"Berlin", Cyprus: photography, simulation, and the directed gaze in a divided city

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I *Prologue*

The "end" of Heroes Street in Nicosia, previously one of its main arteries but now a *cul-de-sac* with an artificial dead-end, is a site which encapsulates some of the basic themes in the recent political history of Cyprus. At the end of the street is a raised military observation post with the message "Nothing is gained without sacrifices, nor freedom without blood" (Τίποτε δεν κερδίζεται χωρίς θυσίες και η ελευθερία δίχως αίμα). Tourists and visiting Cypriots from other towns take photographs of the Green Line/Dead Zone beyond, an area left abandoned by the 1974 Turkish Invasion, now patrolled by UN forces. To the right of the platform is a sign: "Nicosia: The Last Divided Capital of Europe". In a room below the sign are photographs of destruction from the invasion together with a book for visitors to write their comments in, the majority of which are by Greeks and Greek Cypriots. The photographs show refugees, destroyed churches, and mutilated bodies hanging out of bombed buildings. Outside there is a life-size, free-standing, thick metal plate sculpture, with the outline of a figure cut out of it. The title of the sculpture is "Ο Αγνοούμενος" (The Missing Person). This is a powerful work designed not for tourists but for Greek Cypriots, because of its monolingual Greek title. One looks through it – there is nothing to see, except that very fact. The sculpture is literally a silhouette. As a sculpture it is analogous to purchasing a mystery jigsaw puzzle in a plain box, and discovering that it consists only of the pieces that constitute the outer frame. It is a subversive work because it plays upon the tension of complete-incompleteness, of either having had its content removed, or of never having had that content in the first place, and thus representing a category. If it is a category whose category is it? Is

it a category of memory, or of the state? Is it a nationalist work or a profoundly anti-statist one?

This paper explores the construction of the directed gaze in a divided city. How are we expected by political authorities to look around us? How are images and representations of one's group and the other used? In this paper I explore the directed gaze through the use of images in Cyprus by reference to two key issues: the representation of missing people and of the Green Line. Both enable us to approach the past, notions of suffering, and the future. I suggest there are some basic differences between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the way they use images and narratives. Such differences may well be culturally based. I then explore how the events at Dherynia in 1996, when two Greek Cypriot demonstrators were killed, were managed and choreographed through images and narratives. I suggest that the August 1996 violence was a choreography of the state in Cyprus to establish its legitimacy. The state emerged as the demiurge of order through disorder. Violence was therefore not an accidental by-product of the state in establishing its goal, civil order.

II *Introduction*

Between 1963 and 1974 over 2,000 persons, both Greek and Turkish Cypriot, disappeared in Cyprus. They disappeared in the course of hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots from 1963 onwards, and during the mainland-Greek-backed coup of 1974 and the subsequent Turkish invasion.[1] Responsibility for the disappearances appears straightforward in some cases, more murky in others. Few bodies have been officially recovered. There are major differences in the manner Greek and Turkish Cypriots regard the missing. Briefly put, whereas the Turkish Cypriots regard their missing as *kayıp*, that is as disappeared/dead/lost, the Greek Cypriots regard their missing as being of unknown fate, *agnooumenoi*: as not-(yet-)recovered, at best as living prisoners, at worst as concealed bodies requiring proper and suitable burials. Significantly, while English renderings of *agnooumenoi* now include "disappearances", the Greek Cypriots

[1] For good discussions on this period see Panteli 1984 and Hitchens 1984: 61-100.

do not use the proper Greek word for this (ξαφανίστηκαν), which implies a finality and non-recoverability, like the *desaparecidos* in Argentina and elsewhere, although they tap the nuances of the affinity to this term for political reasons. They prefer to employ the nuances of "not known (as yet), but-potentially-knowable". The Turkish Cypriots claim they lost a considerable number of civilians who disappeared between 1963 and 1974. By contrast, the Greek Cypriots claim that their missing date from the 1974 Turkish invasion. Officially the Turkish Cypriots claim 803 missing persons, the Greek Cypriots 1,619.

While widely quoted and known within their respective communities, both figures are regarded as inflated from the official UN perspective. In December 1995 the total number of cases officially presented by both communities to the UN-sponsored Committee of Missing Persons was 1,493 Greek and Greek Cypriot files and 500 Turkish Cypriot files.

Turkish Cypriots claim that while 99% of their missing were innocent civilians, Greek Cypriots mainly lost military casualties (61.19%).[2] For the former the problem of the missing began in 1963, the first year of intercommunal troubles in the Republic of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots counter that their missing were captured by the Turkish army, that they disappeared in captivity, and that the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot claims that these men are dead go against the evidence and show that they want to close the issue without accepting responsibility.

There are further differences in perception. The Turkish Cypriots have long been encouraged by their leaders to perceive their missing as dead, from a desire to distance the Turkish Cypriot community from the Greek Cypriots, whom they blame

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[2] This figure corresponds to the number of reservists/soldiers submitted by the Greek Cypriot authorities, men between the ages of 16 and 39. The statement is correct but is somewhat disingenuous. Until 1974 the Turkish Cypriots did not technically possess an army, although many men were involved in military activities as members of irregular paramilitary groups. Nevertheless, it appears correct that a number of Turkish Cypriots were chosen taxonomically as victims of Greek Cypriot aggression and were innocent civilians. By contrast the majority of Greek Cypriots missing date from the 1974 coup and invasion.

as the culprits. Indeed for the Turkish Cypriot leadership, especially Mr Denktash, the missing are proof that Turkish and Greek Cypriots cannot live together. For the Turkish Cypriot leadership it is important that the missing are dead, while for the Greek Cypriots it is important that they may still be alive, and that the main culprits are not the Turkish Cypriots (with whom they claim they coexisted peacefully in the past) but the Turkish army occupying half the island. Turkish Cypriots maintain that these men died in the hostilities during the invasion or "Peace Operation" as it is called by mainland Turkey, or during the coup and in the week following the coup. But they have refused to return their bodies for reburial. For the Greek Cypriots the missing, together with the enclaved and the refugees, constitute a powerful semantic field for talking about the past and their current predicament. By contrast, for the Turkish Cypriots the issue of the missing is a closed chapter, an example of their oppression by the Greek Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus, a state of affairs that the Turkish "Peace Operation" ended. Thus whereas the Turkish Cypriots appear to wish the matter closed in its present manifestation, but keep the memory and memorials of their oppression alive, the Greek Cypriots wish to maintain the issue open in a present continuous tense, as an issue that is very much alive and will only be buried when the missing are finally returned and their bodies laid to rest.[3]

