyprus, identity, representation, migration (displacement), memory and deconstruction.

ÖZ

Son on yılda Kıbrıs önemli değişimlere sahne oldu. Bu değişim, adanın ve onunla ilişkili şey/olay ve kişilerin anlamlandırılmasında etkili bir yeniden inşa sürecine girilmesine sebep oldu ve olmaya da devam etmektedir. İletişimin süregelen bağlantı koparıcı ya da bağlantı kurucu (bağları çözen ya da yeni bağlar yaratan) yeni kanalları, “Kıbrıslılığa” atfedilen tüm anlamlarda yeniden eklemlenmeler zinciri yarattı. 1974’ten beri iki toplum arasındaki iletişim sadece sınırın iki toplumu bölmesiyle değil aynı zamanda bir duvarla da sınırlandırılmıştı. Zaman içinde, toplumun sınırları/kanalları değişime uğradı ve uğruyor. Her iki taraftaki kitle iletişiminin önemi ve etkinliği azalırken, yaydıkları mesajların anlamı, iletişimin yeni kanallarının açılmasıyla belirlenir hale geldi. İnternet ve World Wide Web’i ve aynı zamanda adada iki toplumlu grupların oluşturulmasını bunlar arasında sayabiliriz. Ve son olarak da, belki de en önemli değişimi, adadaki, bugüne dek birbirinden kopmuş olan iki toplumda karşılıklı ve yüzyüze iletişimi mümkün kılacak sınır kapılarının açılmasını (23 Nisan 2003) saymalıyız. Doktora çalışmamda, açılan iletişim kanallarının Kıbrıs’la ilişkili şey/olay ve insanlara (toplumlara) dair nasıl bir yeniden-anlamlandırma sürecini tetiklediği üzerinde yoğunlaşıyorum. Esas olarak, “Kıbrıs sorunu”, “barış”, “çözüm”, “Avrupa Birliği”, “Annan Planı”, “Kıbrıslı Türk”, “Kıbrıslı Rum”, “Kıbrıslı”, “Türk” (“Türkiyeli”), “Rum” ve “Avrupalı Kıbrıslı” gibi gösterenleri ele alıp, bu kavramların hem zamansal olarak hem de mekansal olarak nasıl değiştiklerini gösteriyorum. Kıbrıslı Türklerin göç hikayeleri, “ev”e, “anayurda” ve geri “dönüş”e dair anıları, bu hikayelerin yaşlı kuşaktan genç kuşağa aktarımı ve bu “yeni” Kıbrıs’ın deneyimlenme biçimi de yoğunlaştığım

konular arasında. Çalışmada Kuzey Kıbrıs yazılı basınındaki Kıbrıs, Halkın Sesi, Afrika, Yenidüzen ve Birlik gazetelerini metin çözümlemesi ile analize tabi tutuyorum. Ancak çalışmadaki analiz basındaki yazılı metinlerin temsili ile sınırlı değil; sosyal, tarihsel ve kültürel metinlerde ortaya çıkan temsiller de kapsama dahil. Ayrıca, iki toplumlu aktiviteler, gösteriler, web siteleri ve sanal topluluklar da bu bağlamda çalışmaya dahil.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İletişim, Kıbrıs, kimlik, temsil, göç, hafıza ve yapı söküm

TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Regarding Cyprus as an Inquiry	3
1.2 Why do we need to (re)read Cyprus’ History	6
1.2.1 Communication(<i>less</i>) on the divided island of Cyprus	7
1.3 Theoretical Framework	13
1.4 Methodological Strategy	15
1.5 Opening Remarks	20
2 CYPRUS’ HISTORY OF THE “PRESENT”	22
2.1 Genealogy/History/Story of Division.....	25
2.1.1 Re-membering the sense of belonging	36
2.2 The social/political transformation in the north of Cyprus	52
3 READING THE DIVIDED CYPRUS	84
3.1 BORDER: separator and/or the unifier	85
3.2 ENGLISH: means of communication or the colonizer’s language?	94
3.3 Bi-communal Groups: Bridges for a Better Cyprus	103
3.4 Reimagining “Cyprus” @ Net.....	123
4 METAMORPHOSIS OF THE “GREEN LINE”	138
4.1 Border Constructions: Beyond/Before-After	141

4.1.1 The stories of “displacement”/“past”:when the grape vine became olive tree	148
4.2 The opening of the border as an archeological excavation	154
4.2.1 Experiencing the Impossible: Crossing to the “lost” past	160
4.2.2 Using the Fairy tales as extended metaphors	164
4.3 Those who are born into the <i>unrecognized</i> part of the divided country	170
4.3.1 Located in-between the different stories of the <i>past</i>	177
4.3.2 A prelude to the past.....	182
4.4 So far so close.....	189
5 CONCLUDING REMARKS	195
REFERENCES	205
APPENDICES	216
Appendix A	217
Appendix B.....	218
Appendix C.....	219

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Cyprus has gone through important changes in the last decade. These changes have been, and are, influential in the re-construction of the meaning¹—and/or the identity and/or reality—of the island and of things and peoples related to it. The ongoing de-linking and re-linking of new lines of communication results in the re-articulation of the meaning of all things “Cypriot.”

From 1974-2003, communication between the two main communities on the island was limited as the two were separated not only by a border but with a wall as well. In the meantime, lines of communication have changed. The significance and authority of the mass media on both sides have slightly decreased, and the meaning of their messages has been increasingly over-determined, with the opening of additional lines of communication. The alternative lines of communication have increased so much that the mass media in the North, for example, has responded by changing its messages, resulting in some dramatic turn-arounds. We can count the Internet and the World Wide Web, as well as the formation of bi-communal groups on the island among these. The last, and perhaps, the most significant change has been the opening of the border gates on the island (23 April 2003) which allowed interaction and face-

¹ During this study I use the signifiers “truth”, “reality”, “identity”, “meanings” and/or “things” related to Cyprus in intertextual relationship with “solution”, “peace”, “Annan Plan”, etc which call upon and refer to each other. All of the abovementioned signifiers refer to Cyprus and in order to understand these signifiers (each have multi-signifieds), it is crucial to understand that within the signification of “Cyprus” they are among many other signifiers which signifies/represents Cyprus’ meaning, identity, reality and truth.

to-face communication between hitherto isolated communities.

In this dissertation I study how the opening of these and other lines of communication have been leading to the re-signification of things and people related to Cyprus. I principally take the signifiers “Cyprus issue,” “peace,” “solution,” “European Union,” “Annan Plan,” “Turkish Cypriot,” “Greek Cypriot,” “Cypriot,” “Turkish,” “Greek,” and “European Cypriot” as cases, and observe both the temporal and spatial changes they are undergoing.

This dissertation covers the last decade, especially the years between 2001-2004, which was a period of intensive political, cultural and social changes. I analyzed this period in depth by taking into account numerous historical markers. Among these historical markers are the “mass demonstrations,” the “opening of the gates,” the “referenda,” “the accession of The Republic of Cyprus into the European Union”, “the general election(s)” and the presidential election in Northern Cyprus. The above-mentioned historical markers are taken into consideration as the focal points of the study.

I performed a textual analysis of the main newspapers of North Cyprus published in the said period. I have selected, AFRİKA, HALKIN SESİ and KIBRIS newspapers as “non-party” newspapers which are published in Northern Cyprus and I have selected BİRLİK²—as a newspaper which belongs to a right-wing political party, Nationalistic Union Party (UBP), and YENİDÜZEN— a newspaper which belongs to a left-wing political party, the Republican Turkish Party (CTP). However, my

² In 2005 Birlik newspaper is closed and since then a new newspaper, Güneş, became National Unity Party’s publication.

analysis is not limited to the representations of only the printed text, but covers the representations in the social, historical, and cultural text as well. I, therefore, also looked at the bi-communal activities, demonstrations, web sites, virtual communities and also social relations that have been constructed/re-constructed after the “partial” opening of the border. As these examples indicate, my study is limited to “meanings” that are constructed in mainly North Cyprus. Unfortunately, my deficiency in Greek confines me to representations from Northern Cyprus.

1.1 Regarding Cyprus as an inquiry

The Cyprus issue, and consequently things and meanings related to Cyprus, has been one of the main agenda items for Cyprus, Turkey, Greece and the European Union in terms of their relations with each other in the recent past. Thus, it has become one of the most contested issues. Actually, the meaning of things constituted Cypriot is in crisis within Cyprus itself. As Stuart Hall puts it; “all meanings are produced within history and culture. They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is, thus, no single, unchanging, universal “true meaning”” (1997b, p. 32). Adopting this understanding, I can say that “meaning” related to Cyprus is put in question and rearticulated during the time intervals of this study, which are periods of intense social change. Therefore, my study is the investigation of these meanings and things in time and space, from overlapping or contradictory perceptions.

To understand these alterations in Cyprus, the purpose of this study is to trace, how meaning and things related to Cyprus is/are changing, how they are re-articulated with the opening of new lines of communication that have been listed above. Thus, the research question for this study is how “meaning” is re-constructed within

different texts whether printed, historical or cultural and how these textual fabrics are woven and re-woven when new lines of communication open-up.

It is important to study such a subject because throughout history Cyprus has undergone many changes and nowadays it is witnessing one of the most important turning points of its history. It is also significant due to the fact that Cyprus is one of the last two countries whose capital Nicosia is divided into two with a border/wall/line going through it and which has two municipalities. (The other example that comes to mind is Jerusalem.) Furthermore, as a result of a new change, it is also the only country whose half is in the European Union (since May 1, 2004) and the other half is not. For these reasons, this study would be valuable for a better understanding of “present Cyprus” and all things and meanings related to it.

While mentioning meaning and how it is constructed, it is, however important to highlight the way in which meaning will be understood, used and applied within the study. For Ferdinand de Saussure, meaning is the result of the difference between signifiers. According to Saussure: “*In the language itself, there are only differences.* Even more important than that is the fact that, although in general a difference presupposes positive terms between which the difference holds, in a language there are only differences, *and no positive terms.*” (1983, p. 149). Thus, words within a language mean something only in relation with other signs around them. Starting from that point, Jacques Derrida adds that, meaning is also deferred, never fully present. For Derrida, “the signifier” always means many signifieds. Furthermore,

Derrida states that *iterability*³ is essential since it is what actually makes possible the signification. We always speak and write with “stolen” words. By *iterability* Derrida indicates the continuous repeatability, and thus, the resignification of meaning but always a repetition with a difference. Everything, including the signifying subject, is intertextual, is textually interrelated and “there is nothing outside the text” (Derrida, 1988).

Meaning is constructed and it is the result of an articulation. What makes this construction and articulation possible is difference. It is at the root of meaning. Difference is more original than any conventionally accepted “origin” of meaning such as the signifying subject, but it is not an origin in the usual sense. It is not one thing but always refers to a relationship between things. Because of difference, there can be no one-to-one correspondence between a signifier and its signified. The signified is always differed and deferred. The referral to a different other is irreducible, making every signifier polysemic. For instance, a sign refers to its own meaning/identity/truth/reality; these are all interrelated and refer to each other. Hence, for a better *understanding*⁴, we need to *interstand*. As Taylor & Saarinen argue “understanding has become impossible because nothing stands under. Interstanding becomes unavoidable because everything stands between” (1994, p. Interstanding 2).

In short, “meaning” is always yet-to-come and it is never completely and fully present. Meaning always exceeds any current articulation of it. Therefore, meaning is

³ Iterable (Iter, “once again,” from *itara*, Sanskrit “other”): *repeatable*, but in the sense of repeatable-with-difference. Iterability undermines “context” as a final governor of meanings. “Iterability alters, contaminating parasitically what it identifies and enables to repeat” (Derrida, 1988, p. 62).

⁴ The word “understanding” connotes a one to one correspondence of a surface-depth relationship.

only momentarily stopped. It is at this point, where meaning is momentarily stopped, that we can build upon and discuss its construction.

1.2 Why do we need to (re)read Cyprus' History?

Classical history attributes a telos to history in order to understand the “present”. This study is conducted by applying a genealogical approach which criticizes this understanding. Michel Foucault says, "Let us give the term “genealogy” to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allow us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today” (1994, p. 42).

From the genealogical perspective, all "history is written in accordance with a commitment to the issues of the present moment, and as such it intervenes in the present moment" (Lecht, 1994, p. 112). Genealogical study does not seek the origin of the present in the past in a teleological manner, but traces the non-necessary route of our arrival to the present. Thus, attributing a telos to the present, a telos located in the past, commits the error of *metalepsis*⁵. What the past “is”, is always constructed in the present. The telos is projected to the past from the present. Genealogy, thus, seeks “history-of-the-present”. How meaning related to Cyprus is re-signified within successive configurations of the present therefore forms a major component of this study.

⁵ A logical fallacy where an effect is taken for a cause or the cart put in front of the horse.

Since 1974 Cyprus has been divided into two as Northern and Southern Cyprus—as two administrative bodies. Although it is a very prolonged and tragic story, it can be summarized with a single sentence; “Everything changed in 1974” (Kızılyürek, 2002, p. 14).

One of the most crucial elements in the identification of the two communities on the island was and is “nationalism”. With the influence of nationalistic discourses the two main communities in Cyprus came to be delineated in a particular way. As Bekir Azgin states; “as the ideology of Greek nationalism spread throughout Cyprus, it created the predictions for an ethnic conflict, and provided the underlying logic for the denial of Turkish culture on the island. This, in turn, accelerated Turkish nationalism” (2000, p. 148). That is, the two main communities on the island, who were increasingly seen as externally different from each other with the influence of nationalism, came to be physically separated with the division of the island in 1974. Nationalism in itself denies differences within a country in its effort to unify and totalize *the* nation. This, in turn, hindered the construction of a cooperative meaning on the island across those divided and totalized identities. To put it another way, within that period, the two nationalistic discourses, with their identification and dependency towards their supposed motherlands, hindered the formation of “local” Cypriot identities—both Turkish and Greek Cypriot (Arslan, 2001). This was also an obstacle for the construction of a cooperative meaning of “Cyprus” across those divided identities and things related to them.

1.2.1 Communication(*less*) on the Divided Island of Cyprus

On an island which has been divided into two since 1974, not only geographically but also in terms of relations, communication between the two communities on the island has been limited. For instance, there has been no direct telephone line between the two parts of Cyprus since 1974⁶. For years, the only communication between the two communities on the island was the mass media which generally was in support of the official discourses of their respective governments. These discourses were by and large nationalistic discourses which constructed the other community on the island as the external “other”. Different studies show us that the media of North Cyprus commonly portrayed Greek Cypriots as the ontologically different “other”. The same can also be said for the Greek Cypriot media relying on their nationalistic representations (see also Papadakis, 2003, Arslan, 2002 & Güresun 2001).

Without putting aside the diversity/difference among these communications, I can say that until the time that the people of Cyprus started to communicate via the Internet or/and started to form bi-communal groups, the communication—which was controlled by the dominant discourses on both sides—between the two main communities on the island were the most significant factors which prevented the construction of a different, hybrid/cooperative/shared meaning on the island.

With every new line of communication, the meaning that is communicated is re-articulated, since every new linkage brings about a new relation of difference, and hence, a new and different articulation and interstanding of meaning. Among various

⁶ The only telephone network between the two communities is/was the telephone lines that were assembled through a project by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR). It is a network in which telephone lines from both sides (16-20 lines) of Cyprus are connected to one another at Ledra Palace. At the beginning (1974) there were only 2 lines.

communication lines, I can specify: mass demonstrations (which can be accepted as a representation of a “decision” or “wish” and also a communication line which gives an opportunity to the Turkish Cypriots to transport their wish/decision to other Turkish Cypriots and to the world); general elections (which toppled the existing authorities in North Cyprus who could directly influence all the dynamics regarding the Cyprus issue); the referenda (in which Turkish Cypriots voted “yes” and Greek Cypriots voted “no” on the Annan Plan for reunification); and the accession of the Republic of Cyprus (which represents Southern Cyprus geographically, but also all citizens of the Republic in terms of citizenship) to the European Union — which closed the European “gate” for Turkish Cypriots as a community, but individually provided the possibility for European citizenship. In each of these instances, communication on the island is continuously de-linked and re-linked.

With the opening of all these new lines of communication, specifically “the border”⁷, as the signifier of separation, came to be seen as increasingly “undecidable”. It could no longer function as a separator because the very same border became the meeting point of the two main communities. By the use of the term “*undecidability*”, Derrida argues that signs “have a double, contradictory, undecidable value that always derives from their syntax, whether the latter is in a sense “internal,” articulating and combining under the same yoke,..., two incompatible meanings, or “external,” dependent on the code in which the word is made to function” (Derrida, 1981, p. 221). That is to say, for Derrida, the undecidability of meaning is a result of the signifiers’ differential, iterable, and polysemic nature.

⁷ Within this study the “border” is considered as a signifier which has multi signifieds.

As it is in the case of many things in Cyprus, this geographical distinction between Northern Cyprus and Southern Cyprus especially for the people who are living in the Northern part of Cyprus is “undecidable”. On one hand, “the border” seems like a separator separating the European and the non-European. However, Turkish Cypriots who are the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and their children automatically became the citizens of the European Union since 1st May 2004. That is to say, although they are geographically not European, they are individually European.

The “border” which has an important role in limiting, and drawing the limits of their identity within nationalistic discourses, became a “place” where the common meaning related to Cyprus is established by the people of Cyprus who craved for a solution, especially the bi-communal groups. At the same time this border is also likened to cell bars by the Turkish Cypriots who yearned for a solution⁸. Similarly, as Niyazi Kızılyürek mentions, “The “Buffer Zone”, or more appropriately “No Man’s Land”, which is formed around the line dividing the two communities, has become an area of exile for the Cypriots who are open to critical thinking” (Kızılyürek, 2002, p. 14). What these different portrayals show is that the same “border” acquires different meanings within different discourses and within different circumstances. That is, the border, or the UN Buffer Zone that separated the two main communities on the island, afterwards became the meeting point of the people who wanted a “solution” in Cyprus—especially for bi-communal groups— and then with the opening of the borders it became a passageway or communication line which supplied face-to-face communication for the peoples of Cyprus.

⁸ Cyprus is a jail/we are prisoners within it/the green line is the cell bar/ he (referring to Denktaş) became the guardian/we are wasted in it (was amongst the most popular refrains in the squares where the mass demonstrations took place) [Kıbrıs mapushane/İçinde biz mahkum/yeşil hat parmaklık/Beybaba gardiyan oldu/içinde biz ziyan olduk]

Actually, we see the importance of the boundary here. That is, although the border seems like a separator, it is undecidable. Is it a border of Northern Cyprus? Or is it a border of Southern Cyprus? Or both of them? Or neither of them? In short, there would not be a South Cyprus if there was no North Cyprus and vice versa. In other words, if there was not a “border”, neither of them could exist. The border is necessary for the constitution of any identity. Although it is at the limit or margin, it is of *central* importance in the construction of one’s identity/meaning/reality/truth.

Other communication lines between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots are formed in the cyberspace. It is through the virtual computer world that the Cypriots form chat groups on the net and also construct bi-communal web sites. While discussing interpersonal interactions, mediated situations which come into being through writing or printing and also through “virtual communities”, Briankle G. Chang argues, “the emphasis is always on the common sharing of material or symbolic wealth, on social intercourse, mutual exchange, or the imparting of feelings and thoughts to one another” (1996, p. xi). Cypriots—both Greek and Turkish—share their feelings and interacted, communicated with each other through this communication line. Eventually, they constructed a contested and hybrid notion of Cypriotness on the Net, as “netizens”⁹ of a virtual Cyprus and not as citizens of their respective “nations”.

⁹ The term “netizen” was used by Tuğrul İlter during his presentation in *Ethics in Communication: culture, community, identity...*, titled “Ethical Considerations on Intellectual Property Rights”. 2004, EMU, Cyprus.

One of the most influential communication lines between the two parts of Cyprus was “the partial opening of the border”. Since the border separates the two main communities on the island, “the border in the official constructions of Cyprus is more imaginary than it is geographical. The nationalist discourses’ yearning towards their so-called motherlands build an imaginary wall between the two main communities in Cyprus, and their hybrid commonality—the Cypriotness of their identity—is weakened day by day” (Yaşın, 2010, p. 10). Furthermore, as Mehmet Yaşın states, “the border between the northern and southern parts of Cyprus is taken to be symbolic for more than it is, as though it is represented as a cultural distinction between “East” and “West”” (2000, p. 10). Nowadays this assumption has become more visible. In today’s circumstances, the border between Northern Cyprus and Southern Cyprus, which symbolizes the distinction between East and West, is more markedly underlined with the identities of “European” and “non-European” because of the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the European Union. However, this assumption is limited to the geographical identification. As was mentioned before, when the subject is “citizenship”, it is undecidable.

Brian G. Chang argues that writing is a transitive act. For him, “To write is to answer a call; it is minimally, to respond to a need to make one’s ideas public: to communicate” (1996, p. ix). Regarding this, it can be said that the mass demonstrations and also the general elections which were held in North Cyprus during December 2003 were also transitive acts. By having mass demonstrations in favor of a solution in Cyprus, the people of North Cyprus were writing their story, making their ideas public to the world. They used mass demonstrations as a line of

communication in order to spread their wish/desire for “peace” or/and a “solution” in Cyprus. The same can also be said in regards to the general elections.

As it was mentioned in the “introduction”, meaning is not stable and it can come about differently in both its temporal and spatial aspects. In this respect, within the lines of communication that have been described earlier on, communication is iterated and re-signified—that is, differed from the description of the one coming before it.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study considers communication in Cyprus, how this communication is dependent on the linking, de-linking, and re-linking of communication lines and how this process influences the construction and re-construction of “meaning” in Cyprus.

“Communication” is a word that is etymologically related to “the Latin *communicare* (to make common, to share). It can also be traced to *munia/muntare*, a root connoting mutual help, exchange (as in *munus, mutuus*) and interaction among those who belong to the same community” (Chang, 1996, p. x). The overall understanding that we gain from this explanation is that communication emphasizes common shared meanings, which include material, symbolic wealth, social intercourses, mutual exchange, or the imparting of feelings and thought to one another. Similarly, Erdoğan defines it as; unity, cooperation, process, a system of sending and receiving messages, etc. (2002). However, throughout time “communication” has continued to be rearticulated in different ways.

It is important to note that etymology does not reduce the polysemy of the word communication but helps us trace some of the relationships that temporarily fix a meaning for it. The signifier “communication”, like other signifiers, is irreducibly polysemic, and stands for many signifieds. In the telling and retelling of its story, communication has each time been re-defined, explained differently from the one coming before it. Accordingly, Erol Mutlu states that in 1972 E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson scanned for definitions of communication within the field and found 126 different definitions. Evidently, the number of definitions has increased up to the present (1995). Within the different textual networks, weaves and linkages we can attribute different meanings to the word “communication”. It can both refer to a face-to-face communication and also to a song which is sung by a singer. Thus, communication is not limited to semantics, semiotics and linguistics, but can also designate non-semantic movements such as the communication of a movement, a tremor, shock or even a displacement of force which can all be propagated and transmitted (Derrida, 1988). As it is in my case, it can refer to both communication in the virtual world and also to communication through mass demonstrations.

We cannot come to a simple, unique answer to the question of what is communication, because the polysemy of the word communication cannot be reduced. Furthermore, as Derrida has argued,

If *communication* has several meanings, and if this plurality could not be reduced, then from the outset it would not be justifiable to define communication *itself* as the transmission of a meaning, assuming that we are capable of understanding one another as concerns each of these words (transmission, meaning, etc.) (Derrida, 1988, p. 1).

As far as meaning is concerned, the irreducible polysemy of the word communication precludes its definition as the transmission of a singular, complete, final meaning.

A quotation explaining one way of how communication can be ensured is as follows: “...different or distant places can communicate between each other by means of a given passageway or opening” (Derrida, 1988, p. 1). This can be used as one of the best explanations in enlightening communication in Cyprus. The Cyprus case perfectly suits this claim in every line of communication, especially in regards to the “opening of the gates”. The opening of the gates or/and the permission for the bi-communal groups to meet at Ledra Palace can be accepted as “passageway” that allows a possibility for the two main communities on the island to communicate with each other. Within such different lines of passageways, the word “communication” is reconstructed without excluding the definition coming before it. Therefore, “meaning” related to Cyprus is also re-constructed in a similar manner, that is, continuously.

In a few words, the communication lines that I have mentioned in the previous section give us different configurations and definitions of communication.

1.4 Methodological Strategy

Within the conventional understanding of methodology, it gives you a procedure (e.g. epistemological, ontological) that you can apply to your study to make it fit into the parameters of that procedure. Generally speaking, what all, or most methods have in common is that they are based on a given knowledge prior to and distinct from the knowledge and other representations of one’s own study. However, as I stated in the

previous sections, meaning is not static and fixed but is open to its future becoming. This future becoming, what is yet-to-come, is unforeseeable, and incalculable. As Derrida states; “[...] it’s better to let the future open — this is the axiom of deconstruction, the thing from which it always starts out and which binds it, like the future itself...” (Derrida, 2002, p. 21). It always exceeds the predictions, the limits, and the bounds of any such prior knowledge. Thus, the method/strategy that I used in this study should not be static or fixed by the application of a single method based on a pre-determined knowledge. The result of operationalization by applying such a method would be both reductive and irresponsible: a reduction of the study to the “Procrustean Bed”¹⁰ of an inflexible method unable to accommodate what is yet to come. My methodological strategy should be flexible and leave open passageways for understanding, studying the “truth”, “identity” and “meaning” by putting it in play from eternal stability and fixation.

Furthermore, communication is an interdisciplinary field of study; and as such includes different disciplines —media studies, cultural studies, public relations and advertising, social sciences, humanities and so on. As a combination of different fields, there are different methodologies within the field of communication. Since different disciplines are interrelated, the usage of several methods for understanding and studying communication gives a gateway to the researcher to study communication as an interdisciplinary field of study. Jean-François Lyotard’s

¹⁰ Procrustes is a mythical Greek giant who was a thief and a murderer. He would capture travelers and tie them to an iron bed. If they were longer than the bed, he would hack off their limbs until they fitted into it. If they were too short, he would stretch them to the right size. A “procrustean” method is one that relentlessly tries to shape a person, an argument, or an idea to a predetermined pattern (Hirsch, Kett & Trefil, 1993, p. 42). Here, it is also worthy to note that, at the same time some “reduction” arising from interdisciplinary relationship and translation is unavoidable. Therefore, this is a question of ethical responsibility facing reduction vs. reduction.

commentary on interdisciplinary work elaborates the particular nature of this interdisciplinarity;

The idea of interdisciplinary approach is specific to the age of delegitimation and its hurried empiricism. The relation to knowledge is not articulated in terms of the realization of the life of the spirit or the emancipation of humanity, but in terms of the users of a complex conceptual and material machinery and those who benefit from its performance capabilities. They have at their disposal no metalanguage or metanarrative in which to formulate the final goal and correct use of that machinery. But they do have brainstorming to improve its performance (1984, p. 52).

I took “bricolage” as strategic approach in my study. In a few words, “bricolage, is a skill that involves using bits of whatever is to be found and recombining them to create something new” (Phillips, 2000, p. 151). As it is for Michel Foucault, who argues that every discipline or field of study creates its own object of study within it. If we bear in mind that communication is an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary field of study, it is not possible to limit the study to one methodology. Bricolage is a methodological strategy in which the researcher is seen as a bricoleur and s/he uses whatever methods or methodological approaches s/he finds useful in dealing with the problems that her/his research keeps throwing at her/him.

Starting from this point I use various *strategies* in this study. By using bricolage as a methodology of my study I gain a freedom; that is a freedom of choice within my own study. Once again recalling that within this study meaning is not static and is open-ended, it is noteworthy to state that in order to understand this dynamic, deconstruction is the most suitable way of grasping the signification and re-signification of “Cyprus”. As a bricoleur I do not give any privilege to one of the methods in my study. Instead, I apply deconstruction as a way of understanding how meaning is constructed; I did a textual analysis of various texts—including news

articles, editorials, announcements, slogans, web sites...etc. and also I consider cultural and historical texts— I conducted interviews with some of the bi-communal group members and also the Turkish Cypriots who have visited their old homes in the South after the opening of the borders and also with their children. By employing a variety of methods in this way, I constructed my own methodological approach.

Once again it should be emphasized that one of the main *strategies* that I used within the conduct of this study is deconstruction. The main aim of deconstruction is to deconstruct the inheritance¹¹. As Bennington states “.... deconstruction aims to deconstruct “the greatest totality”, the interrelated network of concepts bequeathed to us by and as that metaphysic [of presence]...” (2000, p. 64). It is this metaphysics which leads us to believe that meaning, identity, truth are there, fully present with no need for representation, mediation, signification or communication.

Derrida’s notion of “deconstruction” cannot be defined as a theory or a method, but it has been defined as a way of reading; not just the reading of written texts but of the world as well. I think this is the most appropriate approach in order to understand the constitution of meaning. As Stuart Sim puts it, "a deconstructive reading displays just how much textuality is always a network of unfinished meanings, with “each” text differing from itself" (1998, p. 227). That is, meaning is a textual construction which is always open to (re-)construction. Specifically, texts do not have unchangeable identities, origins, and ends. Similarly while referring to texts Derrida states that it is:

¹¹ “Inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task... there is no backward looking fervour in this reminder, no traditionalist flavour, Reaction, reactionary or reactive are but interpretations of the structure of inheritance. That we *are* heirs does not mean that we *have* or that we *receive* this or that, some inheritance that enriches us one day with this or that, but that the *being* of what we are *is* first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not” (Derrida, 1995, p. 54).

no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity....(Derrida, 1979, p. 84).

In short, what is explained here is that every reading of a text is a beginning, and that every text indicates another text. Moreover, there is “undecidability” amongst texts, in which none of them has any privilege over the other. That is why no one methodological text can be privileged and used as the basis of a procedural form of judgement.

Having examined deconstruction as put forth by Derrida, textuality and the way meaning is constructed within differential networks, I would further like to mention that since deconstruction, as in Derrida’s understanding, is a parasitic activity, we can assume that it lives within my study. Shortly, I intend not only to talk about but also to perform deconstruction in my study. As Derrida states:

Deconstruction is inventive or it is nothing at all; it does not settle for methodical procedures, it opens up a passageway, it marches ahead and leaves a trail; its writing is not only performative, it produces rules – other conventions – for new performatives and never installs itself in the theoretical assurance of a simple opposition between performative and constative (Derrida, 1989, p. 42).

Among the means that I used within this study are interviews. By doing so, I tried to learn about things that cannot be observed directly by other means, to understand a social actor’s perspective, to infer the communicative properties and processes of interpersonal relationships, and finally to elicit the distinctive language—vocabularies, idioms, jargon, forms of speech—used by social actors in their natural settings (see also Lindlof, 1995).

The interviews that I conducted for my dissertation are aimed at bi-communal group members, displaced Turkish Cypriots and their children. Among diverse types of interviews, I used unstructured interviews with the people of North Cyprus in order to know how their perception of Cyprus has changed after experiencing the bi-communal groups and/or the opening of the border. I looked at their way of constructing their home, homeland, identity, etc. In the unstructured interviews, “the researcher is focused and trying to get information, but he or she exercises relatively little control over the responses of the informant” (Berger, 1993, p. 112). By doing so, I tried to get an understanding of how the Turkish Cypriots’ view of reality has changed after the opening of the border. Actually this kind of interview is versatile, it is used “when you want to know about the lived experience of fellow human beings...” (Bernard, 2002, p. 208).

On the other hand, I used semi-structured interviews while conducting interviews with bi-communal group members. Within this kind of interview, “the interviewer usually has a written list of questions to ask the informant but tries, to the extent possible, to maintain casual quality found in unstructured interviews” (Berger, 1993, p.112). I chose this kind of interview because groups that are bi-communal in nature participate for a common purpose and there could be some specific questions that I can direct to the members.

In brief, I used various methods in shaping my research, and by using bricolage I established my own style in order to conduct my study of the above-mentioned subject matter.

1.5 Opening Remarks

With the changing circumstances, with every articulation of relation and with the opening of new lines of communication “Cyprus”, and also meanings and things related to it are continuously re-constructed. Briefly, with the differentiation of “communication”, that is with the re-articulation of “communication—without excluding the one coming before it— its definition becomes different from the previous one. In regards to the re-articulation, re-linking and delinking of communication, meanings and things related to Cyprus also become different from their previous significations. This is a continuous process, which never ends. In other words, there is no end to becoming—and neither to the becoming of “Cyprus”.

The metaphysical claim is that things (meaning, identity, reality, truth) exist by themselves in full and complete presence with no need for mediation, representation, signification or communication. However, the history of the metaphysics of presence, which deconstruction highlights, shows that “full” and “complete” presence is differed and deferred by its own alterity, by its difference within and by its becoming. Seen in this light, the full presence (of meaning, reality, identity, truth) is always-already substituted by a representative, a signifier, a medium or another means of communication.

When we consider the deconstruction already at work in things themselves, meaning is in a process of “becoming”; it is not fully and completely present but is always-already open to its future to come. Generally speaking, it deals with the “future to come”. For instance, I do not know what the future will bring to me, and as Derrida says being “open to the future” is in things themselves.

Chapter 2

HISTORY OF THE PRESENT

“The past—or, more accurately—pastness—is a position”.
Michel-Rolph Trouillot

In its historical texture, Cyprus has lived through different socio-cultural upheavals and it has been a terrain of identity conflicts. For centuries it has been a place marked and defined by different cultural inscriptions signed by: the Ottomans, the Hellenes, the British, Muslims, Christians, Greeks and Turks. Throughout its history “Cyprus has for millennia occupied a shifting position in terms of symbolic categories of east and west which frame the division of Christian liturgy, and Islam and Christianity, Occident and Orient” (Scott, 2002, p. 106).

Today the island is divided into two parts by what is known as the “Green Line”, as northern and southern Cyprus. Although it has a long *history* this division can be summarized as the result of a national conflict between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities, which are the two main communities, on the island. Since 1974, the 183 km long “so called” Green Line divides the island not only geographically but also more or less demographically and ethnically; with North Cyprus dominated by Turkish Cypriots, and South Cyprus dominated by Greek Cypriots. Today, Cyprus is the only country in the European Union with one city—Nicosia—as the capital of both political entities and it is the only “country” which has two parts, one of which is in the European Union and the other not. Thus,

when we talk about Cyprus, the “border”—and automatically, the division of the island—is the first issue that comes to mind, the border as a signifier of division, which separates the north and south, Turkish and Greek, European and non-European, *legitimate* and *illegitimate*, East and West¹² and also past and present.¹³

Today’s Cyprus is a country that can only be experienced as “two” countries, because the border, which divides the island, functions as the border between two different countries with several “check points”. When one looks at the map of Cyprus one sees a Green Line. This “Green Line” was first drawn in 1964, after the ethnic conflict between the two main communities of Cyprus;

This marked the beginning of a process of geographical division between Greek-Cypriot run areas and Turkish-Cypriot enclaves, which was epitomized by the demarcation of Greek and Turkish sectors in the capital Nicosia, respectively located south and north of the UN-controlled “Green Line”. During this period the role of the state (by then completely run by Greek-Cypriots, the Turkish-Cypriots having been “withdrawn”) was under question, due to its inability to tackle the sporadic violence that endured (Demetriou, 2007, p. 992).

Since 1974 this UN patrolled line separates the country from within and at the same time runs almost its entire width. From 1974 to 2003 this “Green Line” was a communication and passage barrier between the two parts of the island. There was almost no contact between the two parts of the island. In this chapter of my dissertation I give a brief “history” of this division while concentrating on the two main communities’ perceptions of Cyprus as a country/homeland. However, my

¹² Please see also Introduction, p.12.

¹³ However, here, we should keep in mind that with the changing circumstances and conjunctures it became a third place which enabled the intercultural or transcultural interactions, exchanges and communications. In several parts of this dissertation different significations and representations of this very same border will be discussed. As it is mentioned in the introduction, in this study the border is taken as a signifier which stands for many signifieds at different times, with different perspectives, and in different places.

research focuses on the north of Cyprus. I then discuss the social and political alteration of the Turkish Cypriot community.

The border in Cyprus, after a 29 years break (from 1974 to 2003), was re-opened to controlled crossings on 23rd April 2003. Now there are 7 border-crossing points¹⁴ where “Cypriots” can pass from the north to the south and vice versa. The first gate at Ledra Palace in Nicosia, was opened on 23rd April 2003, and the last one was Lokmacı, almost five years later, on 3rd April 2008. There are ongoing discussions about the opening of new “gates”, and the bringing down of walls on the island. We are living at a “time” in Cyprus when it is easy for us to say that it was “unforeseeable” a decade ago because for the years from 1974 to 2003 the “Green Line” was seen as a symbol or signifier of division, rift and separation. “Based on the assumption that proximity is required for the dissemination of information and social interaction, the presence of the “Green Line” assumes that contact and communication can be physically severed by partition” (Gumpert & Drucker, 1998, p. 238). That is, the border was a barrier of communication between the two parts of Cyprus. Today, Cyprus is still divided into two with a border/line, but it no longer acts as a physical barrier between the two sides nor does it prevent communication between north and south. The significance of the border altered after the opening of the gates, and the uncrossable became the crossable. It still divides the island but not as before. The significance is repeated but with a difference. These are all related to Derrida’s discussion of the concept of “iterability”: “the logic that ties repetition to alterity” (1988, p. 7). The meaning of the border as a signifier of division is altered; its function is repeated but differently. Therefore I believe it is not an exaggeration to

¹⁴ Today, there are 7 border-crossing points which are open to the passages in Cyprus: three in Nicosia (Ledra Palace, Kermiya/Metehan and Lokmacı), one in Famagusta (2.5 Mile), one in Beyarmudu, Bostancı and one in Yeşilırmak.

say that we are living/experiencing a Cyprus which was “unforeseeable” and “unpredictable” a decade ago. It is a good example for seeing the endless structure of the future; you never know what will happen in the future. Here, I do not use the “end” as a telos, but to emphasize openness to its future becoming. There is no specific destination in the word “end”. As Jacques Derrida puts it, “What is happening is happening to age itself; it strikes a blow at the teleological order of history. What is coming, in which the untimely appears, is happening to time but it does not happen in time” (1994, p. 77). The changes that Cyprus and its people have been witnessing over a decade, especially since 2003, have had the effect of manifesting this “unpredictable” present.

The present situation was experienced as “unpredictable”, especially for the Turkish Cypriot community because for years the division of the island was strengthened by the administrative/governmental discourses. The negotiations between the leaders of the two main communities had been continuing without bringing about any immediately noticeable change. I believe, for understanding the present situation and its alteration we should go over the division: the history/genealogy of the division.

2.1 Genealogy/History/Story of Division

Today’s situation was seen as “unpredictable” because the authorities on both “parts” of the island relied, until the end of the 1990s, on nationalistic discourses which were nourished by the nationalistic cultural atmosphere on the island. The nationalistic discourses were fundamental to that division. Thus, to begin understanding the de facto situation in Cyprus, we need to critically review the received history of this division; a division which was consolidated and took on a new meaning with the national/ethnic conflict among the two main communities in Cyprus.

In Cyprus, nationalities, both Turkish and Greek, are/were constructed and articulated in and through a particular relationship between the self and the other. Because, nation “is a form of identity that competes with other kinds of collective identity” (J. Hutchinson & A. D. Smith, 1994, p. 4). These separate identities are distinguished by reference to what they are not. In the Cyprus case, the two main communities—Turkish and Greek Cypriots — have competed with each other for years. The de facto division is the “outcome” of the conflict between the nationalist goals of the two main communities on the island. However,

the claims of the ethnic communities on the island hark back to periods in time well before the appearance of the Greek and Turkish nation state. The Greek Cypriots point to an Hellenic cultural legacy that stretches back to antiquity and privileges the arrival of Achaeans in Cyprus around 1200 B.C. The Turkish Cypriots locate their history in the Ottoman Turks’s conquering of the island in 1571: this terminated a period of Venetian control (1489-1571), and before that, a Lusignan dynasty of Jerusalem France (1191-1489) a time of the Crusades (Calotychos, 1998, p. 5).

The narrations of the nationalistic discourses on both sides relied on these “projections”. By projections to the past, national discourses have attempted to understand the “present” by searching for its teleological roots in the past. The present projects of the nations and ethnicities are founded and governed by projections to the past.

Through changing historical and cultural circumstances, the relation between these two main communities was refigured; the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot identities are reconstructed within the opposition of the self and the other. For instance, during the Ottoman era (1571-1878), in the construction of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot identities the “self-other” correlation was based on the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim. That is, it was based on religious

affiliation (see also Kızılyürek, 2002) and ethnicity was not a significant consideration. Furthermore, "...identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (Hall, 1996, p. 17). Specifically, the identities in Cyprus have always been refigured within different discursive regimes; at times in terms of religion, and at other times in terms of nationalism.