The two groups employ different persuasive strategies to convince listeners of their case. Turkish Cypriots appeal to "reason" or "reasonability" to convince third parties that the Greek Cypriot missing are actually dead and to be seen as war casualties, and that the Greek Cypriot leadership has concealed the truth for propaganda purposes. They quote testimonies of Greek Cypriots to show that there were far greater casualties during the coup than was admitted by the Sampson Junta-controlled government, and that the Greek Cypriots are blaming the Turks and Turkish Cypriots for Greek-Cypriot-induced crimes. By contrast, they emphasise that their missing have

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[3] For a discussion on views of history see Papadakis 1993: 139-54. For a discussion on the role of the missing as *ethnomartyres*, see Sant Cassia (forthcoming).

died as a result of a conscious policy of genocide. Greek Cypriots tend to appeal to "emotion" and "sentiments" to convince third parties, with evidence from bodies such as Amnesty International and the European Commission on Human Rights (Council of Europe), that their missing are victims of the crime of enforced disappearance by Turkey: "It is a crime which perpetuates the sufferings of the missing and their families, a crime which constitutes the most flagrant violation of the basic and fundamental human rights of both the missing persons and us, their families" (PCC: 7). Parallel persuasive strategies were employed in post dirty-war Argentina (Robben 1995).

III *Representations of suffering*

In Cyprus, as in Northern Ireland, "Victimage is the generic institution shared by all sides of the conflict as their common material denominator and as the operator of all political exchange" (Feldman 1991: 263). But victimage is evoked differently by Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This is not a case of mere inversions. An examination of how photographic representations of the issue of missing persons are used provides valuable insights into the iconography of suffering and the constitution of victimage. There have been some excellent studies of differences between Greek and Turkish Cypriot Museums (Papadakis 1994). In this section I explore a paradox in the iconographic representation of suffering. This is that whilst published Turkish Cypriot photographic material is effective locally among Turkish Cypriots but, I suggest, less effective internationally, Greek Cypriot published photographic material has the reverse effect, namely that whilst it may be less effective locally (or nationally), it is much more compelling on the international level. The differences are not because Greek Cypriots have greater access to international fora, or that Greek Cypriot claims for their missing persons are all "propaganda" as Turkish Cypriots claim. In Cyprus, narratives and images are authored, circulated and consumed with an aim to convince. That does not make them any less "true" or valid, and we have to ask why certain groups choose to represent their experiences and suffering in certain ways. I am interested here in the grammar and iconology of suffering. There are substantial differences in the articulation of photographs as representations of suffering, their

accompanying narratives, the structures of the images, and the relationship of photographs as mnemonics or representations. In this section I suggest that the Turkish Cypriots use photographs "directly" as self-evident representations of truth and of "what really happened", thereby asserting an unambiguous political resolution. By contrast, I suggest that Greek Cypriots employ images according to a particular tradition of iconography and narrative, often drawing upon traditions of laments that are literary or mythical. More importantly, they employ a triangular relationship between the person depicted in the photograph, the absent person evoked, and the viewer. Such photographs may be less powerful but they are haunting and pose a question.

Greek Cypriot photographs can be grouped into three types: (i) colour photographs of groups of (often black-clothed) women demonstrating in vigils and holding up photographs of their loved ones (sons/husbands), suggesting an unresolved political-humanitarian issue (very similar to the Argentine mothers); (ii) a famous picture taken by a Turkish war correspondent of five Greek Cypriot soldiers kneeling on the ground with their hands raised behind their heads in evident distress surrounded by armed Turkish troops (the soldiers disappeared after the photograph was taken); and (iii) photographs of single individuals, usually an old woman holding a photograph of her son, or a child holding a framed wedding photograph of his mother and father, thus appealing to the third-party viewer. Others depict groups of men in captivity in Turkey with some encircled faces of the missing.

Much Greek Cypriot symbolism surrounding the missing is a complex mixture of Christianity and Hellenism. Many claimed that the Turks, "as Muslims", may not attach that much importance to burials, "but we as Christians do". There are indeed theological differences in the treatment and significance of bodies between Christianity and Islam, although from fieldwork among Turkish Cypriot relatives I confirm that such differences had little effect in diminishing their pain. But such differences are reflected in the representation of bodies. The mothers of the missing recall the Panayia mourning her son prior to the resurrection. I have often asked myself why this particular photograph of five kneeling soldiers surrounded by

Turkish troops has been used so many times, and why it is so powerful. After reading Paine's analysis of the 1994 Hebron Massacre (Paine 1995), I began to appreciate its potency. The photograph shows individuals in an act of total physical submission both facing, and with their backs to, their captors. It is known that these men were killed soon after in Pavlides's Garage, Nicosia. With this background knowledge the photograph becomes particularly powerful. The mental linkage of physical submission → killing that the photograph evokes then subliminally slips into a prototypical act of religious submission before sacrifice, *their* sacrifice. The bodily semiotics thus evoke the association: capture → murder → sacrificial killing/massacre/desecration/sanctification. In addition there is the look. As Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote: "It is always the victim's look that suggests the violence which will be done to him or her."