The question of what constituted the "nation" came on the agenda during the British rule on the island between 1878 and 1960. It was in this time that the identification processes for the two main communities in Cyprus, previously based on religious identification were shaken and transformed into a national identification. Hellenist national consciousness began to spread on the island and the political aspiration of Greek Cypriots after the Second World War was based on the political principle of ENOSIS¹⁵. The governing belief among Greek Cypriots maintained that Cyprus had been a Helen Island since the beginning of time, so inhabitants of the island were, therefore, Greek. In this respect, there was no disagreement between the leftist and the rightist Greeks' approaches. In the referendum at 1950, 95.73% of the Greek Cypriot community voted for the idea of Enosis (See also Kızılyürek 2002)¹⁶. This movement can be understood as a national intention towards the "motherland" which

¹⁵ Enosis is the movement towards the unification of Greece and Cyprus. The Greek word "enosis" means unification in English. The "unification" is the central objective of the nationalist discourses, and the idea of nation comes from the word "*natio*" which also means the "condition of belonging" (see Timothy Brennan, 1990). The unification of Cyprus in the sense of Enosis can be understood also as a provision for integration Cyprus to Greece.

¹⁶ Actually the policy of the Greek parliament towards Cyprus, in those years was framed on the amity among the Greek and the British (Nikos Kranidiotis cited in Kızılyürek, 2000).

would gather all Greeks under the same umbrella. Greek Cypriots' main goal was articulated as achieving unification with Greece.

Nationalism is a discursive construction which is "...a trope for such things as "belonging", "bordering", and "commitment"" (Brennan, 1990, p. 47). According to, Benedict Anderson, the nation/nationhood has three dimensions. These are; becoming a bonded community, having a limit in terms of its land mass and domination within its territories (1991). This conception of nationalism limits the territory, tries to achieve domination of this territory, and also constructs an identity. Nationalism "conceptualizes society in terms of a single, homogeneous ethnic identity, thus rendering the existence of other ethnic groups in the body social a "national anomaly" and, in times of conflict, a "national blemish" that needs to be cleansed" (Anastasiu, 2002, p. 582). During the 1950s, nationalism among the Greek Cypriot community was strengthened and diffused. In the name of "war of independence", the Greek Cypriot struggled against British colonial rule on the island, while also struggling to promote "Enosis", the political notion that would unite the island of Cyprus with Greece. This aim of the struggle was based on controlling the island— having a domination over Cyprus, while at the same time cleansing the "national blemish", "differences", which was the Turkish Cypriot community.

A multicultural structure which continued until the 1950s transformed the resolution process in parallel with ethnic policies. Turkish nationalism on the island emerged in those years. The conflict between two *different* ethnicities turned into a national

conflict which attempted to achieve domination in Cyprus, of a “homogeneous ethnic identity”. As Papadakis puts it;

The Greek Cypriots had waged an anti-colonial struggle beginning in 1955 in the name of Union (*Enosis*) with Greece, led by EOKA (*Ethniki Organosi Kyprion Agoniston* — National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) [...] The Greek Cypriot struggle for Union was opposed by the significant Turkish minority that in 1958 embarked in its own armed struggle for Partition (*Taksim*) led by TMT (*Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı* — Turkish Resistance Organization). Both sides failed in their respective aims since the island eventually emerged as an independent state in 1960 (2003, p. 255).

This resolution process can be understood as varied relations between two colonialisms and two nationalisms which were developing in conflict with each other (Kızılyürek, 1993). This nationalism as a confrontational base integrated the religious characteristics of identities with “ethnic” characteristics (see also Yücel, 2003). This alteration is a transformation rather than an integration.

In a nutshell, the anti-colonial struggle, between the years 1955-1959, was conducted by Greek Cypriots with the aim of Enosis. This can be understood as the “result” of the nationalisms in Cyprus which started as the anti-colonial struggle of Greek Cypriots against British colonialism with the aim of ENOSIS, and the constitution of the “subject” of the anti-colonial struggle as “Greek”. This national “aim towards the motherland Greece excluded Turkish Cypriot identity on the island, which, in turn, initiated a Turkish nationalism as an antagonistic counter. The inter-communal conflict continued between the years 1955-1959.

In 1959 Greece and Turkey made an agreement in Zurich¹⁷, which was then signed in London. The agreement was signed by the leaders of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots and also by the prime ministers of Great Britain, Turkey and Greece. According to the Treaty of Guarantee, Great Britain, Turkey and Greece became the guarantors of the republic and they could intervene to restore order if security, territorial integrity, or independence were undermined. Since then, Greece and Turkey have had the right to keep their military forces in Cyprus. Great Britain also was given the right to keep its sovereign bases on the island. Accordingly, since then, Cyprus was an “issue” which is not negotiated not only by its communities’ leaders, but also by representatives from the guarantor’s countries.

The Republic of Cyprus¹⁸ was established as an independent bi-communal state in 1960 but it was not supported by either community leaders or by their publics¹⁹. The establishment of the Republic of Cyprus was “unacceptable” for both communities’ leaders, Makarios and Denktas (An, 2003, p. 24). Because, in the context of the Republic of Cyprus, it became difficult to attain their “national causes”—ENOSIS and TAKSİM²⁰. So, “both sides continued to pursue their aims [Enosis & Taksim] after 1960” (Papadakis, 2003, p. 255). Three years after the independence of the Republic of Cyprus] interethnic violence broke out, initially in Nicosia, then spread throughout the island. During 1964, the United Nations came to Cyprus to maintain

¹⁷ Zurich agreement (11st February 1959) signed between the United Kingdom, Turkish, Greek states and the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus, for determining the status Cyprus as an independent state and for ratifying the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus.

¹⁸ In 1959 Archbishop Makarios was elected as the first President of Cyprus by the Greek voters and Dr. Fazıl Küçük as the first Vice-President by the Turks. According to the constitution of the republic the House of Representatives would be elected separately by the two communities. Other minorities on the island entailed to choose either Greek or Turkish Cypriot communities as their ethnic group.

¹⁹ Republic of Cyprus is most probably the only government which has no national anthem. It is represented differently by different writers. Such as; “Revolutionary Development” (N. Kızılyürek), “Provisional Republic” (M. Hasgüler), “custom design Government” (N. Beratlı).

²⁰ Taksim was a national intention of Turkish Cypriots for a divided Cyprus.

the peace and has stayed ever since, guarding the “Green Line” (Papadakis, Peristianis, Welz, 2006, p. 2-3). That is, although it would seem that the island was divided in two in 1974, this division was predicated on the division of the capital city Nicosia after the ethnic conflict in 1963²¹.

The period between the years 1960 to 1974 cannot be described with a mono-logical narrative. It has a meshed story, like every history. After I conducted my interviews, as a Cypriot, I became aware that those days were “unexplainable”. In some stories I felt the complete division/conflict among the two main communities and in some stories I felt that although the conflict was going on in some areas the people of Cyprus continued their lives as it was before the ethnic conflict. I believe those stories are good indicators for me and also all Cypriots that our history was not only “good” or “bad”, and it is important to take into consideration these differences while we try to understand the past and also the present;

The villages around us were all Greeks... just after the 63 for a couple of months people were a bit scared... avoided going here and there... but you couldn't live like that, because you had to do daily things... so the two people had to deal with it and we found a way to live together.. The people from both communities weren't afraid of each other...what they were scared of were the provocations... Our vineyards and theirs were side by side. Then our common lives helped us to get rid of that uneasiness in our lives (U.H²²)²³.

I came to Pafos for secondary school. Our school was a very good one. Because I came to Pafos from Susuzlu I liked the school very much. One day the head of the school told us that we were not allowed to come to the

²¹ The last gate which opened for passages is Yeşilırmak gate. Before that in 2008 Lokmacı gate was opened. This gate was closed down in 1963. That's why it has a symbolic meaning also. It has a symbolic meaning because it is the first point which separates the two main communities on the island; it divided the capital city Nicosia as southern and northern. Since that date Nicosia has two municipalities.

²² U. H. (M) Retired teacher. 60 years old. He is migrated from, Ayios Nikolaos, a village of Pafos.

²³ *Çevre köylerin tümü Rumdu...İlk 63 olaylarından sonra bir kaç ay insanlar çekinceli yaşadı, kontrollü... Aman şuraya gitmeyeyim başıma birşey gelir...ama.. insanın günlük yaşamı bunu ortadan kaldırır...mecburen bu halk içiçe geçti..halkın da birbirinden çekincesi yoktu...halkın her iki tarafın da korkusu provakasyonlardı..bizim bağlarımız Rum bağlarıyla komşuydu. Dolayısıyla ortak iş yaşam yavaş yavaş aradaki tedirginliği kaldırdı.*

school until we were called back. It was the day after 21st of December. I couldn't go to that school again because we had to live separately as Greeks and Turks then. We went to the schools for only Turkish students which were like barracks. (M.A.²⁴)²⁵.

The memories above are both “true”, but within a national construction the “good” things could not find a place. The multifaceted structure of the history/memory is suppressed, and only the memories of the war were brought out to the present. It is because, and something which I will discuss in greater detail later, the aim of the national official history is to construct a clean break with the past; “If the past can be shown as all pain and suffering, then the break is easier to accomplish” (Papadakis, 1995).

The inter-ethnic violence has started in December 1963. Since 1963 until 1974 the Turkish Cypriots lived in dispersed enclaves. It could also be said that “...large numbers of Turkish Cypriots became internal refugees and were effectively prisoners of the enclaves for lengthy periods of time between 1963 and 1974” (Bryant, 2001, p. 919). In this period of time, Greek Cypriots were not allowed to enter the enclaves and Turkish Cypriots were not allowed to go out. 1.6% of the area of the republic was controlled by a “Provisional Cyprus Turkish administration” which was established in 1967. The inter-communal conflict between the two main communities has continued since 1974.

In 1974, Turkey “intervened” in the north of Cyprus in order to secure a territory for the Turkish Cypriot community—using its guarantor right under the terms of the

²⁴ N. O. (F). Teacher, 55 years old. She migrated from Pafos.

²⁵ *Ortaokul için Baf'a gelmişim. Okulumuz çok güzel bir okuldu. Ben Susuzlu'dan Baf'a geldiğim için okul bana inanılmaz güzel gelmişti. Orta 3. sınıftayken bir gün müdür bizi çağırdı ve artık biz sizi çağırana kadar okula gelmeyeceksiniz dedi. 21 Aralık'ın ertesi günüydü. Bir daha o okuluma gidemedim. Rum ve Türk bölgeleri ayrılmıştı çünkü. Bize barakalardan yeni okullar yaptılar ve orada devam ettik okumamıza.*

Treaty of Guarantee. With the “intervention” of Turkey, Greek Cypriots had to move to the south and Turkish Cypriots had to move to the north²⁶. After these compulsory migrations/displacement forced by circumstance, Cyprus became a space in which the two main communities on the island live separately, side by side in two different parts of the country. Subsequently, the border became a symbol of the geographical *separation* of Cypriot communities as “homogeneous” communities²⁷.

Since that date, the “border” in Cyprus happened to be a questionable phenomenon, and has been discussed within the UN, the European Union politics and also within the politics of Cyprus. For these reasons 1974, itself, has become a border.

The division of Cyprus in 1974 can be accepted as a “de facto” division which separated the whole island into two. This division has been articulated differently within different discourses, such as “peace”, “cease fire”, “peace operation”, “invasion”, “intervention”...etc. Since that date, the communication and also the relationships between two main communities in the island have been limited. This can be accepted as one of the main reasons of the strengthening of nationalisms towards their “motherlands”. After the “intervention” the Provisional Cyprus Turkish Administration was reformed into the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus. Since then, there are two governmental bodies in Cyprus.

²⁶ The division has different stories and different “break” points for the Greek and Turkish communities. For the Turkish Cypriot community the “problem” started with the inter-ethnic violence which broke out in December 1963 and later in 1967, but the condensation point of this story for the Greek Cypriot community was based on the this “intervention” which they named “invasion” and the north of Cyprus as “occupied lands”.

²⁷ But there are some exceptions. There are some Greek Cypriots who live in the north, mostly on the Karpaz Peninsula, and some Turkish Cypriots who remained in the south. Apart from this, there are some other ethnicities that live in Cyprus, both in the north and the south. These ethnicities are; Armenians, Maronites, Germans, Arabs, Russians, Kurds, Turkish, etc.

Since 1974, Cyprus has lived as two different geographies. “After the geographical division of Cyprus and the radical separation of the two communities, national identities became so strong that what we have now is really two separate nationalities living side by side” (Kızılyürek, 2002, p. 152). From that date, the nationalistic discourses have also been re-articulated. Before 1974, Cyprus was periphery both for Turkish and Greek nations; however with the division of the island they have started to identify with their “new geographies”. The border of the identity construction in Cyprus changed, and the contours of home and homeland were re-drawn. It can perhaps be said that the national struggle of *Taksim* has reached its aim with the division of the island. The Turkish Cypriot community now had its *own* territory which is one of the vital characteristic of a nation. Since 1974, the Republic of Cyprus is governed by the Greek Cypriot authorities and internationally accepted as the representative of the whole island;

The Republic of Cyprus has been the recognized government of the island, while the government of the north is always referred to as a "pseudo-state" with "so-called" ministers and a "so-called" president. The Republic has maintained various state fantasies that shape popular views of the Cyprus problem. Refugees from the north vote in national elections as though they still live in their former villages, and the parliament is made up of representatives who supposedly represent areas now under Turkish control. These same refugees vote into office mayors of their towns and villages. The mayors are viewed as the "real" and the "legitimate" mayors, despite the fact that they have no access to the municipalities and so do nothing besides crank out propaganda and organize outings for elderly refugees. In the meantime, the Turkish Cypriot mayors who actually manage the towns and villages are "so-called" mayors who are part of the "pseudo-state." (Bryant, 2004).

For decades, the official discourse of the Greek Cypriot community has been based on the representation of the north of Cyprus as “occupied lands” and its administration as “pseudo-state”. In contrast, the Turkish Cypriot official discourse, which broke off all the relations with the south of Cyprus as a territory of homeland, has always had “state fantasies” to represent the places in the north of Cyprus. I

believe, this is interesting to see how the constitution of the homeland—and also the concept of the nation—is imaginary. This brings us to the further prospect of rethinking the construction of what is the nation and what precisely is nationhood. Whether “real” or “pseudo” they are both based on imaginings.

Every community needs its respective identity and these “identities are forged through the marking of difference. This marking of difference takes place both through the *symbolic* systems of representation, and through forms of *social* exclusion” (Woodward, 1997, p. 29). The “self” is constructed through the “other”, which makes the other its constitutive outsider. The nationality—as a symbolic device, imagined community and discursive construction—“represents difference as unity” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 4). The Turkish Cypriot identity is marked out and defined as different in relation to the Greek Cypriot identity which is mostly excluded and vice versa. When we look at the structures of nationalistic narratives on the island, we see that they are constructed as opposed to each other and there is no space for the hybridity which can enable a cultural exchange among the two main communities on the island. Within these nationalistic narratives, both Turkish and Greek Cypriot identities were constructed through a hostile opposition of “us” and “them”. When we look at the way these narratives have been structured, we see some oppositions such as; Turkish Cypriot vs. Greek Cypriot, Turkey vs. Greece, Taksim vs. Enosis²⁸, TMT vs. EOKA, Ottoman vs. Helen, Muslim vs. Christian. National narratives put Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots in an oppositional system; the construction of Turkish and Greek Cypriot identities were based on the ontological distinction between each other.

²⁸ Although ENOSIS and TAKSİM are taking the nationalism towards “so-called” motherlands as their national goals; their ways of doing are different. ENOSIS’s goal was the unification with Greece. However, TAKSİM’s goal was to separate Cyprus into two.

Explicitly, after 1974 Turkish Cypriots' sense of self is constructed by referencing its non-self, "constitutive other" which is Greek Cypriot, and vice versa. The marking of differences and exclusion of the Greek Cypriots had a vital role in constructing the Turkish Cypriots' *imagined* community. The Greek Cypriot identity is excluded from the symbolic order which is based on Turkism. For the Turkish Cypriot authorities, the border is the signifier of their "independent" nation state and the post-1974 national narratives are re-written by referencing their "new" territory. However, the very same border, which divides the island into two, is interpreted and represented differently by Turkish and Greek Cypriots authorities. This border is interpreted as a signifier of "independence" by Turkish Cypriot authorities, but at the same time it is the signifier of "invasion" for Greek Cypriot authorities, and the north part of the island is the "lost" but "unforgettable" territory for them²⁹.

2.1.1 Re-membering the sense of belonging

For the Turkish Cypriots' dominant official discourse, the "division" of the island, and then the establishment of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus Government mark the constitution of the "new" official identity, the new sense of self referring to a distinct *territory* and with the establishment of the TRNC this constitution articulated the new *citizenship*. Moreover, the new for this new form of political community, the state was predicated on the division of Cyprus as the "solution" for the ethnic conflict. Within the hegemonic official discourse in the north of Cyprus the situation was represented as "peace" and the "intervention" of Turkey which resulted in the division of the island as the "peace operation". Hence, the official discourse relied on the wishful slogan, "TRNC will live forever!". This motto did

²⁹ For the displaced migrant Cypriots the places that they had to live in 1974 and also in 1963 were memorized as "unforgettable" territory and they were longing to return to those places until the opening of the border.

not only emphasize the existence and the continuity of the TRNC as an independent state. It is also constructed upon a “new” constitution which emphasizes the Turkish part of the imagined community. This imagined community for Turkish Cypriots, as a project, was pointing out two belongings; the “new” territory” — the territory of sovereignty and the “organic” tie with the supposed motherland; Turkey.

Thereby the northern part of the island became a new “national territory”³⁰ for Turkish Cypriot authorities for their identity constructions. “The physicality of the nation in a specific geographic space or territory has a symbolic meaning and therefore territory functions for a national “homogeneity”” (Hedetoft, 1998, p. 173 cited in Romero 2006). The north as a “new” geography became a symbolic place where the Turkish Cypriot community as a “homogeneous” nation is narrated.

As it is in all of kinds of remembering this remembering is also a creation and a selection. It selects to forget the shared history with the other main community of the island but at the same time it is based on the inscription, “We will not forget!”. The hostility towards the Greek Cypriot community is always freshened up with metaphors and representations like the above. As it is done after wars generally, “victory parades, remembrance ceremonies and war museums tell of glory, courage and sacrifice. The nation is renewed, the state strengthened. Private grief is overlaid by national mourning and blunted—or eased—by stories of service and duty (Edkins, 2003, p. 1). The north of Cyprus mirrors this set of post-war representations in almost every way. Our daily lives were/are surrounded by the symbols and rituals of not forgetting the “selected” version of our reality. The national days, the busts, the

³⁰ For the Turkish Cypriots’ official discourse, the border is the signifier of the sovereignty and limit of the nation state. However, this very same border is the signifier of the “invasion” and draws the border of the invaded part of their country by the Turkish army for Greek Cypriots.

museums, etc. worked as a “memory kit” for strengthening, or, let us say continuously “rehabilitating” the war memories. As an ongoing process and as a revolutionary task, this way of commemoration, the martyrdoms, the busts, statues, and monuments, the blood that was shed, the national days, etc. were and are used as the markers/metaphors/representation of self identity.

A new collective memory was constructed and a shared history with the other main community on the island was forgotten as a shared history and rewritten differently. Specifically, the new discourse, not only carries the exclusion of the other main community on the island, even more, new memorialisation tried to strengthen the attachment of the TRNC with its “motherland”. The official discourse of the north of the island, after 1974, was openly based on this attachment: “In North Cyprus, markers of ‘history’ are found everywhere. Busts, statues, monuments, billboards and photographs of Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey in the 1920s, attempt to strengthen the development of consciousness of membership in the ‘father’ of Turkey’s family” (Killoran, 1998, p. 162)³¹. In such an atmosphere, the Cypriot communities were represented through the metaphors of the war and the national symbols of belongingness—towards the supposed “motherland”. Besides this, because the TRNC is not recognized internationally this generated a political, social and cultural closure which made the Turkish Cypriot community more dependent on Turkey.

³¹ Turkey was referred to as “motherland” and Cyprus, more precisely the north of Cyprus was called as “babyland”. “Thus, the family is ‘whole’ in the marrying of the national father with the land and the citizens as their children” (Killoran, 1998, p. 162). The representation of the TRNC as the “babyland” is an ideological and imaginary construction that maintains the attachment of the Turkish Cypriot community to the wider national state of belonging. This Turkey-centered movement also reminds us of the hegemonic relation between Turkey and Cyprus, like the hegemonic relation between the East and the West as it is discussed in the discussions of Orientalism. This “imported” nationalism, which requires the obedience to the Motherland’s self-interest and desire, hinders the maturing of local Turkish Cypriot identity (Bora, 1995, p. 24).

Thus, the construction of national identity of Turkish Cypriot was Turkey-centric and *Turkeyfication* became more influential in our daily lives especially after the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. Things were more confused for Turkish Cypriots, especially within the understanding and experiencing of nationhood. Turkish Cypriots sing Turkey's national anthem, they began to use Turkey's flag side by side with the TRNC's one after the establishment of the TRNC (1983), and they watched Turkish television and saw the Northern part of Cyprus in Turkish television's weather maps and also in magazine news. Additionally, the symbolic presence of Turkey in north of Cyprus can be seen everywhere in daily practices. Besides the educational system and other practices, the Turkish Lira was adopted as the new currency, the Turkish Cypriot Armed Forces are subordinate to the command of the Turkish Army, the busts of Atatürk are everywhere, the sentence "How happy to say I am a Turk" is on display next to the TRNC flag on the Beşparmak mountains³², and after the partial opening of the border, in the Kermiya (Metehan) gate, the motto "How happy to say I am a Turk" welcomes everyone who passes from the south to the north. At every crossing Greek Cypriots are made to remember not to forget that *the north of Cyprus belongs to Turks*.

The relationship of "motherland" to "babyland" was strengthened day by day, and this intimate political/social/cultural connection continued until the end of the 1990s.

This relation can be likened to the relation between the colonizer and the colonized

³² This flag can be seen easily from the southern part of Nicosia. It can be also interpreted as the symbol which continuously tries to remind the existence of the TRNC to the Greek Cypriot community. There is a committee for lighting-up the flag on the Beşparmak Mountains (KKTC Beşparmak Dağları Bayrağı Işıklandırma Komitesi). Today, it is also observable at night time. For further information and visual material you can visit the web page www.kktcbayrak.org.

within Orientalism. Orientalism is “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 3). With “motherland-babyland” discourse, the hegemonic relation between Turkey and North Cyprus is reinforced. Since 1974 there is an open official “motherland” discourse on the North of Cyprus. These discourses were nourished by several practices. For instance, the Turkish Republic’s national days and holidays are accepted and celebrated as TRNC national days and holidays. We could also observe this within the mainstream media of the Turkish Cypriot community³³. Here, we should see the importance of media which has a vital role in the construction and representation of any identity. Of course, the main reason for this centrism is the dominance of “right-wing” political parties in the North of Cyprus. This can be also interpreted as a re-membering of the Turkish Cypriot community by centering Turkey/Turkish in their “imagined” community and thus in their identity construction. But “the “origin” of the nation is never simple, but dependent on a differentiation of nations which has always already begun” (Bennington, 1994, p. 241).

This situation in Cyprus can be interpreted as the success of *Taksim*, as a national goal of Turkish Cypriots with taking the “so-called” motherland as their national goal. That is, the situation is represented as “success” rather than a “loss”; success in establishing an independent government. However, we should also remember that this nation is constructed as an attachment to another nation. If we think that the “division” is necessary for the constitution of any identity, the identification of the TRNC as an independent government is problematic. In psychoanalysis, the formation of *I* depends on the division between the child (I) and the other (mother).

³³ For a detailed analysis you can see Y. Arslan (2002) and Y. Papadakis (2003).

At the beginning this relationship is wholeness, in this phase the infant does not have his/her selfness; s/he needs his/her other who nourishes her/him. S/he lives as an extension of his/her mother. This is an absolute identicalness and nursing dependence. However, with language the child starts to gain his/her independence and starts to bring out the differences between the self and the other (mother) into the open. Thus, the identification process is completed with the separation of the I with the non-self. This is what Jacques Lacan calls the mirror stage as identification. It is the “symbolic matrix in which “I” is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject” (Lacan, 1949 cited in Munns & Rajan, 1995, p. 133).

Although, the separation/division with the Greek Cypriot community is represented as a gain and “being an independent” administration, the attachment to the “motherland” Turkey is awkward. The solution to motherland nationalism, then, should be a “division” with the mother. The dominant official discourse was mainly based on the dependency with the “so-called” motherland rather than trying to live the differences and to become an “individual”. However, this relationship of dependency and the subordinate attachment of the Turkish Cypriot authorities to Turkey continued for decades.

In this sense, there was a common perception that the “dependency”—not breaking the ties with the mother— towards the supposedly national mother and the construction of the Greek Cypriot community as an external other closed down the avenues for “returning back”. However, as I will discuss in Chapter 4, our

ontological make up, our “becoming” makes this “return” impossible. The path of the official discourse—based on forgetting the old places, friends, etc. for years—can be seen as a sanction that constitutes a counter hegemonic discourse which is based on an alternative “remembering” of the past and an attempt to make it “alive”. It can be said that, the “Babyland & Motherland” authoritative discourse caused a displacement of the symbols related to the breaking off with the “past”. Therefore, the “past” became only the “old” houses, villages, friends, neighbors, etc. The “division” is seen as only the separation of the space and the qualitative transformation over time is unnoticed until experiencing these “returnings”.

Under these circumstances, within the nationalistic narratives, the Turkish Cypriot community was re-inscribed by taking Turkishness as the origin of their existence. The border also became a signifier which demonstrated the boundary of the “new” existence. Turkish Cypriot nationalistic narratives were constructed and reconstructed by practicing “remembering” and “forgetting” and they imagined a “pure, one, true” nation, which is the main intention of nationalism. As Homi Bhabha states;

the construction of identity or nation is based on the process of “obligation to forget” which “is not a question of historical memory; it is the construction of a discourse on society that performs the problematic totalization of the national will... [it] becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 311).

Specifically, the nation is a discursive narration, which is based on the present, and within this formation the process of forgetting is vital. Turkish Cypriots have to have forgotten their neighborhood with Greek Cypriots; they have to have forgotten Greek

as their daily language³⁴. This forgetting also includes the goodness of Greek Cypriots and badness of Turkish Cypriots and vice versa. Within national narrations the re-membering/re-peopling creates new members for respective imagined communities and it constrains to forget the old ones. To put it differently, nationalism is based on a selective memory. It is a process which creates the community of myths and typically it is based on “remembering” and “forgetting” (Kızılyürek, 2003) which “can be based on experience but they can also be used strategically to give rise to different interpretations or stories of the past” (Papadakis, 2005). Telling a story is not simply the narration of the past, it is also the interpretation and the practice of selection. For the official discourse, on the north of Cyprus, the border worked as the signifier of both the time and the space for the narration of the new imagined identity. Thus, the official discourse of the Turkish Cypriots is invented, and reinvented, and the past reconstructed in the service of the “present”.

When we look at Cyprus, we see that there are two communities living side by side and there are two conflicting national narrations. The nationhood which was constructed within these national projects is discursively constructed as it is done in every kind of nationalism. As Homi Bhabha suggests, “nationhood is narrativized” (1990). After 1974, the new project of nationalization was based on the differences between the two main communities on the island. The shared, hybrid history between them is erased and the present and the future was rewritten again, disregarding the positive/shared past between the two main communities. Actually, this can be understood with the term “enunciatory present” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 178). According to

³⁴ Before 1974, many Greek and Turkish Cypriots could speak each other’s languages, since they lived in the same villages and worked in the same work-places, having friendly relations, etc.

Bhabha, meaning is an enunciatory construction, thus produces “a temporality that makes it possible to conceive of the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements” (1994, p. 25). In the case of Cyprus, Turkish and Greek Cypriot identities are constructed within oppositional systems and represented as “constitutive other”/non-self of each other”. The “constitutive other” is a term used to show the necessity of the external other in order to construct the inside as a unity, as a homogeneous identity. In Cyprus, the narration of the nationalistic discourses on identity is based on differentiating themselves from the other community on the island. For instance, The Greek Cypriot identity is a “supplement” for the *unified* presence of the Turkish Cypriot identity and it became a reference point which shows who is not Turkish Cypriot. These two identities became *antagonistic partners* of each other. They are/were referencing each other for their full presence. For both communities on the island, the other is always the one who is beyond the border; the one who is marginalized. This is exactly what Derrida points out with the logic of the supplement. The logic of supplement shows us that the constitution of exteriority is also the constitution of interiority. As Derrida puts it;

The work of exclusion operates within the structure of supplementarity. The paradox is that one annuls addition by considering it a pure addition. *What is added is nothing because it is added to a full presence to which it is exterior.* Speech comes to be added to intuitive presence; writing comes to be added to living self-present speech; masturbation comes to be added to so-called normal sexual experience; culture to nature, evil to innocence, history to origin and so on (1976, p. 167).

The main two communities are represented as two opposing nations on the island of Cyprus. That is, the Greek Cypriot community is represented as an external and other community on the island by Turkish Cypriots. By doing so, the Turkish Cypriot community automatically becomes an internalized, pure, self-sufficient community which is non-Greek.

As I said before, identity is constructed through the “constitutive outsider” and “identity itself is not absolute, single and homogeneous, but relative, plural and dynamic. Any definition of identity, presupposes an “other”” (Yaşın, 2001). That is, “by the fact of being pushed into the margin, the function of the supplement is to restore the fullness of One. The necessity of the supplement implies that there is a lack in this plentitude, despite its fullness” (Yeğenoğlu, 1992, p. 53). After 1974, the constitutive outsider for Turkish Cypriot identity is re-articulated. The other for Turkish Cypriots before 1974 was Greek Cypriots. In course of time, and also after cultural changes in North Cyprus—people from Turkey who moved as agricultural workers³⁵ to the North Cyprus and the continuous migration from Turkey to North Cyprus, economic relations between North Cyprus and Turkey...etc—people of Turkish origin became the other for Turkish Cypriots. As Mehmet Yaşın puts it;

The search for a Turkish identity after 1940s as well as the search for a Cypriot identity after 1974 was carried out hand in hand with popular literature studies. During the first period, the “Turkish” side of Turkish Cypriots was stressed to prove their difference from the Greek Cypriots. During the second period, however, the stress settled on the “Cypriot” side of the Turkish Cypriot, in this manner the difference between Turkish Cypriots and Turks [from Turkey] was highlighted (1995, p. 27).

Specifically, Turkish Cypriot community has started to identify themselves by differentiating themselves from people from Turkey. Thus, “identity is marked out by difference” and it is “taking place at this moment in time and which, it appears, is characterized by conflict, contestation and possible crisis” (Woodward, 1997, p.

³⁵ The Turkish people came to the island as agricultural workers and then they stayed on the island. After 1974 there has been a continuous “migration” from Turkey to the north of Cyprus for several reasons. These people from Turkey formed a heterogeneous group which includes workers, students, University professors, Teachers, with different ethnicities (For detailed information you can check Mete Hatay, 2005). But, these group of people are called “*Türkiyeliler*” (people from Turkey/Turkish people) within the Turkish Cypriot community, and different stereotypes used as markers of this identity.

11). Turkish Cypriots, in this sense, marked their identity with a new difference, which is Turkishness. Specifically,

“Identification is [...] a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption. [...] Like all signifying practices, it is subject to the “play” of *différance*. It obeys the logic of more-than-one. And since as a process it operates across difference, it entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of “frontier-effects”. It requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process” (Hall, 1997b, p. 17).

Regarding Hall’s suggestion, identity is a discursive construction that is open to its own becoming in specific times and places. It is not an ontological datum, but an end product of a discursive formation with a history of its coming-into-being. It is open to transformation in relation to representation and articulation. The difference is the key in this articulation. “So the “unities” which these identities proclaim are, in fact, constructed within the play of power and exclusion, and are the result, not of a natural and inevitable or primordial totality but of the naturalized, over-determined process of ‘closure’” (Redman, 2000, p. 18, see also Hall 1992, Bhabha, 1994).

Here we come to an idea that there is no identity outside the discursive construction, specific historical and social circumstances, representation, and openness to the future. Before 1974 the construction of the Turkish Cypriot identity was constructed by looking at the other main community on the island as a non-self. That is, if you are Turkish you cannot be Greek and vice versa. After 1975 they started to construct their identities with a new non-self; which is Turkish (*Türkiyeliler*). Thus, with the play of difference, a new opposition is constructed; if you are Cypriot you cannot be Turk. This can be seen as a basis of “Cypriotness” which is reinforced by the “leftist” politics in the north of Cyprus.

For a considerable number of Turkish Cypriots, and also for some Turkish Cypriot politicians, this population is seen as collaborators for the continuation of the dominant hegemonic discourse where the “right wing” political view stands for protecting the national interest—the motherland & babyland unity—in the north of Cyprus. Even though, Mete Hatay’s report on³⁶ the political orientation and also the integration of Turkish immigrants in the north of Cyprus and their voting patterns tell us that this group of people did not vote for the National Unity Party which was in government since 1976, this view became a “communal reception” among Turkish Cypriots. Although the population transfer from Turkey to Cyprus used to be a policy of the Turkish Cypriot “right wing” and also Turkey, today this population cannot be characterized only with the thesis of a “population transfer”. There are Turkish people from Turkey with several and different reasons for being in Cyprus. Today, there are many people from Turkey who live in the north of Cyprus. “Starting from 1974 a large number of immigrants from Anatolia came to Northern Cyprus as a part of the Turkish/Turkish Cypriot policy aimed to reduce the labour shortage in the Turkish Cypriot economy, predominantly in the agricultural sector. A more considerable number of Turks immigrated to the TRNC on their own initiative in subsequent years (Hatay, 2005, p. 5). Especially, with the explosion in the construction sector, after the failure of the Annan Plan as a probable solution for the island, almost the entire workforce in this construction sector are from Turkey. The

³⁶ “The analysis shows that, until 1993, the majority of the electorate in the “settler villages” voted for opposition parties—that is, against the party that had been in government since 1976, the National Unity Party (UBP). This majority divided its votes between ethnic “settler parties”, such as the Turkish Unity Party (TBP) and the New Birth Party (YDP), and mainstream opposition parties, such as the Democratic Populist Party (DHP), the Democratic Struggle Party (DMP), the Communal Liberation Party (TKP) and the Republican Turkish Party (CTP). For their part, the “native” Turkish-Cypriot villages overwhelmingly supported the UBP. In the period after 1993, opposition “settler” votes were increasingly directed at the Democratic Party (DP), which was founded in 1992 with the aim of ousting the UBP from government, while ethnic “settler” parties vanished from the political arena. This support remained constant until 2002, after which time the DP started losing ground in the “settler villages”” (Hatay, 2005).

domestic workers in the north of Cyprus are also “Turkish”. In such a manner, the class is explicitly linked to the politics of this population. With the globalization and its influences in our social and economic lives, today there is a mass migration from third world countries to the western countries, as a work force. This can be interpreted as the common fate of colonizer countries in history. In the case of north of Cyprus, the trend is against the accepted historical trend. Here, there is a migration from the “colonizer” to the “colonized”.

“Cypriotness” was developed as an opposition movement towards the policy which externalized the other main community, Greek Cypriots, on the island and promoted dependency on the “motherland nationalism” and the migration policy which is based on the caption “The one who leaves and the one who arrives are both Turks” [*Gelen Türk Giden Türk*]. Since 1974, many Turkish Cypriots have migrated to other countries, especially to the United Kingdom. Many people from Turkey have migrated to the north of Cyprus. This was interpreted within the Turkish Cypriot nationalistic discourses, especially by Rauf Denktaş, with the inscription above; “The one who leaves and the one who arrives are both Turks”. This population policy was criticized heavily by the opposition parties.

We could say that “Cypriotism” was developed as “patriotism”³⁷ against a Turkish oriented nationalism and the influences of this orientation on Turkish Cypriots’ social, political and economic lives. Although it might seem that it’s a purely leftist point of view, I believe when we look at the individual level, the position and attitude towards this heterogeneous Turkey origin group of people is/was no different.

³⁷ Today, there are many discussions going on related to this population. I believe the common attitude can not be understood as “patriotism”. It goes too far. As Turkish Cypriots, we should reflect the distinction between the “patriotism”/“Cypriotism” and “nationalism”.

“Turkish Cypriots on the left of the political spectrum who are critical of Turkey’s ongoing military and political spectrum and who are critical of Turkey’s military and political presence in Cyprus are not the only ones who are uncomfortable with the presence of settlers from Turkey. Turkish Cypriots of all political convictions express similar feelings” (Navaro-Yashin, 2006, p. 87). That’s why when I asked a question to one of my interviewees, s/he did not want to talk about this population. The interviewee didn’t seem happy with the situation but because of their political position they refused to say anything.

In the last decades “Cypriotness” in the north of Cyprus is defined against the population from Turkey. After 1974, after the “intervention” of Turkey to the island, the “other” for Turkish Cypriots was/is “Turks from Turkey”—*Türkiyeliler*, also referred to as “non-Cypriot” Turks. This group of people is represented as a homogeneous group without explaining the differences among them. Those who came to the island just after the division, their children, those who came recently to the island, those who have TRNC ID cards, and immigrants with different ethnicities, etc., were all put under the same umbrella. In contrast to the Turkish oriented nationalism in which the idea of community was constructed by taking the Turkish nation as its origin, the “leftist” political view in the north of Cyprus—which has nowadays become a “common perception”—Turkishness is perceived as a “threat” to Cypriot identity. For the modernist,

To create order means neither to cultivate not to extirpate the differences. It means *licensing* them. And it means *licensing authority*. Obversely, it means also de-legalizing unlicensed differences. Order can be only an all-inclusive category. It must also remain forever a belligerent camp, surrounded by enemies and waging wars on all its frontiers. The unlicensed difference is the main enemy: it is also an enemy to be eventually conquered — a temporary enemy, a testimony to inadequacy of zeal and/or resource of the fighting order [...]. The subversive power of *unlicensed* difference resides precisely in

its *spontaneity*, that is in its indeterminacy *vis-à-vis* the decreed order, that is in unpredictability, that is in uncontrollability. In the shape of the unlicensed difference, modernity fought the real enemy: the grey area of ambivalence, indeterminacy, modernity and undecidability (Bauman, 1992, p. xvi).

For the official Turkish Cypriot the Greek Cypriot community is/was the licenced other for the self-identification. Everything is clear in this construction; there is a border which separates “us” from “them”. The Greek Cypriot community is the licenced other for the Turkish Cypriot community. It is the “other” for the construction of the “unified” Turkish Cypriot community; “One comes to “exist” by virtue of the fundamental dependency on the address of the Other. One “exists” not only by virtue of being recognized, but in a prior sense, being *recognizable*” (Butler, 1997, p. 5). However, with the changing conjunctures, the “non-Cypriot Turks” became the “unlicensed” other for the construction of the self-identification of the Turkish Cypriots. As Bauman argues it, this difference is “unpredictable” and “uncontrollable” and it is also “undecidable”. It is undecidable because these “unlicensed others” is the Turkish Cypriots’ neighbors, friends, domestic workers, relatives, etc. Here, we come to face a dissimilar version of “imagined community”; in contrast to the dominant official discourse, which constructs the Turkish Cypriot identity as an extension of the people of Turkey—Turkish nation, this way of imagining a Turkish Cypriot community excludes the people of Turkey and tries to construct a “Cypriotness” by referring not to the people that they shared their lives with since 1974 but with those who came “originally” from Cyprus. This way of construction, as it is done in the dominant official discourse, also closes down all the ways to the “becoming” in the self-identification. To be precise, “Turkish Cypriots did not significantly speak about or refer to “Greeks” in informal settings. Conflict with “Greek Cypriots” did not preoccupy or worry them as much as their everyday

experiences of living with settlers from Turkey who were granted housing (given Greek property), jobs, citizenship privileges by the administration in return for settling in northern Cyprus” (Navaro-Yashin, 2006, p. 87). This heterogeneous population is one of the most discussed issues in the negotiations between the two leaders of the Cypriot communities.

In a nutshell, in different discursive constructions, the identity of the “constitutive other” is seen in different forms. As it is put by Papadakis, for years on both sides of the island “mythical realities” (1998, p.73) have been produced in order to exclude the existence of the other main community on the island. As mentioned previously, both the Turkish Cypriot authorities and Greek Cypriot authorities have struggled to construct a unified identity by excluding the other main community on the island. It is/was a discursive construction of their national identity. As Sara Mills states “discourse is organized around the practice of exclusion” (1997, p. 12). I observed several exclusionary practices in my research, such as the exclusion of the non-Cypriot people within the discourse of “Cypriotism”, and the exclusion of women as the subjects of the community³⁸.

By some means or other, the social, political and the economic relations between the north of Cyprus and Turkey was gradually strengthened from 1974 until the end of the 1990s. In this period of time the governments of the TRNC and the Republic of Turkey would always act cohesively and in partnership for the framing of a motherland & babyland discourse. But, with the years 2000 the “motherland-babyland” discourse was “weakening” in comparison to an earlier period. In the

³⁸ For further discussion please see pp.167-172 in Chapter 4.

coming section, I show how these social and political patterns are transformed with the new changes related to Cyprus.

2.2 The social/political transformation in the north of Cyprus

Re-imagining the Turkish Cypriot community by taking a “new” geography—the north of Cyprus, and the so-called “motherland” Turkey as points of reference for this belonging and identity was a very powerful sustaining political force for almost 20 years. From 1974 to the late 1990s, the mentality which dominated political thinking on the north of the island was nationalistic, one which accepted the division of the island as an acceptable “solution” to the problem. And, this permanent division of the island was generally accepted as “peace”. This facilitated the continuation of the situation on the island, strengthened it and worked to keep alive the T.R.N.C. This tendency can be seen easily with the decision of the community in the governmental elections. The “right wing” political parties, all of which espoused a “nationalist” based solution, especially The National Unity Party (UBP), have been in government for most of the time since 1976³⁹.

We can attribute many reasons for this, but I believe as a community who had a “war” and/or “ethnic conflict” experience, preferred to choose or stand by those who were committed to complete separation from the “other” community; the other community had brought about their displacement, killed their relatives and friends, and forced them to live in enclaves, etc. Perhaps, this post-war syndrome with all its

³⁹ For a long time, the political situation in the northern part of the island seemed to be relatively stable. For years UBP (*Ulusal Birlik Partisi*) was the one who controlled Turkish Cypriot politics. Until the split within the UBP, and the establishment of the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*), by splinters of the UBP, UBP has governed the Turkish Federation and then the Turkish Republic of Cyprus. These two political parties were/are the ones which carry the banner of the right. However, I think it would not be misguided to say that they do not represent any ideological differences. The CTP, the Republican Turkish Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi*) and TKP, Communal Liberation Party (*Toplumcu Kurtuluş Partisi*) made up the left-wing opposition against the hegemony of the right in Northern Cyprus (*see appendix 1 for the elections in northern Cyprus from 1976 to 1998*).

diverse but connected perspectives is the hidden reason for this preference. The nationalist discourse has always been a powerful component of debate in government elections. However, in the 1990s, Turkish Cypriots became witness to a series of historically critical some historical turning points. The social and political alteration or transformation in the north of Cyprus can be attributed to the articulation of various issues of concern. There was the seemingly “never ending” negotiations between the leaders of the two main communities, being the “unrecognized” part of the country, the embargoes, the “economic dependence on Turkey”, having “limited access to the world beyond—socially, economically and culturally” —all of these and more contributed to a dynamic re-structuring of thinking which shaped the decisive “break” in Turkish Cypriots’ voting patterns, determination and preferences.

It is undeniable and, crucially, that the most significant turning point in discussions on the Cyprus issue, and the one that led to the changing dynamics mentioned above was the application of the Republic of Cyprus for European Union membership in 1990. In addition to “legitimate” versus “non-legitimate” Cypriot identities, this brought a new discussion which was “being European” versus “being non-European”. The accession of the Republic of Cyprus, as representing the “whole” of Cyprus, into the European Union, could eternalize the division of Cyprus and perpetuate the embargoes, emigrations and unemployment on the north of the island. However, with a probable solution, Turkish Cypriots could enter into the EU and their isolation from the world would be removed. Together, these combined forces had an influence on a massive movement within the community.

The oppositional discourses⁴⁰ which were suppressed after 1974 resurfaced and the word “solution” started to be uttered again. In terms of the dominant discourse, Turkish Cypriots already had a solution and a peace since 1974. As mentioned earlier, after 1975 right wing tendencies in the political arena had a nationalistic orientation towards “motherland” Turkey and was the prevailing political sentiment on the north of the island.⁴¹ The division of the island, and the outcome that was forged and accepted after this division is represented as “peace” within these discourses. However, within the counter-hegemonic discourses, the post-bellum outcome is represented as a “cease-fire”, the land as being under “occupation”, and the north of the island as a half-homeland. For instance, referring to a conversation with Bülent Ecevit⁴², Afrika newspaper writes: “Ecevit: If our intention had been to invade the island, we would have prolonged our operation”... 1974-2004... 30 years... And this is yet the ceasefire period” (23 April, 2004, p. 5). The time period since the “intervention” of Turkey on the island until now is represented as “invasion” and/or “occupation”; not only as the division of the island into two and making the north of Cyprus “Turkish” territory but as an ongoing process even a planned project of assimilation with Turkey. This representation of events refers to Turkey’s unduly powerful influence on the island—economic, social, political, military. The effect of “population transfer” is also central to this perspective. Here,

⁴⁰ These were, generally, leftist political parties and the non-governmental civil organizations. They did not accept the “division” as a solution and tried to oppose that division.

⁴¹ Here, I would like to note that the “left-wing” and “right-wing” in north Cypriot politics is based on the distinction between Turkish centered identification (right wing) and Cypriot centered identification, especially after the 1990s. The motherland nationalism which was very powerful for years in north Cyprus, perhaps, complicated the internationalist ideal of the left-wing when the “non-Cypriot Turkish” is under the discussion. They can not act as the way when the Greek Cypriot community is on the carpet. This made the imagination of the “intended” self-identification difficult, especially when the “other” of this identification is the working class (see also Erhürman, 2006). Today, it is perceptible that there are some latent form of “conversatism” within the leftist Turkish Cypriots’ politics which closes down the changes and the “becoming” of the/ir identity. The “returning” back to 1960, “independent” Republic of Cyprus, is also initiated by this point of view.

⁴² Bülent Ecevit was Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey in 1974; intervention of Turkey.

I should also note that the newspaper Afrika is staunchly opposed to Turkish-centered nationalism. In the late 1990s, their oppositional stance towards a Turkish-Cypriot self-identification that was essentially Turkish-centred can be interpreted as an alternative, perhaps radical position. But, at the beginning of 2000s, a “new” movement against the *accepted* political situation of the island—permanent division, non-solution and a motherland nationalism—suddenly emerged.

The most important movement, in the north of Cyprus, against the division of the island and towards a peaceful Cyprus has been *This Country is Ours* platform. *This country is Ours*⁴³ was raised as a slogan and then turned into a platform and became the main locomotive in favor of a “solution” in Cyprus. The platform was a broad coalition of 41 organizations⁴⁴ and was the driving force in the organization of most of the mass demonstrations in favor of “solution” and “peace” in the north of Cyprus.

⁴³ The *This Country is Ours*, as it can be understood from the name, is the platform which criticizes the influence and the control of other countries on the island, especially Turkey in the north of Cyprus. The main inspiration was: The “subject” should be Cypriots, the self-identification should be Cypriot centered, etc.

⁴⁴ CTP (Republican Turkish Party), YHB (Patriotic Unity Movement), KTÖS (Cyprus Turkish Teachers’ Union), KTOEÖS (Cyprus Turkish Secondary School Teachers’ Union), DEV-İŞ (Revolutionary Trade Unions Federation), DĞİS (Revolutionary General Workers’ Union), EMEK-İŞ (Labourer Workers’ Union), BES (Municipality Workers’ Union), TÜRK-SEN (Turkish Workers’ Trade Unions Federation), KTAMS (Cyprus Turkish Public Servants’ Union), KTMMOB (Cyprus Turkish Architects & Engineers Chamber Association), EL-SEN (Electricity Workers’ Union), TEL-SEN (Telecommunication Workers’ Union), BEL-SEN (Municipality Employees’ Union), TIP-İS (Cyprus Turkish Physicians’ Union), YÖN-SEN (Public Servant Employees’ Union), KOOP-SEN (Cooperative Workers’ Union), DAÜ-SEN (EMU Employees’ Union), PEY-SEN (Peyak Employees’ Union), Famagusta Turkish General Workers’ Union, Cyprus Turkish Tradesmen & Craftsmen Chamber, Cyprus Turkish Scotch-breeders’ Association, YKB (Patriotic Women’s Association, Cyprus Turkish Artisan & Writers’ Association, Rights and Freedom Association, Kyrenia People’s Arts Association, Peace Association, Peace and Democracy Initiative, Socialist Reality in Cyprus, EKİM Culture-ART Association, KSD (Cyprus Arts Association) KIB-YAY (Cyprus Turkish Publishers’ and Booksellers’ Union, Naci Talat Foundation, Kutlu Adalı Foundation, Women’s Movement for Peace and Federal Solution, KIBES (Cypriot Scientific, Education, Health and Solidarity Association), Women Research Center, ÇAĞ-SEN (Public Employees’ Union).

A series of mass protests in support of a “solution”, a “peace” and the “EU” took place at several times in the north of Cyprus, in Nicosia. Many Turkish Cypriots came to support these rallying cries for an alternative approach to the Cyprus problem. They also opened a line of communication not only between Turkish Cypriots and the international public sphere but also with the other main community on the island.

We, almost 80 thousand Turkish Cypriots, came together four times at İnönü Square, had demonstrations and sent a message to the world; an S.O.S message that we wanted a solution on the basis of the Annan Plan... (Özker Özgür, 16 Nisan 2003, Afrika, p. 9).

In this article, Özker Özgür likens the mass demonstrations to an S.O.S message. They were, in effect, public outcries of frustration, dispatches from the Turkish Cypriot community to the world; voices of a community that was stuck in the “insoluble” and/or “unending” Cyprus “problem”. In other words, a distress call from Turkish Cypriots who were immobilized and confined on the north of Cyprus and were looking for “help”.

With the mass demonstrations and the feeling of elation that came from this dynamic there was the fading of a “Turkish” centered nationalism—the motherland & babyland discourse—and the advent of “Cypriot” centered discourses. A “new” energy had appeared to challenge the “rooted” nationalism. The outpouring of a new imagination about the conflict, the mass demonstrations and the social dynamic that embraced a “solution” in Cyprus was reflected in the results of the general elections in the north of Cyprus. In politics different symbols, meanings, signs, rituals are used in order to construct a policy or/and campaigns for that policy. In general,

Politics is culture. It is, therefore, a case of broad cultural changes unfolding partly *within* politics, as in many other spheres of life. There is inexorability about this process, because there are powerful forces driving it. It is carried by both corporate and other social and structural agendas, and also by changes within us individuals (Richards, 2004, p. 341).

Political campaigns and rallies took themes from the Cyprus issue and the Annan plan which had been on the agenda since the year 2002. The Annan Plan was a United Nations' proposal which was an essential components of the political road map in Cyprus since the direct talks began between the leaders of the two main communities—Glafcos Clerides and Rauf Denktaş—under the auspices of Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General⁴⁵. From that time, there was an enthusiastic dynamism in the north of Cyprus exemplified by the demonstrations mentioned above. This new political vibrancy, first seen in the demonstrations moved to the general election campaigns which was held on the 14th December, 2003.

General elections can be seen as a form of communication between the ordinary people and politicians. The votes of people are the responses to the policies of the political parties and/or politicians. However, the above-mentioned general elections in the north of Cyprus cannot be reduced to a simple interchange between the Turkish Cypriot community and the political parties, because they also allowed the electorate to express a new trajectory on the issue of Cyprus to the southern part of the country and to the world at large. It was a time for them to show their decisiveness to the world: it was also an answer to the international community.

⁴⁵For the detailed plan, please see the web page: <http://www.hri.org/docs/annan/>

The general election in North Cyprus which was held on December 14, 2003 was one of the most important turning points in the history of North Cyprus. I believe the dramatically different voting patterns in the election illustrates how great the transformation in the “emotions” and preferences of the Turkish Cypriot electorate had been. Political parties did not struggle for only their political views, but struggled for the “unification” of Cyprus or against it, and for the acceptance of the Annan Plan or against it. Indeed, given the overriding prominence of the Annan Plan at the time there is no doubt that the issue of the future of Cyprus played a central part in the formation of the policies of political parties in North Cyprus during the election. That is to say, the “Cyprus Issue” and politics in Cyprus are inextricably bound together. The political parties’ discourses, and their place on the political spectrum, are determined more by their position on the Cyprus issue than what their state programme might be addressing other concerns. This orientation is directly reflected onto their policies and political campaigns. This picture does not change in the southern part of the island either. On both sides, “right-wing political parties have expressed historical identifications with their respective “motherlands,” thus proposing Greek-centered or Turkish-centered versions, while the major left-wing parties proposed Cypriot-centered alternatives” (Papadakis, Peristianis, Welz, 2006, p. 6).

I believe that the political campaigns in the north of Cyprus can be interpreted as emotional communications. Under the umbrella of the Cyprus problem, political parties chose to construct their messages either in terms of “keeping the TRNC alive”

(right-wing parties) or in terms of “being European” with the result of a “solution” and “peace” on the island⁴⁶.

The discourses of the right-wing political parties were based on a grand narrative⁴⁷ which was essentially the aspiration to perpetuate the existing situation in Cyprus. This position could be summarized: the acceptance of the island as a divided country with two “national states”, the continuance of the relationship with so-called “motherland Turkey,” and the construction of a homogeneous identity, taking the border/green line in Cyprus as the limit of their sovereignty and underscoring and emphasizing the Turkish aspect of this identity. By contrast, left-wing political parties argued for pulling down the existing situation as they were looking for a “solution” in Cyprus. The leftist political parties in the north of Cyprus were operating in response to the new challenges relating to the “Cyprus issue” and the division of the island. This statement is also true for the policies in the southern part of the island. The “Cyprus issue” is the controlling concept that dominates politics on both sides of the island of Cyprus. The differentiation between the right-wing and the left-wing political parties in both sides of the island do not reveal substantive differences. As Papadakis puts it;

⁴⁶ While I was scanning the newspapers for my research it was very obvious that every newspaper also took a position. It is not surprising because, as it is in every other part of the world “Political parties not only ran elections but directly or indirectly controlled most newspapers” (Schudson, 2001, p. 424). In our case, for *Yenidüzen* and *Birlik* newspaper it was obvious because of their organic tie with political parties and *Afrika* for its “alternative” position. But, the case of *Kıbrıs* newspaper was interesting. As a “mainstream” newspaper, the transformation of the community is directly reflected in their publishing policy. *Kıbrıs* newspaper was used to be one of the most important agents in representing the “motherland & babyland” discourse (for further discussion and examples you can see Arslan, 2002). However, with the altered perspectives in society on the “Cyprus Problem” they became one of the most important agents, again as a mainstream and the most circulated newspaper, which served the pro-EU discourses. The only newspaper that you can see with a different point of views was *Halkın Sesi* newspaper.

⁴⁷ “TRNC will live forever!”, “Turkish Cypriots are an inseparable/integral part of the Turkish nation”, “we [Turkish Cypriots] will not be considered minority”, “we do not want Greek Cypriots amongst us”, etc. are some themes in the construction of this grand narrative.

Right-wing parties on both sides identified mostly with the respective “motherlands,” their peoples and histories, presenting themselves primarily as Greeks or Turks. While people of the right were thus divided and opposed, the left on both sides expressed mutual solidarity; they were joined by a common discourse on identity as “Cypriots first,” as one people that shared a common Cypriot history. [...] this opened up a third space where empathy could emerge (Papadakis, 2006, p. 71).

This “new” climate witnessed the birth of some new political parties. In this election, The Peace and Democracy Movement (B.D.H.), which was the movement headed by Mustafa Akıncı⁴⁸ now remodelled as a political party and the Solution and EU Party (ÇABP) which was headed by Ali Erel⁴⁹ were the new parties in this new political climate. At the beginning, before the elections, CTP, TKP, BDH and ÇABP were acting together for a “solution” in Cyprus and were considered as “left-wing” in those days. This alliance of the “left” worked together as a unified political unit under the umbrella of *This Country is Ours Platform*. However, here I should note that Ali Erel, the leader of the ÇABP, is although regarded as a “liberal” would be widely considered “rightist” in most political movements elsewhere. Here, I believe it is also notable that in this election, CTP widened its political bases and broadened its appeal newcomers by changing its name to CTP-BG (Turkish Republican Party and United Forces⁵⁰). This new structure included some new MP candidates drawn from different sections of the community businessmen, media people, etc. I believe another important point in CTP’s strategy was forging an alliance with the *TRNC Migrant Association*⁵¹ leader, Nuri Çevikel, who was included on their MP candidates’ list. The CTP-BG’s policy was not limited only to this. In their campaigns other “non-Cypriot Turkish Cypriots” were also represented such as in

⁴⁸ He used to be the leader of the TKP. The peace and Democracy Movement includes TKP and also other leftist political parties rather than CTP.

⁴⁹ Ali Erel used to be a Chairman of the *Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce* and then became the President of the non-governmental organization *The Cyprus EU Society*.

⁵⁰ CTP ve Birleşik Güçler (in Turkish).

⁵¹ KKTC Göçmenler Derneği (in Turkish)

terms like: “I’m the Common View. Mehmet Üşenmez. Retired. Ex-worker of the Social Insurance Office.” “A Turkish immigrant whose grandchildren are Cypriots. Put your seals here... YES!” Or/and “I’m CTP/United Forces... Tuncay Yıldırım. Turkish immigrant. Has two children. Earns his living from citrus fruits orchards... Put your seal here... Yes!”. It was the first time that the CTP announced openly its policy on the way to embracing multicultural structure in the Turkish Cypriot community. Although this was criticized by the ideological party voters, the party cadres and also some of the other partners in the *This Country is Ours* platform, it can be said that CTP expanded, and perhaps softened , its position on the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots by making embracing a wider constituency and making its appeal more inclusive⁵².

Politics is not merely about the kind of intended consequences and affects that can be predicted, foreseen and articulated in advance. Politics is *also* something that has to be invented and created in relation to specific practices, in particular situations and contexts, by performing the associated decisions, and otherwise doing things that may be unanticipated and unpredictable, thus *beyond* analysis” (Hall, 2008, p. 8).

This “change” in CTP-BG’s policy, I believe, can be interpreted as the “softening” of its policy towards the Turkish people who came to the island after 1974; and the “invention” and “creation” of a new policy regarding the new circumstances on the island. But it can also be seen as a strategy that ran parallel to the Annan Plan, since the Turkish “mainlanders” who live in Cyprus would—with some restrictions—be granted full citizenship or residence rights leading to full citizenship in the plan. And

⁵² This strategy continued until the early elections which took place in 2005. Perhaps, at the beginning this strategy was new for these “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots, because historically there was a mistrust towards the CTP. But with the continuity in CTP’s policy in the general elections, during the Annan Plan campaign and also in the early elections this scepticism about their intentions was finally laid to one side and CTP got considerable votes from these Northern Cypriots. Pointing out the villages where the 1974 migrant Turkish people are living, Mete Hatay put forward that “Since the 2003 elections, the CTP vote in these villages has been on the rise (14% in 2003, and 22% in 2005)” (2000). I believe it is also notable that, in May 2004 Nuri Çevikel resigned from the CTP-BG and became an independent MP. However, the vote in these villages has been on the rise in early elections. Thus, the voting patterns of “migrant Turkish” people did not run parallel with the *TRNC Migrant Association*.

lastly, there was a parallelism between the CTP-BG objectives and those of the new Justice and Development Party government in Turkey, which decided to change course regarding Turkey's role in the solution of the "Cyprus Problem," in order to help advance its European Union membership application.

That's why the election could be considered not as a struggle between the right and the left but the between the "status quo" and the "pro-EU"/solution. In other words, Turkish Cypriots "had to choose between the "status quo" as symbolized by keeping the TRNC alive, and "progress" as symbolized by the solution of the Cyprus conflict and membership of a United Cyprus in the EU" (Çarkoğlu & Sözen, 2004, p. 122). The December 2003 general election can be likened to a pre-referendum on the northern part of Cyprus⁵³. The race was between the pro-EU sides and the "status quo". As I mentioned earlier, the discourse of the political parties' in the north of Cyprus was generally based on the Cyprus issue, and given the new circumstances, such as the accession of the Republic of Cyprus and the Annan Plan as a potential solution for the Cyprus problem, the discourses of these political parties are articulated within these new political proposals. Remembering the statement that the meaning is the result of the articulation, the discourses of the "leftist" political parties are re-articulated in these new circumstances. The meaning of the solution gains a new meaning with the notions of "being European" and the "solution" now takes the Annan plan as a base.

The 2003 election took place just after this very politically vibrant period. Here I am referring to the mass demonstrations that had and were taking place, and the partial opening of the border and also the probable entrance of the Republic of Cyprus into

⁵³ This is also emphasized in the BDH's campaign during the elections.

the EU. In the case of a “solution”—in terms of the Annan Plan—the Turkish Cypriot community would enter into the EU as one of the two equal constituent states (Turkish Cypriot State) as proposed in the plan. Were a solution of that kind to be brought about, within the terms and conditions of the Annan Plan it would mean a new “openness” to the world, and a “legitimate identity” for the Turkish Cypriot community.

Relations between Turkey and the EU⁵⁴ and also the relationship between the north of Cyprus and Turkey were important political considerations within these social and political changes in the north of Cyprus. Here, it is important to note that, “unlike previous Turkish governments, the AKP⁵⁵ [The Justice and Development Party] openly supported the idea that the time had come for a solution in Cyprus. Divided or reunited, the island was scheduled to join the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004 (Çarkoğlu, & Sözen, 2004, p. 122). The policy of Turkey on the Cyprus issue changed after the Justice and Development Party came to power in November 2002. Because their main goal was entry to the EU, the Cyprus problem was seen as a problem that needed to be solved. With that in mind as a fundamental political goal the policies of the right wing political parties were not supported by Turkey’s government as they had been in previous elections. In that sense this election was important for an understanding of the critical changes in relations between the TRNC and the Republic of Turkey. Up until this election there was a consonance in the perceptions of the government of Turkey and the right-wing political parties in the north of Cyprus. But in this election, this accordance of thinking was broken,

⁵⁴ “The prospect of continued conflict on the island is likely to become an integral part of Turkey’s long-standing bid for EU membership and thus threatens to turn into an embedded conflict within the institutional network of the EU in the aftermath of the May 2004 Enlargement” (Çarkoğlu & Sözen, 2004, p. 123).

⁵⁵ Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AK Parti (in Turkish)

although there were some groups that were still clinging to the same perception—especially the military. I believe, that’s why, this general election was also important as a way of understanding the change in the relation between the north of Cyprus and Turkey. The right-wing political parties continued to pursue their memorized Turkey-centered discourse, even though there was a disconnection with the Turkish government. But, interestingly this time the CTP-BG included Turkey in their policies, as the “new partner” on the way to the “solution”. In one of the advertisements in CTP-BG’s campaign it says; “For a new Turkey in Europe too: Put your seal here”. This was because a probable solution in Cyprus would open a way to Turkey in its journey towards the EU, and a resolution of the Cyprus issue was one of the main conditions imposed on Turkey in its EU negotiations. Thus, in addition to extending its hand towards the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots, CTP-BG policy also called for collaboration with Turkey in favor of an agreeable solution in Cyprus.

It is clear that, the discourses between the right-wing political parties and the left-wing political parties differed in terms of the “Europe-centered” (left-wing) and the “Turkey-centered” (right wing). The constructions of the leftist political parties were generally based on an “open future” for the Turkish Cypriot community—a final ending to the dispute being the acceptance of the Annan plan and incorporation with the EU—while the right wing was stuck in notions of “history”, sovereignty, martyrs, etc. It can be said that, the different “imagined communities” as they were shaped within a ‘right’ and ‘left’ political perspective, were between a Turkish outlook on the situation and a European one. That is, in contrast to the rightist political parties which took out their national “memory kit” and highlighted the graveyards, the martyrs, the deserted squalid Turkish villages in the south, the leftist parties formed

their kit with plans for the future; “living at the EU standards”, “recognition”, “solution”, etc.

The politicians who were to be elected would be the mediators between the Turkish Cypriots and the world. The 2003 December election, which was held under these competing tendencies, may be considered as the most active campaigns in the history of Turkish Cypriot elections. The campaign of the UBP, the National Unity party, which was the supporter of the status quo in the north of the island, was and always has been directed by a policy that wants to bring about the unification of the Turkish Cypriot community with the Turkish nation. The main slogan of the UBP in the 2003 December election was “Impossible without the Motherland”. The UBP’s campaign was based on the commemoration and historical identification with “motherland” Turkey. This, fundamentally, summarizes UBP’s policy since its establishment.

The CTP-BG’s and BDH’s campaigns completely depended on identifying with Europe. In their campaigns their main slogans were “Yes to Europe” (CTP) and “Europe in spring” (BDH). The spring in BDH’s slogan denoted the probable solution on the island followed by entrance into the EU as a united government in May 2004. I believe here that there are several connotations for the word “spring”. We are all familiar with the word “spring” in poems, songs, etc. Love, the blossom of nature, the idea of newness, of freshness, of a new beginning, resonate easily with the word. Unlike the other seasons it always has connotations with good things and it always evokes a fresh start, after a gloomy winter. I think here, the image of winter

refers to a period which passed through as an “unrecognized” part of Cyprus and “spring” as a seasonal motif refers to a fresh start with a “recognized” identity.⁵⁶

When we look at UBP’s election rallying cries, it is very obvious that their significations, endorse a national identity for Turkish Cypriots that is linked intimately to the “Motherland”; Turkey itself. For instance, they use slogans and sentences such as; “motherland always and forever”, “National Union is protecting Turkish identity”, “We do not accept any demands imposed on us that will cause us to forget our National Anthem and the Turkish Flag”. Within such a construction, there is an open centralization of Turkey and Turkishness as it is in Ethnocentrism, which “refers to the ways in which the language, belief, customs of a particular ethnic group are reinforced, defended or promoted, whether in intellectual work, a political or military campaign, or a cultural or educational programme” (Brooker, 1999, p. 78). In our case, UBP’s discourse is promoted through a Turkey centered nationalism which locates Turkey as the “motherland”⁵⁷.

In the general election which took place on December 2003, the CTP-BG became the largest party, winning 35.18% of the vote and UBP securing 32.93%)⁵⁸. In the following days, the CTP-BG and DP coalition government was formed. It seemed that the CTP-BG as the biggest partner in the coalition government would have

⁵⁶ Acar Akalın’s song, *Mevsimi Geldi Artık*, became a popular song of Turkish Cypriots who wanted a solution on the island. The BDH started to use that song in their campaigns, then in the Annan Plan’s referendum period it was in the spotlight. *Mevsimi Geldi Artık* (It’s the season) again refers to spring; the season of peace, solution, freedom, happiness, etc. Here, if we remember that spring also connotes revolution, they were also referring to a dramatic change in the north of Cyprus.

⁵⁷ Another typical watchword appeal in the discourse of UBP was it’s exploitation of what can only be described as banal nationalism. Michael Billig’s (1995) concept of “banal nationalism” as he puts it is “a deixis of homeland and nation-making, by flagging banal signs of nationhood, by quoting the nationalist utterances of politicians and others”, it is the daily practices which reproduces nationality/nationhood. In UBP’s advertisements the Turkish flag and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus flag are shown alongside each other.

⁵⁸For the general results please see the appendix 2.

enough power to change the situation in the north of Cyprus, although this coalition was criticized by the other pro-EU or pro-solution parties. The pursuit of a solution continued with this new government, even though their attitude towards the Annan Plan was different⁵⁹.

As I mentioned earlier, the Annan Plan⁶⁰ had been on the agenda of the Cypriots since 2002;

The process that led to the April 2004 referenda had been foreseen since November 2002 as a step to legitimating a solution through its approval by the people, while at the same time seeking, eventually, to circumvent the negative positions of the leaders. A series of deadlines were missed, both for achieving an agreement and securing its approval by the people and linked to the major dates in Cyprus' course towards EU entry. The ultimate dates were 12 December 2002, the final day of the EU Enlargement Summit in Copenhagen, and 16 April 2003, when the Accession Treaties of the ten new members were signed in Athens. UN and EU officials and all involved in efforts for an agreement expected that the desire of the Republic of Cyprus to join the Union would encourage its (Greek Cypriot) leaders to adopt a conciliatory stance. At the same time, the prospect of the Turkish Cypriots being left out, posing further obstacles to Turkey's ambitions, would also act as a motivation for Turkey to move in the direction of Cyprus settlement before May 2004 (Christophorou, 2005, p. 86).

The referenda which took place on the 24th of April, 2004, was the first "direct" answer that the two main communities on the island gave to each other. The campaign period in the north of the island was very intensive, active and instructive: mass demonstrations took place several times, the Annan plan was discussed and presented in detail in the media, introduced on different web pages, and was also opened to debates in discussion programs on local TV and radio channels in the

⁵⁹ Because of the resignations from the coalition partners, 1 from CTP-BG and 2 from DP, they could not obtain the majority in parliament, Turkish Cypriots went to an early election in 2005. Thus, this government continued until 2005. In the early election, the policies and the campaigns of the political parties were not different. But there were some differences in the election's atmosphere. The TKP separated from the BDH and the ÇABP spread out. Because of the rising in number of the MPs, CTP-BG and DP again formed a coalition government. However, before these general elections the Turkish Cypriots voted again, this time for the Annan Plan.

⁶⁰ The Annan Plan proposed the creation of a United Republic of Cyprus with Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot constituent states.

north of Cyprus. But although there was an enthusiastic mobilization of interest in the north of the island⁶¹, a similar enthusiasm was not reflected in the attitude of electors in the south of Cyprus. My study does not cover the campaign and the situation/atmosphere in the south of Cyprus. However, I can say that this period was lived more intensively and enthusiastically in the northern part of the island. There were several reasons for that. I believe we can say that the north of Cyprus lived through this time more actively because it was/is the part which is not recognized internationally and would clearly gain “more economical and political advantages with a solution on the island”. Although there were several other reasons, these can also be understood as the difference between the “legitimate” and the “illegitimate”;

While Turkish Cypriots have lived the quotidian realities of a "made-up state," Greek Cypriots have lived the quotidian fantasies of recognition. Moreover, Greek Cypriot politics has long been centralized and party-oriented, leading to a general malaise. At the start of the last round of negotiations, several thousand Turkish Cypriots gathered spontaneously in one of Nicosia's central squares to express their support of a settlement. Such meetings have become common in the north, an expression of a newfound capacity for local democracy. Even at the time, they repeated the question, "Why is nothing happening on the Greek side?" But Turkish Cypriots knew very well that nothing was happening because Greek Cypriots felt secure in their advantage of wealth, recognition and imminent entry into the EU (Bryant, 2004).

Consequently, the connotations of the Annan Plan for the two main communities of the island were different. For Turkish Cypriots, the “solution” under the umbrella of the Annan plan designated more than the “solution” of the Cyprus problem and “peace” among the societies, it designated something more beyond these. This is not

⁶¹ Within the referenda campaigns, in the north of Cyprus there was a public dynamism which we were not familiar with. The Annan Plan was on the agenda of every one in the North, the Turkish Cypriot local TV channels and radios, which were used to listen/watch the news only, became the most watched TV channels as never before. I believe this was an intensive period with the mass demonstrations, the everyday discussion programs on TVs and radios – which also enabled the active participation of Northern Cypriots, the comprehensively explanations of the plan in the newspapers, etc. which can be interpreted as the public engagement/struggle towards/against the plan. This dynamism during those days can be seen in every time/place of our daily lives.

to suggest that the acceptance of the plan excluded a “peace” or a “solution”, only to emphasize that it would bring more than these to Turkish Cypriots.

In the campaign period the Turkish Cypriot community was divided into two; “YES” and “NO”. Although every individual, political ideology has it’s/her/his own reason for these YESs and NOs, they were represented as two homogeneous categories opposed to each other.

The Turkish Cypriot people rallied several times in very large numbers to accept the Annan Plan and to say yes to the unification of their country and also for a “new” life and a better future. As I indicated before, a new political energy was to be seen and felt with the ‘This Country is Ours’ platform, which was the main locomotive of the “Yes” camp. “YES” included different dynamics in it. These were; “unified Cyprus”, “unification”, “legalization”, “recognition”, “lifting the embargoes”, “an end to “migration”, “peace”, “solution”, etc. This “Yes” also became identical with the “peace” and the “solution”. In the “yes” campaign in the north of Cyprus, the main slogan was "Say Yes to connect to the world". This slogan was referring to the “isolations”, “embargoes”, “restrictions” imposed on the Turkish Cypriot Community. “Yes” would solve and clear away all the obstacles which Turkish Cypriots were faced with, and, as a result, they would “get closer to the world”. Here, “yes” is used as a metonymy which “involves a linear form of displacement” (Phillips, 2000, p. 191). The meaning of “yes” was a condensation point where the meaning occurred with displacement and intertextuality of other words/concepts such as; “peace”, “solution”, “being European”, “freedom”, etc. It did not mean only “yes” to the plan, but was equivalent to a chain of different meanings. Since,

“meaning is produced not only by the relationship between the signifier and the signified but also, crucially, by the position of the signifiers in relation to other signifiers (in a given context)” (Phillips, 2000, p. 191), here in the condition of the Annan plan, every signifier took us to another signifier and the meanings related to each signifier was woven with the relations established between and among signifiers. Therefore, the meaning of “yes” came out of the interweaving of different signifiers.

Although there was energetic enthusiasm in favour of the plan from large sections of the population there was also a voice of rejection in the “no” camp in the north of Cyprus, which was led by Rauf Denktaş and Derviş Eroğlu. They regarded the plan as having negative effects on the Turkish Cypriot community. While emphasising “being a minority” they referred to the ethnic conflict between the years 1958-1974. As mentioned before, this position could not find support from the government of Turkey. But they still insisted on this discourse. However, while the Cyprus issue was interpreted differently by the AKP government, it was still the “national cause” for the nationalistic groups in Turkey. The UBP had affiliations with these channels. During this time, these groups visited Cyprus and provided support to the “no” camp. For them the goals of the the Turkish Cypriots and Turks in Turkey were the same; the togetherness of the TRNC/Turkish Cypriot with Turkey/Turkish nation, as seen in the statements of “Serter⁶²; TRNC will survive with the support of Turkey”, and Sinan Aygün; The Turkish community and the Cypriot community are one entity (Birlik, 3 December 2003, p.7).

⁶²Vehbi Zeki Serter, president of the assembly, UBP MP at the stated time.

However, the atmosphere in the southern part of the island was not like this. From the very beginning, the Annan Plan was not supported by the majority of the Greek Cypriot Community. One week before the referendum AKEL (Progressive Party of The Working People of Cyprus) announced that they would not give approval to the Annan Plan. Their stance towards the plan was either “no” or “postponement”. However, there was no time for a postponement because the date for the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU was the 1st of May 2004. This created a disappointment within the Turkish Cypriot community. On that day the headline of Şener Levent’s editorial was; “Like if it was the morning of July 20” (Afrika, 16 April 2004, p.2). By referring to the 20th July—“division” of the island—he implied that AKEL’s position towards the plan would deepen, perhaps stabilize, the “division”. The rejection of the Annan Plan meant the accession of the Republic of Cyprus, as the sole representative of the whole island, into the EU, and this would mean the continuation of the existing circumstances, with two separate governmental bodies. Thus, the situation for the Turkish Cypriot community would not change. In other words, the political picture would remain as it had since 1974 with two governmental bodies, separated and ruling in isolation of each other. AKEL’s (Progressive Party of Working People) decision, more or less, put forth that the choice of the Greek Cypriots would be “NO”. From the beginning, AKEL had been up to then the most powerful voice of the Greek Cypriots’ left wing which supported a “solution” on the island and it was seen to be the main partner who would show empathy. This is why their sudden about-face on the issue came as a complete “surprise” to the Turkish Cypriot community. In the Kıbrıs newspaper, Ahmet Tolgay wrote that; “AKEL: the mask that fell” (Laforizmatik Dokunmalar, 15 April 2004, p. 3). This unexpected and sudden fissure in the relationship between the “left”

on either side of the border on the Annan Plan can be viewed as a final breaking point in the “mutual solidarity” among the left-wing parties.

As a consequence, the enthusiasm, in the north of Cyprus, which had been growing larger and larger could not find the same responsiveness in the south of Cyprus. In the mass demonstrations thousands of Turkish Cypriots gathered across the country. The size of these immense displays of support were unprecedented, and the international media covered them in their bulletins and reports. But, there was no reciprocation towards this enthusiasm in the south of Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots were expecting the support of their partners in “peace,” because for peace in Cyprus, two positive answers were needed; “Northern Cyprus held its biggest public meeting in its history. The bird with one wing searches for its counterpart in the south” (April 16, Afrika, main page)⁶³.

I mentioned that the referendum in Cyprus marked the first time that “Cypriots” across the border *responded* to each other. It was the first direct communicative action between the two main communities of Cyprus. “Communicative action is a form of interaction whose success depends on the hearer responding with “yes” and “no” to the validity claim raised with a given utterance” (Sim, 1999, p. 213). They *responded* to each other but there was a third party who was asked the question: the United Nations. Thus, they responded to each other, but at the same time they responded to the United Nations. As a communicative action the answer of “no” would also serve out the interaction, and could be accepted as a success of this

⁶³ The symbol of bird, particularly the white dove, appeared in the posters, flyers, placards, etc. during the referenda campaigns. The most used symbols in the referenda campaign were the white dove, olive branches and jasmine—which is accepted as the traditional Cypriot flower. The socio-political transformation in the north of Cyprus is also referred to as the “Jasmine Revolution” (*Yasemin Devrimi* in Turkish).

interaction of communication. For the United Nations, for instance, both of the answers would complete the action—because the process would be closed and actualized, whether the plan was accepted or not. But for the Turkish Cypriot Community the answer of “no” constituted an absolute failure. I believe we can look at this referendum from different perspectives. In such a condition it could be considered as an intra-communal communication, inter-communal communication and also trans-communal communication. This period can be taken as an intra-communal communication because like intrapersonal communication—“which occurs within and therefore within the self...it is closely linked to action; it not only prepares individuals for activity, it guides them during interaction. Action is not, therefore, the exclusive property of interpersonal communication” (Price, 1996, p. 9-10)—the communication took place within the community. In the referenda period, the Turkish Cypriot community acted and reacted to a specific social context, to the referenda. As a community they focused on the referenda and also the Annan Plan thinking and discussing them within the community itself. It is also an inter-communal communication because, like interpersonal communication, it occurred with the engagement of the two parts of the island. Along with these, it is also a trans-communal communication because in this period communication took place across several communities: international community, the UN, the EU, the US, Turkey, Greece, etc.

On 24th of April 2004, the two main communities of the island voted on the Annan Plan⁶⁴ in separate but simultaneous referenda. As predicted the Turkish Cypriot community accepted the Annan plan (% 64.91), and the Greek Cypriot Community

⁶⁴ The Annan Plan was drafted by the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan and the version was voted on was the fifth one.

rejected the plan (%75.18)⁶⁵. Although the result on either side was predictable, the Turkish Cypriots kept their hopes up until the final day. Thus, the rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriot community created “hopelessness” and “disappointment” among Turkish Cypriots. Because the “no” vote from the Greek Cypriot community also meant “no to peace”, “no to a solution” and also “no to Turkish Cypriots”. “The rejection that came from the South for the Annan Plan, not without the contributions of the leftist Greek Cypriot parties, meant to the leftist Turkish Cypriots more than just a refusal based on rational criteria; naturally, the subconscious of the society read this rejection also as a rejection—“no”— of its own self” (Behçetoğulları, 2008, p. 106). As I mentioned earlier, both the “yes” and the “no” involved different dynamics and had different meanings for the communities. Before the referendum when it became obvious that Greek Cypriots would reject the plan, Turgut Avşaroğlu wrote; “Our words are directed towards the Greek Cypriot folk who are preparing to say “ohi” [no] at the referendum. We know that you didn't like this Annan Plan that sprung out of the hands of English-American writers. Let us admit that we didn't like it either. Still, we are going to say "yes" at the referendum on April 24. Your “no” is against the Annan Plan. Our “yes” is for peace, for a unified Cyprus (Afrika, April 16 2004, p.3). I believe that this editorial position reflects fairly the very different attitudes that were held by voters on either side of the border. But here there is a generalization of both the “yes” and the “no”. The Turkish Cypriot community did not say “yes” just for “peace” and a “United Cyprus”, but also for a recognized European identity. However, this can be also read as: If you say “no” to the question that we replied “yes” to peace and a United Cyprus, it means you say “no” to a peace and a United Cyprus.

⁶⁵ Please see also Halkın Sesi, 25th April 2004, p.1.