Turkish Cypriot photographs usually depict: (i) the individual person who disappeared, formal photographs as found in stand-up frames in Cypriot living rooms; (ii) bodies that appear to have been photographed *in situ* after a massacre or a killing – here the detail is almost forensic; finally, (iii) there is the face of the survivor as a reflection of the terror experienced by the disappeared. The clearest example of the latter is the cover of the 1993 Turkish Cypriot book which uses a powerful photograph of a highly distraught woman with clasped hands being consoled and held by other women, with the caption: "PRIZE WINNER: A British photographer, Donald McCullin, won the overall prize in the annual World Press Photo contest in the Hague with this picture showing a Turkish-Cypriot woman after she learned the terrible news about her husband", although no date is given (CRTCMP 1993).[4] As Berger points out, McCullin's most typical photographs "record sudden moments of agony [...] that are utterly discontinuous with normal time. [...] The image seized by the camera is doubly violent and both violences reinforce the same contrast: the contrast between the photographed moment and all others" (1985: 39). This provides a handle to understanding the underlying themes of Turkish Cypriot photographic material. The framed studio portraits,

[4] The date is probably 1963 or 1964.

the bodies photographed from above focused on the carnage created by bullet-exits in domestic settings that transform homes into morgues through the polluting and desacralizing eruption of bodily matter, and the sudden terror on the face of the recipient of the news of the events, have two common interrelated features. First, they indicate a time outside time, an event discontinuous with everyday experience by its very terminality and intensity. Indeed, like rituals to which they can be approximated, they occur outside normal time. After having viewed the photographs, just as after having gone through a ritual, the viewer-participant is left with no doubt that for both the subjects and himself, life cannot, indeed should not, be the same again, and one cannot revert to one's previous mental framework. The connection with ritual, in particular the employment by subjects of photographs of their agony as redemptive rituals of suffering, is one I want to return to. In particular, I suggest that the employment of such photographs has a direction away from the event as non-repeatable, transforming it from senseless death of subject self/barbarism of the Other to an archetypal sacrifice/lesson. Berger writes:

> As we look at them, the moment of the other's suffering engulfs us. We are filled with either despair or indignation. Despair takes on some of the other's suffering to no purpose. Indignation demands action. We try to emerge from the photograph back into our lives. As we do so, the contrast is such that the resumption of our lives appears to be a hopelessly inadequate response to what we have just seen (1984: 38).

A second, related, feature is that the photographs, especially of bodies, anaesthetise the viewer. It is not persons as subjects who are photographed but wounds. Such wounds transform the body into impossible object, and thus barely recognizable subject. We cannot gaze at these pictures of excessive eruptive suffering without anaesthetising our sensibilities. As Berger notes: "The reader who has been arrested by the photograph may tend to feel this discontinuity as his own personal moral inadequacy. *And as soon as this happens even his sense of shock is dispersed:* his new moral inadequacy may now shock him as much as the crimes being committed in the war"

(ibid. 39-40, original emphasis). He concludes that such a picture becomes "evidence of the general human condition. It accuses nobody and everybody" (ibid. 40).

"Nobody and everybody" – but only to a certain extent when scanned in newspapers in the centre where, I would suggest, this means: "Not us, but them." But when such photographs are employed by subjects themselves to depict their suffering to the metropolis using the very images harvested by the international media as emblems of suffering, the situation changes. The flagging of photographic authorship by metropolitan observers is important. Foreign (war) correspondents and photographers confirm and authenticate the claims made. But they do more than this. The verificatory strength of the photograph as a conjurer of facticity authenticates the experiences of subjects as constituted by suffering. To many right-wing nationalist Turkish Cypriots such photographs as representations of suffering *qua* suffering confirm their belief that they are victims of genocide, and authenticate their claims to the wider world. Terms like holocaust, genocide and ethnic cleansing are strong words that have been loosely used, but it is precisely their lability that should interest us here. Such photographs and associated narratives by subjects as representations of their suffering become markers of irreversible time. They become a watershed of "history" as a series of events to which there must be no return, and they contain an imperative for a clear, unidirectional solution. Furthermore, the Turkish Cypriot community entered the world stage of the mass media during the inter-ethnic disturbances of 1963-4. Turkish Cypriots became an imagined community through these experiences (Anderson 1991) and they increasingly imagined their community through these photographs, which circulated in the local, but even more importantly, the international media. Following the disappearances Turkish Cypriots withdrew into armed enclaves. But as Susan Sontag wrote: "One's first encounter with the photographic inventory of ultimate horror is a kind of revelation, the prototypically modern revelation: a negative epiphany. For me, it was photographs of Bergen-Belsen..." (quoted in Berger 1984: 57). For many Turkish Cypriots, I would suggest, such a negative epiphany was through viewing

photographs of their own missing people or casualties during the 1963-4 disturbances.

Turkish Cypriot photographic material thus appears unidirectional and unambiguous, in the mould of nineteenth-century realism. As with this genre they presume an "omniscient observer detached from and external to the scenography being presented" (Feldman 1994: 90). The conclusions suggested by the photographs are likewise unambiguous: "This is what happened to us, and the only way we can never experience anything similar again is for us to live separately from the Greeks." They are directed at the Turkish Cypriots, and used to reinforce collective experiences as well as to document (and prove) their experiences for the international media. Similarly, such photographs do not depict missing people as absences. They are depicted as dead – *kayıp*. Even McCullin's famous photograph of the distraught woman, whilst triangular, is unambiguous. The subject is the woman's grief and agony, but whilst the face and the body posture refer to an event away from the photograph, we are left in no doubt that that event was not just unambiguous, but also final. It depicts a moment of intense anguish, but the event is irrecoverable.

Consider the photographs employed by Greek Cypriots, the most famous one being that of the captured missing soldiers. This is triangular in that it links the soldiers, their captors and the viewer, who is actually the Turkish army correspondent who took the photograph. It is the metaphoric space created by this triangulation that contains the question: "What has happened to these men?" Similarly the photographs of mothers holding up photographs are triangular in that they link the mothers, the photographs of their loved ones, and the absences that the photographs evoke. Such photographs are questions, not statements, and they take place in real time in contrast to the Turkish Cypriot photographs that concentrate on an unrepeatable event of horror. Greek Cypriot photographs highlight and sustain a continuing drama which the viewer may identify with more effectively than with the Turkish Cypriot photographic material. The photographs of missing persons that their womenfolk hold in their hands, modern equivalents of the *soudarion* (the cloth used by Veronica to wipe Christ's face on Calvary and which received his image), are links to the past,

and evidence of the past. They take place in real time and record, by evoking, a past that is recoverable at least symbolically through answers to the questions posed by the very act of displaying the photographs.