The referendum date was represented as the “last chance” ⁶⁶, “the day of fate” and a “golden chance” because they wanted a settlement before May 1, 2004, before the accession of the republic of Cyprus as the representative government of an entire Cyprus. However, it did not go as Turkish Cypriots wished because of the fact that the plan was rejected by the Greek Cypriots, the communities were not reconciled and the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU on 1st of May 2004. Thus, with this change, the green line in Cyprus became the “uncertain” border in the EU. Just before the referenda it was believed that the border would become the EU’s border, but it did not. Thus, this “new” change brought a new ambivalence:

Whatever the result would have been, it doesn't matter in the end, because the 47-years reign of the pro-Turkey Denktaş Period has come to an end. After 40 years it is no longer possible to put the Cypriots through all the things they were put through in the past. Cyprus has entered the European Period. Would a "Yes" or "No" change this fact? The answer to this question is a No. This means that now all ways will be open for Turkish Cypriots too. Just because an agreement between the two sides hasn't been reached before May, doesn't mean that the Cypriot government will allow that some of its citizens will live outside of EU standards and in poor conditions. In that sense the Wall of dairy has been torn down long ago. Do we need to pass through the perfect gate to reach our goal? Let this be the fool's gate for those Nasreddin Hodjas that look for the hard way. Can't you see? You are free already... A free European (Arif H. Tahsin, Afrika, 25 April 2004, p.2).

The referenda took place almost one year after the partial opening of the border (23rd April, 2003). Within this period of time, Turkish Cypriots had a chance to get Republic of Cyprus’ passports and/or IDs and many of them did. Thus, with the accession of the Republic of Cyprus, they became, in a manner speaking, “individual Europeans”. The “dairy” in this editorial stands for the northern part of Cyprus which is “closed” to the world and the life standards of Turkish Cypriots which were not at the “expected” level. Here, “the locked door” refers to the harbors

⁶⁶See Kıbrıs Newspaper, 24 April 2004, p.1 for specific indications. But wording of this kind was used very frequently during the referendum campaigns.

and ports in the north of Cyprus from which there was/is not any direct flight from the north of Cyprus to the world, except through Turkey. Tahsin also used “Nasreddin Hodja’s door” to highlight the tragicomic condition of these doors.

Just one week after the referenda, the Republic of Cyprus entered the EU. Like Şener Levent,⁶⁷ Faize Özdemirciler, in her editorial in the newspaper Afrika, referred to the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU: “What May is this, born from a July?” (1 May 2004, Afrika, p. 3). Again, she refers to the current position of the divided Cyprus. Within the oppositional discourses, the intervention of Turkey in Cyprus in July 1974 was always represented as “taksim” (division) which was the main aim of the TMT. Thus, the entrance of the Republic of Cyprus without a “solution” on the island was interpreted as the permanence of the existing situation, which is the division of the island.

If there had been a ‘yes’ vote on both sides in the referenda, the ‘fate’ of Cyprus would have changed. Since the year 2002 there had been a lively debate among Turkish Cypriots around the future of the island, and when speaking about what was most cherished for the future becoming European was the ultimate goal. Being European meant “modernity”, “welfare”, “comfort”, etc. After the failure of the plan the Turkish Cypriot community did not achieve their desirable “future”. And this disappointment was represented in the newspaper Afrika⁶⁸ in an Orientalist manner:

⁶⁷ 25 April 2004, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Afrika newspaper, was formerly known as Avrupa newspaper. Şener Levent, the newspaper editor and Memduh Ener, “were convicted of insulting the Turkish Cypriot leader in an article published on 29 July 1999, when the newspaper was called Avrupa. They were incarcerated on August 8th in Nicosia’s central prison after receiving their six-month sentences from a civilian court. On 24 May 2001, a bomb exploded in the building that housed the newspaper’s printing press, without causing any injuries. On 12 December 2001, the authorities confiscated furniture and equipment from the newspaper’s office, and machinery from the printing press. On 15 December 2001, Avrupa closed itself down, throttled by the sentences and the fines, but Levent announced that it would be reborn

“The picture looks sad. One half of the island smiles in happiness while the other half is looking sad. They say “Hello Europe”, while we're just saying “Hello Africa” (Afrika, May 1, main page). Using Africa as an Orientalist image, the greeting “Hello Africa” suggests that the outcome of the referendum would deny the Turkish Cypriots the benefits of Europe that they had so much wanted and left them with with their very opposites. Modernity, peace, democracy and a high standard of living, the much sought after consequences of a ‘yes’ vote, and intimately connected with a European notion of well-being, would now be replaced by those images, in the Orientalist historical mind of the very contrary.)

After the referenda in the north of Cyprus the atmosphere was multifaceted. On the one hand, there was a hope that because they said “yes” to the Plan something would change; on the other hand, because the plan was rejected by the Greek Cypriots the aim was not achieved (“being a European country”, “lifting of the embargoes”, “having a recognized identity and state”, etc.) Accordingly there was communal disappointment. Turkish Cypriots thought that something should change. But how? From May 1, 2004, the Republic of Cyprus entered the EU as a representative of the “whole” island, and the north of Cyprus would not get the “recognition”, “freedom”, “welfare”, etc. for which they had struggled since the early 2000s. The EU authorities insisted that, in the aftermath of the referendum result, a more favourable approach in EU policy would be adopted in regard to Northern Cyprus affairs, but this didn’t answer Turkish Cypriots’ desires; “The EU Committee of Permanent Representatives adopted a middle solution to stop the isolation of the TRNC... A

with the name Afrika, explaining that Cyprus "no longer faces towards Europe, but instead is turning back towards prehistory, towards Africa" (see also http://www.rsfo.org/article.php3?id_article=3329). The change in the name of the newspaper also referred to the “undeveloped” circumstances in North Cyprus at that time, by Afrika journalists.

small relief... An air tube/ trachea to the TRNC...until the real solution... Turkish Cypriots, permanent residents of the TRNC or EU citizens who entered the island over TRNC harbors will be eligible to cross the border to the South without visas” (Afrika, 29 April 2004, p.2). Although this would bring some “relief” to the north of Cyprus, especially for its tourism economy, this did not mean the removal of the embargoes, it was only an aid that would keep it “alive”, like a patient who survives with the assistance of an oxygen tank.

I believe another important crossroad in the Turkish Cypriot’s political alteration has been the Presidential Election. Rauf Raif Denktaş had been the president since the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus⁶⁹. He also used to be the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community since the 1950s. However, I should also note that Denktaş is/was not only a leader; he is also a “symbol” of nationalist ideas in Cyprus. He is accepted as “national advocate” by his sympathizers. This is because from the beginning, he has been the main negotiator for Turkish Cypriots in the peace talks/negotiations which have been carried out by the United Nations. He is referred to as the “national advocate” because he is a lawyer who believed that he was protecting Turkish Cypriots’ rights. He used to be, and still is, remembered in

⁶⁹ Denktaş’s political career is as follows; “Chairman of the Federation of Turkish Cypriot Association, 1957; attended U.N. General Assembly on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots, 1958; advised Turkish Government on the rights of Turkish Cypriot people during the preparation of Zurich Agreement, December 1958; leader of the Turkish Cypriot delegation at the London Conference where the establishment of a bi-communal partnership state was endorsed by the two peoples of Cyprus, Turkey, Greece and Great Britain, February 1959; head of the Turkish Cypriot Delegation at Constitutional Committee drafting Cyprus Constitution, 1959-1960; elected President of the Turkish Communal Chamber, 1960; entry into the island arbitrarily prohibited for four years by the Greek Cypriot leadership after the collapse of the partnership state, 1964-1968. Took up duties as President of the Turkish Communal Chamber and Vice-President of the Turkish Cypriot Administration, 1968; interlocutor at the inter-communal talks, 1968, which continued until the Greek coup in Cyprus on 15 July 1974; re-elected President of the Turkish Communal Chamber, 1970; elected Vice-President of the Republic and President of the Turkish Cypriot Administration, 1973; formed the National Unity Party, 1975; elected President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, 1976; elected President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, 1985; re-elected 1990 and 1995 and 2000” (see also <http://www.cypnet.co.uk/ncyprus/people/famous/ppl-raufdenktash.htm>).

the context of the “Cyprus Issue”⁷⁰. That’s why I believe it is important to mention this change when we talk about Cyprus, especially Northern Cyprus. Denktaş stepped down as the president of Northern Cyprus and did not contest the presidential elections that were held in 2005⁷¹.

The change in the presidency was represented by KIBRIS newspaper as follows; “So, finally, the “Denktaş Era” has come to an end” (18 April 2005, Kıbrıs Gazetesi, main page). The catchword the “Denktaş Era” is referring to the end of the national camp discourse and is also used as opposed to new notions and approaches to a “solution” and “peace”. It also refers to the end of Denktaş’s extensive leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community. Without doubt he has been the most important and powerful figure in the national camp of the Turkish Cypriot community, a man who defended the “loyalty” and “attachment” towards the “so-called” motherland. Denktaş’ position on the Turkish Cypriot identity, is/was very clear;

I am a child of Anatolia. I am Turkish in every way and my roots go back to Central Asia. I am with Turkish with my culture, my language, my history, and whole being. I have a state as well as a motherland. The notions of “Cypriot culture,” “Turkish Cypriot,” “Greek Cypriot,” “a shared Republic” are all non-sense. If they have their Greece and we have our Turkey, why should we live under the roof of the same Republic? [...] Some individuals are producing fiction about the existence of “Cypriots”, “Turkish Cypriots”, “Greek Cypriots”. There is no such thing as a “Turkish Cypriot”. Don’t dare to ask us whether we are “Cypriots”. We could take this as an insult. Why? Because there is only one thing that is “Cypriot” in Cyprus, and that is the Cypriot donkey” (Quoted in Navaro-Yashin 2006, p. 85-86).

⁷⁰ I think it is also remarkable that since 1950s the negotiations among the leaders of the two main communities, with the collaboration of the United Nations and the guarantor governments, have continued. During this time period the negotiators and the leaders were always changing. The only leader who remained in the office from the beginning was Denktaş.

⁷¹ In the referenda campaign period Denktaş declared that he would resign from the presidency if the Turkish Cypriot community said “yes” to the plan. But, after the referenda he again announced that his

In saying this, I believe, he was saying nothing more or nothing less than the belief that the Turkish Cypriot identity is an extension of the Turkish nation. At that time, Turkish Cypriots reacted to these words of Denktaş, not because of the equation of the Cypriotness with donkeys, but the removal of even the idea of Cypriotness. That's why the change in the presidency would mean more than a change in the leader. The new president of the TRNC is represented in *Kıbrıs* newspaper as follows: "As it was the case two months ago during the parliamentary elections, today's presidential election showed us that people demand "EU and a Solution" of the Cyprus Issue. In yesterday's critical election, the Turkish Cypriots elected in the first round with 55-60 % of the vote CTP/BG leader and Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat as the new president" (*Kıbrıs*, 18th April, 2005, main page)⁷². Mehmet Ali Talat is represented as "new period, new leader" (18th April, 2005, *Kıbrıs*). In contrast to Denktaş who was the symbol of nationalism, Talat as a new leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, symbolized solution and the EU. That's why this new leader did not mean only a change in the presidency, but also a changing of the policy related to the construction of the Turkish Cypriot identity and also in the policy of any further negotiations. Mehmet Ali Talat used to be the leader of the Republican Turkish Party and the prime minister at that time. Doubtless, CTP's image which came into prominence during the mass demonstrations and the referendum campaigns was influential in this presidential election.

⁷² Results of the presidential elections: Mehmet Ali Talat (CTP-BG): %55.60, Derviş Eroğlu (UBP): %22.73, Mustafa Arabacıoğlu (DP): % 13.22, Nuri Çevikel (YP): %4.79, Zeki Beşiktepeli (independent): % 1.72, Hüseyin Angolemlı (TKP): % 1.05, Zehra Cengiz (KSP): % 0.44, Arif Salih Kırdag (independent): % 0.30, Ayhan Kaymak (independent): % 0.17. (see also *Halkın Sesi*, 18th April 2005, p. 1).

The negotiations, which were discontinued after the referendum, were again on the agenda of Cyprus, with new leaders; Mehmet Ali Talat and *Dimitris Christofias*⁷³. It seemed that it was the first time that two “leftist” leaders would negotiate the Cyprus issue. Although it seemed to be the best coupling in the negotiations Turkish Cypriots did not believe that there would be a solution or they did not want to build high hopes in fear that it would lead to another disappointment: “I don't think that this would happen. If it did, it would have happened during the Anna Plan period. The Greeks have rejected the Annan Plan. What are they going to accept now? In my opinion it will be us this time who will reject what they've accepted. It will go on like this. Besides, it's not enough if only we accept it. There's Turkey, there's Greece, there's the United States... But I would really wish for it to happen...” (U.H.)⁷⁴ or as another Turkish Cypriot participant says; “I hope they also realise that Talat and Christofias is the last chance....There is a hope but it will become clear in time. We have hope but we are waiting, knowing that it's our last chance. I hope it happens. There won't be any other (Z.A)⁷⁵.

The two leaders of Cyprus attempted to solve the “Cyprus Problem”. Like it was in the Annan Plan, the probable “solution” was based on a Federal United Republic of Cyprus, bi-zonal and bi-communal, with one sovereignty, one citizenship and one

⁷³Dimitris Christofias became the President of the Republic of Cyprus on February 28, 2008. During the negotiations of the Annan Plan, Tasos Papadapulos was used to be the President. Although Christofias' party, AKEL was also rejected the plan, the relationship between the two parties, CTP and AKEL made the “new” negotiations dissimilar from the previous.

⁷⁴*Olacağını zannetmem. Olsaydı annan planı zamanında olurdu.Rumlar Annan Planını reddettiler.Şimdi neyi Kabul edecekler. Onların Kabul edeceğini bu defa da biz Kabul etmeyceyik bence...Bu böyle sürececek..hem zaten sadece bizim Kabul etmemizle de olmaz. Türkiye var, Yunanistan var, Amerika var...Keşke olsa ama...*

⁷⁵*Umarım onlarda Talat ve Hristofyas'ın son şans olduğunu farkındadırlar...Umut var ama zaman gösterecek. Bir umudumuz var ama son olduğunu da bilerek beklerik. İnşallah olur. Başka da yoktur.*

international personality. The first meeting among the two leaders, after *Dimitris Christofias won the election in the south of Cyprus*, was represented as below;

Says TRNC President Mehmet Ali Talat to Greek leader *Christofias*, who won the elections in February: “Comrade, either we’ll resolve the Cyprus Problem or we’ll seal the divide.” *Christofias*, who has been active in the ranks of AKEL since and defending the unification since his youth days replies to his old friend Talat with his eyes filled with tears: “I am aware of this situation. That was the reason why I announced my candidacy”.

The closeness between the two leaders isn't the only indicator. For example, before the election of Christofias 5000 Turks a day on average went to the South while only 500 people from the South crossed to border to get to the North. After the election these numbers equaled (Yenidüzen, 13 May 2008).

The Turkish meaning of the word “comrade” [*yoldaş*] means also fellow traveler. Since the beginning of their political lives, as members and then as the leaders of the left-wing political parties their main aim was to bring peace to Cyprus.

As mentioned in the above editorial, after the presidency of Christofias began the number of people passing from the south of the island to the north has increased. This can be interpreted as a lifting of the pressure upon the Greek Cypriots which was put on them by previous administrations, particularly the one time president Tasos Papadopoulos not to travel to the northern part of the island. At that time crossing to the north was a political act and “implied recognition of the “illegal pseudo-state” (Demetriou, 2007, p. 998). Thus, this “new” change in the political arena, prepared the ground for the relief of interpersonal relations between the two main communities of Cyprus—since the pressure on Greek Cypriots partly disappeared.

Unfortunately, neither did the two *comrades* succeed in the way of signing the “peace”. Such an “end” was interpreted as the failure of a “left-wing” policy in

Cyprus and created disappointment both at an individual level—for Talat and *Christofias* because of the failure of the “solution” that they put their hearts into—and also at a social level⁷⁶.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, political communications between the communities on the island have continued with an ongoing alteration of mood that sometimes has augured a promising future and at others has been sadly disappointing. In this part of my dissertation I went over the history of the “division” and the social and political reconfigurations in political ambitions of the Turkish Cypriot community which came into the picture with the mass demonstrations, general elections, the referenda and the presidential elections. In other words, the communication among the communities in Cyprus at a political level underwent radical changes. In the coming chapters, I will go through the “border” issue and its role in constructing the identities, the past, the future, the home, etc. In this way, the political issues of ‘border’ and ‘division’ can be looked at from a perspective that is not constrained by politics but is situated at the level of the individual.

⁷⁶ This dissertation was completed in 2008. Since, the period of study does not cover the political changes and alterations after 2008, they are not included within this study. The period of research is also limited with the political changes mentioned in the Chapter 1.

Chapter 3

READING THE DIVIDED CYPRUS

*They say a person should
love their homeland
that's also what
my father often says.
My homeland
has been divided in two
which of the two pieces
should I love?
Neşe Yaşın*

This chapter is a reading of Cyprus as a divided country and the ways of communicating through a border that bans communication. I am not only dealing with the border which separates the north and the south of Cyprus, but also the borders which define our sense of belongings. Boundary, border, line and frontier are all signifiers which are used to designate the inside and the outside. However, “the boundary is not that at which something stops, but as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its essential unfolding*. That is why the concept is that of *Horismos*, that is horizon, the boundary” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 332). Thus, the border/boundary/line/frontier is also an opening—opening to the outside and a creator of awareness—awareness of the outsider. In some cases you need this border for protecting you and in some cases you struggle against its limitations. Thus, it preserves difference.

In Cyprus, for years there were/are different attitudes towards the border, I mean the “green (border) line” in Cyprus. In this chapter I try to drift across this border in

Cyprus and try to understand or to put forward what this “green (border) line” means for Cypriots and also how they behave towards it. However, my designation of the border is not only limited to the physical border in Cyprus but also refers to its extensive and multiple phrasings in different circumstances.

While looking at the ways how the Cypriots perceive and experience the “green border line” in their country, my main focus in this chapter is on the counter hegemonic civil initiatives towards the border; which are against the division, as also on its role which functions as a ban on communication, interaction and exchange between the Cypriot people. Subsequently, in this chapter I deal with the border that awakes in us the “courage to make the truth of our presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserved to be called into question” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 116).

3.1 BORDER: separator or/and the unifier

In Cyprus there are many ongoing discussions about Cyprus, “Cypriot identities”, “solution”, “peace”, “Cypriotness”...etc which are related to the desire or need for defining one’s identity. As I mentioned earlier, since 1974, Cyprus is divided into two as North and South Cyprus, which are also divided as the legitimate and the illegitimate. For the southern part of Cyprus, the government in the north part of Cyprus is a “pseudo” state established on “their” territory—the north of Cyprus—which was invaded by Turkey. For them, the TRNC as a state which is only recognized by Turkey, but not by the international community, is the “unrecognized” state which is established on the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. But the official discourse of the TRNC insists that the north of Cyprus belongs to Turks. When the issue is Cyprus we talk about North and South Cyprus; two in one. Thus, the border

dividing Cyprus is what is most discussed and most centered on when considering Cyprus and all matters related to it.

In the last 50 years the identity construction in relation to this conflict and resolution are the most discussed issues in Cyprus. Actually, I can say that the beginning of the conflict has crashed with the “definition” of identities in the island as two “different” *imagined* communities. For defining our identities we always need borders. Every border drawing does not only define the inside, it is at the same time an act of “exclusion”. However, here it is important to develop an ethical responsibility while we are drawing our borders of identity; which concerned with “destabilizing the entrenched certainties of polar oppositions and attempting to develop an ethical response to the irreducible otherness of the other as well as to one’s own alterity (Hall, 2008, p. 1) so that we should beware of not marginalizing or not creating/placing the “outsider” or the “other” exclusively as an enemy. This is what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1985) means by the phrase “othering the ‘other’”. While drawing our border of identity we should open up a “place” which would enable exchange, dialogue and democracy. This place can be understood as a “third” place in which the transcultural, intercultural and cultural interactions, exchanges and communications are enabled.

The concept of the boundary or frontier, in which the frontier is not only that which separates different parties, but is also that which binds them together, forming a place of joining and communication: this is also the structure of the “bridge” according to Heidegger, the “hinge” according to Derrida, and the “frontier” according to de Certeau. Border also has an influential role in the construction of home, homeland,

citizenship, etc, and points out the “inside” and the “outside”. It becomes a separator between the “self” and the other”. The very same border that defines the self, at the same time, defines the other, from which it is distinguished. However, as it is in every kind of signifier, the border can have multiple signifieds⁷⁷.

When we look at our environment, we see that several “borders” give shape to our subject positions—such as urban vs. rural, old vs. new, east vs. west, north vs. south...etc. For instance, the border divides Cyprus as North and South Cyprus. That is, the border is a bypass of the capital Nicosia. This very same border also separates the capital as South and North too. I can say that this border is the margin between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. For instance, when we look at the northern part of Nicosia we see that the city walls divide the city into two; the inside and outside the city walls/the old city. The city wall in north Nicosia is a border which separates *Turkish people* who live in the old town and Turkish Cypriots⁷⁸ who live in the new city. Every drawing of a border brings “exclusion”. Briefly, the same border which defines the old city also defines the new city, and the very same border also has created /creates a class division between Turkish people and Turkish Cypriots (see also Bizden, 2006). Thus, the city walls of Nicosia became a discriminative border between Cypriot vs. Turkish, educated vs. uneducated, modern vs. unmodern, unlawful and lawful, etc⁷⁹ (see also Erhürman, 2006). As spaces, the inside and the outside of the old city became two different identity spaces for two different groups of people. “With the changing of the living conditions Turkish Cypriots have started to move to the “new” Nicosia” and the “new comers who are not well educated as

⁷⁷ The ‘border’ as a space is represented differently within different discourses. Such as; “buffer zone”, “green line”, “check points”, “meeting point”, “the sign of occupation”, “the sign of independence”, etc.

⁷⁸ For the further discussion related to this issue you can see sections 2.2 and 4.4.

⁷⁹ For further discussion please see section 3.3.1 in this chapter.

people from Nicosia” (Tolgay, cited in Bizden 2006, p. 69) have started to live there. These kinds of representations can be seen within daily and media discourses.⁸⁰

The division of the island in 1974, was one of the most important turning points in Cyprus’ history. As I said before, the border has a significant role in drawing identities, especially in nationalistic narratives. Post -1974 is a “new” era for Turkish Cypriots. Starting from that date, this period can be understood as a struggle of becoming a state and every kind of “act” which has a tendency to construct the nation state relies on an official history (Behçetoğulları, 2006). Post-1974 can be seen as a re-writing of Turkish Cypriots’ history from the point of official, nationalistic point of view, taking the border as a “margin” of their identity construction. After the division of the island in 1974, the border became a diagnostic or discriminative indicator of the nationalistic discourses on the island.

As I mentioned in earlier sections, nationalism is a narration which is based on “remembering” and “forgetting”⁸¹, and it is constructed to chart a particular way to the future. National memory is a set of myths which try to unite our past, present and future (Kızılyürek, 2002). In Northern Cyprus, the green line has a significant role in writing the history within nationalistic narratives. It is a margin for identity construction. It draws the boundary between the inside—Turkish Cypriots—and the outside—Greek Cypriots⁸².

⁸⁰ For further discussion please see section 3.3.1 in this chapter.

⁸¹ For further discussion please see the previous chapter.

⁸² However, I should note here that “The wall of a Greek Cypriot military post at the west end of Nicosia...bears the inscription “Our borders are not here. They are in Kyrenia” (Gregoriou, 2005), which shows us that Greek Cypriot “official” discourse does not accept that “border” as a margin of their identity construction. That is, there are two different interpretations of the territory which overlaps with each other but which are, at the same time, discordant with each other. That’s why it is two in one.

Nationalism has been accelerated with the division of the island, and the border became a symbol of division. On the one hand it seems like a signifier of the separation of the island, while at the same time it became a “border” between the past and the present. The “past” also had been left with the division of Cyprus, and the border had tried to nourish the “forgetting” by dividing the past and the present. The border here became the signifier of the *past* of the displaced Turkish and Greek Cypriots on the island. However, at the same time it brought forth the “remembering”. The “other” sides of the border as a lived memory had been “frozen”, like a photograph, for Cypriots, especially for Cypriots who had to leave their houses, villages, etc. For instance, for years it was very normal to see the pictures of the “old” owner of the houses –Greek Cypriots who used to live in those houses before 1974– on the walls of displaced Turkish Cypriots’ homes. Although this can have several interpretations, I think this shows us that they never forget their “past” which is on the “other” side of the border. They respect displaced migrant Greek Cypriots’ lived memories. What I am trying to say is, the border which is supposed to block the “remembering” could not succeed in doing it; the border rather constructed the past as “frozen” memories like photographs and these photographs can also be interpreted as a sign that they are/were still waiting to go back to their homes. The photographs always freeze and frame a moment from the past, like their imaginations of their own homes.

The past “is” always constructed and rewritten in the present. One of the main influential tools of the re-writing of the past is, of course, education. Within nationalism, the history is written by breaking the ties with the other communities on the island. Within official history which is taught in Turkish Cypriot education,

Greek Cypriots are represented, and constructed as an “enemy”; as a threat of our national being and those who killed “our” “children”, “wives”, “relatives”...etc. This “education” reached such a point that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is taught as a peninsula⁸³. The nations are *imagined communities*⁸⁴ and “the nation’s “coming into being” [is] a system of cultural signification” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 1). However, this official history has been falling into confusion with Turkish Cypriots’ “individual” histories. Greeks who are represented as a “fiend”/“enemy” within official history becomes a “friend” in your individual history. S/he becomes a friend of your grandmother/father or an “old” house owner of “your” house who sends presents to you for 23 April National Sovereignty and Children’s Day. That’s why, the construction of Greek a Cypriot’s identity for a Turkish Cypriot—especially for youths—is ambivalent⁸⁵.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, North Cyprus, a “new geography”, born after the geographical division, started to be constructed as the Turkish Cypriots’ homeland” (Kızılyürek, 2003, p. 33). Although the “border” is the signifier of the separation it is also common for the existence of both Northern and Southern Cyprus. Without the border neither of them could exist. It is the border for both of them. The film “Our Wall” is a good example that shows the “commonality” of the border/wall for the two main communities on the island. The film is directed by a Greek Cypriot director Panicos Chrysanthou and written by Panicos Chrysanthou and a Turkish Cypriot

⁸³ This is also supported by the ‘so-called’ motherland sending “Ülkü Ocakları” (ultra nationalist far right organization) for rehabilitation of “worn” nationality among Turkish Cypriots and religious representatives to enliven the religious beliefs and identities within the Turkish Cypriots community (see also Yücel, 2003).

⁸⁴ Imagined community is a term which is used by Benedict Anderson (1991) who argues that national identity is an abstract and symbolic imagination of our belongingness.

⁸⁵ Ambivalence is “a term first developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action” (Young, 1995, p. 161).

writer Niyazi Kızılyürek. This film shows the history of Turkish and Greek Cypriots. As the title of the film is “Our Wall”, Chrysanthou and Kızılyürek—as “representatives” of Greek and Turkish Cypriots—claimed the border and ascribed “commonality” to it.

The “border” constructs the “new geography” for Turkish Cypriots. “Every island knows its natural boundaries. The North and the South, [...], we and they conditions are everyday life’s realities which are constituted by the border’s division of Cyprus in an unnatural manner” (Sarioğlu, 2005, p. 17). Although this illustration refers us to another imagined community which is based on Cypriotism. This notion of Cypriotism highlights the point that the division of the island had made communication and a shared life between the two communities impossible. Cypriotism, is a term claimed by both Turkish and Greek Cypriots who live on the same island but in different parts, and with no connection between the two. Cypriots are islanders who cannot live on the whole of it. As Kızılyürek puts it, “Cyprus lives as ‘half Cyprus’ since 1974” (Kızılyürek, 2003, p. 33) both in the south and in the north. Turkish and Greek Cypriots have lived under the same “sun” but with different stories. Although as communities they lived separately in the two parts of the island the official versions are different. We can say that it is the same but “different” because the Republic of Cyprus claims the *whole* island while the TRNC does not.

The official discourse—especially until 1990s—constructs North Cyprus as a “peninsula”, independent from the south. The discourse is based on the “politics of denial” of the relations and history with the other main community in Cyprus.

Actually this denial is not only a denial of the other main community on the island, it is also a denial of the “past”, denial of the lived experience. This denial, which is the other side of acceptance, is necessary for the consistency of the “story”. As Slavoj Žižek says when the story that we tell ourselves no longer has a meaning, it creates violence” (cited in Behçetoğulları, 2006), because of the discordant relation between the official history and the personal memory of the Turkish Cypriot community—especially for the displaced Turkish Cypriots and those who see the “division” as problem/ceasefire/deadlock. This is what Bhabha states related to the idea of the nation. Bhabha states that, there is ambivalence “that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write it and the lives of those who live it” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 1).

From 1974 until the end of the 1990s, the established communication between the two communities was, moreover, very limited. The only communication tool was media which continuously represented Greek Cypriots as the “Other” and the southern part of the island as the *Other* part without any relation. Such a construction nourished the “acceptance” of the “divided” Cyprus. This “division” was consciously or unconsciously “internalized” by Turkish Cypriots. I think the example below is a good one that shows the “internalization” of this “division”.

One of my islander friends, artist (painter) Hüseyin, crosses to the south after the referendum. On the way back to the north, after finishing his dues and with thousands of different thoughts running through his memories, it starts raining before he reaches the border. With the joy of getting wet under the rain pouring down in the south he arrives at the checkpoint. Though he had the feeling that the rain should stop at the border, he gets surprised to see that the rain was actually continuing. The subconscious where all the signs made up of historic concentrations and learnings are piled is telling him that the rain will stop at the border. He passes to the north “under the same rain” and continues to get wet. The rain, continuing in the north awakens a fabulous feeling within him.

Because, like all things that started in the south, the rains had to stop at the border! [...] Can you imagine? The rain is continuing at the same time, both in the north and the south... the physical and mental division is so much our reality that we get this feeling that a rain in one side will not continue in the other. It was a wonderful feeling to pass from the Turkish [Cypriot] and Greek [Cypriot] checkpoints and get wet under the same rain... and at the same time, a heavy, traumatic and painful feeling. It is already very painful to cross from Ledra Palace... above all, Turks and Greeks being directed from different places” he thinks (Sarioğlu, 2005, p. 17).

Although this story was lived after the opening of the border, it is a good storyline that shows the “division” of the island. This division is not only a geographic division; it is a *mental* division, which is constructed through *historic concentrations* and *learnings*. The story that Hüseyin had “learned”, no longer has a meaning when the rain continued across the border and this created a conflict in his story. All of the things that he was *forced* to learn, to feel, to live gave him an idea that the border separates the two parts of Cyprus as two different *worlds* and there is no relation between the lives which is lived in two parts of the island. The “division” of Cyprus is *taught* and the history is written through this division through various narratives—education, daily practices, politics...etc. Whether, it is accepted or not, this “division” has an impression on the consciousness of the peoples of Cyprus. That is to say, “our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the “present”... we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). In the constructed *today*, Turkish Cypriots have lived a “half” Cyprus and a half-present time—with a lost past and with a far future. Actually, it is clear we have never lived the “real” present time because it doesn’t have a past or a future, because the present time lost its links with the past and the future. Thus, personal memories are

conflicting with nationalistic narratives. The national narratives which build upon the unification of our past, present and future⁸⁶ have created a traumatic present for Turkish Cypriots, who do not forget their homes, their neighborhood, their friendship with Greek Cypriots, now broken from prolonged division and waiting for the “solution”, when they would rejoin the world.

In this chapter I talk about the civil initiatives and civil experiences of Cypriots. But before going on to discuss these issues and the experiences, I will talk about English as a means of communication among the Cypriot people. It is discussable because the language that made the communication possible among the Cypriots was their “inheritance” from British colonization. Thus, I will talk about English, particularly how it relates to Cyprus.

3.2 ENGLISH: means of communication or the colonizer’s language?

The border, which divides the island, separates it both geographically and communally. It created “mono-communal”⁸⁷ structures living side by side on the two different parts of the island, without any communication between them. Since 1974, the “Green Line” on the island separates the island and also the two main communities on the island, as two different governmental bodies. In such circumstance life in northern and southern Cyprus is lived within “mono-cultural” structures. This suits the nationalistic narratives that, since the beginning, polarize the two main communities on the island, and construct and represent them as two opposing and antagonistic communities which have different nations, ethnicity,

⁸⁶ Please see the coming section and Kızılyürek 2002.

⁸⁷ Here, I do not exclude other minorities on the both side of the island. I used the term “mono-cultural” in order to express the two governmental bodies on the island and also the nationalistic discourses that try to construct a national unity on both sides.

religion and language. That is, the nation, the religion and the language are used and represented as the discriminative factors between the two main communities on the island.

However, when we look at the new lines of communication that have opened up in the last decade we can see that English played a significant role as a means of communication. Communication between the two communities is generally maintained through another language—different from their local languages (Turkish and Greek)—which is English. English became the main language that enabled the peoples of Cyprus communicate with each other. This is apparent within bi-communal groups' activities where it is used as the "lingua franca"⁸⁸ of communication, in face-to-face communications which became possible after the opening of the gates, and moreover communication in cyberspace. Within bi-communal web sites and journals, e-mail groups, chat groups, discussion forums, daily conversations, English is used in addition to Turkish and Greek.

Actually, English has another history in Cyprus. It is the language of the British colonizer who controlled the island between the years 1878-1960. What we are observing in the present instance is that although, English is historically a colonizer's language, the present usage of it is not. By considering the colonized people, Salman Rushdie states that, "...peoples who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it—assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontier" (1991, p. 64).

⁸⁸ The term 'lingua franca' commonly used as a way of expressing a common language when two or more people with different mother tongues want to communicate with each other.

That is to say, the use of English or English as a communication tool does not necessarily refer to the colonizer's identity. It is another identity which is being constructed by the inheritance of the British legacy and also the common usage of English in the world as a first international language. Remembering Derrida's concept of inheritance which is never a given but always a task (1995, 54)⁸⁹, the usage of English, which is an inheritance from the colonizer, is turned into an enrichment in the communication between the two main communities of Cyprus.

English is now a quasi-universal language in the world including countries that are not British colonies. In Cyprus, English has another connotation that solves communication problems between the North and the South which coincides with the language of the colony and the dominant communication means in the world.

When we talk about the conflict in Cyprus we do not talk about the other ethnicities but only about these two main communities. As I said before, when you talk from a nationalist point of view it is very easy to separate these two main communities, based on their ontological differences: as two who speak different languages (Greek and Turkish), believe in different religions (Christianity and Islam), belong to the different ethnic origins (Greek and Turkish), etc. That is, their language is one of the distinctive elements used in separating these two main communities.

However, when we talk about language we should be aware that language is allegorical and metaphorical:

Language is not primarily a means of communication; it is a means of cultural construction in which our very selves and sense are constituted.

⁸⁹ For further explanation you can see the footnote 11 in Chapter 1.

There is no obvious “message”, no language that is not punctuated by its contexts, by our bodies by our selves, just as there is no neutral means of representation (Chambers, 1994, p. 22).

Language as a main communication and representation tool works as figurative. We define who we are by using this metaphorical tool of representation. But like our national identities which are “not things we are born with, but formed and transformed within and relation to representation (Anderson, 1983, p. 162), language is also “a step-mother by its very nature. Individuals are born into languages they have not themselves created and which cannot express human beings totally” (Yashin, 2000, p.1). Yashin used the term “step-mothertongue” “...not only in the field of language and literature, but in relation to its philosophical, historical and cultural references (2000, p.1). That is to say, like our names, gender roles, nationality and religion, our historical and cultural practices are also things that we are born into. For instance, in criticizing the nationalistic ideology informing Turkey’s and Greece’s official literatures, Mehmet Yaşın states that; “If a poet has an identity, it is the spatial language that actually constructs and reflects it... when I read Kavafis, I sometimes think that I share the same mothertongue” ⁹⁰(2002, p. 15). Here, he attracts our attention to the way of using language instead of using the same language. For instance, before the referenda, which were held on 24 April 2004 on both sides of Cyprus simultaneously, some Cypriot poets⁹¹ wrote cooperatively a poem named *Yes: What a Joyful Word*, in English⁹². This is another distinguishing

⁹⁰ Kavafis is a poet who is Egyptian born modern Helen or old Egyptian who became Helen.

⁹¹ 15 Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot poets, Nese Yaşın, Filiz Naldöven, Lily Michailidou, Fikret Demirağ, Elli Peonidou, Zeki Ali, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Tamer Öncül, Feriha Altıok, Neriman Cahit, M. Kansu, Stephanos Stephanides, Gür Genç, Jenan Selçuk, Michalis Papadopoulos, and Aydın Mehmet Ali came together to use their creativity, imagination and work on a common poem (http://bianet.org/2004/03/01_eng/news32205.htm).

⁹² See appendix 3.

aspect of this poem. Poets—from both Northern and Southern Cyprus—, who use different languages, wrote this poem using a common language, English.

The important point here is that meaning is not constructed through the language that is inherited to us by nationalistic discourses as “mothertongue”. By using “English” in this poem, they substitute their “mothertongues”—which is seen as one of the main distinctive features of one’s identity within nationalistic discourses—with another language. Actually, it is pivotal here to point out that English is also another inherited language, another step-mothertongue. In this respect, it is the inheritance of British colonization.

In the poem *Yes: What a Joyful Word*, poets from both sides of the border constructed a common “meaning” which represents their expectations related to the Cyprus issue. As Anzaldua puts it; “Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland, is what makes poets and artists create. It is like a cactus needle embedded in the flesh. It worries itself deeper and deeper, and I keep aggravating it by poking at it” (1987, p. 73). The poets of Cyprus as representatives of “creation” displaced the role of the border as a separator of two main communities as mono-communal structures. The poets used English as a bridge language between their two *mothertongues*. The colonizer’s language and/or international language became the language of “peace” on Cyprus. As the poets have written;

We had in mind that every YES is also a NO to something else and every NO has also a YES. We approached YES as a very affirmative word. A word we learn first in the other's language, a word which is an opening rather than a closure, a word which can bring a change...
(http://bianet.org/2004/03/01_eng/news32205.html).

They use the word “yes” as a representative of the exchange between two different languages. It is the first step to go beyond, beyond the symbolic border that is created among the languages. They use the language of English as a channel of exchanging their ideas by replacing their mother tongues. As the poets wrote in their poem;

So that I can speak
What is Greek what is Turkish
Are they two houses exchanging each other
Are they two lives filled to the brim
Emptying themselves
into sand bags

Using English, they displaced the discriminative role of the language. Here again, we come to the discussion that Mehmet Yaşın articulated; “the way of using language instead of using the same language”. “It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained” (Rushdie, 1991, p. 17). Here, we see an example of the achievement or benefit of the way of the *translation* and the way of using the language. Here, English is neither a colonizer’s language nor the international language; it is a channel of communication and exchange for the hopes and desires of peoples of Cyprus related to their “local” concern. The “imported” language of the colonizer, perhaps, became a tool of communication. This poem is a good example of exchanging and sharing multi-cultural, inter-cultural inspirations. They had a “common desire” which was more easily realized by abandoning their own local languages and adopting a third “neutral” language. I believe, we can understand with the term “paralogy”. Contrary to the consensus, paralogy is an inventive way of conducting conversations. Thoughts emerge which allow mutual understanding rather than using conventional methods to find the solution.

In Cyprus, in many cases, English as a third language became a “location” where the people from two different languages could meet. That is “in order to understand the connection to language as an avenue for identity performance, one must first understand the participants’ views of language and language practices, [...]. Language plays a salient and defining role in the way these participants desire to be positioned and position themselves” (Giampapa, 2004, p. 200-201).

The use of English as a third language and common language for both communities can be interpreted as a “speaking from the margin”. Using English, peoples of Cyprus challenge the marginalization derived from ethnicity and language. Namely, use of English became a counter discursive means to deal with the challenges experienced of the mono-communal structures of their lives and exigencies. “Speaking from the margin, [poets of Cyprus] have found the ways to re-articulate their identities within multiple spaces of their multiple worlds and to redefine—at least for themselves – what it means to be a [Cypriot] (Giampapa, 2004, p. 216).

The use of English as a third language, and the use of multilingual interaction as a means of communication can be interpreted as an interstitial mode of communication. It can be said that multilinguality is one of the characteristics of the interstitial mode. As Bhabha points out it is “theoretically innovative and politically necessary” to focus on the “interstitial moments and processes that are produced in the articulation of “differences” (1994, p. 269). That is, the intertextuality, interlinguality and also the hybridity is proposed by such poets, as cross border activists, in order to displace the oppositions and antagonisms between the two main communities on Cyprus have translated the dominant designations of difference. In

short, they use English as a third language, which is an “active moment of challenge and resistance against the dominant cultural power” (Young, 1995, p. 22). Here with dominant cultural power, I mean the languages which are used in both communities—Turkish and Greek. English is the language of neither the one nor the other, but a different language.

Here, I should also note the disadvantage of the use of English as a main communication tool. Although there are many Cypriots who can talk and communicate in English generally English is spoken by educated Cypriots. Communication in bi-communal groups is generally maintained through English – which is “different” from their local language. That is, “English as the language of communication has an impact on the composition and the social scope of the bi-communal groups as only members of the educated middle class can be integrated” (Wolleh, 2001, p. 22). Canan Öztoprak who has attended the bi-communal trainings organized by Fulbright Commission writes;

The trainings are conducted by foreign trainers and are all in English. This eliminates a big portion of communities who don’t speak English from the process. Even for the ones who speak it is not so easy, especially to express feelings in a foreign language. This leads to some reactions or feeling of being excluded (2000).

I believe, on the one hand, it limits the expressions of the participants related to the issues that they discussed, but on the other hand it closes down means of expression that are established in our own language. The use of English forced the participants from the two main communities into an equidistant relationship. In bi-communal workshops one of the key practices was the usage of the language;

In the bi-communal workshops we taught the use of “triggering words”. This is way of expressing thoughts without causing the opponent or the other party to perceive any pain. Using English had such an advantage. It is easier in

English rather than Turkish to find words that would not cause pain to the other party. [In English] we had chance to choose these kinds of words more easily (H.G).⁹³

In bi-communal groups Cypriots were taught how to use English as a mediator between the communities who talk different languages, and within these groups the main communication tool was/is English. However, the role of English is not limited with the mediation of these groups. English has a more significant and wider use when we look at the channels of communication between the Cypriot communities; the leaders of the two main communities talk and discuss the “Cyprus issue” in English, the bi-communal groups use it as the main communication tool as mentioned above, the artists collaborate artistically in English and after the partial opening of the border, and the ordinary Cypriots use English in their face-to-face interactions, especially the younger generations who do not know the language of the other. Thus, English in some way or another became the main tool of communication, negotiation, cultural/social/political exchange, etc. It works as a connecting link. Consequently, the role of language, in general, which seems to be the marker of differentiation among people who speak different languages, became a junction where two different groups of people who speak different languages could meet.

Apart from the political communication between the two main communities on the island which is generally held in English, the first utilization of English as a connecting link in civil initiatives was used in bi-communal groups.

⁹³ *Bu iki toplumlu workshoplarda biz “triggering words” eğitimi aldık. Bu yöntem karşı tarafta herhangi bir acıyı hissettirmeden ona fikri anlatabilecek bir yöntem bulabilmekti aslında....İngilizce’nin şöyle bir avantajı oldu. Kullanılan kelimelerin öğrendiğimiz kelimelerden farklı kelime seçme, çok rahat kullandığımız Türkçeden başka onu, karşı tarafı, da rahatsız etmeyecek kelimeyi daha rahat seçme şansımız vardı.*

3.3 Bi-communal Groups: Bridges for a Better Cyprus

Since the two main communities on the island had a conflict and this conflict ended with the division of the island, the peace building activities, which are generally funded and run by third parties, have been continuing. Just after the division the third parties started to bring people from both parts of Cyprus together in order to “keep warm” the relationship between the divided groups.

Since the late 1970s, many conflict resolution workshops have taken place to bring together members of both communities in Cyprus to learn about one another, share experiences and build greater cooperation and trust, in an effort to make progress towards a solution. These workshops started slowly in the beginning, supported and driven mostly by the international community. But through 1980s and especially towards the end of the 1990s, they gained momentum and flourished. Bi-communal groups were formed around many issues and skills training. By the late 1990s a group of thirty citizens from both communities were trained as conflict resolution trainers and thus took ownership of the work. After the opening of the checkpoint in 2003, bi-communal projects lost momentum. However, there are still many efforts today supported by the international community as well as Cypriots that are continuing ... (Hadjipavlou & Kanol, 2008, p. 14)⁹⁴.

The above citation is a descriptive summary of the bi-communal initiatives between the two main communities on the island.

From 1974 till the end of the 1990s, the two main communities in Cyprus lived side by side on the same island with very *limited* communication between them. Although there were some bi-communal conflict resolution projects held by third parties, especially the United Nations, it can be said that the media was the only means of communication between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. However, at the end of the 1990s, Cyprus started to witness some changes in terms of communication.

⁹⁴ For a detailed study you can see Hadjipavlou and Kanol, 2008. The study of Hadjipavlou and Kanol gives a detailed explanation of the bi-communal groups' history and their activities.

“The partition of Cyprus has been an extraordinary complete barrier to communication. Not only has the fence been difficult to penetrate and the two crossing points rigorously policed, with all movement subject to a forbidding bureaucracy, but other forms of contact has been frustrated too” (Cockburn, 2004, p. 172). The border separated two main communities on Cyprus as communicationless communities which were sharing the same island. As I mentioned earlier, the border became the signifier of “independence” for the Turkish Cypriot authorities and the signifier of “invasion” for the Greek Cypriot authorities. For years, it’s function was as the separator between the legal and the illegal. The north of Cyprus is regarded as the “illegal” part of Cyprus which is not recognized by other countries except Turkey and “Cypriots have long grown used to the fact that letters with an address in the “wrong” part of Cyprus are often “lost” in the post” (Cockburn, 2004, p. 172). In such a position, the north of Cyprus is the place that lost its connection to the world, or let’s say, the world switched off the connecting links with the north of Cyprus because of being “illegal”. Thus, the people in the south of Cyprus could not communicate with the north part of their country, and the people who were living in the north could not communicate directly with anyone, except Turkey.

In brief, the communication between the two main communities on the island has been a confused and baffled thing since 1974. Under those circumstances it can be easily said that, “Cyprus [was] a communication laboratory and an anomaly. It is a country globally connected⁹⁵ but locally and interpersonally divided” (Lauris, 2004, p. 68). However, the communication or the communicationlessness of the two main communities is *ambivalent*. Although they were two communities living separately

⁹⁵ Here, I should note that the one that is globally connected to the world is the southern part of Cyprus. The northern part of the island, I mean the TRNC is not.

on the same island and had no direct communication with each other, there were broadcasts on government TVs in the other language on both sides, both communities could watch the television broadcasts of each other, they had news about each other in their media and also they could read translated press articles of each other in their own newspapers⁹⁶. Despite this, the extent of communication between both sides, with the exception of official political interaction, was very limited. In addition, this kind of communication also is a controlled, censored and generally *biased* communication. They were very aware of each other without any direct communication.

Since the division, the border is always there as a signifier of division, where each ignores the other main community, but at the same time, points them out. It was the communication barrier; “the enemy of talk, of interaction, of the flows of ideas, in short they are the opponents of communication” (Gumpert & Drucker, 1998, p. 237). But on the other hand, it is/was the “contact zone” between the two parts of Cyprus. Actually, when we talk about the border we do not talk about a static, tranquil entity. It is moveable. It is a village, a military unit, a meeting place, a passageway, the UN zone, etc. The border was always there as a mnemonic symbol. It was that which made the south and also the other main community, the Greek Cypriot community, more “noticeable”. We were not aware of our neighbors or the neighborhood villages as much as we were aware of the Greek Cypriot community because they were always signified by the metaphors of division: flags, barbwire, military units, etc. The division always reminded us of the other part and also the other main community on the island. It can be said that the function of the border is paradoxical.

⁹⁶ Another enhancement of CMC is its opportunity for Cypriots who also know the *other's* language to read the online newspapers.

It both functions as the separator and the reminder of the other part of the country; it is a supplement. As Derrida puts it: “the supplement is maddening, because it is neither presence nor absence” (1976, p. 154)

Benedict Anderson (1991) told us that all nation states are “imagined communities”. That is to say, although we do not know our neighbors, we are tied with each other in an imaginary unity. It is supposed that we do not have any conflict with other people within this imaginary boundary. We speak the same language (sometimes not), we have the same culture, etc. Specifically, “although all the members of a nation have never met each other, in the minds of each lives the “image of their communion”⁹⁷. If the “glue” holding the concept of community together is its imagining, then nationalism can be conceived as the cement of the nation” (Killoran, 1998, p. 159). But, by the means of this border which divided Cyprus into two – and also makes it continually to become one – the Greek Cypriot community became not the supposed fellow countryman whom we were not aware of, but the one who is a continually noticeable and realized identity. It can be said that the southern part of our country was a blank space and the Greek Cypriot community was the ghost-like community for us, especially for the Turkish Cypriot youth who had not had any contact experience with this community.

However, after the opening of the border, this ghost-like community became extra noticeable – in supermarkets, in the streets, in the home visits, etc. It might be described as the excessive livening up of the ghost. At the beginning especially, when the borders were opened, they assumed an identity which we could not be

⁹⁷ See also Benedict Anderson, 1991.

“unconcerned” about.⁹⁸. This is also valid for the Turkish Cypriots’ visits to the south. I mean before the opening of the border they were “lacking” and after the opening of the border they became “excessive”. They became “excessively” visible in the supermarkets, restaurants and streets as non-Turkish speaking people.

Under the conditions of being divided into two communities, Cypriots had an opportunity, in the late 1990s, to come together and to discuss *their* issue. “Because communication links are almost completely severed in Cyprus [...] bi-communal peace initiative is difficult. It is not impossible to develop without the assistance of outside third parties. The United Nations presence in Cyprus was primarily a military and refugee assistance mission and most diplomatic posts primarily concerned themselves with contacts with political leaders” (Broom, 2000, p. 3). The bi-communal contacts were started as a project that was coordinated by the United Nations Developmental Programme. The workshops and meetings were facilitated by the UN. These workshops and activities happened in a mono-cultural context at the beginning but then carried over to a bi-communal context. “The bi-communal Conflict Resolution Trainer Group began to emerge in 1993...From Spring 1995 onwards approximately 30 people of the Conflict resolution Trainer Group began to initiate a project of their own to establish new bi-communal groups. By the end of 1997, there were 25 such groups and approximately 1.500 people had participated in bi-communal activities” (Wolleh, 2001, p. 6)⁹⁹.

⁹⁸ This is also applicable for the perceptions of the Turkish Cypriot community by the Greek Cypriots after the opening of the border.

⁹⁹ There are bi-communal groups/activities in Cyprus in a number of fields, such as; women, architecture, art, medicine, folk, youth, bi-lingual journals (Turkish and Greek), etc. Additionally, the transmission of this interaction through the members of these bi-communal groups to members of the rest of the community can also be accepted as ‘communication’.

These bi-communal activities were the first contacts between the members of the two main communities. They were the first groups that had a chance to communicate with each other; they were the first seeds in cross-cultural communication. I believe the transmission of this interaction through the members of these bi-communal groups to members of the rest of the community can also be accepted as communication. That's why, I believe, it is important to look at these bi-communal groups: they were the first group of people who had a chance to experience communication after such a long period when there was little or not communication.

In those days there was no passage between the two parts of Cyprus. "If a crossing is not possible or does not appear to be possible, the only alternative is a meeting in the middle" (Wolleh, 2001, p. 24). The bi-communal group members were meeting in Ledra Palace (in the buffer zone in Nicosia). With the bi-communal activities and/or groups the border became one of the most influential communication passageways on the island. With the formation of the bi-communal groups the signification of the border as a signifier of separation is altered and it became a "meeting place": its function as a barrier of communication has transformed into a space of communication. Ledra Palace Hotel on the green line and also the bi-communal village Pyla became the main meeting points of these activities.

In a general sense, borders are used to define things, places and identities, and they are used to separate one thing from the other. Borders are used to define our homes, our countries, our identities, our gender roles...etc. As it is presented by Gloria Anzaldúa;

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along

a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3).

The border in Cyprus (since 1974) can be perceived as an edge which separated the “us” from “them” within nationalistic discourses on either part of the island. It is a separator which separates the north from the south; Turkish Cypriots from Greek Cypriots¹⁰⁰. Within nationalistic discourses, it has a vital role in promoting a “mono-communal” identity in both parts of Cyprus. This can be considered as “purification of space”. The border is used to define and separate the inside(r) and the outside(r), us and them; it is used for the exclusion of foreigners. This can be likened to the construction of our homes and homeland. “The home may be profaned by the presence of “dirt” in the form of dust or mud [...]. Similarly, the homeland may be profaned by the presence of strangers, or the national culture profaned by the presence of foreign cultural products” (Morley, 1999, p. 161). That is to say, the border in Cyprus is used to construct “mono-communal” structures in both parts of the island by excluding the ones in the other part. It is considered a “no man’s land” within these discourses. Nevertheless, with the bi-communal activities, its “deadness” has passed through a transition formation and has come alive. The dead zone, a “no man’s land”, became a common land for peoples of Cyprus. As I mentioned earlier, it became an “in-between” space which gave the possibility of a cultural transformation in Cyprus. That is, it became a transition from mono-cultural structures to a hybrid bi-communal structure and an opportunity for an in-between, hybrid identity.

¹⁰⁰ It can be said that after the accession of Republic of Cyprus to EU it also separates the European and non-European in a sense. As it is also mentioned in the introduction it is also used as a separator between ‘East’ and ‘West’ (see also M. Yaşın 2000).

Until the formation of the bi-communal groups, the border could be interpreted as a separator between *two nation states*¹⁰¹ on the island¹⁰². Here I should note that for the Greek Cypriot authorities the border is the sign of occupation that separates the “free” and “occupied” lands. In such circumstance, the border is a retaining wall of communication between two main communities on the island that did not enable any transition¹⁰³. However, with the bi-communal activities and their usage of the buffer zone, especially Ledra Palace, as their meeting place, the common sense of the border as a separator has been displaced by the commonness of north and south Cyprus. With the formation of bi-communal groups, as I mentioned before, the border became a place where peoples from the two parts of the island could exchange messages¹⁰⁴. In such meetings, Greek and Turkish Cypriots exchanged their hopes, expectations, solution suggestions and they forged a *common* goal for Cyprus’ future. It became a communication space where the peoples of Cyprus could dwell in and imagine a “different” Cyprus. What is interesting here is, I believe, sitting on the border that divides the island into two and imagining a Cyprus without this very border. Thus, bi-communal activities can be interpreted as the “undoing” of the already accepted “definitions” of the border—a border which is used to carry on the mono-communal structures of both parts. It became an “other” space, a “wonderland” for counter hegemonic discourses for the peoples of Cyprus. That is, the border in Cyprus became an *interstitial* place where “the intersubjective and

¹⁰¹ Although the Republic of Cyprus is represented as bi-communal republic there is no active Turkish Cypriot participation. Here again, the border is seen as a separator between the ‘recognized’ and the ‘unrecognized’ parts of the island.

¹⁰² Actually, the border carries its undecidability in itself. For instance, there is a bi-communal village, Pyla on the border. This is a kind of dilemma in its own character; being a border which separates the two main communities and at the same time being a border which has a bi-communal village in it.

¹⁰³ It was not like any border among two different countries. There was not any passing without the permission from official authorities.

¹⁰⁴ Until the opening of the border in 2003, the border, especially the Ledra Palace in Nicosia and Pyla, was used to be a meeting place for bi-communal groups. But with the opening of the gates, the border became a passage between the two parts of Cyprus.

collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). The border as a meeting place provided a space where peoples of Cyprus could communicate and negotiate. The bi-communal formations became a group communication where the members “share common goals, purposes and interests...” and they wished to join these groups in order to “achieve a shared goal or oppose a common threat” (Dimbley & Burton, 1992, p. 85-86). Bi-communal groups, in this sense, were the first civil movement of rapprochement between the two isolated communities on the island.

The bi-communal groups invented a “new” way of living (in/on) the border. A new “border culture” began to take shape with these bi-communal groups and activities. Thus, it can be said that bi-communal activities as a “border culture” was a resistance culture towards the *division* of the island. This is because, “the status quo on Cyprus is marked by a geographical separation of the Turkish and Greek ethnic groups into ethnically homogeneous areas. A buffer zone [...] divides the Greek Cypriot part of the island [...] from the Turkish Cypriot northern part” (Wolleh, 2001, p. 5). However, with the bi-communal formations the buffer zone became a hybrid bi-communal place of a counter hegemonic discourse aiming at the status quo in Cyprus. That is to say, the symbol of division was transformed into the symbol of “resistance”—resistance to the dominant culture. It became a place of “transition” which enabled the peoples of Cyprus to communicate.

In the circumstances of the time, the border was a prohibited zone/area for the peoples of Cyprus and it was the symbol of the continuity of the struggle for power over their separate territories of the two *states* of Cyprus. However, when

considering the alteration of the situation with the beginning of bi-communal activities, the meeting in the border can be interpreted as “a symbolic abandonment of the demand for freedom of movement on the whole island. The status quo would lose some of its provisional character (Wolleh, 2001, p. 28). The establishment of bi-communal groups can be interpreted as a civil demand from both parts of the island for free movement and open communication.

On the one hand the border has a vital role in imagining a unified sense of self within nationalistic narratives on both parts of the island, while on the other this very same border has/had been interpreted differently within different groups. The very same border can be interpreted differently by different groups such as;

- For Greek Cypriots it is/was a barrier which separates the “invaded” part of their country.
- It is/was a frontier which encircles the “nation state” for Turkish Cypriot authorities and empowers the mono-communal structure
- It is/was the line which divides the country into two for the counter hegemonic discourse.

With cross border activities, the bi-communal activities were the first movements that displaced the “dominant” discourses and practices of the nationalistic movements. The “border” became a meeting point for the “peoples of Cyprus”, and these activities became a cultural strategy that struggled against the oppositional discourses and became an in-between “room” for alternative voices in Cyprus.

As such, the border went beyond the competing, dualistic nationalistic discourses—oppositional discourses—and opened the possibility for a re-signification of a “new” sense of belonging—a sense of belonging that is based on a hybrid Cypriotness¹⁰⁵. It enabled the peoples of Cyprus to meet, communicate, and share their memories, culture, hopes... etc. The “border” of Cyprus is “a liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4) between the north and the south, the legal and the illegal. With the bi-communal groups the meaning of the border is transformed and it became the first symbolic interaction that gave chance to the cultural communication between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. That is, “these ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1-2).

The border as an interstitial space enabled the peoples of Cyprus—who have the same goals of “solution” and “peace”—and it became a place of cultural transformation. The bi-communal groups can also be accepted as an alternative practice to competing nationalism. It also opened up the possibility of new significations of identities, re-significations of Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot and Cypriot identities. It also became a hybrid cultural space “that forms contingently, disjunctively, in the inscription of signs of cultural memory and sites of political agency” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7). That is, with bi-communal activities “border” became a “new” place where the people of Cyprus discussed their peace-building efforts,

¹⁰⁵ Here, I should also note that these bi-communal group members were only from the two main communities in Cyprus. Thus, they did not reflect the other minorities on the island.

their “commonalities” and also their “differences”. With bi-communal activities the peoples of Cyprus had the opportunity to explore their differences and to build up a compromise of forethought about their country across the boundaries which are/were drawn by nationalistic narratives.

Briefly, these bi-communal activities became *cross-community* activities, so bi-communal groups members became *local peace constituencies*. They started to bore into that “division” along with the initials of this *new sense of belonging*. They helped to break the stereotypes and these bi-communal groups became a cross community that criticize and problematize the division of the island and the isolated lives of those that live here. As one of the bi-communal participant says; “These groups were the “good will groups” (U.H)¹⁰⁶. I believe such an expression shows us that the main aim of these groups is to create a “good will” among the communities of Cyprus and to break down the stereotypes which were constructed by the national camps on both sides. For instance, as one Turkish Cypriot bi-communal activist G.T¹⁰⁷ says, the stereotype of Turkish Cypriots which was “being undeveloped” was broken in the minds of Greek Cypriots who attended those meetings. They also became agents to circulate this “new” image of Turkish Cypriots among the Greek Cypriot community;

I think these meetings were good in introducing the two communities to each other. I think Greeks were surprised, they were not expecting such a developed community. However, once they got to know the Turks, their preconceptions changed. For example, there were teachers and they showed

¹⁰⁶ He used to be a member of the bi-communal choral and language groups.

¹⁰⁷ 28 years old, (M). Working for a PR company. He attended several bi-communal activities including a work shop on “Problem solving: To learn how to trust the other, and how to understand the other” and bi-communal dance activities.

Turkish people's pictures to their students. With these meetings, in fact we got to know the lives of each other (G.T)¹⁰⁸.

I believe that bi-communal activities served a significant role in the communication between the two main communities in Cyprus. The bi-communal group members were the first initiatives volunteered for the “first contact” and opened up the ways for an alternative imagination of Cyprus. Different groups from the two parts of Cyprus came together sharing a mutual and reciprocal ambition. Their main initiative was to bring peace—at least talk about peace—to Cyprus in a personal manner without erasing the differences. “What is interesting, but also tragic for the interest of peace, is that whatever positive experiences of symbiosis and peaceful coexistence between G/Cs and T/Cs they may have inherited, or are even [...] taking place, they are restricted to people's private and personal memories” (Anastasiou, 2002, p. 589-590). The bi-communal activities gave a chance to the peoples of Cyprus—who wants/wanted peace from both *sides* of the island—to canalize their “private” memories/wishes/hopes/desires into a “public/group” domain. These bi-communal groups are/were motivated by a desire to imagine a Cyprus different than the one produced, imagined and represented by the status quo. This reminds me of the slogan “The personal is political”. Although the bi-communal activities did not have a connection to any political party, their personal intention can be read as a political intention. With the bi-communal activities, personal commitments transformed into group commitments and mono-communal initiatives were transformed into cross-communal initiatives and a dialog between two main communities on the island was (re)created. That is, the personal memories that are tightened in the mono-communal

¹⁰⁸ *Bu toplantıların iki toplumun birbirlerini tanımaları açısından faydası oldu bence. Rumlar çok şaşırdıydılar, daha geri kalmış bir toplum bekliyorlardı. Konuştukça önyargıları değişmeye başladı..Öğretmenler vardı mesela, okullarda Türklerin fotolarını gösterdiler öğrencilerine..Birbirmizin yaşamlarıyla tanıştık aslında bu toplantılarda.*

chats came up as bi-communal public memories with these groups. Clearly what is emerging with the bi-communal activities is a new mode of invention to understand each other's concerns and expectations;

Our main approach was developing a contact between the two communities, recognizing each other, understanding each other's worries. And it went towards an efficient cooperation, while trying to understand what the other party wanted, as a group of people trying to understand each other (H.G)¹⁰⁹.

The bi communal group members are local peace constituencies in Cyprus who aimed to pave a path for peace in Cyprus. Their initiation is peace building while undoing the already established social structure and communication on the island.

The established social structure on the island was based on marginalizing the other community in the sense of becoming. That's why, as an initiative that tries to break down this marginalization, they ran counter to and were unwelcomed by the nationalistic ways of thinking which were dominant at that time. In the north of Cyprus they were seen as the "traitors" of the national unity;

At that time these kinds of events were not respected by our leaders. After we came back from the camp, we went to Pyla to meet our friends from that camp. Since we were under-age, our parents took us there. Unfortunately, there were journalists there that we didn't know of. My father is a primary school teacher and those journalists took his picture and then published it in their newspaper with awful headlines like "Traitors! They make our youth give presents to Greek youths". I think it was the Volkan newspaper doing that. Although people know about the attitude of that newspaper and people did not take it seriously, it was still unpleasant (L.T)¹¹⁰.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ *Bizim en temel yaklaşımımız iki toplum arasında temasın ortaya çıkması, birbirini tanıması...birbirinin kaygılarını anlaması idi.. Sonuçta Kıbrıs'ta birbirini anlamaya çalışan bir grup olarak daha verimli bir işbirliğine yönelmekti. Öteki tarafın ne istediğini anlamaya çalışmaktı.*

¹¹⁰ 23 years old lawyer. She attended the bi-communal youth camp SIT (School for International Training), 2001, Vermont, USA.

¹¹¹ *O zamanlar bu gibi etkinliklere pek iyi niyetle bakılmıyordu yönetenler tarafından. Kamptan döndükten sonra tekrar kamp arkadaşlarımızla buluşmak için Pile'ye gittik. Yaşımız küçük olduğu için ailelerimiz bizi götürmüştü. Bizden habersiz orda gazeteciler vardı. Benim babam öğretmen ve o zaman onun fotoğrafını çekip vatan haini, gençlerimizi Rum gençlerine peşgeş çekiyorlar gibi çok kötü ifadeler kullanarak gazetede yayınlamışlardı. Volkan gazetesiymiş sanırım. Yani gazetenin duruşu herkes tarafından bilindiği için çok da önemsenmemişti ama tatsızlık yaratmıştı.(Volkan Gazetesi is an ultra-nationalist newspaper in the north of Cyprus).*

Thus there was an offensive attitude towards the people who attended and supported these events, in this case the father of the bi-communal participant. Here, I want to open up a parenthesis to point out the importance of the bi-communal youth groups. They were the ones who did not have any mutual contact since the experience of these bi-communal camps;

I have never had prejudices about the two communities' meetings. However, there was anxiety until I went to this camp. I had such a great time in this camp. We didn't have any problems, as people attending such bi-communal activities are usually supporters of peace. The communication between the two communities was great. We discovered how much we have in common.[...] This event was the first time that I met Greeks face to face, and one to one. On the first day we all met and introduced ourselves. It's so hard to explain the atmosphere. In general, people were shy and quiet when we first met. Of course, there were funny people from both sides who tried to change the atmosphere. At the end of the two weeks, most of us were integrated. I would also like to point out that American, Turkish and Greek Cypriot instructors played an important role in this (L.T)¹¹².

I believe this quotation captures the main focus of the structure of the bi-communal groups. The people who attended those meetings/camps/workshops are generally pro-peace sympathizers—but not all of them. They were the first volunteers to meet the “other”. But, although they didn't have any prejudices, the first meeting with the “other” created tension. This is because, as I mentioned in the previous chapter representations of the “other” community included words like “danger” and an “enemy”. From the beginning they learnt how they are “different”. Perhaps, that's

¹¹² *O zaman böyle bir kampa katılabilmek benim için çok büyük bir olaydı. Henüz kapılar da açık değildi. Rumlarla görüşebilmek çok uzak bir ihtimaldi. Bambaşka bir ülkede, aynı karada ayrı yaşadığımız insanlarla iki haftalık bir kamp yapma düşüncesi heyecan verici olduğu kadar tedirgin ediciydi. Kimse ne ile karşılaşacağını önceden kestiremiyordu[...]*

Ben hiçbir zaman iki toplumun görüşmesine ön yargılı yaklaşmadım. Ama kampa gidene kadar biraz tedirginlik vardı. Kamp gerçekten harika geçti. Zaten bi-communal aktivitelere katılan herkes barış yanlısı olan kişilerdi o yüzden pek sorun yaşanmadı. İki toplumun iletişimi gayet güzeldi. Ne kadar ortak yönümüz olduğunu keşfettik. [...]Rumlarla ilk kez birebir iletişimi bu etkinliklerle kurdum. İlk gün toplandık ve herkes birbirini tanıttı. Kelimelerle anlatılamayacak bir ortamdı. Genel olarak insanlar ilk başta daha soğuk ve sessizdi. Tabii her iki toplumdaki da matrak tipler vardı ortamı yumuşatmaya çalışın. 2 haftanın sonunda çoğu genç birbiriyle kaynaştı. Burada, Amerikalı, Kıbrıslı Türk ve Rum eğitmenlerin katkısı çok oldu.

why the first thing that comes to their mind is discovering their “commonness”. I believe the most important point that we should bring to the surface is the role of the instructors. The aforementioned Turkish and Greek Cypriot instructors were the ones who attended the trainings and workshops in conflict resolution and peace building at the initial stages of these bi-communal activities/workshops. I believe, this example shows how the bi-communal groups as a project was successful in terms of creating an environment of conciliation and dialogue.

To be precise, the communication between the two main communities on the island can be seen as a project of pulling down the retaining wall so that the bi-communal group members can be seen as the facilitators of the *togetherness* in Cyprus. However this togetherness carries undecidability in it while thinking of today’s Cyprus. When we look at these activities we see that on the one hand they strengthened the relations between the Cypriots of divided Cyprus; however, at the same time, this togetherness does not have a discourse which talks through the circumstances of today’ Cyprus. It excludes other “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots and strengthens their otherness. As Wolleh puts it;

On the Turkish side, bi-communality symbolizes renewed equality of both communities. At the same time it emphasizes the emancipation and enhancement of their status as the Turkish Cypriot community as a separate group from the rest of the Turkish population in the North and the influence of “Big Brother” Turkey. The exclusion of people originating from mainland Turkey has a highly symbolic meaning for island Greeks. The inclusion of mainland Turks would result in a massive refusal by Greek Cypriot society as the question of Turkish settlements in the North is politically highly controversial and explosive. On the other hand, the actual involvement of immigrant mainland Turks in “bi-communal” activities would be interpreted as an indirect acceptance by the Turkish Cypriot government of their policy of settlement (Wolleh, 2001, p. 21).

By doing so, the time line of the history is frozen in 1974. This date is accepted as the beginning of the division, especially by the Greek Cypriot community. The “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots who came to the island after 1975 are continuously one of the main agenda items in the negotiations. For the Greek authorities they are an “illegal population” who were sent by Turkey in order to guarantee its existence in Cyprus¹¹³. This population is also criticized by the counter-hegemonic struggles in northern Cyprus.

Here we see another border that is used to separate us from them and the native from the foreigner. Specifically, we should also be aware that the border is not considered only as a physical separator. In view of that, “....a geo-political partition is not just armoured fencing, it is also a line inside our heads, in our hearts too. In fact, the physical fence is manifestation of these more cognitive and emotional lines that shape our thoughts and feelings” (Cockburn, 2004, p. 01). That is to say, we draw our *own* border in order to define our identity, our gender, our homes, our homelands and our nation and community. In every demonstration, representation in order to construct our identities we draw a border between the self and the other. Actually the border is in our thoughts. Remembering that, “the “other” is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously “between ourselves”” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 4), the border that we draw to define our identities is also in ourselves. The border which is drawn within bi-communal activities precludes the “non-Cypriot” Turks and they are the excluded other within the *imagined* Cyprus of bi-communal formations.

¹¹³ This issue was one of the main concerns of the Greek Cypriot authorities related to the Annan Plan, and perhaps one of the main reasons of the rejection of the plan by the Greek Cypriot community.

In general, bi-communal activities can be interpreted as a critical project which challenges the division of the island—as the common sense of both parts of Cyprus—challenges to two different nation states, mono-communality...etc. Actually, it is not only a critical project against this common sense. It is also interpreted as an expansion/re-reading/undoing of the space for the imagination of alternative interpretation of social forms. However, apart from all of these pros, I think we should also be aware of some of the limitations of these formations. As discussed previously, one of the limitations is the exclusion of the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots. What I can say is, bi-communal formations in Cyprus carry an ambivalent¹¹⁴ structure. On the one hand, they were/are undoing the common idea of the division; on the other hand they are (re)creating an idea of the exclusion of the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots. What I should say here is that there is an urgent need for a more extensive forethought of togetherness. We should open up a new place for this togetherness that include multiculturalism and hybridity within it. This is what Bhabha named as place of hybridity;

where construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment politics. The challenge lies in conceiving of the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction. This is a sign that history is *happening* (Bhabha, 1994, p. 25).

I do not mean that there is no limit to multiculturalism and to hybridity. But keeping a space open to the alterity that would enable us to accept the differences and to learn how to live with them is necessary. If we are talking about today’s Cyprus, the whole history which is happening today, we cannot exclude all the “Turkish” population on the island. So, the identifications of the bi-communal groups should be a cultural

¹¹⁴ The ambivalence disrupts the categorical differences.

hybrid which does not exclude Turkish people. "...Hybridity involves a continual and contradictory process of productive and reciprocal displacement of one another by cultural forms that are constituted as mutually incommensurable but are irreducibly contemporaneous with another" (Lloyd, p. 2001, 22). In hybridity there is no pure identity, and to talk about pure identity is always a reproduction of a hierarchy between the "pure" and the "tainted". Because whenever we talk about historically fixed identities, we deal with "conflict" as it is the case in Cyprus. Hybrid cultures should be evaluated as the results of the peoples' production of their own syntheses. Hybrid forms displace and redraw the boundaries between spaces like culture, class, nation, ethnicity, etc.

The gap between what they are trying to do and what they do is irreducible. They are against the mono-communal structures of a divided Cyprus; however, at the same time they are reproducing another mono-communal formation which is based on Cypriotism. As I mentioned earlier, bi-communal groups were the first social movements in which the communication and negotiation between two main communities occurred. However, this negotiation does not "convey a temporality that makes it possible to conceive of the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements: dialectic without the emergence of a teleological or transcendent History..." (Bhabha, 1994, p. 25). On the contrary, these formations abolished "non-Cypriot" Turkish Cypriots and put forward another contradiction which is being Cypriot *and* being Turkish.

Bi-communal activities can be interpreted as a strategy for dealing with conflict, a re-imagining of Cyprus and a resistance towards the dominant division of the island.

However, we should keep in mind that “the imagining of a different life takes the detour of history in order to unfix thought from itself and enable difference...” (Foucault, 1985, p. 9). Possibly, this alternative route of history is vital for a re-imagination or living a “different” life in Cyprus’ present.

The bi-communal groups are not as active now as they used to be. When I asked the question “why the groups are not as active as much as they were in the past?” one respondent replied;

We have been discussing this issue but we still have no answer for that. For me, the reason of all those people’s participation in the groups was either to see the south side or sometimes to find a friend on the Greek side. The synergy that came out of those groups and the will to do something together was a new thing in the conditions of that time. The groups kept working one more year after the doors were opened but became opposed communities after the referenda... (H.G).¹¹⁵

As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the bi-communal activities are continuing but they have lost their momentum. That loss of momentum is very normal when we look at the changing circumstances on the island. The period in which they were extremely active was the time before the opening of the border. After the opening of the border every Cypriot found their own way of communicating with the other. They did not need to organize specific events in specific dates and times. This is only one of the reasons that can account for losing their momentum. I believe another important reason is the rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots. This created “mistrust” towards the Greek Cypriot community among Turkish Cypriots.

¹¹⁵ *Bunu biz de tartışıyoruz ve daha cevabımız yok. O dönem zaten bu kadar kalabalık insanın katılmasındaki temel yaklaşım bana göre, pek çok insan, bir defa güneyi görebilmek için, kimi zaman rum tarafındaki arkadaşını bulabilmek için bu gruplara yazıldı. Bu grupların ortaya çıkardığı sinerji, birlikte birşeyler yapabilme o koşullarda yeni birşeydi. Kapılar açıldıktan sonra bir sene yine bu gruplar çalıştı ama referandumdan sonra bu kadar sert birbirinin karşısında bulunan iki toplum olarak ortaya çıkışımız....*

I believe in such circumstances, like the circumstances themselves, the bi-communal groups and members have a “new” mission and responsibility. As voluntary civil negotiators among the communities of Cyprus, they can try to understand and circulate new ways of “expectations” related to Cyprus, perhaps with explaining and understanding the reasons of the “yes” and “no” votes to the Annan plan. Thus, as “good will agents”, their new role is try to understand each other by considering the new circumstances and circulate this in their own communities. Therefore, their role as peace bridges between the two main communities is re-negotiating the new circumstances.

3. 4. Reimagining “Cyprus” @ Net

We are living in a world where our life is enclosed by technological devices. We use these technological devices in our homes, offices and even in our pockets. We do our housework, we travel and also we communicate by using these technologies. Although technology has an important history in the communication process, the latest and perhaps the most discussed one is computer-mediated communication.

Let us recall, as we noted in the Chapter 1, meaning is the result of articulation, that difference is at the root of meaning, and that meaning is always yet-to-come and never fully present. Regarding this understanding and thinking about communication we can easily say that communication also becomes meaningful with the play of difference and articulation. People’s communications through these technological devices were re-interpreted again and again throughout history. With every new technological innovation the way that people communicate has changed continuously. Human being’s communication is re-linked, de-linked, and re-

articulated over a time making up a story from, for example messenger pigeon to messenger chat programs.

With the development of computerized technology, people started to use the Internet or World Wide Web as a communication tool, and they construct their identities, communities, genders either using their pre-existing “realities” or re-constructing “new” or virtual “realities” in and through the Internet or the World Wide Web. We are living in an era when computer mediated communication is one of the most used communication tools. There are different reasons for this. When the issue is computer-mediated communication there are lots of ongoing discussions on virtual communication, virtual identity virtual community, cyberspace, hypertext, virtual communication, etc.

There are different reasons for communicating¹¹⁶. We communicate for exchanging information, our feelings, emotions...etc. Remembering the well known quote, “one cannot not communicate”; as human beings, we should communicate in order to survive and sustain our lives and also to represent ourselves.

As a “new” means of communication, computer mediated communication became a vital tool for the peoples of Cyprus in order to exchange their hopes, and desires with each other. In Cyprus it became a new challenge, not only for developing relations

¹¹⁶ As Richard Dimbleby and Graeme Burton puts it; “We communicate to survive...we communicate in order to work with others...we communicate to satisfy our needs...we communicate to be involved with other people, to form and maintain relationships...we communicate to persuade other people to think in the way that we do or to act in the way we do...we communicate to gain and exert power over other people...we communicate to hold our society and our organization together...we communicate to gain economic benefits...we use communication to make sense of the world and our experience of it...we communicate to decide what we think and what we do...we communicate to express our imagination and ourselves to others. We like to be creative with our communication in words, pictures, sounds and other forms (1992, p. 8-13).

between the two main communities on the island, but in the process of developing a new sense of self and a tool of imagination for an *undivided* Cyprus. Because there was a ban on communication, the computer-mediated communication became a new way which was used for many people in Cyprus for cross cultural communication. It became a new way to explore the possibility of communicating in a “space” where there is no one point of control.

There seem to be different ways of using technology, or computer mediated communication as a way of envisaging communication. There is e-mail, web sites¹¹⁷, chat programs, discussion groups, etc. When we look at the history of computer-mediated communication on the island we see that the rise of the CMC and the formation of bi-communal groups came about during the same period – which is at the end of the 1990s. In this way, the communication between Cypriot communities on the island is enriched with the articulation of these two types of communication; the articulation of face-to-face communication and CMC. Remembering that the bi-communal groups’ activities were limited to specific times and specific places, the CMC also gave a chance to these groups to exchange, to save, to reach and to use their messages and information in/through e-mail communication or/and net groups;

Right after we came back from the camp, we met in Pile on the first weekend. In that year, we also met a couple of times more. We also joined the event organized at Ledra Palace on the 1st of September Peace Day. We also set up a mailing list before we left the camp and we communicated via that mailing list regularly. We also chat on MSN regularly. However, we didn’t communicate for a while as most of us went to university. I met one of my friends while I was studying in UK. Last summer, 12 of us, 6 Greek and 6 Turkish friends met in a cafe on

¹¹⁷Some bi-communal web sites are; www.womanwagingpeace.net, www.peacewomen.org, www.tech4peace.com, www.handsacrossthedivide.com, www.daphe-tookit.org, www.bianet.org, www.inek.org.cy, www.members.tripod.com, www.sign4peace.com, www.occhiaperti.net.

the Turkish side. We are also trying to arrange a meeting this year. Nowadays we are also communicating on Facebook¹¹⁸ (L.T)¹¹⁹.

Thus, the main role of virtual space, especially the e-mails and chat programs, are performing as networks of information and exchange. It also speeds up the time of communication while enhancing/enriching the social and individual experiences.

It freed communication from the geographic limits of nation states and also time constraints. The "...virtual existence rests on the promise of transcendence and liberation from our material and embodied existence in the here-and-now, providing access to an indefinite, transcendent, and perfect other world" (İlter, 2007, p. 84). For instance, "In 1997, in response to the EU's Luxembourg decision giving the light for the start of accession negotiations with Cyprus, TC [Turkish Cypriot] authorities closed the check points and forbade bi-communal activities. [...] Due to the difficulties in crossing during 1997, Tech for Peace, a Cypriot civil society organization dedicated to improving communication and trust building among the youth in Cyprus, established a web site, www.tech4peace.org in 1998" (Hadjipavlou

¹¹⁸ Virtual communication is still a very important communication tool among the communities in Cyprus. The latest noticeable use, I believe, is Facebook. Facebook is not only new for only Cypriots. Facebook is mainly used for interpersonal communication, but also enables group communications. Today, it has become the individual's "virtual" self which represents his/her interactions: personal, political, social, academic, etc. It became a new way of social networking. In Facebook, we can see different representations related to the Cypriot identities and friendships among the communities on the island. On the one hand, there are some nationalistic groups that generally have mono-communal identities—only Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots. These groups struggle for their national ideas. For instance two opposite groups are; *Get the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus recognized as a country* and *There is no such a thing as "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and NEVER will!!!*. But against these mono-structured groups there are some bi-communal groups which discuss the Cyprus issue, exchange their ideas and organize events to meet up. One of these groups, among the others, is *Lets Unite Our beautiful Island*.