There is an absence of such questions in Turkish Cypriot material. Because the Turkish Cypriot leadership was particularly concerned to declare their missing as dead in the interests of (what they considered to be) compassion and political realism, and therefore concentrated on presenting the *kayıp* as (dead) *shehits* (martyrs), they by-passed tackling the existential, but necessary, aporia of recollection for the relatives. One Turkish Cypriot whose father disappeared in 1964, when he was a little boy, told me with some anguish that he knows he had a father "because he appears in an 'English book'" (probably a UN compilation) with his name and biographical details. Appearance in a foreign book, rather than a Turkish Cypriot one, documenting the disappearance of a person facticizes his existence. In short, for this Turkish Cypriot as well as for others, confirmation of a parent's existence was through the recording of his disappearance. Such disappearances are culturally interpreted by the Turkish Cypriot political leadership as a death although no evidence may be available. By contrast for the Greek Cypriots a person's existence is pursued through the act of continually asking for information about his fate. Whereas Greek Cypriots record an absence to conjure up a presence that has to be re-explained as a disappearance, Turkish Cypriots record a disappearance as a death, and hence for the relatives a proof of having lived. It is these differences that help explain that, whereas the Turkish Cypriots begin by utilizing photographs of dead people as metaphors for the disappeared, the Greek Cypriots record representations of absences as metaphors of a presence that needs to be commemorated, much like an icon.

I suggest this helps explain differences between Turkish and Greek Cypriots in their approaches to memory and its relation to experience. Underlying this are differences in the political fabulation of the past and its appeal to "memory" and "experience". The Turkish Cypriots, because of their pressing political problems, especially between 1963 and 1970 when they tended to view their survival as being at stake, use photographs

in a relatively matter-of-fact way, whereas the Greek Cypriots use them as representations of what is in effect an iconic predicament: representation as participating in some fundamental way in that which it represents. The former is what John Berger called a "unilinear way – they are used to illustrate an argument, or to demonstrate a thought which goes like this: ————→ " (1984: 60). For the Turkish Cypriots photographs have the function of ensuring that the past is not forgotten by being documented. This oscillation operates between two incontestable semaphores: "History repeats itself" (*TCNN* 5: 4), and "Never Again". Documentation through photography creates facticity. The uncertainty of disappearance easily slides into, and becomes the province of, the certainty of death. Photographs of the dead/representations of death thus colonize and imbue the representations of the missing in Turkish Cypriot material. When one looks at Turkish Cypriot photographic material there is no doubt that one is looking at photographs of people who died through disappearance, whereas for the Greek Cypriots they are photographs of people who disappeared through dying. The *Fact Note on Missing Persons in Cyprus* published by the Turkish Cypriot Human Rights Committee December 1996 shows a school photograph with the following caption:

> All these children disappeared in August 1974 and have not yet been accounted for by their known abductors. Primary school pupils at Turkish Cypriot village Murataga on opening day on 1 September 1973. The school did not re-open on 1 September 1974 because all the pupils had disappeared in August 1974 following Greek Cypriot armed attacks on the village.

Such photographs state unambiguous facts. As Berger notes, some photographs are used "tautologically so that the photograph merely repeats what is being said in words" (1984: 60). They point to an event so traumatic that it exists outside time, but nevertheless marks an ineradicable chasm between the before and the after. It legitimates the genesis of the total and complete separation of the Turkish from the Greek community through a prototypical act of destruction. Such photographs seek to illustrate collective experiences through images where

Turkish Cypriots have been encouraged by their nationalist political leadership to objectify themselves as subjects of suffering. Such images do not appeal to individual memory. Rather they illustrate a collectivised ethnic memory empty of individual experiences. This is congruent with the attempt by the Turkish Cypriot leadership to manufacture a collective past and to provide it with a series of representations.

By contrast the Greek Cypriot approach is Platonic-recollective. It evokes an absence and potentially anticipates a resurrection. This may well have roots in the Christian tradition, including its iconography. Many photographs, like icons, employ a double image – an image within an image. The most famous photographs of the mothers depict them holding up images/photographs of their loved ones. These photographs suggest a double suffering: of the missing person, but even more importantly of the relatives. The spectator identifies not so much with the objects, the missing persons, but with the subjects, the mothers. Here it is useful to distinguish between the internal and the external signified. The internal signified is the suffering of women. It is not a heroic but a quotidian suffering faced by civilians the world over as a result of war or oppression. The external signified is therefore that of continued oppression through the denial of information on the fate of the missing. It is thus a continuing story. The dominant tense is the continually extending present, the *passato continuo* rather than the *passato remoto*, the tense employed by the Turkish Cypriot photographs. In the western iconographic tradition the theology of women's faces has long been used to signify ecstasy or suffering (Feher and others 1989). Yet the hand-held photographs, like the crucifix, commemorate an absence, a body that is not there. It is through the identification of their fate that the living achieve their soteriology, and the missing their resurrection – their *anastasi* to be buried properly according to Christian rites. Through the equivalent of such second burials (Bloch and Parry 1982) they are loosened from the earth and this world, and united with both their loved ones and God. They are *martyres*. Whereas the Turkish Cypriot photographs commemorate a black epiphany and move unidirectionally, Greek Cypriot ones anticipate a soteriology through resurrection-reunion, and they move backwards and forwards from the image to real-time

experiences and back again. Such photographs are effective because they evoke individual memories and emplot them along various lines of recollection. Some further observations of Berger are useful: "Memory is not unilinear at all. Memory works radially, that is to say with an enormous number of associations all leading to the same event" (1984: 60). He uses a star image with lines radiating from a single (empty) point as illustration. Berger suggests that, "If we want to put a photograph back into the context of experience, social experience, social memory, we have to respect the laws of memory. We have to situate the printed photograph so that it acquires something of the surprising conclusiveness of that which *was* and *is*" (ibid. 61, original emphasis).

I suggest that Greek Cypriot photographs are visually compelling because they are able to move from the *was* to the *is*, and back again. This may be more effective internationally than Turkish Cypriot material employed to sustain the TRNC's (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) line that Greek and Turkish Cypriots cannot live together. Such campaigns may have a decreasing purchasing power in an increasingly integrated Western Europe the further back in time such images recede, but they are effective among Turkish Cypriots.