¹¹⁹ *Kamptan döner dönmez ilk hafta sonu Pile'de toplanıp görüştük. O sene içerisinde yine bir iki kez görüştük. Yine 1 Eylül Dünya barış gününde Ledra Palace'da düzenlenen etkinliklere katıldık. Kamptan ayrılmadan bir e-mail grubu oluşturduk ve düzenli aralıklarla haberleşiyorduk. Msn'de chat da yapıyorduk. Sonra bir ara herkes üniversiteye gittiğinden dağıldık. Ben İngiltere'de bir arkadaşım ile görüştüm. Geçtiğimiz yaz gruptan 6 Rum ve 6 Türk, Türk tarafında bir cafede buluştuk. Bu sene de bir buluşma ayarlamaya çalışıyoruz. Şimdi Facebook'dan da haberleşiyoruz.*

& Kanol, 2008, p. 14). In this case, virtual communication has a vast potential against the suppression and limitation of ordinary channels of communication.

As was stated in previous sections, there had been no direct communication between the two main communities on the island for a very long time. But there emerged more recently some significant openings in the lines of communication on the island that made communication possible between these two communities. Computer mediated communication as one of the new dynamics opened up the possibility of a “new” way of communication which is free from time and space constraints. With computer mediated communication, people started to communicate via computer networks and the “...traditional ideas of home, homeland and nation have been destabilized, both by new patterns of physical mobility and migration and by new communication technologies which routinely transgress the symbolic boundaries around both the private household and the nation state” (Morley, 2000, p. 3). Computer mediated communication ushered a new era for the peoples of Cyprus who live in a divided country and have a limited, even prohibited communication. Here, technology became a main and an alternative tool of communication, as it is emphasized in peace-cyprus’ web page; "Using Technology to Build Bridges of Communication" (<http://www.peace-cyprus.org>). This is exactly what net culture and communication offers us;

The very nature of the Internet precludes any discussion of power since there is no specific repressive power that sets boundaries, or productive power that produces any grand narrative or preferred discourse. The only form of control lies in the boundaries that are produced by the discourse and the members who produce the discourse (Mitra, 2000, p. 691)

With the developing of new communication technologies our definitions of time, space and community are reinterpreted. Our way of communicating became free from space and time, and our imagination of identities and communities became independent from geography. However, we should keep in mind that; “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined” (Anderson, 1983, p. 18). In this way of understanding, there is no community outside the imagination. Throughout history, communication media has played a vital role in the imagination of our communities and also our individual identities. And with every new way of communication, the way that we imagine our community, and our way of sensing of the self is re-articulated. As a way of communication CMC enables us to imagine our identity/gender/community free from time and space. The “geography” is not a destiny anymore. In the Cyprus case CMC the border as a barrier of communication is displaced. The border which divides Cyprus geographically and supports the nationalistic discourses is not a barrier anymore.

Like our communities we also draw the margins of our countries or territories. We use different representations in order to represent our identities, countries, nationalities...etc. We use ID cards to represent our identity, and we use maps to represent our countries. Keeping in mind that, there is not any reality present outside its various representations, in Cyprus, the representation of the country is also a complex, confused issue. The map of Cyprus as a representation of a *community* is represented differently within different discourses. Thus, maps are socially constructed texts which divide our world, and categorize and play an influential role in the nation state’s discourses. The borders which were/are drawn for division or

separation of countries always “have become sites of not only physical and political but also discursive [...] struggles” (Nacify, 1999, p. 3).

In every part of the world there are virtual communities; communications among people from different places of the world creates a virtual geography “in which we live in many ways quite new: The new communications technologies have had profound transforming effects, disarticulating and disaggregating communities from any necessary foundation in physical contiguity” (Morley, 1999, p. 166). The CMC gave/gives chance for peoples of Cyprus to break the ties of physical contiguity and exigencies which separates the two main communities. In general it can be said that virtual communication offers a way of communicating for people who live away from each other or/and who are out-of-reach geographically, spatially and in time. A virtual world offers a “different” and “new” space for people to share different topics, and/or makes people “close” to each other. . However, in Cyprus the case is a little different. In Cyprus, it became a tool of communication between two main communities on the island whose communication is hindered, prohibited, and cannot meet and communicate whenever and wherever they want – although they are very close to each other spatially. After CMC and especially after it became widespread on the island, the people of Cyprus could create their own virtual land/territory. That is, it created an opportunity for alternative constructions of homeland/country. And so the CMC has played an influential role in the construction of interpersonal and group relations and became a “movement of people across geographic borders” (Mitra, 2000, p. 678). Such as;

We are actively engaged... in pursuit of our aims, in networking and communicating, across the Green Line in Cyprus, within our particular regions and internationally. We are building a practice of education and information, advocacy and lobbying

(<http://www.handsacrossthedivide.org>)

It became then an opportunity for the peoples of Cyprus to communicate across the border which separates them as two disconnected communities who live on the same island – and also with people from all over the world who had an opportunity to construct their own meaning, which is “constantly being produced in every personal and social interaction in which we take part” (Hall, 1997a, p. 3).

As noted in the “introduction” of this chapter, the communication between the two main communities on the island was hindered since 1974, constituting an “anomaly”. That is “Cyprus is a communication laboratory and anomaly. It is a country globally connected but locally and interpersonally divided. It is a land divided by bricks, concrete, barbed wire and other barriers of all shapes and forms that compose the Green Line” (Gumpert & Drucker, 1997). Here I should note that the northern part of the island is not globally connected. It is connected to the world through Turkey. That’s why, it is not an exaggeration to say that virtual communication became the only way that connected the Turkish Cypriots to the world. With virtual communication the two main communities on Cyprus could communicate whenever they want and construct their imagined homeland—which they want to achieve geographically—as their virtual *homeland*. That is to say, virtual space became a common place for the peoples of Cyprus—who wants/wanted peace and a solution for the island—where they can communicate freely without any restriction or border and to achieve free movement and communication on Cyprus which they wanted geographically but can only achieve virtually. This is exactly what Mitra says; “[to] think of community in the electronic age, the construct of commonality becomes central because the technology has now provided the ability to communicate across

the boundaries and limitations that the traditional community imposed” (Mitra, 2000, p. 677-678). The conditions in Cyprus since 1974 cut off all the relations and communication between two main communities and the nationalistic discourses which were the dominant official discourses did not allow the peoples of Cyprus to communicate. These conditions ignore the aspirations and wishes for communication of individuals on both parts of the island.

In cyberspace, the virtual space, the relation between the two main communities was (re)established, (re)challenged, in a kind of social fulfillment. This virtual geography became a “new” space for *cultural identity* of the peoples of Cyprus.

This is exactly what the peoples of Cyprus have tried to do at the net. As it is presented at tech4peace web site;

Our overall VISION is to empower the people of both communities in Cyprus to assume responsibility for coming closer together, working together, and appreciating each other's culture by increasing the level of knowledge on all matters through electronic and computerized communication that will allow interaction between people working on the same problem, archiving and searching of data as well as sending and receiving of electronic messages.

The specific vision which underpins the project “Technology For Peace” is to enhance in Cyprus one of the most basic human rights, the right of communication, by applying modern technology in the service of peace with emphasis on the usage of internet and internet-based applications. A promising and creative way to enhance inter-communal communication where there exist substantial hindrances to direct contact between peoples is through the use of the Internet. Cyberspace and Internet provide an efficient, fast, traceable, confidential, organized, time and space independent means of communication. As individuals and organizations throughout the world continue to demonstrate, the Internet can overcome the challenge posed by physical separation, whether due to geographic, political or other reasons, by effectively moving discourse into “cyberspace” (<http://www.tech4peace.org>).

As this quote illustrates, the conditions on the island run counter to an acceptance of human rights. According to the article 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights; “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and import information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers” (UN 1948). This freedom would call for an access regardless of location, class, nationality, race, gender, etc. However, the policies on both parts of the island limit and restrict communication.

Cyberspace as a *nonplace* became an “unreachable territory” for the peoples of Cyprus. It became a “third place” which may allow Cypriots *freedom* to share their thoughts without hindrance from the authorities of either side. It became more than a medium for the communication on the island. It was also a countercultural tool of communication on the island—as a technological device.

We aspire to live in a united country and to create a democratic society, where there is equality, including equal access to resources and gender equality, and respect for all, irrespective of differences. Our mission is to contribute towards a culture of peace and multiculturalism. We stress the urgency for an agreement on the Cyprus problem and accession to the European Union
(<http://www.handsacrossthedivide.org>).

To put it differently, the channel of communication became the channel of solution and peace. The virtual space has created a multicultural communication. Like in most of the bi-communal initiatives, the main ambition here is an “un-divided”, democratic peaceful country. Virtual space provided the opportunity to imagine this ambition. The virtual space is “... celebrated as providing space and form for a new experience of community. This experience is depicted as multiple, liberating, equalizing and thus providing a richer experience of togetherness” (Willson, 2000, p. 655). However, this cannot be understood as completely different from our traditional space and time.

Like the bi-communal groups' communication, the CMC is also a counter hegemonic communication. As I underlined repeatedly, there was no direct communication between the two main communities on the island. Both communities could communicate via telephone with people from everywhere in the world, but not with each other. The condition for Turkish Cypriots is again a little confused because they have telephone lines through Turkey¹²⁰, they connect to the world via Turkey. However, with the Internet and the World Wide Web, if they have connection to it through telephone lines/cables, they could also communicate with each other. Their choice to connect to the Internet and communicate with the people on the other side of Cyprus is their own choice. There is no restriction, hindrance or compulsion. The virtual space "... as a containable, separable field, entered voluntarily when one enters one's access code into a machine from which one can choose to walk away" (Grosz, 1997, p. 116-117). It also represents the free will of the peoples of Cyprus. The Internet as a medium of communication became a message; a message of the peoples of Cyprus who are against the ban of communication. That is, "the medium is the message";

In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7).

As a choice of communication and a choice of the Internet as a medium of communication they chose to communicate with each other. Thus, this was against the dominant hegemonic discourses on the island that limited the cross-communal

¹²⁰ Since its establishment TRNC (1983) is recognized only by Turkey. That's why the communication – and also tourism, trading, of the north of Cyprus with the world is done (still) through Turkey.

communication among the communities. That is to say, by using this medium, the individuals' attitude towards the division also became definite; the usage of the virtual communication for communicating with the other automatically became a way of struggling with the "division" and "communicationless". Thus the medium became the message.

Different groups and people worked and exchanged their thoughts via the Internet. They became friends, they continued their bi-communal activities, they informed each other about "isolated" communities, etc. But I believe one of the most fascinating examples amongst all of these projects was the first multi-cultural music label in Cyprus, Olive Tree Music, POETZ4PEACE. Their first album was called "A Pair of Olive Leaves". They are a group of poets, singers, musicians, and studio personnel who believe in peace in the world and this peace can be achieved through the universal language of music. The core members of this group are Hadji Mike and Zeki Ali. They "met" through the Internet and decided to work together in an effort for peace;

This project has emerged step by step. Hadji Mike saw one of my poems in an anthology called "Weeping Island"¹²¹ and he sent me an email. He told me that he wanted to compose my poem called "A Pair of Olive Tree". I accepted that. We couldn't meet anyway. He could access Nese Yasin so he got her to vocalise it first. But in the album, they had it with my voice. This song was made in three languages [...] Steffen came here for a project. At that time the border had not been opened yet. He used to go to North one day and to South the other day, and then we used to combine the pieces that we worked on. Half of the recordings were made here and half were made in Limasol. [...] We usually communicated via email. Once in a while we also met in Pile. But we couldn't do much there except from drinking beer or coffee...At the beginning the project was progressing so slow as we were waiting for Stephan to arrive to start recording. We managed to finish it after they opened

¹²¹ "Weeping Island" is also a bi-communal book which is a collection of Cypriot Literature, which is a project of the United Cypriots Friendship Association. It is, like other lots of projects, funded by the UNDP.

the border. After they opened the border, I have also started to go to Limasol (Zeki Ali)¹²²

As we can see from this situation before the opening of the border in Cyprus, people from different parts could not work together. Poetz4Peace as a project began on the Internet and the big part of it is completed on the Internet. The Internet became the main communication tool between Hadji Mike and Zeki Ali. Hadji Mike found Zeki Ali through the Internet. They composed the same song in different studios in the two parts of the island. Steffen Franz, another member of *Poetz4Peace* functioned as a “carrier pigeon” between the two composers of the song “A Pair of Olive Leaves”. Because he was foreigner he could get special permission from the authorities to bring sections of the song from Kyrenia to Limasol. I believe it is also interesting to see that they used the “modern” and “ancient” ways of communicating at the same time. This is again what is so special because of the situation in Cyprus. Although, here again, there is the “help” of a third party, the virtual communication itself became vital in this project, because as Zeki Ali says; “Since the communication was done electronically, you somehow go beyond the borders”¹²³.

I mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, with the bi-communal activities the border became a liminal space and a place of symbolic interaction which enables

¹²² Adım adım ortaya çıktı bu proje. Hadji Mike benim “Weeping Island” adlı bir antolojide şiirimi görmüş ve bana mail attı. “A pair of Olive Tree” şiirimi bestelemek istediğini söyledi. Ben de kabul ettim. Zaten buluşamazdık. Önce Neşe Yaşın’ı bulabildiği için ona seslendirdi benim şiirimi. Sonra albüme benim sesimle girdi. 3 dilde yapıldı şarkı.[...] Steffen bir proje için buraya geldi. O zaman daha sınırlar açılmıyordu. 1 gün kuzeye giderdi bir gün güneye ve yaptığımız çalışmaları birleştirdik. Kayıtların yarısı burda yapıldı yarısı Limasol’da [...]E-mail yoluyla anlaşırdık. Arada Pile’de buluşurduk. Ama orda birşey yapamam, bira içen bir kahve içen...İlk başlarda çok yavaş gitti proje çünkü ilk kayıtlarımı yapmak için Stephan’ın gelmesini bekledik. Kapılar açıldıktan sonra bitirebildik. Kapılar açıldıktan sonra ben de başladım gideyim Limasol’a..

¹²³ İletişim elektronik olduğu için sınırları aşan bir şekilde...

cultural communication between the two isolated communities on the island. The virtual space also can be interpreted as an in-between space which is a site of struggle towards the dominant discourses on both sides of the island. As a “third place”, it became “a site of struggle as subjects attempt to develop a strong sense of self while responding to the “other”. The “other” is not outside or beyond the participants but emerges within the intercultural interaction” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 4). That is to say, virtual space also became a dynamic space where communication between the communities could be positioned and a space which enables the intercultural communication of the peoples of Cyprus. It became a site of community, a site if imagined “country”. The CMC also reminds us of hybridity which also includes the “third place” as a site of struggle, in a form of counter hegemonic discourse. With the third space Bhabha meant; “the “hybrid moment of political change. Here the transformational value of change lies in the re-articulation, or translation, of *besides* which contests the terms and territories of both” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 13). As a *nonplace* the virtual space is a resistance towards the divided country and a prospect of a political change. It challenges the dominant, nationalistic discourses both in northern and southern Cyprus.

The transformational value lies in the re-articulation of the ways of communication of the peoples of Cyprus. With every opportunity they make a hole in the wall that stops the communication of Turkish and Greek Cypriots who share the same island. The new sense of self which is based on Cypriotism is promoted with the articulation of bi-communal formations and virtual space as liminal space among the two main communities on the island. I can say that this type of articulated communication is an “occasional” communication, produced as a struggle against the hindrance of communication on the island between two isolated communities—in terms of

economic, social, communicative relations. I believe, the social interaction which is constructed along these lines of communication produces a network of discourses that are likely to change, (re)present the multicultural, peaceful and un-divided Cyprus. Different projects were produced like the one produced by the Olive Tree Music in Cyprus, not only in music but also in other branches of art.

However, I should point out the limitations of virtual communication. Like I discussed in the section related to the bi-communal groups, virtual communication also has some restrictions. The users of the virtual community are again also educated people. Additionally, another limitation, I believe, is the ages of the users. Computer mediated communication is generally used by younger people. It is observable that the older people generally prefer to use the e-mail while the youth prefer to use chat programs, group networking, etc. which are more open to social interaction. But I believe it has some advantages compare to the bi-communal groups. First, it is more generous or democratic than the bi-communal groups because it is open to everyone. And secondly, it is faster than the other ways of communication. That is to say, the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots also can have opportunity, if they are welcomed, to the groups and discussions in cyber space.

I suppose, one way or another both the bi-communal groups/activities and virtual communication have a significant role in the development of communication between the communities in Cyprus. They were and still are important alternative tools of communication on the island. I believe they have been an influential in developing relations among the communities of Cyprus.

Chapter 4

METAMORPHOSIS OF THE “GREEN LINE”

In the previous sections I mentioned that there has been a so-called “Green Line” in Cyprus since 1974, which has a long history. This so called “Green Line” has transformed since 1964. After the ethnic conflict between the two main communities on the island, the green line as a cease fire line was established in 1964. Since that time the capital Nicosia has been divided into two. The de facto division of the island goes back to the year 1974. With the “intervention” of Turkey, the island was divided in two with this so-called “Green Line” and since then the two main communities started to live side by side on the same island. It became impassable. The division of the island does not only mean the geographical division of the island but also the demographic/ethnic division, at least at the level of control/administration. This “impassable” structure in Cyprus was in place up to the year 2003. With the opening of the gates the impassable structure was turned into a controlled passage between the two parts of the island. Along with the activities of the bi-communal groups it became a “third place” which enabled cross cultural negotiations, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The de facto division goes back to the year 1974. After the “intervention” of Turkey, many Cypriots were displaced at that time. Actually, the displacement of people on the island began with the events of 1960s. Many Cypriots had to leave their places,

homes and move to other places in 1960¹²⁴. The demographic structure of the villages and the towns started to change; “Before the events of 1958, our village was bi-communal. But with these events, the Greeks in our village moved to other villages next to ours” (N.O). As I mentioned earlier, the division of the two main communities cannot be attributed only to the Green Line as a border. The division has different stories and different “break” points for the Greek and Turkish communities. For the Turkish Cypriot community it begins in the 1950s—to their exclusion in the anti-colonial struggle with the aim of the ENOSIS, and for the Greek Cypriot community this goes to the division of the island with Turkey’s “intervention” in 1974. In other words, for the Turkish Cypriot community, the Greek struggle for their national identity brought about an ethnic division, while for the Greek Cypriot community, Turkey’s “intervention” in 1974 divided the island and created the border.

This chapter deals with the role of the border in the construction of the memories and the personal memories of the displaced Turkish Cypriots and their children/grandchildren. I believe here, it is also important to mention that this dissertation is about the re-signification of what Cyprus means in the north of Cyprus. Although I did not limit my research only to the displaced Turkish Cypriots, I deal mainly with them and their children. I believe this group in Cyprus is an essential part of any understanding of the division in Cyprus. After I went through the literature, I can say with confidence that the stories of displaced people, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots are very much like each other. For instance, when I

¹²⁴ For further discussion you can also see Chapter 2.

watched the movie “Home, Sweet Hope”¹²⁵, which is based on a Greek Cypriot story, I remember my friend’s grandmother picking up her baggage to go to her village. There are many Cypriots who had to move out in 1974 and between the years 1958-1963. “Being in place, [...], is never an empirically given or static relation and is open to local and particular imaginings and representations which have political as well as emotional resonances (Anthias, 2006, p. 179). People are used to represent themselves by giving a place name as a reference. However, this reference is a construction which carries emotional imaginings, representations and characters of its own.

Since the beginning of this dissertation, I suggest that the border in Cyprus has been re-articulated with changing circumstances and over different time periods, and although the de facto situation on the island was “created” in 1974, the division of the island has its origins in the events of the late 1950s. However, for understanding the displacement in Cyprus, I take the displacement in 1974 as a case study for my dissertation: the stories of the displaced Turkish Cypriots is the focus of my dissertation.

I believe it is important to understand these memories—stories and narrations—because these stories are/were also a communication channel between different generations in Cyprus. For Walter Benjamin memory “creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation” (1969, p. 98). The memories of displaced Turkish Cypriots were one of the main passages for the children of these

¹²⁵ Home, Sweet Hope, (2005) directed by Stella Karageorgi. The story takes place in 2003, in Cyprus, when the Green Line opened for the first time after 29 years. An old lady is very excited and picked up her baggage to go to her ‘old’ places to live. The story is based on the relationship between this old lady and her granddaughter.

displaced Cypriots; these memories became the “alternative” channel of communication between the youth and the “past”. The other one is the official history which was mainly based on nationalistic discourses¹²⁶. In this chapter of my dissertation, I try to show how these stories have been influential in the construction and understanding of the past in the eyes of the displaced Cypriots and the exchange of these stories between generations.

4. 1 Border Constructions: Beyond/Before-After

For an understanding of the construction of these memories and narrations it is important to understand what the border, or the “so-called” Green Line, in Cyprus means to Cypriots¹²⁷. It can also be said that, “according to one’s political position, ideology and history, this line is referred to [with different wording]. These different designations of the Line constitute part of the collective historical and political experience in each Cypriot community” (Hadjipavlou, 2006, p. 333). That is, as it was discussed in the previous sections, it is a signifier that refers to multiple signifieds¹²⁸, and hence, requires its substitution by multiple other signifiers.

As I discussed in the previous chapters, especially in Chapter 2, after the year 1974, the Green Line in Cyprus became a border which separates the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as two communities living “separately” on the same island. Then in 1983, with the establishment of the TRNC as a self declared and unrecognized government, except by Turkey, the border of “separation” between the south and the north gained a new meaning; it became a symbol which separates the *legitimate* and the *illegitimate* identities; Turkish Cypriots became the *illegitimate* one. That’s why

¹²⁶ Please see Chapter 2.

¹²⁷ Today, different signifiers are used in order to label the very same border in Cyprus. Such as; the border, barricade, gate, passage, green line, border gate, wall, crossing line, the ceasefire line, the dead zone, the demarcation line, the partitioning line, the Attila line, the no-man’s land...etc.

¹²⁸ Please see also chapter 3.

the border for Turkish Cypriots is also a retaining wall which separates them from the world. There has been isolation and embargoes for the north of Cyprus since the establishment of the TRNC. In this sense, it is not only a “Green Line” that separates them from the “other side” of their country. As Deren Derya (a Turkish Cypriot youth) said, referring to the opening of the border, “we will not have to live in isolation [...] I don’t call it the green line, I could call it the black line because it was like the line separating me from the world”¹²⁹. For Turkish Cypriots, the border was a retaining wall which hindered communication with “the other side” of the island. But it was also a *line* which separated them from the world. Because, the TRNC is not recognized internationally, the Turkish Cypriots were “isolated” and “embargoed” socially, culturally, and economically—they cannot travel with their own passports (TRNC), they did not have the right to have an education abroad as Turkish Cypriots (they had to have the passport of the Republic of Turkey¹³⁰), they cannot buy and sell internationally and they do not have direct communication with the world¹³¹...etc. 1974 marks an important turning point in this respect. The new official sense of identity of the Turkish Cypriot authorities was based on selective remembering of the past which pretended to forget the lives before the division and reinforced its existence within the new “national” territory with pointed references to the “motherland” Turkey. Thus, the border is taken as a margin of the Turkish Cypriot identity and the aim was to create a “homogeneous” identity while highlighting the “Turkish” part of this identity. But, the very same border became a border which limits Turkish Cypriots’ “access” to the world.

¹²⁹ In the documentary titled “Which Cyprus?” directed by Rüstem Batum (2004)

¹³⁰ After the opening of the border (2003), Turkish Cypriots had a chance to apply to receive the passports of the Republic of Cyprus, and many of them did. Since then, many Turkish Cypriots are studying abroad with the passports of the Republic of Cyprus, as European citizens.

¹³¹ You can also see chapter 3

The "...borders have a special place marking the known and essential limits to the nation-state. Borders are frequently inscribed within narratives of statehood; from maps to history books to popular notions of "us" and "them", "self" and "other". Borders are the very substance of nation-statehood" (Sidaway, 2002, p. 145). From the time of the division of the island up to the opening of the border, the Green Line on the island of Cyprus was the signifier of "inclusion" and "exclusion". The "new" sense of belonging for the Turkish Cypriots signifies this "inclusion/exclusion" referring to a "new" place—northern part of the island— and a "new" time of identity—after 1974. It played a significant role in the constitution of the official Turkish Cypriot memory starting from 1974 until the end of the 1990s during which "motherland" nationalism was very powerful in the island's conjuncture. Keeping in mind that boundaries are institutions and symbols that are produced and reproduced in social practices and discourses and that they have a crucial role in the construction of national socialization processes (see also Paasi, 1999), the border in Cyprus is the symbol of the *re*-territorialization of the "new" sense of self for the TRNC's imagined community. The "new" narration, in which the sense of self for the Turkish Cypriots is narrated, was constructed in terms of this border. This border also limits the sovereignty of the TRNC. In the Turkish Cypriot official discourses, this border was the symbol of the protection of the "purity" of the new imagined community. In other words, it was the defender of the imagined "purity" or homogeneity of identity. However, as Derrida puts it, it is not the "purity" which is restored here, but the idea of the purity (Derrida, 1981). Like it is done in all other nation state narrations, the narration of the TRNC's dominant official discourse is based on the construction of a "homogeneous" community while ignoring the differences within the community. The other main community, and also the other ethnicities on the island and the

hybridity of the identity are ignored and excluded. This is what Anderson tells us; community is imagined. With such constructions the nation states assume “homogeneous” communities. I believe the case of Northern Cyprus, or the TRNC, as marginalized, as “pseudo” or/and “illegal” has now become the model of our understanding of the “real” and “legal”. Whether it is “legitimate” or “illegitimate”, the communities are imagined.

All social, national and also individual memories are constructed, and constituted by taking this border/division as the central point of their narratives. However, the way that they are represented and narrated can differ. The stories in Cyprus are bifurcated into two (both social and individual): before and after the border. The opening of the border also dislodged the symbol of the protection of the “purity” of self. It can also be said that the opening of the border, at the same time, led to the excavation of Cypriot’s “buried past/memory”.

For the displaced Turkish Cypriots the border was/is also a symbol of the division between the “past” and the “future”¹³². To say it differently, it is also a “*time line*” between their past and the present¹³². Within the stories of these Cypriots the border became a symbol which separated them from their pasts, homes, etc. In this way, the border in Cyprus is also a signifier which divides the past and the present; the life that they lived before the division and the life after the division. With the division of the island many Cypriots, both Turkish and Greek, had to move from the north to the south and/or from the south to the north, leaving behind their “homes”, “places”,

¹³² In the north of Cyprus this is seen in individuals’ memories, however in the south of Cyprus this motif can be easily seen in the dominant official discourses. This is always underlined with the mottos like; “our borders are in Kyrenia”, “we will not forget” and also “I will not forget” which is the personalized version of “remembering” etc.

“friends”, “memories” and “pasts”. Specifically, for the Cypriot peoples, the border was a retaining wall which hindered the communication between one side and the other and also a time line which separated their past and the present. That is, the border was also a separator between their “new” homeland and the “old” one for the Cypriots who had to leave their lands in 1974¹³³. Within the Turkish Cypriot official history, returning to the south had no place. In the construction of this history, as I mentioned earlier, it forced the Turkish Cypriots to re-construct their sense of the self by taking the north of Cyprus as their identity reference. Maybe that is why we can say that with the division of the island, and the construction of the new national narrative by taking this border as the symbol of their sovereignty, the past in the individuals’ stories is silenced. This is because it has no place in the Turkish Cypriots’ official narrative; the things that should be forgotten and remembered were chosen. In view of the fact that;

Remembrance, of the communal/collective past is of key importance for both the construction and perpetuation of national identities. Meanwhile, there is a growing trend of turning away from accounts of communal/collective past. This is due to the assumption that communal past is a territory largely invaded and mapped out by nationalist ideologies. Therefore, to get to “alternative” historical truths, turning to the individual accounts, engagement in micro-histories and letting oral histories speak are commonly prescribed as the new ways in which historians can conduct their craft. (Canefe, 1998).

Between the years 1974-2003 the memories of the displaced Turkish Cypriots worked as “alternative” stories against the official discourse. Additionally, and contrary to the dominant official discourse, for the displaced Turkish Cypriot the period between the years 1974-2003 can be interpreted as the “dream of return”, “yearning for the homeland”, etc. That’s why when you talk about the border of

¹³³ Here, I want to note that when we talk about the displacements in Cyprus, we should talk about different displacements. Such as displacements for the south and the north and vice versa (1974), displacement in 1963, displacement of Cypriots peoples to other countries (especially England), from Turkey to Cyprus.

Cyprus; you talk not just about the present and the past but also about the future—especially for the Turkish Cypriots. As the community that has been *isolated*, the future for the Turkish Cypriots is a fragile one. It is fragile because their “legitimacy” and “freedom” were seen to be directly and negatively related with this border and the “solution” in Cyprus was, thus, directly related with the abolishment of the border.

From 1974 until the end of the 1990s, the national discourses were very powerful in the northern part of Cyprus, and the national will worked as a “memory factory”. The memory which referred to the “new” *time* and *space* is narrated and represented politically, socially and historically. And within this period the themes which were used in order to weave the grand narrative were; “*TRNC will live forever!*”, “*Turkish Cypriots are an inseparable/integral part of the Turkish nation*”, “*we [Turkish Cypriots] will not be considered as a minority*”, “*we do not want Greek Cypriots amongst us*”, etc. The “braiding of consciousness” depended on these grand narratives and the memory of/for Turkish Cypriots worked as a “fabrication” that also depended on a “willed remembering” (King, 2000). This “willed” remembering or re-membering is also based on an *inevitable* forgetting. This inevitable forgetting or the intention to forget based on the “*common*” history among the two main communities and the willed remembering was based on the villainy done by Greek Cypriots. The dominant official discourse of the TRNC (which is based on the ontological distinction between the two main communities on the island ¹³⁴and also emphasized the *Turkish side* of the Turkish Cypriot identity) have had to reconstruct, represent everything in order to make the “new” identity/citizenship/republic appear

¹³⁴ Like it is done in the Greek Cypriot official narrative.

“real”. The history of Turkish Cypriots is monumentalized with the martyr’s monuments and achieved with the museums such as The Museum of the National Struggle¹³⁵ and The Museum of Barbarism. The repetition of these grand narratives in every space of the public sphere worked as a remedy for the failure (King, 2000) of this willed memory. In order to remember the past, we need metaphors. If the memory works like “archives, libraries, fiction and drama” the official memory in the northern part of the island was based on the symbols of war, martyrs, mass graves, ethnic violence, etc¹³⁶. This narration is supported by all of the agencies of the state which Louis Althusser calls *the Ideological State Apparatuses*¹³⁷. After 1974 and up to the end of the 1990s, this official narration of the TRNC was sustained by all of these agencies, and it was the time of fulfillment in which the “national will” taught Turkish Cypriots to remember—remember the martyrs, missing people, and the war—and to forget the *togetherness* and the *common* history with the Greek Cypriot community. As Edward Said points out, “it all depends on what one chooses to remember and record, or forget, of the past, which is inevitably going to be selective, abridged, bowdlerized, variously mutilated in the context of national narratives designed to establish authority over concrete spaces and very precise geographies” (1999). What is being expressed here is not only nostalgia for a particular version of the past, but also nostalgia for a *certain kind of memory* (see also King, 2000). The individuals’ memories which did not go along with the official discourse are always silenced. Hence, the opening of the border also can be

¹³⁵ Ironically, “In Cyprus’s divided capital, Nicosia, are two museums with the same name, Museum of National Struggle, one on each side. One has the name written in Turkish, the other in Greek (Papadakis, Peristianis, Welz, 2006, p. 6).

¹³⁶ In both parts of the island, the past is constructed differently by using same way of narrating it. “The past as a “narrative of national struggles” thus emerged as the pragmatic form of history shared by the sides in Cyprus despite their competing political and historical claims” (Papadakis, 1994, cited in Papadakis, Peristianis, Welz, 2006, p. 7).

¹³⁷ These agencies of the state include the education system, the family, the legal system, religious institutions, the political system and also the mass media (Louis Althusser, 1989).

interpreted as the recovery of the “silenced” past or providing an access to such a past. It enabled the access to the “memories”, however, keeping in mind that the meaning can never be finally fixed and is always open to becoming (Hall, 1997), and that it is socially and historically constructed, then every recovery of the past is also the re-writing of the “past”. As noted earlier, this border also defined a time line which separated the past from the present. The past is “like the child’s relation to the mother, [...] always already ‘after the break’” (Hall, 1990, p. 226). It is/has developed from the notion of “afterwardness” (see also King, 2000). When we talked about the “past” in Cyprus, we always spoke after the break; after the division, after the time line; which is the “border”.

4.1.1 The stories of the “displacement”/“past”: when the grape vine became olive tree

The displaced Turkish Cypriots’ stories resemble the motif of love as found in the fairy tales. Until the opening of the border, there was always an obstacle for reaching this “love”. The thing which makes the well-known love stories special is the tension in these stories. Love owes its existence to the obstacles against it: otherwise no one tells the stories of happy loves, because they are dull stories which resemble each other (Kamışlı, 2007, p. 212). Similarly, the significance of these displacement stories – yearning and longing for the old places and the construction/narration of these places – lies in the obstacles that blocked return. Like the princess in the fairy tales, who is waiting for her prince on a white horse, the displaced Cypriots have waited for an opportunity that would allow them to reach their “loved ones”.

In the imagination of the displaced Turkish Cypriots, the return would be perfect – like in the fairy tales. This feeling of returning, for years, was constructed and nourished by the feeling of its impossibility; the conditions that made it impossible

nourished this feeling. The places that they had to leave in South Cyprus, were the objects of desire for the displaced Turkish Cypriots. That's why they have been emotionally investing in and fantasizing about those places. However, this feeling was corroded after the opening of the border. They went through a feeling of frustration because, as I mentioned earlier, the past was repeated differently;

I went only once and I do not want to go again. My daughter says she would take me there but I do not want to. You feel sort of a... thing. You can not help it. I do not want to. When it was first opened everybody felt relieved as if they were going to live in it but we all know that it will not happen...(A.E.¹³⁸)¹³⁹

The “thing” in the minds of A. E. is the unspeakable, indescribable feeling of “returning” in the experiences of the displaced Turkish Cypriots. She does not want that thing which carries the feelings of “longing”, “resentment”, “hope” and the closure of that “hope”, “remembering” and the “discernment of forgetting” all together. They are not resolvable. Because the experience is so complex and difficult to handle, she does not want that “thing”. The experiencing of these returns was different than the way they were imagined. Until the opening of the border, these displaced people imagined that their returning would be the full return to their lives before 1974. But their experience of returning created “emptiness” in their minds.

However, with the opening of the gates we see that these memories related to the past and to the places that the displaced people had to leave were historically, socially and emotionally constructed. Within these memories the time gap between the years 1974 and 2003 were not taken into consideration in the minds of these

¹³⁸ A.E, 78, (F). Displaced Turkish Cypriot. She displaced from Vuda.

¹³⁹ Bir kere gittim başka gitmek istemem. Kızım der götüreyim seni. İstemem. N'apsan bir şeylik gelir sana..istemem..ilk açıldığında herkese bir ferah geldi sanki içinde yaşayacakmış gibi oldu, ama olmayacağını da biliriz (A. E).

people: the time was frozen and stopped. They thought that when they got to see those places, they would be exactly the way that they had left them. And their “visit” to their “old” places created a traumatic experience for these displaced people;

I cried and cried...I did not recognize even a thing. I was petrified. I looked for a grape vine...The house is not there, not here...The grape vine became an olive tree. I could not recognize whose house that was nor the other was...Nothing...I felt awful because we had left everything as it was and came here. I always thought that I could go and find everything I left just exactly how I left. No! I could not...They renovated some parts of it but I did not like it. It was much more beautiful then (Z. H¹⁴⁰)¹⁴¹

Within the dominant official discourse the memories of the displaced Turkish Cypriots did not find a place. They are forced to forget their attachments to those places. The obligation to forget and the construction of the cultural identification towards the “new” places with the remembering of the Turkish Cypriot community closed down all the ways to go to the “old” places in the southern part of the country. The violence in such circumstances was the forced migration, obligation to forget the places/friends/life which was left in the South and the “inhibition” of the longing for returning in the dominant official discourse. Here again, I should also refer to the Foucauldian view that power is not centralized but dispersed; it is not something that can be possessed, but a relationship (Foucault, 1980, p. 109-33). We should speak of relations of power, not power, plain and simple. Because it is a relation, power always exists alongside resistance. On the one hand, official discourse tried to construct a “new” memory which is based on division and completely ignores the before of this division. On the other hand, this led to the creation of oppositional, individual narrations which were longing for a return to “before-division”.

¹⁴⁰ Z.H. (F) 68 years old displaced Turkish Cypriot. She was displaced from Ayios Nikolaos.

¹⁴¹ Ağladım ağladım....Hiçbirşey tanımadım. Dondum. Ben asma arardım..orda ev yok burda ev yok...asma zeytin oldu....Hiçbirşey anlamadım. Ne kimin evidir. Ne hiç...Çok bozulduydu çünkü. Öyle bıraktıydık da geldik. Ben zannederdim ki gideceğim sağlı sollu herşeyimi bulacağım. Hiç bulmadım....Bazı şeyleri onardılar ama hiç güzel olmadı. Eskiden daha güzeldi.

I believe that the oppositional parties¹⁴² and the individual memories have worked as alternative voices towards this dominant discourse. I mean the construction of the Greek Cypriot community and the past were different within these alternative narrations. “Resistance to [the] re-scripting – resistance to state narratives of commemoration – constitutes resistance to sovereign power. As Milan Kundera¹⁴³ reminds us “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting”” (cited in Edkins, 2003, p. xv). I believe that the personal narrations are worthwhile attending to in order to understand the “past”. They can be accepted as a struggle against the dominant discourse which gave lists of what “to forget” and what “not to forget”. They are noteworthy to understand because, although they are also selective and constructed, they are not politicized and generalized. Besides, “if memorials on the whole (not always, of course) support the imaginary community and reproduce the status quo, testimony is generally expected to function as a criticism of state power and its abuse” (Edkins, 2003, p. 17-18). Here, without ignoring that the individuals’ memories are also selective constructions like every kind of memorizing and the construction of the past—they are also “re” of remembering. I believe it can be said that the “witnesses” of the past function as a criticism and alternative of the official history. In a metaphorical sense, I believe, these individual memories worked as the “unconscious”. Here we have, on the one hand, the dominant/official discourse which has worked as the consciousness of our minds, as a memory factory, and tried to produce a mass memory for the Turkish Cypriot identity. The individual stories related to the “past” and the south were always suppressed and silenced.

¹⁴² With oppositional parties I mean the oppositional political parties and also “This Country is ours” platform.

¹⁴³ Milan Kundera, *the Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Aaron Asher (London: Faber and Faber, 1996)

However, since the establishment of the TRNC which is not recognized internationally except by Turkey, the negotiations between the leaders of the two main communities continued. Several plans and scenarios for the Cyprus issue had been on the agenda. That is to say, the displaced Turkish Cypriots were caught between the national discourse, which did not have any room for returning to the old places and the unification of the two parts of the island, and the international agenda which allowed for the possibility of the unification of the island and considering various scenarios, including the possibility of the return of displaced people. They were in-between. They were caught between a rock and a hard place. The impossible here, addressed the possible, which was never completely absent from the scene but was believed to be “impossible”.

The uncertainty here, made the melancholia of the displaced Turkish Cypriots to gradually enlarge. Here, I use the term melancholia rather than the term mourning, because, in mourning there is an acceptance of the lost object, but in melancholia the object is seen as a “lack” rather than as a “loss”. According to the Freudian understanding, mourning is the reaction towards the loss of the loved person or an abstraction, such as country, freedom, idea, etc. The key word for understanding mourning is the loss. In melancholia there is an internalization of the object; the person does not accept the loss of the object and s/he internalizes the lost object as a lack. In mourning there is an acceptance of the loss. It can be said that melancholia is a never-ending mourning. In Freud’s words;

In mourning we found that the inhibition and loss of interest are fully accounted for by the work of mourning in which the ego is absorbed. In melancholia, the unknown loss will result in a similar internal work and will therefore be responsible for the melancholic inhibition. The difference is that the inhibition of the melancholic seems puzzling to us because we cannot see what it is that is absorbing him so entirely. The melancholic displays

something else besides which is lacking in mourning— extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, and impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale (Freud, 1917, p. 245-246).