IV *Staging, simulation and transgression*

I will now examine the employment, management and choreographing of images across the Green Line which divides the South, or the Republic of Cyprus, from the Turkish-occupied North and the TRNC, which is recognized only by Turkey. The term Green Line is used by United Nations personnel; the Greek Cypriots officially call it the Buffer Zone. It is also informally called the "Νεκρή Ζώνη" (Dead Zone). The Green Line is an important topos to examine as this is where the ethnic self confronts the other. To the Turkish Cypriots it is the borders of their state. The Green Line is the interface between conflicting interpretations of truth and falsity, and of the real and the symbolic. It is also the site where Greek and Turkish Cypriots put on poster displays, each highlighting the monstrosity of the other. Viewed from the Greek Cypriot side, on the other side of the Green Line everything is literally *entre parenthèses*. All references to the TRNC in the Greek Cypriot media are prefaced

with the term "ψευδο-κράτος" (false but also lying State, and the State as the product of lies), or "the so-called". Here nothing is true except lies (ψέματα). The Green Line is an interface of ritual transgressions, e.g. of women crossing the line to return to their homes, or of motorcyclists attempting to cross "the last boundary in Europe". Such transgressions become further ritualised through their calendrical "inevitability". They occur at "black anniversaries" of the coup and the invasion. The Green Line becomes a mirror for those on the Greek side, and a distorting window through which everything seen on the other side is inverted. Through this looking-glass border, mimesis and exchange conspire to create and service images of the self through the other. In summer 1995 works on the Turkish side of the Green line in Nicosia were interpreted as threatening "tank roads" by the Greek Cypriots and explained by the Turkish Cypriots as a "children's playground". Children, icons of transparency, become symptoms of guile. As the *"Nekri Zoni"* (dead zone) it is a place *of* death, a place where transgressions are staged and managed for the purposes of representation. Here, order, lawlessness and violence are choreographed by both sides to be represented in photographs, posters and the media.

A particular set of images and narratives were employed in Cyprus during the demonstrations and attempted crossings of the Green Line by dismounted motorcyclists on 10 and 14 August 1996, the anniversary of the second round of the 1974 Turkish invasion. There is contestation over the numbers involved and the intentions of the participants. To the Greek Cypriots the events were peaceful demonstrations against the Turkish occupation. Turkish Cypriots claim that "thousands of Greeks and Greek Cypriots armed with iron bars, knives, sticks and stones supported by the Greek soldiers ready for action in their dug outs attacked the Turkish Cypriot border".[5] To the Turkish Cypriots they were illegal transgressions into their sovereign territory. Although the ride to the borders was cancelled by the Greek Cypriot organizing group, "scuffles broke out when Greek Cypriot protesters were confronted with members of the Turkish terrorist

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[5] *TCNN* 10: 1. The Grey Wolves have strong informal connections with right-wing politicians and the military. They are based in Turkey but maintain cells in Cyprus.

group 'the Grey Wolves' in the buffer zone who were waving large wooden sticks and iron rods against them. [... The] 'Grey Wolves' were brought to the island a few days before the rally."[6] During the events two Greek Cypriots were killed: Tasos Isaak, a refugee, beaten to death in the buffer zone on 10 August; the second, his cousin Solomos Solomou, on 14 August, when he casually shinned up a flagpole, cigarette in mouth, attempting to pull down the Turkish flag, and was shot some four times.[7] Let us begin with the representation of the first killing. Tasos Isaak was caught attempting to cross the Green Line by the Turkish Cypriot police and non-uniformed men (the majority). Turkish Cypriots consider that beyond the Green Line lies their state, the TRNC. They thus consider the Green Line or the Buffer Zone as the outer perimeter of their borders.[8] Whilst entangled and caught in barbed wire Isaak was repeatedly beaten with sticks and killed in the space of fifteen seconds. The attack was brutal, disproportionate to the alleged offence, and attracted deserved international condemnation.[9]

The events were caught by the media and the film was repeatedly shown on Cypriot TV in slow motion. Two particular sets of images were critical. The first set is the juxtaposition of a mass of persons with raised clubs surrounding Isaak's body with another image of UN personnel reaching the body after the crowd had dispersed. The first shows intense fury through the raised, tense arms of the closely packed bodies surrounding Isaak; the second disintegration, panic, impotence through the extended arms of UN personnel reflecting the contagious pollution attendant upon reaching a body whose status as alive

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[6] *Cyprus Bulletin* (PIO Office, Nicosia), Vol. 34, No. 17 (19 August 1996), 2-3.

[7] According to Greek Cypriots the perpetrator was a mainland Turkish national long settled in Cyprus and a Minister in the TRNC cabinet. It occurred close to a Turkish Cypriot observation post.

[8] I am using terms such as borders, the TRNC, the Republic of Cyprus, without any parenthesis. I am interested here in demystifying these terms, which can be better pursued through the lack of such qualifications. It does not constitute either recognition or denial of the claims of the TRNC, and I hope this paper will contribute towards the demystification of the pernicious rationalisation of violence.

[9] It was condemned by the European Parliament on 19 September 1996.

or dead is not known. The first image is that of *discharge*: the transmutation of individual fear into a single collective, transformative but polluting, violent act. Here some thoughts of Elias Canetti on crowds are useful: "The most important occurrence within the crowd is the discharge. Before this the crowd does not actually exist; it is the discharge which creates it. This is the moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal" (1973: 18). Such a crowd can be seen as a baiting crowd which

> forms with reference to a quickly attainable goal. The goal is known and clearly marked, and is also near. The crowd is out for killing and it knows whom it wants to kill. It heads for this goal with unique determination and cannot be cheated of it. The proclaiming of the goal, the spreading about of who it is that is to perish, is enough to make the crowd form. This concentration on killing is of a special kind and of an unsurpassed intensity. Everyone wants to participate. [...] There is no risk because the crowd have immense superiority on their side. The victim can do nothing to them [...] he has been made over to them for destruction; he is destined for it and thus no one need fear the sanction attached to the killing. [...] There is another factor which must be remembered. The threat of death hangs over all men and, however disguised it may be, [...] it affects them all the time and creates a need to deflect death on to others. The formation of baiting crowds answers this need (Canetti 1973: 55-6).

Images of threats precipitate fear and hence violence. I hope to show that the stimulus to violence was far from "defensive"; rather it was "demiurgic" (in the classical Greek sense of forcing through a new state of affairs) and had useful political effects whatever the intentions of the politicians. Perceptions of threats were anchored in the images of a community of suffering that have permeated the officially sponsored Turkish Cypriot historical imagination. By contrast the Greek Cypriot crowd can be seen as what Canetti has called a "reversal crowd" – an attempt to reverse a painful sting, often tied to promises of liberation, and operative in messages of redemption.[10]

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[10] The distinctions are not absolute. There were also elements of a baiting crowd in the Greek Cypriot crowd; the two are often found together but the relative determination and weighting of elements vary.

The second set of images concentrate on the camera as the substitute for, and stimulus to, the violent act. The Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash (known to be a keen photographer) was also shown photographing events from a vantage point.[11] The juxtaposition of the repeated raising of sticks on the sequestered body, like the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles, and the seemingly inscrutable image of Denktash behind a camera had the effect not only of suggesting that he was impassive to the events taking place, but also of transforming its agency. It appeared that the beatings and the show of force were being staged for him to photograph and record. As Denktash's hobby is photography this was further evidence to Greek Cypriots of his "monstrousness". The structuration was triangular, linking the beatings, the "photographer-orchestrator", and the viewer. To the Greek Cypriots, this was not just a murder, it was a staged murder, and it was staged to further fabricate the "falsity" of the Turkish Cypriot state. As Feldman has observed for a different context (that of interrogation and torture), to which the present one bears some similarity, especially in its approximation to sacrifice, "the entire action oscillates at the boundaries of spontaneous violence and fabricated performance" (1991: 121). To the Greek Cypriots the transgression was (unfortunate) spontaneous violence and the killing fabricated performance. To the Turkish Cypriots by contrast the transgression was fabricated performance, and the killing an unfortunate example of spontaneous violence.

The killing of Isaak (and Solomou) can be seen as legitimation rituals of the state. By this I mean two things. First, this was a tragedy closer to what Girard has called "a balancing of the scale, not of justice but of violence" (1988: 45). Secondly, I want to suggest that the events involving crowds, politicians, the military, the media, ideologies, violence, and narratives were too complex, multilayered and seemingly uncontrollable to be approached except by reference to some "abstract" overarching entity such as the state. The *direction* of the symbolism (sovereignty, borders, transgressions, legitimacy,

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[11] "The Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr Denktash himself was present at the developments watching and photographing the last few moments of the first victim's life" (PIO leaflet 139/1996).

morality) both in the Republic of Cyprus and its other, the TRNC, points to the state. Through the sacrifices of Isaak and Solomou, political authority constituted itself as legitimate through its generation of a supremely "illegitimate/immoral" act. Through (i) the offering of the live body of Isaak as free agent across the Green Line, (ii) the rejection of transgression by surrogate agents of the state, or the collective beating of his body as polluting, threatening other by the state's exact monstrous double, its other of illegality, and (iii) the carrying back of his broken body as sacrificial matter, the state cunningly staked out its claim to embody authority through its manichean splitting into representations of the "good/legitimate" and the "bad/illegitimate" state. The state thus scripted itself as the only conceivable form of legitimate power. Yet this was a simulated power that manifested itself through the production of simulations. As Nietzsche observed: "Truth cannot be regarded as the highest power. The will to semblance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming, to change (to objective deception) is to be regarded here as deeper, more original, more metaphysical than the will to truth, to reality, to being – the latter is itself merely a form of the will to illusion" (quoted in Baudrillard 1996: 9).

For the Turkish Cypriots the Green Line is the border of their state, the TRNC. In the vocabulary of justification provided by the discourses of the state it therefore had to be "protected" from transgressions, physical, symbolic and somatic. The Greek Cypriots interpreted that same violence as the *lack of order,* even anti-order, and hence delegitimized the TRNC whilst legitimating the Republic. For the Turkish Cypriot political leadership, transgression *qua* transgression generated both value of the state (and of the order that the state as the TRNC claimed to protect in its territorial jurisdictions), and the state of values (peace, and freedom from attacks from Greek Cypriots) through which the state as TRNC legitimated its existence. As Girard has observed, "The more a tragic conflict is prolonged, the more likely it is to culminate in a violent mimesis; the resemblance between the combatants grows ever stronger until each represents a mirror image of the other" (1988: 47).

The killing of Isaak, "accidental" as it may appear, had therefore a greater, and concealed, significance. It was the

supreme act of a mutual conniving at staging an act as an accident, a dissimulation, where two parties perceive the results as unintentional and even tragic, yet nevertheless can derive "benefits" from the results by reciprocally accusing the other of conscious agency. Each side created an other, a spectral image, yet each other, in striving to escape from and deny that definition, further reinforced that spectral image. Mimesis flowed from attempted escapes from spectral alterity. Each side believed that the events occurred through the other's will, and thereby confirmed the reality of the spectral other. Each side projected the other as the author of events, whilst they themselves were merely "responding" to those events. Agency was dissimulated through response. Yet as Nietzsche observed, agency is not the author but the product of doing (Feldman 1991: 3).