That is to say, in mourning there is a transformation of the grief into a renewal of life, but melancholia is destructive. Unlike mourning the person cannot learn to let go of the lost object. I believe the situation in Cyprus, until the opening of the border can be defined as melancholic rather than mournful. The key point here, as I mentioned before, is the uncertainty of the situation on the island. This uncertainty causes Cypriots to stay in-between and hinders the acceptance of the loss of their “old” lands/places. For years the feeling of melancholia is enlarged. Briefly,

...melancholia contains something more than normal mourning. In melancholia the relation to the object is no simple one; it is complicated by the conflict due to ambivalence. The ambivalence is either constitutional, i.e. is an element of every love-relation formed by this particular ego, or else it proceeds precisely from those experiences that involve the threat of losing the object (Freud, 1917, p. 257).

The ambivalence is the motive force of the melancholia as it is in the situation in Cyprus. The displaced Turkish Cypriots were in-between the official discourse—which did not give any room for returning to their old places, and the international and also the alternative discourses – which opened a way to imagine this “returning”. The conflict within these two different paths made the displaced Turkish Cypriots ambivalent: to accept the loss and attach to the “new” places or not to accept the loss and maintain their attachments to their old places.

The melancholia here is constructed through the expectation of return to their old places/homes/villages. Because, for the displaced Turkish Cypriots, the life that they had been living after 1974 was “unwanted life” and the new places of residence were

“unchosen places”. After the displacement it took years to get used to their lives in the north of Cyprus.

Everyday we felt that we would go back...So we did nothing (to the houses we lived)...we did not renew them. If we were going back, why should we be bothered? That’s how we imagined. Later and later...Everyone had high hopes. We were going to go back. We hoped so. We dreamed so. We did not feel at home. Then we realized that we have been living in those houses until now (Z. H)¹⁴⁴.

I believe this illustration summarizes the feeling of the displaced Turkish Cypriots. For years the hope of returning back to their old places of residences and this hope hindered their attachments to their new places of residences, at least until experiencing of these returning and faced up to the impossibility of these returns. The sub-text of these returning stories was “we did not want to come here!”. I believe that until they had actually experienced these “returns” they were not aware that they had left their “old” places.

4.2 The opening of the border as an archeological excavation

When we are studying historical representation and memorialisation, we need to look at the different forms of historical representation and memorializations in Cyprus. Also, we should discuss the relationship between history/memory and the formation of social, political and cultural discourse. The memory of conflict, war, displacement and division and their particular representations are constitutive elements of understanding the situation in Cyprus. Reading texts on historical representation and the construction of individual and collective memory we can see how the past is retold, remembered and represented. Here it is also important to understand/explore

¹⁴⁴ *Hergün sabahtan kalkıp gidecektik. Hiçbirşey yapmazdık. Hiçbirşey onarmazdık. Ne yapacayız derdik zaten kaçacağız. Hep öyle hayal ederdik. Sonra, sonra, sonra...Herkesin ümidi büyüktü. Kaçacaktık. Öyle ümit ederdik. Öyle hayal ederdik. Isınamazdık. Sonra baktık. Oturduk şimdiye kadar.*

the private, individual memories as well as the historical narratives. As I pointed out earlier, memory works as an individual's creation and history works as a memory factory. They are creations, constructions, etc. Learning history helps us to strengthen our memory and comprehend the things that influence our lives. I believe the most important characteristic of the recent history of the island, I mean the individual stories, lies in its emotional attractiveness (see also Kyvig & Marty, 2000).

The "past" in the memories of the Cypriot people were fantasized. "The displacement leaves an empty or absent space that defines the [Cypriot identities] in an imagined, fantastic space" (Romero, 2006, p.158). Maybe that's why these stories were always started with "those were the days", "our weather/our sun/our water was so much better", "the apples from our region were more beautiful/delicious", etc. It was like a fantasy to go beyond; beyond the border, beyond the time line. The border as an *aporia* made their pasts fantastic. Because going beyond the border was impossible, dreaming/narrating was the only way of going back. These individual stories were constructed as fantasies of the individuals' pasts. "To go beyond the border" was the common *social* dream for the displaced Cypriots and also the Cypriot people who wanted a "solution" on the island¹⁴⁵. They evoked the fairy tales which start with the words "once upon a time". The "once upon a time" for the Cypriot people implied the time before the division of the island, before the displacement, before 1974; before the border. This is because the official discourse in the north of Cyprus, which is based on the new territory and time, "silenced" their memories for years, made the return *impossible* and forced them to become accustomed to their "new" life.

¹⁴⁵ The Turkish Cypriots' individual stories can be interpreted as the split within the official/dominant discourse.

The opening of the border turned into a site of face to face communication and at the same time it gave the possibility for an “*archeological excavation*”. It opened up the possibility of going “beyond the border”. The “beyond” of this border was the “lost past” for the two main communities of Cyprus. It can be said that April 23, 2003 was another condensation point for the communities of Cyprus. It was an “historical”¹⁴⁶ date for the Cypriots. Why was it historical?¹⁴⁷ Because, the opening of the border also enabled the cross-cultural traffic between the two main communities of Cyprus. On the first day, many people crossed from the North to the South and vice versa.¹⁴⁸

It was “historical”, because what happened on that day was marked in the history of Cyprus. It was/is a “matchless” day for Cypriots. This date was also represented in the newspapers as an “historical date”¹⁴⁹. Because it was an event which was unique in Cyprus’ history, it was singular and irreducible, without forgetting that the “strange and singular only become visible through a rich representation” (Weymans, 2004, p. 178), I should say that experiencing this date was fascinating for Cypriots because it was a “shared dream” for many Cypriots, especially for those who had been displaced¹⁵⁰. For years, the border was an aporia in the sense of a dead-end for Cypriots. It was an absolute blockage between the two main communities of Cyprus.

¹⁴⁶ The opening of the border was announced in KIBRIS and Yenidüzen newspapers as a “Historical Date” (see KIBRIS and Yenidüzen newspapers, 24th April 2003, p. 1)

¹⁴⁷ Mehmet Yaşın in his poem (the one that I use at the beginning of this section) indicates to us the different freezings of Cyprus history or the starting point of the ‘problem’. He points out that; For Turkish Cypriots the Cyprus problem—or may be the division—started with the interethnic conflicts which took place in December, 1963. But for Greek Cypriots, the same issue has started with the partition of the Island or the ‘invasion’ of the northern part of their country by Turkey.

¹⁴⁸ According to the UNFICYP report in 2007 %39 of the Greek Cypriot community and %28 of the Turkish Cypriot community did not pass to the north of Cyprus (see also Appendix 3).

¹⁴⁹ Please see also footnote 20, page 30.

¹⁵⁰ When we compare the percentages, the percentage of the Greek Cypriot community who crossed is less than the Turkish Cypriot community. Because the previous administration’s policy-governed by Tasos Papadopoulos - was rigid related to the crossings. But with the change in the administration, after Dimitris Christofias-leftist leader- came to power, the numbers increased.

Here I use the term *aporia*, as a “non-road” and because it was a “prohibited area”: there was no exchange/passing/crossing between the two parts of the island, even taking photographs was impossible. Thus, the opening of the border opened the way to go to the South, and for displaced Cypriots, to go to their “lost past”.

Experiencing this impossible return created a split in the displaced Turkish Cypriots’ consciousness. It did not materialize in the way they had hoped. They were frustrated when faced with the “unexpected”. They were frustrated because they faced the possibility of another “loss” - they had also become attached to their “new” lives. History did not turn out as they had imagined. In brief, what the displaced Cypriots witnessed was what had long been recognized as “unimaginable” and “unspeakable”. I think this experience was the perishing point of the displaced Cypriots’ memories. Their memories were shaken by the “forgotten” part of this story – their lives after 1974. They were in-between the loss of the first object and the articulation of the other. Returning to their “old” places was a dream for most of the displaced Turkish Cypriots, and between the years 1974-2003, this yearning to go back is constructed and reconstructed by repeating the themes of the past and the returning. Within these narrations their old places were always constructed as their “homes”. In the narrations of these people related to their “visits” to old places of residence, the open “home” put into the words is their old places of residences, however, the places that they had to leave:

We should repair (them). I go...what am I going to do to this one? Our houses and place are there.¹⁵¹

I was so scared. I said to myself that if I do not die and go to my home today, then I will not die ever!¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *Lazım onaralım..Giderim..Napayım burasını? Bizim evlerimiz yerimiz orasıdır...*

These two sentences both belong to my interviewee Z. H. At the beginning of the interview she was talking about going back to the south. But in the later of the parts of the interview, when she was talking about her frustration, she wanted to go home, to her home in the north. The experience of this “impossible” created a split in the consciousness of these displaced Turkish Cypriots. Now they are in a kind of no-man’s land between the old places of residence in the south and the new ones in the north of the island.

The opening of the border brought about a new object (of belonging), a new loss and a new life for the displaced Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, the opening of the border as the point of arrival became the point of departure for many displaced Cypriots because this experience forced them to evaluate their old and new lives, reminded them of the possibility of a new loss and created a new consciousness about the present Cyprus. They are not emotionally investing in returning back anymore. The condition here is the conflict of “belongingness” that has led to the loss of “homecoming”. The opening of the border made those Turkish Cypriots who had been displaced from the south think from the present.

Will our children feel they belong to the other side? I do not know that! I wish we had peace. I will live maybe one more year or may be 3 more years...So it does not matter for me that much. But will my children say that I would stay here because it is my mother’s village? I do not think they want to go.. (A. E)¹⁵³

and

I do not want to go and live on the other side. My children are here. My grandchildren are here and they work here. I do not want to go either, what am I going to do there? (Ö. E)¹⁵⁴¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Ben çok korktum. Dedim ölmezsam da bugün giderim evime...bir daha ölmem...

¹⁵³ Çocuklarımız o tarafı benimseyecekler mi? Onu bilemem! Keşke barış olsa. Ben bir sene yaşaycam, 3 sene yaşaycam...Benim için önemli değil çok. Ama çocuklar bu ananın köyüdür gideyim orda yaşayayım diyecek mi? o tarafa gitmeyi zannetmem arzulasınlar...

¹⁵⁴ Ö.E. (M). 64 years old Turkish Cypriot who was displaced from Limasol.

Here, in both cases the attachment to the “new” life and places is constructed through their children, with the new generation.

In 2003, the separated communities of Cyprus had the chance to cross to “the other” part of the island. This *crossing* was not limited only to traveling to the “other side” but also included all the new ways of communication between the two main communities on the island. After 29 years, this was the first time that they could visit their pasts. Maybe that’s why it “seemed like a festival of goodwill that people were determined to express towards each other” (Papadakis, 2005, p. 243).

The opening of the gates was announced on 21st April 2003 by the Turkish Cypriot authorities. It is noteworthy that the gates were opened just after the signing of Cyprus’ EU Accession Treaty (16th April 2003). It is important to note that this signature can also be interpreted as the accession of the first “divided” country to the EU¹⁵⁶ and with this accession “the Green Line of Cyprus became the EU’s uncertain border in the east” (Papadakis, Peristianis, Welz, 2006, p. 4).

After the border was opened, Turkish and Greek Cypriots started to visit “the other side”. On the first day the people of Cyprus “ran to the other side”¹⁵⁷. Before the opening, the border which was a “dead end” and gave no passage to them, was an *aporia* for the Cypriot people. Since 1974, “the hope of the return”, “the dreaming of “old houses/villages/places”, “the hunger”, etc were the most remarkable motifs in

¹⁵⁵ *O tarafa gidip yaşamak istemem. Çocuklarım burda, torunlarım burda. İşleri güçleri burda. Ben de istemem gideyim. N’apacağım orda?*

¹⁵⁶ See also Afrika Newspaper 16th April, p. 1, Headline.

¹⁵⁷ See also “Which Cyprus?”, Rüstem Batum, 2004.

the individuals' stories, and the opening of the border enabled Cypriot people's *dream to come true*; the border was not an aporia anymore. There were holes in it which enabled the individuals' stories to speak. These individual stories or the narratives can be interpreted as something which highlighted the "gap" between the individuals' narrations of the past and the "new", official, imagined community which was constructed after 1974. During this time period, Cyprus happened to be a country which the Cypriots wanted to visit more than any other "foreign" country¹⁵⁸, because, it had been "forbidden" and "closed" for all those years.

4.2.1 Experiencing the Impossible: Crossing to the "lost" past

If you go to our village after my death, please carry my photograph on your neck"!

These were the words of my grandfather. He (and also I) thought that he would never have the chance to go to his village. In those days, before 2003, it seemed almost impossible. However, events did not run in the way that we had thought. Before his death, he had a chance to go to his "old" place of residence, only once. I was in our village (his "new" place of residence), waiting for the return of our grandfather in order to see how he felt. My grandfather's facial expression was not what I was expecting. He was so "unhappy", "ruined", "confused" and "shocked". I could not say anything. And he said to me; "My child, they [Greek Cypriots] have all demolished our place". I had been there before my grandfather and I did not understand what he meant because everything had looked fine to me and I had not seen any ruins.

This story is my personal story, which marked the first time I felt feelings of "frustration", experienced as a result of "going back to the other side". And then we

¹⁵⁸ In Afrika Newspaper, it says "Cyprus, the most desired country that the Cypriots want to go/visit" (25th April, 2003, p. 7, *Günlük*)

heard lots of different stories—from both Turkish and Greek Cypriots—who found their homes “smaller”, “older” even “more closer or further to the mosques or/and churches”. These narrations of the “homes” were all constructed by taking the impossibility of the opening of the border as their reference. These stories can be likened to melodramas. As Steve Neale (1986) points out, the root of the melodramatic pleasure lies in its poignancy. The melodrama always plays to the feeling of the “impossibility” to go back, to the feeling of being “too late”. The feeling of “too late” grows out of the running of two different emotional states together. And the base which makes the running of these two different emotional states together is the (empty) ground of desire: “if only” (Abisel, et.al. 2005, p. 39). The hunger, the yearning and the dreaming to return back were so “powerful” because of this “if only” or the impossibility. And in the Cyprus case this “if only” refers/referred to the wish; “*if only* the war had not happened”. And with the opening of the borders the gap between this “impossibility” and the Cypriots’ dream was closed off. Hence, with the opening of the border the dream was terminated and the gap between the hope and the border evaporated. The impossibility created by the border as a physical barrier had “enabled” the past as a fantasy. With the closure of this gap, the Cypriot communities started to experience the “impossibility” which then created the “traumatic division” in the individuals’ memories. I think my grandfather’s frustration—and also the frustrations expressed in other individual stories—were based on the breaching of this impossibility. When the impossible became possible with the opening of the border, the gap *suddenly* closed—the border *opened and the gap closed*. This created ambiguous sensations for Cypriots. Here, I use the term ambiguous in order to indicate the experiencing of contrary sensations at the same time. This was exactly seen in the stories of Cypriots’ stories who had

visited their “old” houses after the opening of the border. In her visit to her home, regarding her “visit” of her own home, a Greek woman said; “I feel very sad! I want to come back...I became familiar with these people [Turkish Cypriots who live in her house]. And I don’t want to dispossess them...I am in a dilemma” ¹⁵⁹. She wants to come back but at the same time she does not want to dispossess the Turkish Cypriot residents of “her” house. The doubling of sensations came together in the narrative of this Greek woman. And another Greek Cypriot woman says; “I am settled there [South Cyprus], how can I come back? Maybe if there is peace...but...”¹⁶⁰. These Greek Cypriot women are completely divided by their conflicting feelings for their “homes”. They want to come back because they wanted to come back for years, but they also do not because one of them has another life somewhere else in Cyprus and the other one liked the “new” owners of her house. Therefore, the existing tension created by the absence which becomes the main characteristic of the Cypriot identity. Here, the choice is neither the one nor the other, with the experiencing of the *impossible* she could not decide. And here again, we come to the empty ground of desire; *if only*. That is, “if only the past had not been lived like that”, the return would have been possible. In such a case, I mean in the Cyprus case, the return is equivocal. Because the return creates another “past”, and also another “gap”. As it is suggested by Stuart Hall, there is no any actual “return” to the past or/and going “home” again (1993).

In the narratives of the displaced Turkish Cypriots, this experiencing of returning is visible;

If they said that everyone will go to their places, I would love to go....

¹⁵⁹ In the documentary “Which Cyprus?” (Rüstem Batum, 2004).

¹⁶⁰ “Which Cyprus?” (Rüstem Batum, 2004).

Half an hour later...

Do I trust them enough to go and live?! Every type of people (Greeks) living there now. Some of them lost their families. Some of their families were killed by Turks. They must have hated Turks just like some Turks who hate Greeks whose families were killed by Greeks. So I am not eager to live with them. But I could live with my own old neighbors (villagers) as it was, if it was possible... (A. E)¹⁶¹

In this case A. E would return to her old place of residence *if only* the people could be the same.

I believe this illustrates to us the “special” circumstances of that particular displacement in Cyprus, the displacement in 1974. People who had to leave their places of residence and move to the northern part of the island, moved with their families and also, in most of the cases, with their villagers. Their spatial/temporal return to the before is an impossibility.

It can be said that the period between the division of the island (1974) and the opening of the borders (2003) is the episode/experience of melancholia and ambivalence¹⁶². Here, we met the ball of “uncertainty” and withdrawal. As Freud put it; “melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradiction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious” (1914-1916, p. 245). The years between the division of the island and the opening of the borders can be interpreted as the withdrawn years for the displaced Cypriots because the feeling/hope of returning back to their “old”

¹⁶¹ *Bana şimdi deseler herkes yerine gidecek severek giderim[....]Şimdi itimadım var mı gideyim?! Onun içinde 100 çeşit Rum var artık. Ailesi ölen var. Ailesi Türkler tarafından öldürülen Rumlar var. Nasıl bizde kin duyar ailesi Rumlar tarafından öldürülenler, onlar da kin duyar herhalde. Onun için onlarla oturmayı heves edemem. Ama öyle eskisi gibi kendi köyünde kendi insalarıyla, kendi köylünle yaşayabilin.*

¹⁶² Here I use ambivalence in which wanting to go to the old places, and belonging to the “new” places.

places was always with them. There was nothing about the loss within the construction of the personal memories. At least they did not lose their feeling of attachment to those places. They always had the expectation. But it seemed impossible within the official discourse, they did not take into account a possibility of another leaving and a possible loss which would be caused by this leaving. They did not compare their “old” and “new” places/lives until experiencing a return that made such a comparison possible.

4.2.2 Using the Fairy tales as extended metaphors

The opening of the border was a “dream time” for the Cypriot people, especially for the displaced Turkish Cypriot people. This is represented in different newspapers such as; “Today our people will meet with the other part of their country. The gates which were closed on 20th July 1974 will be opened today. The whole Cyprus is yours”¹⁶³, “First time after 1974”¹⁶⁴, “What a yearning”¹⁶⁵, the embrace after 29 years”¹⁶⁶. These are all indicators of narrations of the past in the Turkish Cypriots’ memories. Keeping in mind that memory is also a fabrication, the memory of the Turkish Cypriots is nourished by the “going back” dream.

The “silenced” past was continuously narrated for 29 years like a “fantastic memory”. And fairy tales or the sections from fairy tales are used in order to illustrate the opening of the border¹⁶⁷. In YeniDüzen Newspaper¹⁶⁸, the opening of the border is represented with the words “Open, Sesame”. These words are the magic

¹⁶³ Afrika, 23rd April 2003, Cover page Headline

¹⁶⁴ KIBRIS, 23rd April 2003, Cover page Headline

¹⁶⁵ Afrika, 24th April 2003, Cover page Headline

¹⁶⁶ Yenidüzen, 24th April 2003, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Here I should note that these narrations are also generational transformations. For the young generations these narratives were the only ones—independent from the official discourse—in their construction of their ‘un-witnessed’ memory.

¹⁶⁸ See Cumhur Deliceirmak, “Anda Arada”, in YeniDüzen, 24 April 2004, p. 3.

words which are used in the fairy tale of Ali Baba¹⁶⁹. In the Cyprus case, this can be read as the opening of the gates leading Cypriots to find the “treasure”. When the gates were opened, Serdar Denktaş was the Deputy Prime Minister. At that time, in Afrika newspaper it was written; “Sultan's son, prince Serdar commanded: Open the doors!” (Afrika, 27 April 2003, p. 9)¹⁷⁰. In these articles, the political enactment is also likened to the sultanate system; Rauf Raif Denktaş is portrayed as the sultan and Serdar Denktaş as the prince. This newspaper article was criticizing the political system which had been “controlled” by the same family. Rauf Raif Denktaş used to be the president of the TRNC and Serdar Denktaş, his son, was the deputy-prime minister at that time.

With the opening of the border, some conditions were imposed. These were; Greek Cypriots have to show passports, which is changed after a few months and Turkish Cypriots have to show IDs to travel or visit “the other side”¹⁷¹; the Turkish Cypriots have to be back in the north by midnight. In the Afrika newspaper, this was represented as “those who pass down to the southern Cyprus are bound to return back before midnight...Do not worry, it was the same for Cinderella as well!”¹⁷². The women’s organization *Hands Across the Divide* (NGO)¹⁷³, which has members from both communities, protested these restrictions. These restrictions were also protested by using the fairy tale of Cinderella in order to criticize the normalization of the

¹⁶⁹ “Ali Baba, a poor woodcutter in Arabia, happens to overhear a large band of thieves –forty in all– visiting their treasure store in the forest where he is cutting wood. The thieves’ treasure is in a cave, the mouth of which is sealed by magic–it opens on the words “Open, Sesame”, and seals itself on the words “Close, Sesame”. When the thieves are gone, Ali Baba enters the cave himself, and takes some of the treasure home...” (see www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁷⁰ Open up Hey Door! Open up Hey Door! let not the issue of 40 years remain until judgment day” (Afrika, 5 May 2003, p. 11, Bizim Duvar).

¹⁷¹ This is/was the main concern which prevented many Greek Cypriots to visit the other side, the northern part of the island.

¹⁷² 23 April 2003, main page.

¹⁷³ Hands Across the Divide is a woman organization which is a combination of Cypriot women from different ethnic origin who live in the both parts of island and also in different parts of the world.

existing “divide” in Cyprus. Cinderella¹⁷⁴, as an extended metaphor was used in this protest in order to criticize the limitation. The character Cinderella is chosen because she “has been much maligned by contemporary feminist audiences because she is viewed as representative of passive femininity [...and] she portrays the archetypal passive female victim” (Scott, 2004, p. 15). The demonstration of *Hands Across the Divide*, used the slogans “No to Passports!”, “No to Cinderella Time”, “No Limit to Friendship!” and “Yes to Urgent Solution!” For them such an opening of the gates—with these limitations—did not change the existing situation in Cyprus much, and they were looking forward to a political settlement which would not normalize the relationships between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots as separated communities living side by side in the same country, but which would allow the whole of Cyprus to enter the EU in May 2004¹⁷⁵.

Using fairy tales as an extended metaphor while narrating the stories related to Cyprus is not limited to the newspapers’ narrations/representations. The displaced Turkish Cypriots always narrated the stories related to the “past” and also “their old places of residences that they had to leave” in the taste of the fairy tales. Thus, the post-74 generation have listened to those stories like the fairy-tales; continuously repeated stories of beautiful places.

Hands Across the Divide was the most visible women’s initiative in the media of North Cyprus during my research. Actually, mobilization of the agenda in the

¹⁷⁴ “The familiar plot revolves around a girl of a rich family deprived of her rightful station in the family and given the cruel nickname “Cinderella” by her horrible stepmother and two step-sisters. In some versions, her father plays an active role in the humiliation of his daughter, whereas in others, he is secondary to his new wife. In some versions, especially the popular Disney film, the father has died. Forced into a life of domestic servitude, she was forced to tend the fireplace, hence the nickname...” (see www.wikipedia.com)

¹⁷⁵ See also www.hamamboculari.org , retrieved on 21th July 2003, (<http://www.stwing.upenn.edu/~durduran/hamambocu/haberler//fullnews.php?id=222>)

Cyprus issue provided a space for the women's initiatives to become pronounced. Before that "the prospects and perceptions of the bi-communal women's group and women's initiatives are totally absent in the mainstream Cyprus media" (Aliefendioğlu & Arslan, 2011, p. 101). The appearance of women, especially in the political news, was limited to the women's branches of the political parties¹⁷⁶. It was particularly noticeable that during the election periods "two facets of women's perceived existence emerge from the media: women as 'window dressing' for rallies and propaganda meetings, and women as 'vote hunters' for the political discourse of their parties. Men, as the dominant and homogeneous subject in the public sphere, address women [as "our women"] as secondary subjects which can be activated when the need arises" (Aliefendioğlu & Arslan, 2011, p. 105). Thus, the appearance of *Hands Across the Divide*, and also the (voices of) other women's groups in the newspapers are cases in point which show the importance of civil initiatives as a challenge and also contribution to the peace and solution discussions as articulations of the "other". Such examples are valuable in order to highlight the fact that discussion on issues like "peace" and "solution" are not only taking place at the level of political parties dominated by men and/or on platforms where the leaders and contributors are almost all male.

There is no doubt that in a situation in which nationalism is the driving force the involvement and representation of women tends to be weak. In the stories related to the war of Cyprus, for example, as in other narratives of war, men are represented as

¹⁷⁶ When the issue is politics, women can not find a place in the media of North Cyprus. Apart from very few examples they always have been represented as the victims of the war, members of the women's branches of the political parties, mothers of the young people who had to leave their country, etc. (see also Aliefendioğlu & Arslan, 2005 & 2011). But, with the rise of political movements that address the need to bring together the two main communities on the island, women have also found a place to express themselves more.

“war heroes” and women generally find a place as “war victims”. So, the memory of the war is masculinized. Similarly, at mass demonstrations and at political parties’ rallies, the print media of Northern Cyprus betray an obvious prejudice when women are characterized as “our women”, or “mothers of the youth who emigrate”, or “our young girls” (see also Aliefendioğlu and Arslan, 2005). This is also visible in the banners used in the mass demonstrations and the political parties’ rallies. Such examples show how language is used in order to construct a subject—in this case man as the subject. Different researches show the language in the print media of Cyprus has a phallogentric gesture. “This is indeed [so]... if we see phallogentrism not simply as ‘men oppressing women’ but understand from it a particular structuring of discourse where the law of the One operates” (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p.104). In Cyprus, as in the many other examples, men are the ones who operate. When we look at the Cyprus’ history, all the figures are men: they are the ones who decide both war and peace. Thus, there is a lack of woman representation in the decision making processes which are influential in the creation of today’s community, its future as well as the understanding of the past. Accordingly, the media re-establishes this lack of representation.

It is not an exaggeration to say that for many years, there was no voice for women in any public sphere, including anti-nationalism discourses. In the media the representation of women comes across in a limited archetype of personification such as; “woman’s body as an object of desire”, “femininity as a laughable subject” and “Cyprus/the Cyprus issue represented as woman” (Aliefendioğlu & Arslan, 2011). For instance, the caricature below criticizes the division of the island and the militarization of Cyprus, illustrated with the use of barbed wire. However, the

cartoonist's sketch renders the island of Cyprus as a woman. This kind of portrayal and the feminization of the Cyprus issue is apparent in the print media of Cyprus¹⁷⁷.



St. Valentine's Day has been celebrated: Where should I kiss you? You're all covered with barbed wire! (Baybars, 2004, p. 5).

Women are depicted within a fairly typical framework of designated roles. Media as a space where social practices are reproduced and represented illustrates well the lack of gender sensitivity in the area¹⁷⁸. The media sector of North Cyprus, because of its patriarchal nature and structure is distorted in its view of women and is the best proof of this lack of representation. For instance, other than the masculine language used in the media (Aliefendioğlu & Arslan 2005 and Aliefendioğlu & Arslan 2011) “there are very few by-lines belonging to women in the print media in Northern Cyprus which addresses its public audience as if it were an exclusively male group. In this manner, media language is reminiscent of everyday ‘men’s talk’, in the sense

¹⁷⁷ “The metaphor of “Cyprus as female” can also be located in the historical reading of Cyprus as the island of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and sex. Mythology appears in the media discourse of both sides of the (Greek and Turkish) Cypriot media as a metaphor: Cyprus as a woman to either abuse or protect. There are many references to this common memory on both sides of the island” (Aliefendioğlu & Arslan, 2011, p.108).

¹⁷⁸ For further discussion please see Aliefendioğlu and Arslan (2005 & 2011), Alankuş (2008)

that male authors commonly address male audiences”, (Aliefendioğlu & Arslan, 2011, p.104).

However, the media that acts as the agent of the masculine narrative should become a site where reconciliation between the sexes could exist. No doubt such a transformation in the media would be reflected in the reconciliation between nations and ethnic groups (see also Alankuş, 2008, p. 56). Alankuş also claims that the masculine form of the language is the most principal obstacle to peace in Cyprus (see also Alankuş, 2008, p. 46).

Keeping in mind all of these representations I believe individual stories and civil initiatives, including the stories of women are crucial in amplifying and strengthening the voices of those who are suppressed and silenced¹⁷⁹.

4.3 Those who are born into the *unrecognized* part of the divided country

In the previous part of this chapter, I mentioned that the personal memories are one of the main communication channels between the youth and the past and also with the southern part of their country.

The Turkish Cypriot youth, born after the division of Cyprus, were born into a country which was/is divided into two. For a long time, we had no opportunity to see

¹⁷⁹ Here, I want to make special mention of the writer Sevgül Uludağ and to note her own special contribution to the significance of ‘empathy’. In her newspaper article series (on) mass graves and lost people in Cyprus, – now gathered in book form under the title *İncisini Kaybeden İstiridyeler* (Oysters Who Have Lost Their Pearls, 2006), she collected the stories of the suffering of both communities. This book was published in 3 languages; English, Turkish and Greek. Another striking work I believe is by the Greek Cypriot film director, Tony Angastiniotis. In *Voice of Blood* (2005) Angastiotis documents the calamity of war by looking at the mass graves of Turkish Cypriots. But the film is also a compassionate understanding for the pain of the other; an empathy. Both Uludağ and Angastiniotis are voices that are more and more in need for ‘empathy’, as a healing force, to grow.

the other part of “our” country and we could experience only one half of Cyprus. The south was always the “unknown” part of our country. Since there was a mutual isolation between the two parts of Cyprus, for these Turkish Cypriot youth, who had only the chance to experience one half of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots, as a community, were the “invisible other”, beyond the border; they were in the “unknown” part of our country. The south was also “prohibited” and “unreachable” which created a curiosity for the post-1974 generation; “As you grow old, you start to question things much better, as why I don’t step on the gas and cross to the south. Everyone has an east, a west, a north and a south. “The south is forbidden, it is cursed” (Financial consultant)¹⁸⁰. The south was always the unknown part of our country, the part that the younger generations were always curious about.

Since the island was divided into two and there was no mutual contact between the two main communities on the island, communication between the two ethnic groups was limited. However, for us—the post-1974 Turkish Cypriot youth—Greek Cypriots as a community were beyond the “border”; they were beyond the present, in our “past”, in “stories”. They were in newspapers, TV news, sometimes photographs in our albums or/and pictures on the walls of houses. But at the same time, they were nowhere. Their *traces* were everywhere but as a community they were ghost-like. We were connected and disconnected at the same time. The only communication was the narrations of them by third parties while we did not have any social, or mutual communication. We were aware of each other without having any direct communication. The border that separated us also reminded us that there is another community behind the border. So, it was also a facilitation of contact. The border as

¹⁸⁰ In Güngör, Ç. (2002). *Kıbrıslı Türk Gençleri Konuşuyor*. İstanbul: Metis.

a signifier also functioned as a unifying signifier, which pointed out and connected with the other side. It became a reminder, a waking call to the existence of the Greek Cypriot community beyond it. Thus, its function became was an ambiguous one; it marked separation and connection at the same time: it separated and connected; it neither separated nor connected, all simultaneously. Inadvertently, the communication or the lack of communication of the two main communities became *ambivalent*. Here, I mean the presence of two contradictory meanings about the communication or/and lack of communication of the two main communities on the island.

The Turkish Cypriot youth have inherited a divided Cyprus and the Cyprus issue/problem. For years we have witnessed the negotiations between the communities' leaders for a "solution" and for "peace" in Cyprus. As a signifier of division, the "green line" also reminded/reminds us of our "illegitimacy". Because the existence of the border meant "deadlock" in Cyprus and it barricaded our "freedom" and separated us from the world.

As a citizen of the non-recognized part of Cyprus, we could travel everywhere in the world ¹⁸¹(with a Turkish passport), but not to the "other" side; we could call and send/receive mail to/from every place in the world (through Turkey) but not to the south¹⁸². "On the way to Budapest, I realized that my passport was good for nothing. I had a separate country but I had to get a Turkish passport. A passport is something which represents national identity but mine is not valid around the world" (PR

¹⁸¹ With the TRNC's passport, Turkish Cypriots can travel to very few countries with special visas. For most of the countries we need to have a Turkish Republic's passport.

¹⁸² Turkish Cypriots live in northern Cyprus, but they cannot write their own Cypriot addresses (in TRNC), they should write Mersin 10 Turkey as a postal address. And/also the international call for the north of Cyprus is 0090 which is also via Turkey.

person)¹⁸³. Passports and ID cards are representations which certificate and also legitimize and classify our identities (Woodward, 2000). In our case, our passports (TRNC) do not and cannot legitimize our identities as world citizens.

Today, border crossings are allowed and those Turkish Cypriots who are recognized by the Republic of Cyprus, can go and visit “the other side”, because they (could) have the passport of the Republic of Cyprus¹⁸⁴ and they can travel all over the world—without the need for the passport of the Republic of Turkey. But, still, they are living in the “unrecognized” *side* of Cyprus, individually they have “legitimate” identities, because they have the Republic of Cyprus’ passports, but the country in which they live is still considered to have an “illegitimate” identity. That is, from one perspective, the opening of the border made Turkish Cypriots closer to the world—individually, but still it hinders them from the world—geographically.

Our access to the world’s communication network was possible only through Turkey, because, the part of Cyprus, to which we belong communally, is unrecognized internationally. The north of Cyprus is considered “illegal” as it is not recognized by other countries except Turkey and “Cypriots have long grown used to the fact that letters with an address in the “wrong” part of Cyprus are often “lost” in the post” (Cockburn, 2004, p. 172). That is to say, the border which separated us from the southern part of our country was, in one of its disguises, the line which separated us as the “unknown”, “illegal”, “wrong part” and also “unrecognized”¹⁸⁵. Hence, the border for the Turkish Cypriots also served as a retaining wall which

¹⁸³ In Güngör, Ç. (2002). *Kıbrıslı Türk Gençleri Konuşuyor*. İstanbul: Metis.

¹⁸⁴ Here I should also note that issuing passports to Turkish Cypriots is necessary for the legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus. If the Republic of Cyprus did not do this it would be Greek Cypriot Republic and would thereby become ‘illegitimate’.

¹⁸⁵ I think this is the most important point which distinguishes us from the Greek Cypriot youth.

separated us from the world. There have been social, cultural and economic isolations and embargoes for the north of Cyprus since the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. The border of separation became a symbol which separated the legitimate from the illegitimate. In that sense it is not only a “Green Line” that separated us from the “other side”.

Remembering that “identity becomes an issue when it is in crisis” (Mercer, 1990, p. 4) and “crises occur when an identity position is challenged or becomes insecure, whether at the level of the individual or at the level of the state” (Woodward, 2002, p. xi), our identity was/is the main issue in our lives from the time we were born. Moreover, if identity is always open to its future becoming and it “belongs to the future as much as to the past” (Hall, 1990, p. 223), it is significant to look up our identity in relation to the past, the present and the future. I believe that if we are going to talk about the identity and the future, we should talk about the youth. In this part of my study, I focus on the Turkish Cypriot youth and how they construct their own meaning in relation to the “south”, to the “past” and to the “future”.

When the subject is Cyprus and displacement, we should talk about different displacements in different time periods. However, the main displacement that I will take into consideration in this part of my study is the displacement of Turkish Cypriots in 1974—Turkish Cypriots who had to leave their homes, their homeland in the southern part of Cyprus, moved to the northern part of the island, and did not have the opportunity to see/visit their homes/homelands after the opening of the border on 23rd April 2003¹⁸⁶. In this part of my study, I, again, focus on the Turkish

¹⁸⁶ The opening of the gates was announced on 21st April 2003 by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, just after the signing of Cyprus’ EU Accession Treaty (16th April 2003).

Cypriot youth whose families were displaced in 1974, the Turkish Cypriot youth, who were born or/and grew up after the division/partition of the island—those who grew up in a divided country and whose identity is/was defined/constructed according to the compass “direction” of where they were born.¹⁸⁷ For the post-1974 generation Turkish Cypriots, whose families were displaced in 1974, the very simple question “Where are you from?” has always been a very complex and confusing one, in contrast to our parents who generally answered this question by referring to their “old” places of residence as their homeland.

I was born after 1974 in Esentepe¹⁸⁸ (one of the “old” Greek villages), and my father always told me: “This house is not ours; we are just living in it”. Given that belief, it was really difficult to say that I was from Esentepe. The answer to this question has always started with “My father is from Ayios Nikolaos and my mother is from Knodhara (Gönendere)”. Or as O.G. says; “How can I explain where I am from? Who lives in Cyprus? Is my house really my house?”.

After the compulsory displacement forced by circumstances in 1974, many Turkish Cypriots—who had to leave their homes, and their homeland in the south and move to the north—have started to live in the houses of Greek Cypriots who were similarly displaced. Like many other Turkish Cypriots, I grew up in a Greek Cypriot’s house; we used their furniture, TVs, plates, even their clothes. On the one hand, there was an *unknown* “home” which was always remembered with “yearning” and “longing” by our elders, and, on the other hand a “home” which carried someone else’s traces. As Woodward puts it;

¹⁸⁷ I interviewed 12 people, 8 women and 4 men between the ages of 24-32. In this text they appear as; F.A, Ö.H., Y.Y., Ö.G., A.M., O.K, İ.H, S.E., E.A., G.H., L.T, G.T

¹⁸⁸ Ayios Ambrosios in Greek.

...home combines the meanings that are attached to the place we have come from and the desire to return, including the whole process of seeking the means to return and contemplating its possibility, even if it is never likely to be accomplished. The longing to return always shapes the present and the ways in which people negotiate their identities in relation to what they might become, as well as what they are (2002, p. 49).

In a condition where our families attached themselves to the places that they had to leave, it was really difficult to build an attachment to the places that we were living in. For years, their “desires and longings to return” also prevented us from constructing our identity by attaching ourselves to the homes that we grew up in.

Because the Turkish Cypriot youth have listened to the stories of the past and the places as a sort of fairy tale, we thought the time of returning would be in the style of “fairy tales”. But the first experience was different. The general feeling among the children of these displaced Turkish Cypriots was “emptiness”. Day by day, our relationship with the southern part of our country was “normalized”: We wanted to visit. The south was not a forbidden part of a country anymore. Now we can go shopping, we can go on trips, we can visit some friends, etc. It is not “desperate” to visit our families’ houses/places because, it is not “impossible” anymore. Consequently, it is not an imagined place anymore: it is “real”.

My father’s family is a displaced family, but my mother’s is not. When we were children we used to listen to stories of their lives, home, and village like a fairy tale. For us, our father’s village was mystical and legendary. The story we used to listen from our dad was “different” from our mom’s story that was without any conflict and tension. Our dad’s story was the “extraordinary” one. As I pointed out earlier, like many other stories, my father’s story “resembled” a love story. It was more special

for me and for my sisters than my mother's story because of its inner tension. We grew up listening to his fairy-tale like story. That's why when I visited my father's "old" village for the first time, I was very excited. When I think of my father's home compared to my mother's home it always had something more. Actually its absence made it more "special". It can be likened to a digital photograph that you can make brighter, more colorful, bigger, etc by using a software program. The only picture that we had, had been made up in the narrative constructions of our families. Since these places were behind the border, we could not see those places. We could only imagine them: imagine with the narration and guiding of our parents/grandparents.

Like many other Turkish Cypriot youth, I grew up listening to these fairytale-like stories, which were full of desire and wish to see or/and to *return* to the places that our families had to leave in 1974. It was also a wish and desire for us to visit our families' "old" places of residence because we inherited the memories related to the past by listening to these stories of longing. Then, the frustration that our families experienced after they visited their former places of residence was puzzling for us, as listeners and witnesses of these returns. As a generation which grew up listening to the stories that were full of the expressions of the longing and yearning to go home which was in the "unreachable" part of our country, we always wanted to go and see our elders' "homes" and "places"; "The south was an unreachable place which I always wanted to visit. It was mysterious, it was forbidden but it seemed like it was very beautiful" (Ö.H.).

4.3.1 Located in-between the different stories of the *past*

The post-'74 generation grew up by listening to different stories about the "past" and the South—both official and personal. These stories sometimes supported and at

other times contradicted each other. We inherited the Cyprus problem/issue and we needed to construct, and re-construct the meaning of who we are by listening to the older generation's narratives—official and personal stories. These narrations can be interpreted as the main communication tool between the youth and the South or/and the past. Remembering Benjamin, who suggests memory is a tradition which passes from generation to generation¹⁸⁹ (1969), these memories became one of the main channels of communication between the youth and the “past”. These narrations constitute the understanding of history. History which is “harvested and collected, to be assembled, made to speak, re-membered, re-read and rewritten, [...] in interpretation” (Chambers, 1994, p. 3).