We can now see the killings of Isaak and Solomou as a double sacrifice. From the perspective of the Greek Cypriots it was an unambiguous sacrifice of two young men and the "animality" of the Turkish Cypriot forces of law and order that were indicted. Isaak and Solomou were buried with state honours as *iroomartyres* – hero martyrs. The conjoining of the two terms was new to Greek Cypriot political vocabulary, although martyrs may act heroically in accepting the tortures inflicted upon them, and Christianity has a long tradition, since early times, of grafting itself onto the classical tradition to synthesize its own iconography (Perkins 1995). Early Christianity appealed to Stoicism, but not to the almost thoughtless hubris of the Homeric hero. It is worthwhile recalling Vernant's observations on the Homeric hero, as they disclose aspects of character that must have been far from the intentions of the state eulogists and politicians, yet nevertheless come closer to reflecting the features of the young men who crossed the Green Line. As Vernant points out the Homeric hero, such as Achilles, has a "edgy irritability and a profound obsession with humiliation" (1991: 53). He is a marginal figure and can think of "nothing but rivalry, dispute and combat" (ibid. 52). He lacks *aidos*, the feeling of reserve or restraint felt by others who are wiser, and "as a heroic character, Achilles exists to himself only in the mirror of the song that reflects his own image" (ibid. 59). The demonstration was organized by motorcyclists who have a

reputation not very dissimilar to the Homeric heroes. Like Achilles, their love for a καλός θάνατος is even reflected in their ironic epithet as *kamikazes*. Most people in Cyprus give them a wide berth. Those who died were much closer to Homeric heroes than to Christian martyrs, but in the nationalist language of the state, it was through their death that they became martyrs and αθάνατοι (immortal). Killing created a victim; victimage created martyrdom. Yet the media cascade of images of the crowd as hunting pack and Denktash as photographer-orchestrator made it appear to Greek Cypriots as a staged killing and thus pre-figured Isaak as a *selected* (not *ex post facto*) sacrificial victim. It shored up and reinforced the lines of separation between the two communities, and was thus a rite of separation through a single cataclysmic aggregation.

For the Turkish Cypriots the meanings were different. The incident appeared as an attack by the most unruly elements of Greek Cypriot society dedicated to their destruction. Transgression was perceived as a polluting presence, and as directed against the Turkish flag. Defilement of and by the body becomes the language of transgression and response. Tansu Ciller, the Turkish Prime Minister, threatened to cut off the hand of anyone who desecrated the Turkish flag. As Loizos (1988) has pointed out, defilement of the ethnic other through the selective debasement of valued symbols and the body (such as exposing genitals) is common practice. The seeming casualness with which Solomou shinned up the flagpole, cigarette in mouth, travestied the Turkish flag even more than the actual attempt to pull it down. Yet whilst the Turkish Cypriot leadership was keen to demonstrate that the TRNC was a state and had all the paraphernalia of a state (borders), it was the *Turkish*, not the Turkish Cypriot (TRNC), flag that Solomou attempted to pull down. To Greek Cypriots that very nonchalance turned him into a hero, a modern *kamikaze*. But by shooting a man with a cigarette in his mouth, hardly a physically hostile stance, the Turkish authorities turned Solomou into a victim, and thus encouraged a slippage into the interpretation of the event as murder – a position adopted by the Greek Cypriot authorities.

It is precisely this slippage that turned the event into what Girard called a sacrificial crisis. During it, "the difference between blood spilt for ritual and for criminal purposes no longer

holds" (1988: 43). He notes: "the difference between sacrificial and nonsacrificial violence is anything but exact; it is even arbitrary" (ibid. 40). "The sacrificial crises, that is, the disappearance of the sacrificial rites, coincides with the disappearance of the difference between impure violence and purifying violence. When this difference has been effaced, purification is no longer possible and impure, contagious, reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community" (ibid. 49). This was not possible. Nevertheless confrontation was heightened and the groups retained their distinctiveness, a reversal of Turner's *communitas.*

Official Turkish Cypriot material presented the events as an "attack on our borders", asserting that such individuals were "hooligans", and that the transgressions were the initial steps towards hoisting the Greek flag in northern Cyprus (*TCNN* 7). The latter was clearly unrealisable given the heavy presence of Turkish troops. The following is a Turkish Cypriot gloss on the second killing:

> Among them Solomos Solomou was determined to bring the Turkish flag down and hoist the Greek flag in it's (sic) place. He was going to be a "hero" [...]. Encouraged by these terrorist leaders, Solomos made that fateful dash to the Turkish Cypriot border. He was so determined, the UN soldiers were unable to stop him. He started to climb the flag pole, despite the warning shots fired in the air he carried on climbing. He would not be allowed to bring a nations (sic) flag down, would not be allowed to bring down the symbol of our sovereignty. To some people, their flag might be a piece of cloth but for us, our flag is the symbol of our freedom, symbol of our sovereignty, and symbol of our future in Cyprus. *We the Turkish Cypriots paid dearly for that sovereignty and for that future. More than 1000 missing people, hundreds of destroyed villages, thousands of dead women, men, children and our mass graves are there to remind us that we paid dearly for our future in Cyprus.* [...] We will not give up our sovereignty or our future in Cyprus. This was the situation in August 1996 in Cyprus. Let us turn back the clock to the situation in October 1931 during British rule in Cyprus...[12]

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[12] *TCNN* 10: 1 (December 1996). The emphasis is in the original.

The key themes are linkage with the past, the emphasis on sacrifices to achieve a sovereignty which alone can prevent a slippage to the hell of that past, and that history "repeats itself", especially in the unchanging motives of the opposing group. There is little doubt that sovereignty is fetishised especially when it is equated with a flag. Indeed it may be claimed that the greater the practical, political, isolation of the TRNC and its lack of international recognition, the greater the emphasis on the symbols, rather than on the substance of sovereignty. It is my contention that many of the actions of the TRNC are likely to remain highly objectionable and symbolically overdetermined, precisely because there are few other modes of behaviour available.[13]

The events of August 1996 could not have been other than highly "symbolic". It was thus almost "necessary" for the TRNC to demonstrate to the Greek Cypriots, and to the wider world, that it was a genuine state, not just a ψευδο-κράτος. It was not the transgressions as such that led to the killings. It was the killings that made (demiurged) the transgressions. It was, in short, violence as a mutually reinforcing system of signs that conjured up the TRNC. Violence (the manufacture of a victim) became a sign of transgression-response generating its own discourse. It was through the sign of violence that statehood conjured itself. Rather than seeing the causation as:

Transgression → Violence → Sovereignty

we should see it as:

Victim Selection through Violence = Transgression → Sovereignty

Thus the classic Radcliffe-Brownian and Weberian definition of the state as the upholder of the social order through its monopoly of violence should be reversed. Rather, the power system that claimed statehood conjured itself as the upholder of

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[13] In June 1998 the TRNC increased its telephone rates across the Green Line to the Republic to overseas tariffs because, it claimed, these are international calls.

violence orchestrating social disorder to claim its monopoly of the social order. The official unilineal explanation:

Signifier = Transgression/ Signified = Sovereignty

should be changed to a more mutually constitutive one:

Signifier → Sovereignty ↔ Signified = Transgression.