The official narrative, which was dominant from 1974 to the end of 1990s, was generally based on the positing of an ontological difference between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and it was nourished by the education system and also the media. Within the official story/history of Turkish Cypriot authorities, the border is/was the symbol of sovereignty. The educational policy in the northern part of Cyprus was mainly based on the “re-membering” of the Turkish Cypriot in the “new” geography—North Cyprus. Within this system, the past is “monumentalized”. The “new” *imagined community*¹⁹⁰ for the Turkish Cypriots is constructed by taking the “new” destination after the migration in 1974—which was the northern part of the island—as its basis. The symbols that remind us of our *imagined community* are everywhere in our daily lives; “Monuments, museums, flags, mass graves, the functioning of military service, political discourses which always build on “don’t forget what they did to us”. I want to forget but they do not let me forget” (A.M.).

¹⁸⁹ Please see the “Introduction” of this chapter.

¹⁹⁰ Imagined community is a concept which is used by Benedict Anderson (1991) who argues that national identity is an abstract and symbolic imagination of our belongingness.

These kinds of practices, retelling the stories of wars and repeating them again and again, reinforce the reconstruction of a new and different identity, an identity in conflict, and play a crucial part in the construction of an *imagined community* as a fixed entity. Thus, this way of imagining a “new” nation by referring to a new geography, excludes the other main community—Greek Cypriots—on the island. The Greek Cypriot community is represented as “Other”, which is monsterized, and is removed from the “common” life between the two main communities before and during the ethnic conflict. As one Turkish Cypriot youth says; “When I was a child, I used to think that Greek Cypriots were much more different from us, that they would somehow look different from the Turkish Cypriots. I also thought that all the Greeks in the world were men, I somehow could not imagine a Greek Cypriot as a woman or as a child” (Housewife)¹⁹¹. Of course this is because these stories are militarized stories. Men’s stories generally focus on wars of ethnic conflict and thus the relation between the two main communities was reduced to war in the official/educational narratives. Generally Greek Cypriots were represented as EOKA fighters or/and priests.

In schools, we learned to “remember” the Greek Cypriot community as our enemies and what “they” have done to “us” during the ethnic conflict. There were many ceremonies to keep them alive;

In elementary school, we used to visit the war grave on certain memorial days, an exhibition of photographs reminding us of those days would take place... when I look at it today, I see chauvinist attitudes in memorial days like those. They were not mentioning the bad side of war, but the heroism of those who fell as martyrs. I thought that enemies lived behind the border ... (PR Manager)¹⁹².

¹⁹¹ In Çağla Güngör, 2002.

¹⁹² In Çağla Güngör, 2002.

The visits to the war graves were part of our educational upbringing. Our *history* was “constructed, retold and enacted through narratives and through rituals” (Woodward, 2002, p. 73). These kinds of rituals—the visits to the mass graves or the like, illustrate the notably ethnic conflict/war, martyrs, missing people, etc, and these kind of practices—are influential in producing and re-producing meanings about the nation’s past. Referring to the “Museum of Barbarism” in the north of Cyprus, Killoran says; “This well-furnished museum/home encloses an identity of a national family and this home/museum and its guardians work to create and inculcate a remembered past of conflict and hostility (1998, p. 163). With these kinds of museums and practices, national familiarity and nationhood is institutionalized. The education that is based on the construction of a “consistent” identity is supported with these kinds of practices.

In the Turkish Cypriot official narrative, “returning back to the south” was not a common theme. However, in the official story of the Greek Cypriots, it is not the same. Their story is based both on the “unforgetfulness” and on returning back (see also Gregoriou, 2005). In the official stories of both communities, the “unforgetfulness” of the ethnic conflict was the common narrative thread; however, in the construction of *their* homeland their representations were different. The Greek Cypriots posit themselves as “owners” of the whole island, stating that, “Our borders are not here. They are in Kyrenia” (Gregoriou, 2005). While the Greek Cypriot “official” discourse accepts the whole of Cyprus as their “homeland” and the north of Cyprus as the “occupied part”, the official discourse of the Turkish Cypriot community accepts the north of Cyprus as part of their “homeland”: “home” [...] has

particular political meanings attached to it, especially when “home” is contested and the same territory read as home by different and often conflicting peoples” (Woodward, 2002, p. 51). Here, in Cyprus, there are two different interpretations of the territory which overlap each other but at the same time are discordant with each other. Thus, the difference in the way of constructing homelands was also determinative in their “returning back” or “not returning back” stories.

However, in contrast to the Turkish Cypriot official story, “returning back” and “the dreaming of a return” in personal stories, which introduced splits within the official story were the most emphasized themes. These are repeated again and again; they became coded memories and then transferred to the new generation by the older generations. Like fairy tales which “develop maps for coping with personal anxieties, family conflicts, social frictions, and the myriad frustrations of daily life” (Tatar, 1999, p. xi), these stories that we have heard from our parents/grandparents helped us to “frame” the places that they had to leave; “South: like a story that I will always listen to” (İ.H.). Thus, the south and the past can be likened to a nostalgic picture which is taken and then framed by the older generations. These stories became a line of communication between us and the south and the past; “I always feel like my grandmother was the link between the South and me. She brought me up and she was always telling me stories about her past and her life in the South” (Y.Y.). Reading between the lines of these stories it was possible to see the friendship among the two main communities and *another* representation of the Greek Cypriots; friends, neighbors, mates, and the like.

In a nutshell, the older generations' stories split and divide the discursive unity of official (hi)stories and representations, and they constitute bridges for a possible 'peace' on the island—especially for the young generation. I believe, this is what makes the personal memories interesting, worthwhile and indispensable for understanding the past.

4.3.2 A prelude to the “past”

The opening of the “gates” on 23rd of April, 2003, gave the opportunity to all Cypriots—I mean for “proper” Cypriots who were recognized by the Republic of Cyprus—to visit and experience the “other” side. As I mentioned earlier, the partial opening of the “gates” made face to face communication possible and at the same time, it enabled the possibility of an “archeological excavation”. It made it possible to go beyond the border to the “lost past” of the communities of Cyprus. It also enabled the youth to cross the divide, experience the “other” part of their country—which they had not experienced before—and to meet with the “invisible” other.

Many memories of the displaced Turkish Cypriots, who have had to leave their places of residence in 1974, were constructed in terms of displacement. For the displaced Cypriots the past, as a time, and the south, as a place were/are always attached to each other, and they have taken this displacement as the central point of their narratives. The past always reminded them of the places that they had to leave in 1974. From that point of view, the border can also be defined as a time line in the memories of the Cypriot communities, especially for the displaced Cypriots. The displacement created an empty space that was imagined as fantastic, beautiful, etc. That's why the south became the most desired/dreamed part of the world for the

Turkish Cypriots¹⁹³; “It was the part of the island that my grandmother always dreamed of going back to live” (Y.Y.)¹⁹⁴.

After the opening of the border many Cypriots “visited” their old places of residence. The Turkish Cypriots were not only experiencing their own “returns” but the “returns” of the Greek Cypriots, and vice versa. Previously displaced Cypriots became *guests* in their *own* houses. With the exception of a few undesirable cases, this strange experience can be interpreted as a civilian negotiation between the two displaced communities. It helped the displaced Cypriots from both communities to see and try to understand the “other”: “It was the first time that my father gave his seat in the dining table to someone else” (F.A.). “This kind of dialogue is an example of people-to-people reconciliation whereby the one puts [herself] in the position of the other” (Hadjipavlou, 2007, p. 65). Here, F.A.’s father was welcomed by another displaced Cypriot. There were many examples of empathy like this. Many Cypriots from both sides returned the left objects, family valuables to their real owners. For instance, referring to the visit of the Greek Cypriot owner of her house A. E. says:

I felt unhappy. Just like me when I felt unhappy when I saw my house. They also felt that pain I guess. Imagine that they would come to the house where they were born and that they would see somebody else living there.. I say, someone else but may be the one who is an enemy for them...it’s difficult...¹⁹⁵

“These gestures have had a humanizing effect on both sides” and can be understood as an “ability to appreciate and feel the Other’s pain, agony and loss in his or her

¹⁹³ After the opening of the border, referring to the crossings from the north to the south and vice versa, Afrika newspaper’s headline was; “Cyprus, the most desired country that the Cypriots want to go/visit” (25th April, 2003, p. 7, *Günlük*)

¹⁹⁴ Here, I should note that although there were differences in the interpretation of the Cyprus issue, and ethnic conflict in leftist and rightist families, the narrations related to their “old” places were not different.

¹⁹⁵ *İçim burkuldu. Ben nasıl gittim evimi gördüm da içim burkuldu. Öyle...onların da içleri sızladı herhalde. Doğduğu eve gelsin, içinde başka bir insanın yaşadığını görsün...başka bir insan dediğim de belki da düşman gördüğü bir insan...zor...*

own right” (ibid, p. 65). Although this “public reconciliation” is not enough for peace in Cyprus, it can be accepted as a condition which enabled the people of Cyprus to “acknowledge”, “understand” and “transcend” the past together (see also Hadjipavlou, 2007).

The displaced Cypriots’ children grew up listening to stories about the places that our parents had to leave and how beautiful they were; “I created images that were, of course, very Mediterranean, maybe some scenes from an Italian movie...” (Ö. G.). These narratives of our parents/grandparents resembled the fairy tales which start with the words “once upon a time”. The “once upon a time” for most of the Turkish Cypriot people implied the time before the displacement, before 1974; before the border¹⁹⁶. We listened to different stories about their daily lives, places, rituals, ceremonies, etc. The narrators of these fairy-like stories were our elders and we were the listeners.

Everyone that I interviewed for this study visited their parents’ “old” houses (including me). We really *wanted* to go and visit those places because we had also “memories” of those places. And listening to the repeated stories related to the past and about going back created a wish and curiosity in our minds related to our parents’ places.

We are the *postmemorial* generation who grew up listening to the stories about these fantastic, unreachable and beautiful places. These narratives of the South constitute and energize an inherited re-memory in the Turkish Cypriot youth. This can be

¹⁹⁶ In Cyprus there are people who had to leave their places for several times. However, as I mentioned earlier my focus group for this dissertation is the displacement in 1974.

explained with the term “postmemory” which “defines the familial inheritance and transmission of cultural trauma” (Hirsch, 2001, p. 7). Here, I use the term “post memory” in order to designate our familial inheritance of these memories. Thus, I prefer to use the term re-memorizing in order to highlight this aspect of the youth’s memory. Through narration and representation of the south by the older generations we re-memorized the “past” and the “South”. The frustration that we experienced when visiting *our elders’ previous* residences is because of the stories whose referent was not experienced or lived; but what we had inherited through listening. “To talk of this inheritance, to refer to history, is to refer to translation or memory, is always to speak of the incomplete, the never fully decipherable. It is to betray any hope of transparency. For, to translate is always to transform (Chambers, 1994, p. 4). These stories were the mediums of our re-memory, and while experiencing returns as returns, we are disappointed for ourselves and for our parents/grandparents;

I went to my parent’s village with my mother. I was shocked; the village was not inhabited after 1974. So most of the houses were destroyed; only very few houses still existed. In fact my parents’ house is still there, it was very disappointing to see the size of the house, the narrow streets of the village and also the location of the village....my grandmother always wanted to visit her village again, but she passed away before the border was opened so she didn’t have the chance to see her village again. But I am glad that she didn’t; it would have been very disappointing for her (Y.Y.).

Marianne Hirsh uses the term postmemory “as a response of the second generation to the trauma of the first (2001, p. 8). The south in the minds of displaced Cypriots’ children was equal to the stories that they listened to, as told by the previous generations. These stories, narratives, created re-memories of the post-74 generation. We developed ties with those places through the stories that we heard. And with these feelings/expectations, the frustration that we experienced is due to our way of remembering these stories that we had listened to.

These returns created an “emptiness” in the youths’ sensations. I remember the first time that we went to my father’s place. I was so excited. But at the moment that we arrived at my father’s previous home I was confused. I did not know what I should say or feel. That moment created an unbridgeable distance that separates the narrator and the listener of the stories (see also Hirsh 2001).

I was not very moved to be in the house of my family which I visited after the border opened. I just felt inexplicable feelings when I thought that I would have been born in that house and lived in that area if history had moved in a different way. But I felt different things when I followed the conversations and movements of my father while we were visiting his village. As I tried to understand him, I saw that as a person who never lived around here, I would never be able to understand his feelings (E.A.).

As E.A. tries to tell what he feels, his feeling is arrested by the “emptiness” and the “unexplainability”. This is not only because of the unlived memory but the ambiguity in E.A.’s sensations while trying to understand his father’s loss. Zelia Gregoriou, in her study related to the Greek Cypriots youth’s experience, says; “What they experienced was not a feeling of historical alienation and emotional disengagement but another kind of displaced presence, essential to *their* re-turn as different from that of their parents, also constitutive of their historical experience as witnesses” (2005, p. 17).

For the displaced Turkish Cypriots, the saturation that “the places may have been reached one day” has been surpassed after visiting their “old” places. And in some cases, the melancholia was turned into mourning. Ö.H.’s grandfather became reticent after he visited his old house and garden after the opening of the border;

After 1974, my grandfather took very good care of his house and garden. He always thought that the Greek owner of his [previous] house and

garden also took very good care of his place in the south; because he thought that one day everyone would return to his/her own place. But after he visited and saw his garden which was not used and was not cared for he was very disappointed. He always thought that one day we would have peace in Cyprus and he would reach his garden. But at the time that he visited his garden and found it squalid he was frustrated (Ö.H.).

Here, the melancholia of Ö.H.'s grandfather has turned into mourning because he lost his dream of "returning back" and found out that he did not find his garden as he had left it. In melancholia there is still identification with the lost object, however the mourning is the acceptance of the loss of the object (Zizeck, 2000, p. 659-663). Or, as Butler puts it; "the melancholic refuses the loss of the object, and internalization becomes a strategy of magically resustaining the lost object, not only because loss is painful, but the ambivalence felt toward the object requires that the object be retained until differences are settled" (1999, p. 78-79). In the melancholia the subject refuses the loss of the object, however in melancholia the acceptance of the object as loss is refused/ignored and the relationship between the subject and the object is ambivalent and unresolved. In Ö.H.'s grandfather's case, until he visited his former place of residence he refused to accept/face up to the loss of these places and experienced and lived melancholia towards those places. But after he visited/saw his places and couldn't find them as he had left them, he lost his attachment to those places. This again reminds us that there is no actual "return" to the past or/and going "home" again (Hall, 1993). Here, Ö.H.'s grandfather had to come to terms with the loss and the change because time had transformed the place.

Our parents/grandparents were disappointed because they did not find the places "as they had been". We are disappointed because the image that is constituted by these imaginary, representational narratives did not match the *reality*. As it is in Y.Y.'s

experience there is a gap between the memory and the experience. Although she had not seen the places before, the *memories* (re-memories) of the places clashed with what she experienced in the visit. Remembering that every memory is a creation and a construction, the youth's memories are the inherited constructions of their elder generations' memories.

Today, 8 years after the opening of the border, the visits to the "old" places of residence are not on the agenda anymore. My father says "I do not want to visit my house often. Because, every time that I visit, I feel farther apart from my house". The displaced Cypriots dreamed for 29 years (from 1974—division—to 2003—opening of the borders) to see and visit their former residence places, but now they are not as desirous as they were before the opening of the border, for a number of reasons. The first one is their disappointment at every visit, because of the contradiction or/and discrepancy of the *image* in their minds and the *real*. The second reason is their "new attachments" on the other side (Papadakis, 2005). Furthermore, the stories are *silenced* nowadays. The south is not unavoidable anymore, and the conditions of "impossibility" which enabled these fairytale like stories and kept them alive also faded away. Every visit kills the displaced Cypriots' memories and makes them distant from melancholia and closer to transform their melancholies into mourning. Paradoxically, because they do not want to loose their ties to the places they had to leave, they do not want to visit those places anymore.

After the opening of the border, the Turkish Cypriot youth did not experience the feelings that we expected; "I have accepted Girne always as home and it still is. As a matter of fact, I come from Limassol and I do not have anything to do with Limassol

and I feel that I would not be able to increase my sense of belonging towards it. I thought that if I spent time there, Limassol would have more meaning for me. But it didn't happen in that way" (İ.H). Here, İ.H's memories of the place as home clashed with what she experiences in the present.

I believe the experiencing of these returns closed the gap between the present and the past. The displaced Turkish Cypriots had to face another "reality": their life after 1974. These "returnings" were traumatic stories which were on the main agenda of Cypriots, especially just after the opening of the border. For the Greek Cypriots, to choose to cross from the south to the north had an ideological meaning. But another "reality" that they faced was the "new" owners of their houses, who were not the Turkish Cypriots but the Turkish "settlers" as they are called.

4.4 So far so close

Yes, the border opened on the 23rd April 2003, and the Cypriots—only the "proper" Cypriots who are recognized by the Republic of Cyprus—had opportunity to pass from the north to the south, and vice versa. The displaced Cypriots had the opportunity to visit their "old" places in the north or/and the south which would enable the growth of empathy between the two main communities of Cyprus. Also, after the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU, the EU Committee of Permanent Representatives announced that those who come to the island from the ports of northern Cyprus would pass to the south, but only the European and USA citizens, could pass from the north to the south. Thus, only third world countries' citizens cannot cross to the south since the partial opening of the border. In such a situation it could be said that the green border line in Cyprus became a border which can be passable by only the "western" people. I think it is not an overstatement to

say that after the opening of the border, the border itself became a place where the tourists, generally western people, come and see. A place where even taking a photograph was forbidden was opened to the sightseeing tourist. Tours are organized for the tourist groups who come to the island—to the south or/and to the north—for experiencing this “passing”. Consequently, the disputed, controversial border of the EU became a place that could be experienced by all Europeans, Americans, and the “proper” Turkish Cypriots.

Thus, “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots and the citizens of third countries, including Turkey, who arrived in Cyprus from the northern ports, can not cross to the south, subsequent to the partial opening of the border. From the beginning of this dissertation, I have argued that since 1974 the border is the signifier of division between the “legitimate” and the “illegitimate” identities on the island. But, with the opening of the border, the Turkish Cypriots, as individuals had an opportunity acquire the Republic of Cyprus’ identity cards and passports and so become “legitimate” persons living on the island. We can say that their “illegitimate” identity was recast as “legitimate” with the opening of the border. In other words, the border opened passages between the two parts of the island, but not to *all* of the people “living” on the island. People of Turkish origin who came to the island and have lived here since 1974 were not allowed to cross because the Greek Cypriot authorities regard entry to the island from the north of Cyprus as illegal. However, the restriction on border-crossing does not apply to Europeans.

This opening had significant effects on constructing new forms of identities. I can say that it created new levels of the legitimacy; Greek Cypriots who are European

and live under the recognized government of Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots who are European but live under the “illegitimate” government of Cyprus and the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots who are not European and live under the “illegitimate” government of Cyprus. Although it is not proclaimed as the border of the EU, it is still the indicator of legitimacy both at the governmental and the individual level. That is, the present border functions as the separator between the European and the non-European, or, to phrase it differently, Western and non-Western; it became a European colander which only allows western people to pass from the north to the south.

As I mentioned in the previous chapters, the people of Turkish origin who came to the island after 1974 are represented as an homogeneous group and became the “unlicensed” other, the very opposite of “being Cypriot”. They are also perceived as the most powerful organ in maintaining the continuation of a “right wing” policy and a motherland nationalism (see also Erhürman, 2006 and Hatay, 2005). They are seen as the primary reason for the continuation of the “insoluble” structure of the Cyprus issue. It can be said that there is a political and social conflict between Turkish Cypriots who were autochthonous on the island and immigrants from Turkey who were invited to settle in northern Cyprus by the “TRNC” regime” (Navaro-Yashin, 2006, p. 84). These “im-migrants” from Turkey were “officially registered as “Turks” and were assigned “citizenship” in the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”” (Navaro-Yashin, 2006, p. 84). Since then, there has been an ongoing debate related to these “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots. For Turkish Cypriots they are “Turks from Turkey” (*Türkiyeliler*), distinguishing them even linguistically from

Turkish Cypriots, and for Greek Cypriots they are the “settlers” who illegally came to the island and have been given the rights of residency in Greek Cypriot homes;

It is proposed that the ‘settler’ label be restricted to the sub-category of ‘agricultural labour’, whose migration to the island formed part of a deliberate settlement policy pursued by both Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot authorities following the partition of the island in 1974. Other Turkish nationals have since migrated to the island on their own initiative, acquiring citizenship through either naturalization or assisted naturalization (e.g. through marriage to Turkish Cypriots) (Hatay, 2005, p.7).

In the previous chapters I said that the imagined community of the Turkish Cypriot authorities, I mean the official discourse, was narrated by excluding the other main community on the island and attempted to construct a homogeneous “Turkish Cypriot” community which was highlighting a shared “nationality” and “ethnicity” with the Turks of Turkey. However, when we look at the counter hegemonic discourses which were trying to protect the “Cypriotness” and struggled against Turkish assimilation on the north of the island, we see another version of imagined community. In this version of imagined community, the community is narrated by taking the time before the year 1974 which includes all Cypriots who have familial inheritance of Cyprus. Accordingly, the year 1974 as a time line became a “border” which separates the Cypriots— those who used to live in Cyprus before the year 1974 and their families/children, and the “non-Cypriots” who came to the island after the year 1974 and their families/children including the ones who were born in Cyprus. Hence, the effort of imagination or construction of the identity is analogous to the nationalist construction of the Turkish Cypriot community. In the nationalistic construction of the Turkish Cypriot community, the shared history of the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities is ignored. This way of construction ignores the shared history and the lifetime which has been shared since 1974 among the Turkish Cypriots and the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots. Since 1974, the

Turkish Cypriots and the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots have been living in the north of Cyprus. They are friends, neighbors, and workfellows, even relatives. However, when the subject comes to the designation of the Turkish Cypriot identity, the “non-Cypriots” are pushed to the beyond of the “border”; they are not autochthonous. As I wrote in Chapter 1, the CTP as the one of the biggest, possibly, the biggest leftist party has softened its policy towards these “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots. Especially after the Annan Plan which proposed residency and citizenship to the many thousands of these “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots there has been ongoing discussions related to these groups of people; the political parties are arranging some platforms to discuss the issue, the intellectuals also write about this issue to raise consciousness towards these people. If the Annan Plan had been accepted and Cyprus as a United Cyprus Republic entered to the EU, these “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots would be European citizens. However, it could be said that one of the reasons for the vote of “no” of the Greek Cypriot community was because of this issue. Because it is argued that these people were brought to Cyprus by Turkey in order to destroy the demographics of Cyprus and that they are illegal citizens who use Greek Cypriot properties. The other main reasons were/are property rights and the security.

The subject of the articulation of the identities in Cyprus regarding the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots is not the main subject of my study. However, when you talk about “peace” and a “solution”, I believe, it is impossible not to take into account this identity. I believe later studies will develop broader perspectives on this issue. In the coming negotiations among the leaders of the two main communities, it seems that as it was in the Annan Plan negotiations, this issue will be the most fractious and

challenging issue. It's already the main concern when discussions on the Cyprus problem are held in the media. In the southern part of the island there is a stubborn drive towards the "settlers" as they are called. But, it was also impressive to note that with the opening of the border, the Greek Cypriots who chose to pass to the north and visit their "old" houses, have met with these "non-Cypriot" Turkish Cypriots. Unavoidably, the first contact between these two groups of people had already been established at an individual level. The "non-Cypriot" Turkish Cypriots accommodated the Greek Cypriots in their "old" houses but they can not return a call to those visits.

In the case of a solution to the Cyprus problem, thousands of these "non-Cypriot" Turkish Cypriots would acquire European citizenship. Thus, being European for them is part of the solution in Cyprus. Consequently, being European and/or the south of Cyprus is so far and also so close for these "non-Cypriot" Turkish Cypriots.

Chapter 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS

*There is no way to peace, peace is the way.
Mahatma Gandhi*

This dissertation has not only summarized the events that have been lived over the past decade as a “new” era in Cyprus’ history, but it has highlighted how the situation in Cyprus has altered beyond what might have been predicted a while ago. The research was a sustained effort at capturing a period of change in Cyprus while taking into consideration the arrival of different patterns of communication, and social and cultural practices of representation such as media representations, personal experiences of different others, national narratives concerning self-other relations, stereotypes, web interactions, etc., and to show how these different patterns of communication enabled the people of Cyprus to interact and communicate differently.

In this dissertation I examined and highlighted how alternative lines of communication have developed and made a change in our understanding of Cyprus, enabling the experience of a new Cyprus. One of the main arguments of my dissertation has been that with the re-linking and de-linking of new lines of communications the meaning of Cyprus, and of things related to Cyprus, have changed and altered, enabling a new experience of today’s Cyprus as an ongoing process in the making. I have highlighted how these new configurations for

interaction can be interpreted as ways that enable dialogue and reconciliation possible. Every opening of the kinds of communication on the island, which I examined in this dissertation, enabled new experiences which were banned for years. These openings also facilitated the recovery of the historical relations among Cypriots across the divide.

For almost 30 years communication between the two main communities on the island was limited. Apart from the deadlock in the talks between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, this situation was interpreted as one of the main obstacles to peace. Today, several channels of communication, as mentioned in the previous chapters, enable interaction between the two communities in different dimensions. But, the still desired agreed settlement has not been reached, with some crucially important opportunities missed along the way. Today, negotiations between the two leaders still continue. There are still bi-communal events and programs which are carried out by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programs in Cyprus. But, despite these efforts none of these programmes are greeted today with much enthusiasm by most Turkish Cypriots. After all these developments, this can be interpreted as a communal disappointment among Turkish Cypriots¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹⁷The research includes the period up until 2008. But after this period of change, in the northern part of Cyprus the political balance has altered again. In the year 2009 in the north of Cyprus there was a general election (19 April, 2009) and a presidential elections (18 Nisan 2010). Unlike the elections used in the research of this study, the right-wing political party, UBP, won the election and after that Derviş Eroğlu (chairman of the UBP during that period) became the president. This can be interpreted as a return to past policies or as a response given by Turkish Cypriots to the disappointment of the deadlock in the negotiations. However, the negotiations and debates on the Cyprus issue between the two main communities still continue. On the other hand, under the leadership of the Trade Union Platform and leftist political parties, several mass demonstrations against the economical package imposed by Turkey were held. Since they are not within the scope of the research of this dissertation, I believe it is worthy to look at this change and its reasons in other studies.

The research in this study includes an intense period of social change after a 25-year break in terms of communication. It has been ten years since the borders between North and South were opened. During this period of time, the meaning of Cyprus, what it means to be a Cypriot, and the meanings related to Cypriot matters generally, have been re-articulated and re-constructed.

After the opening of the previously mentioned lines of communication, we, Cypriots, are experiencing a “new” Cyprus. Already, the situation in Cyprus has altered beyond what was foreseen a while ago. Today, we are living in an “unforeseeable” and “unpredictable” Cyprus. As Derrida puts it, “everything depends upon contexts which are always open, non saturable” (1986). Today, we are experiencing a Cyprus which was not foreseeable in the days before 2003. Before 2003 the situation in Cyprus was represented differently among different groups, with words such as “peace” and “cease fire”. The non-communication and the blockaded exchange between the two main communities had led us to believe that there would be no peace on the island, because it was divided into two with a border which carried symbols of separation – flags, military bases, barbed wires and also the UN. Although it still carries these separators, it does not block the communication and exchange among the communities anymore. The ways of experiencing the country and the condition of awareness have altered. It can be said that, with the partial opening of the border, the lack of communication between the two main communities has turned into a “controlled communication” (see also Anastasiou, 2002), and today the border in Cyprus functions as a “leaky” border with new communication lines linking those across the border.

The “green line” still divides the island into two, but differently. This can be understood with the concept of iterability which is “the logic that ties repetition to alterity” (Derrida, 1988, p. 7). We can say that the situation in Cyprus is “itered” and “iterable”. Although it is still divided, the division has changed: it has changed in its repetition. The situation in Cyprus thus comprises both repetition and alterity; that is to say, both sameness (division) and difference (crossings). The circumstance in Cyprus reminds us of Derrida’s words: “No meaning can be determined out of context, but no context permits saturation” (Derrida, 1979, p. 81). The opening of the border created a new context for change on the island. That is why, in order to understand the “meaning” of Cyprus, one has to engage in a specific scene of reading.

Today, the border in Cyprus, which has played an influential role for nationalistic discourses in drawing the limits of their ‘imagined community’, has become a hybrid place that enables the social interaction between the two parts of the island. I think Edgar Morin’s words are very relevant in order to understand the border (frontier) in Cyprus;

The frontier is both an opening and closing. It is at the frontier that takes place the distinction from and liaison with the environment. All frontiers, including the membrane of living beings, including the frontier of nations, are, at the same time as they are barriers, places of communication and exchange. They are the place of dissociation and association, of separation and articulation (1977, p.203-204).

The border is still the last “wall” in Europe, but the way that it divides/separates the two main communities has changed. The people of Cyprus now have the chance to travel to their “past” and to their “old places”. Some Turkish Cypriots benefit from having the passport of the Republic of Cyprus. The border is not a hindering wall of communication anymore, but a controlling one. It became the main passage which

enabled the people of Cyprus to experience the island together, but still with some limitations, as mentioned earlier. And, “the absence of ethnic violence since the border opening has been noteworthy” (Papadakis, Peristianis, Welz, 2006, p. 4).

In such circumstances we should re-define the meanings related to Cyprus: peace, the Cyprus issue, the Cyprus problem, solution, etc, since we are living in a “different” Cyprus now. For instance, before the year 2003, the meanings of *the opening of the border* and *the solution* were inextricably linked as two mutual and complementary notions. But this did not happen as in the scenario. The partial openings in the border became check points between the two parts and the border still divides the island into two, while there is still an ongoing debate about peace and a final solution.

Thus, in spite of everything, people are still looking for “peace” and the “solution” in Cyprus. What do these signifiers mean in today’s conditions? Do they mean an “unproblematic Cyprus?”, an “uncontradictory identity?” or “being European?”. It seems to me that, today, Cyprus has become a geography where the division separates the people who live on the island and their identities into 3 categories: the (European) Republic of Cyprus which claims to be the representative of the whole island, the legitimate Europeans who live in the “illegitimate” part of Cyprus and the “illegitimate” ones who live in both the legitimate and “illegitimate” parts. The condensed signifier of this separation is also the “green line” in Cyprus.

Irrespective of all of these changes, all Cypriots have to confront a reality: Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots are not the only ones who live in this country. I believe

Mehmet Ratip¹⁹⁸ makes a worthy point as a start for a better Cyprus. He argues that our probable first step would be to consider other Cypriots in Cyprus – other Cypriots apart from the “well known” Cypriots; that is, other than the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. Here, he is speaking of workers from Anatolia and other countries, East European sex workers, TRNC citizens, Italians...etc. Until today, we thought that Cyprus existed only for “us” [Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots]. He is asking a significant question: “Are we ready to imagine a new Cyprus for others?” In such circumstances we should think about our ethical responsibilities towards the “other”. In today’s world democracy does not refer only to the “demos”/“ethnos” as it is in the root of the word, but it is conductive and permeable. It recognizes and accommodates difference. That’s why as a community, we, Turkish Cypriots should unlearn the wisdom of our rote learning which informed our social, cultural, and political practices up to now. As it is put by Landry and Maclean we should open a space for others, to speak them and unlearn our privileges:

Unlearning one’s privileges by considering it as one’s loss contributes a double recognition. Our privileges, whatever they may be in terms of race, class, nationality, gender, and the like, may have prevented us from gaining a certain kind of Other knowledge: not simply information that we have not received, but the knowledge that we are equipped to understand by reason of our social positions. To unlearn privileges means, on the one hand to do our homework, to work hard at gaining some knowledge of the others who occupy those spaces most closed to our privileged view. On the other hand, it means attempting to speak to those others in such a way that they might take us seriously and, most important of all, be able to answer back (Landry & Maclean, 1996, p.4).

Today, the “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots are marginalized from the Cypriot identity. And they do not have a legitimate subject position to talk from. I believe, as Cypriots, we should keep in mind the difference between criticizing and struggling with Turkey’s expansionist policy on the island, and condemning the Turkish-origin

¹⁹⁸KIBRIS newspaper, 29 September 2007.

people as a threat to our identities. Within different discourses, “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots are reduced to a symbolic icon that prevents a probable peace and a solution to the historical conflict on the island. Thus, it is our ethical and political responsibility to unlearn this marginalization. Although it is difficult to deal with this sensitive position, this is our ethical and political responsibility towards the “other”, the people that we share our lives with. This “other” can be Greek Cypriots, “non-Cypriot” Turkish Cypriots, non-Greek and non-Turkish Cypriots, but also women, disabled, the aged and minorities who are somehow discounted from the subjecthood of “our” history and knowledge. To be ethically and politically correct towards the “other” is our own self-responsibility.

For instance, the rejection or the exclusion of these “others” (non-Cypriots) from a probable solution would be a naïve “realism” and also a conservative way of thinking that would create violence in a new context. The danger in excluding the “others” of Cyprus lies in the ignorance of the “newness” of Cyprus and a stubborn thinking in the “past tense”. And what is important here is remembering the discursive construction of every kind of ‘past’, I mean of history. In short we should keep in mind that:

The past [...]is not a whole that existed somewhere as “given” and that can be brought into the present. Instead, the past is precisely that which cannot be grasped by research, that which is absent and cannot be displaced again, because in *itself* the past has no meaning and no original unity (Weymans, 2004, p. 174).

Looking for a peace and trying to frame it in terms of the “past” is problematic from the very start. The peace, thus, exists in the present, not as a static thing but rather as a construct that needs to develop according to its own, present-day dynamics.

This is why we need an alternative democratic Cypriot vision which aims to create a change in the field of social relations, which, in turn, enables a change within the conversation, discussion and participation of different identities. Hence, we should accept the “others” not as the objects of social transformation and change but as active subject participants. We should share the same space as founding and active subjects. Recalling here, again, Brian Chng’s definition of the word communication¹⁹⁹ which connotes “mutual help, exchange and interaction among those who belong to the same community”(1996, p. x) we should re-think communication and, relatedly, the peace in Cyprus. Thus, while we talk about the peace in Cyprus, it should not be something only *between* the two main communities on the island but also *among* the communities themselves. Thus, both communities should develop the peace culture in every dimension of social relations, including gender, race, age, etc. As Sevdal Alankuş argues, for years alternative discourses in the north of Cyprus have been striving to create an ethics towards the “other” main community on the island, now its time to show the same effort towards the “other” in the north of Cyprus – Turkish, Kurdish and Arab residents from Turkey, “Third” and “Fourth” World countries’ citizens (2008, p.62). Namely, as a community we need to re-read the borders of our identities and instead of placing what we have learned at the center, we should open us/our identity to the “other”. For such a transformation, the media becomes a most influential agent. The representations in the media should have the ethical responsibility toward the others in the community and should adopt the peace language in their representations.

¹⁹⁹Please see Chapter 1, Introduction, p. 11.

At a personal level, the people of Cyprus should develop empathy toward the others. Empathy is one of the main social skills in communication. Alternatively, we can call it sensitivity towards others. I believe when we look at the relationship between the displaced Cypriots, it is easily observable that there is an empathy between the two main communities; they are willing to put themselves in each other's shoes. However, the same empathy can not be observed, again, in other types of relations. As the two main communities of Cyprus, both Turkish and Greek Cypriots should learn to live in harmony with people of other ethnicities who, for one reason or another, have left their places of origin to come and live in Cyprus. I believe the same sensitivity should be developed for the "others" in Cyprus, especially for those who have been living on the island since 1974. As Northern Cypriots we should learn how to respect and tolerate differences. We should respect the separate ethnic contrasts in Cyprus. It is when both the differences and commonalities learn to live in a mutually respectful climate that there will be a lasting "peace" in Cyprus.

I believe these alterations and examples take us to Derrida's notion of "democracy to come". With this notion Derrida does not talk about a democracy that will one day fully be 'present'. He writes "democracy remains to come...not only will it remain indefinitely perfectible, hence always insufficient and future, but, belonging to the time of the promise, it will always remain, in each of its future times, to come" (Derrida, 1997, p.306). As Derrida suggests for democracy, peace in Cyprus will not be fully present one day. Thus, peace will always be something in front of us; something challenging that needs persistent effort to accomplish and to maintain.

Consequently, the future of Cyprus—also the meaning of terms like “peace”, “solution”, “Cypriot”, etc—are unpredictable when we look at the present, as the “present” Cyprus could not have been predicted a decade ago. However, for a more decent Cyprus, and for peace on the island, we should keep imagining peace anew with each new conjuncture, and also not forget Gandhi’s words; “There is no way to peace, peace is the way”.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The results of the parliamentary elections in North Cyprus since 1976

	1976	1981	1985	1990	1993	1998
UBP	53,7	42,5	36,7	54,7	29,8	40,3
	30	18	24	34	16	24
DP					29,2	22,6
					16	13
TKP	20,2	28,5	15,8	44,5 16	13,3	15,4
	6	13	10		5	7
CTP	12,9	15,1	21,4		24,2	13,4
	2	6	12		13	6
YDP			8,8			
			4			
DHP	11,7	8,1	7,4			
	2	2	-			
TBP		5,5				
		1				
Others	1,5	0,7	12,6	0,8	3,5	8,3
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	40	40	50	50	50	50

UBP: National Unity Party

DP : Democratic Party

TKP : Republican Turkish Party

CTP : Communal Liberation Party

YDP : New Dawn Party

DHP : Democratic People`s Party

TBP: Turkish Unity Party

Retrieved from <http://www.cyprusive.com/default.asp?CID=367>

Appendix B

TRNC 2003 General Parliamentary Elections RESULTS

		UBP	DP	MBP	BDH	CTP	ÇABP	KAP	
TOTAL		% 32.93	% 12.93	% 3.23	% 13.14	% 35.18	% 1.97	% 0.60	Percentage
		18	7	0	6	19	0	0	Number of M.P.
Lefkosa (Nicosia)		% 29.21	% 11.64	% 2.33	% 16.05	% 37.20	% 2.99	% 0.54	Percentage
		5	2	0	3	6	0	0	Number of M.P.
Gazimagusa (Famagusta)		% 36.61	% 13.74	% 5.01	% 8.66	% 34.20	% 0.95	% 0.83	Percentage
		5	2	0	1	5	0	0	Number of M.P.
Girne (Kyrenia)		% 35.15	% 12.66	% 2.98	% 11.83	% 35.42	% 1.65	% 0.32	Percentage
		3	1	0	1	4	0	0	Number of M.P.
Guzelyurt		% 30.72	% 12.48	% 1.01	% 19.01	% 34.76	% 1.61	% 0.41	Percentage
		2	1	0	1	3	0	0	Number of M.P.
Iskele		% 41.89	% 21.99	% 5.02	% 7.84	% 21.80	% 0.56	% 0.90	Percentage
		3	1	0	0	1	0	0	Number of M.P.

Retrieved from <http://www.cyprusive.com/?CID=400>

Appendix C

The common poem of Cypriot poets

(Retrieved from http://bianet.org/2004/03/01_eng/news32205.htm).

Yes: What a Joyful Word!

Yes, to a bird with open wings
To the open sky, to the open sea
Yes, to lips open to a smile
To a wish, to hope
Magical words

The revenge of silenced hearts against history
While kissing the wind of love
To share the same flame
Sing the same song
Be drunk with the same passion
Make love under the same moon
Let my heart my body be light
So that I can speak
What is Greek what is Turkish
Are they two houses exchanging each other
Are they two lives filled to the brim
Emptying themselves
into sand bags

Yes, I said as though drawing a beautiful bird
Nearing extinction
I am handing it over to you
So that you can add yet another colour
A bird hidden for so long in my heart

A YES bird; so close to bursting my heart open
Take this joy
Attach it to the bird's wing
As though planting new saplings
In a beautiful forest
I sit, sweating, breathless
So as to send a wave from deep inside me
Look there, at the abyss of my heart
That thing amongst the flames is "Yes"
Life will fall, like a star
And we will also change

Yes, a palm open to the other
To the different, to the unknown
I passed through the border amongst
The rumble of thousands of migrating butterflies

I know this day of May will be the day
Oh wall

Your stones
We will bury
In the foundations of our common house
The whole universe
Fits into a single word!

Yes: What a joyful word!
To sing the song of heavenly love
Say Yes! To your good neighbours in exile
Open the doors ajar with your hands
Say yes! Let's come out onto the doorsteps
Clean out our wounds
Kiss by kiss (NM)