Violence, realised through popular action and the crowd, many of whom were the Grey Wolves from Turkey, was the most unambiguous sign needed to shore up the simulacrum of the state with sovereignty as its signifier. The state was conjured not so much through imposing order, but rather through a killing that scripted a transgression, signifying a sovereignty to be "protected" against those very transgressions.

Some ironies further suggest fabrication and we can now appreciate how the gaze is directed and structured in this divided island. Although the Turkish Cypriot political leadership claims that the demonstrations took place at the borders of the TRNC, their delineation is extremely vague for two reasons. First, they are not recognized by the Greek Cypriots, the most important party, and secondly, they are also vague in their geographical delineation. Certain areas are subject to competing claims; others appear to be not subject to any active claim. Some others are used by farmers, and shepherds and tourists regularly inadvertently wander across the border/buffer zone to the other side. They are questioned and then released.[14] The border, in short, is more a mental social construct realised through doing and simulation, and a function of relations between the two communities, than a strictly defined geographic one. The paradox is that not only is the general strip across the island that constitutes the Green Line highly mapped out and dangerous (because of mines and armed soldiers), it is also subject to intense scrutiny by the military gazing through high

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[14] Such wanderings and police investigation with no untoward consequences paradoxically do more to retain practical legitimation of the TRNC's claim to territorial sovereignty than the Dherynia killings. Power is *routinised* and hence *de facto* accepted through not being contested.

magnitude devices, a veritable panopticon where the "jailors" scrutinise each other. The Green Line is structured in terms of what can and what should not be seen, and by "seen" one means photographed. Indeed all the Green Line is intended to be seen, *and seen as not intended to be seen.* Along it at specific points are signs forbidding photography. As this is one of the most highly photographed, surveilled, and militarised borders in the world with specially constructed photographic vantage-points, photographic displays and poster campaigns, it would be bizarre to accept this as simply a case of some areas being viewable and others concealed from view for "practical", "military" purposes. Given the intense, twenty-four hour surveillance, secrecy is unlikely to be sustainable for long. Rather, some sites are constructed as the touristic equivalent of "back regions" to be apparently hidden from view, and others as "front regions" (MacCannell 1992). Except that some sites are fabricated to be demanding a concealment from the seemingly aggressive intrusiveness of photography. Such signs create a site, marking it out as significant territory to be "defended", even if they may contain no military secrets, but attracting military attention towards them away from other (perhaps more unheralded military) areas.

The slippage between shooting a gun and shooting a photograph is particularly apt, but also highly problematic. The sites from where photographs are shot, i.e. invited, such as the end of Heroes Street, appear almost irenic. Sites which order a looking by forbidding photographs, and therefore a non-looking in the language of the appropriating eye, appear to be bristling with hidden aggression. The camera replaces the exposed gun as the intrusive device that must not be bared and displayed. It becomes a surrogate, and a metonym through prohibition, of the gun. Dissimulation takes over.

From the Greek Cypriot side, photography is carefully harnessed to the creation of sites, again from a triangular perspective. There are sites to be photographed *against*, thus linking the photograph viewer, subject-person, and location in a discursive triangle. The conscious parallelism of Heroes Street is with the Berlin Wall, and the viewer is left with little doubt that he is gazing from "West Berlin" onto East Germany/ Turkey/the Soviet Union. The smart Eastern Europeans now

milling in Nicosia further reinforce the impression of a time-lag, where local divisions belatedly emulate global ones, except that the other side is even more brutal. The underlying narrative to the historically ironic eye is that this is the tail end of a war that froze, to be resolved by diplomacy ("Bigger Powers"), or through the collapse of "the other side"/East Germany/ Communism. Significantly, there are no equivalent sites on the Turkish Cypriot side to gaze from. The gaze there is directed to the *past*, such as the Museum of Barbarism, but it is not geographic.

The creation of significance is thus pursued through the alliance of prohibition of the directed gaze with a topography staked out through the apparent unambiguity of the flag. Flags along the Green Line are not so much nationalist markers of identity, important though this indubitably is. Rather, they become the focus of the photographic gaze, struggling to mark out borders of territories in a highly contentious situation, where even the participants are uncertain about the exact contours of such borders or boundaries, or how they should respond to transgressions. Flags as photographed sites become metonyms for territory, and thus loci for deadly rituals. The demonstrations took place adjacent to the TRNC's claimed border. Because it has been refused negotiation or recognition by the most significant party, the Republic of Cyprus, this border is bound to be vague in practice. To escape from that vagueness which is inimical to statehood, territory and sovereignty have to be (i) created through actions like killings that invest space with the association sacrifice-transgression and re-choreograph the alignment of forces facing each other, and/or (ii) semantically shifted to other markers such as the flag as metonym of territorial jurisdiction. This is much more specific. Yet the flag was not the TRNC flag but the *Turkish* flag. That indeed was the aim of the demonstrators. Both sides correctly read each other's intentions yet dissimulated their *ex post ante* actions. An offence against the Turkish flag became an attack on the sovereignty of the TRNC, which claims recognition as a separate sovereign state. Finally, if the transgressions took place, this still involved the taking of two lives. Yet there were no judicial investigations or legal procedures followed by the organs of the TRNC after the deaths, such as an inquest. It is worthwhile

noting that the police of the TRNC operates under the control of, and is subject to, the Turkish military, and Turkey is the only country that recognizes the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the TRNC.

The loss of two lives can therefore be seen as a sacrifice upholding the ideology of a unitary nation-state as the only conceivable, practicable and realizable form of political organization in Cyprus. Statehood *qua* nation-statehood was legitimated through its refraction into a manichean alterity/splitting. In Cyprus the state emerged as the demiurge of order through disorder. Violence was therefore not an accidental by-product of the state in establishing its goal of civil order. Rather, violence was the supremely constitutive act through which the state legitimated itself as the only imaginable political reality. The state constituted itself through nationalism, and nationalism imagined and fantasised itself through the state.

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