

The Jasmine Scent of Nicosia: Of Returns, Revolutions, and the Longing for Forbidden Pasts

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Abstract

In the past decade in Cyprus, the jasmine flower has become the symbol of Nicosia, the island's divided capital, and subsequently of a revolution within the Turkish-Cypriot community. As symbol of Nicosia, the jasmine flower evoked a purer time when the city had not yet been "tainted" by an influx of poor workers from Turkey into areas of the walled city that had been abandoned by Turkish-Cypriots. As such, the flower also came to stand for Turkey's purported colonization of the island and Turkish-Cypriots' rebellion against it. And because the jasmine came to represent a city that had once been multicultural and a call for a re-valuing of the local, it was easy enough for the Jasmine Revolution to be translated into a semblance of bicomunalism. But as we show here, rather than a multicultural nostalgia, the nostalgia expressed by the symbol of the jasmine is for a period when Turkish-Cypriots lived in enclaves, a period of deprivation but also of solidarity.

Who can forget the scent of jasmine? Modest, limpid, deliciously fragrant jasmine flowers. . . . There were always jasmine flowers even in the butcher's shop, and on my red bicycle. They're the truest witness to our pain. Jasmine is the true peace flower which didn't wilt even in the heat of war, the friend who is always present at our bedside even in the worst of days.¹

Jasmine seems to be a flower made for nostalgia. It grows in doorways and winds over arches, linking it to the intimacy of home. It begins to bloom as the days become hotter, and it releases its scent at the hour when tables are set in the garden or in narrow lanes. It is associated with the melancholy of dusk and the conviviality of summer evenings. Its fragrance permeates the air, making it both a background for and

participant in scenes of love and liberation, of youth and its loss. And its scent lingers, clinging to hands and clothes and giving it the tone of longing.

Over the past decade in Cyprus, this flower of nostalgia has been associated first with a city, then with a common past, and finally with a moment of historical change that sparked a revolution. For Greek-Cypriots, the folk song, *To Γιασεμί Μου*, (*My Jasmine*) with its theme of intercommunal love, gained popularity as part of the rising importance of local identities that coincided with a movement for reunification of the island. Both the song and the flower became associated with a longing for a simpler village life that presumably was bicomunal. But the flower became especially important to a new Turkish-Cypriot opposition movement that promoted the possibilities for a common future and named its rebellion the *Yasemin Devrimi*, the Jasmine Revolution.

Jasmine and its scent have played an important role in the culture and contradictions of a movement for social change. Its white, untainted petals, and the association of the scent with a city and with youth, made the flower a potent symbol for a generation of journalists, poets, and left-wing and liberal politicians as they gathered the momentum to rebel against a present that they saw as aged and corrupt. The flower and its scent appeared to represent a new valuing of the local and its multicultural pasts in the context of globalized economies and a transnational European community where the provincial nationalisms to which Cypriot political leaders clung no longer seemed salient. The nostalgic associations evoked by the flower also contradicted its multicultural tint, since the flower is linked in stories, poetry, and common conversation to a particular period of the Turkish-Cypriot past that excluded their Greek neighbors.

The Jasmine Revolution, then, used nostalgia as a form of cultural politics and cultural resistance. When İl Adalı, daughter of murdered journalist Kutlu Adalı, wrote “Give me back my jasmine flowers,” her cryptic demand viscerally evoked not only the loss of hope and a purer past, but also a sense that these had been absconded.² “I want my jasmine flowers back,” she wrote.

In the name of my father, in the name of my mother, in the name of my friends, in the name of all the islanders. The wonderful days that were lived must not remain in memory; we must speak of the future by stubbornly living and creating and multiplying in the narrow streets of Nicosia. We must walk again in the cool scent of the bazaar that smells of freshness. We must shop again in our grandfathers’ butcher shops. We must buy cloth from Arasta and take it to the local tailor, and we must drink a coffee. We must listen, laughingly, to the future read in our coffee cups. In this tiny

island laughter suits us. We must not have nostalgia for wars, instead we must eliminate them and greet the future with jasmine flowers. Give us back our jasmine flowers. This game does not at all resemble the games of my childhood. I'm sick of playing hide-and-seek.³

For any Turkish-Cypriot reader of this piece, it is clear that the demand for return of "our jasmine flowers" is a call for resistance to a perceived colonization of northern Cyprus by Turkey, which many saw as having destroyed the Cypriot character of the island. This was especially apparent in Nicosia, the site of Adalı's nostalgia, because of an influx of poor workers from Turkey to the areas of old Nicosia that had been abandoned by Turkish-Cypriots in the 1980s. The importance of Nicosia in the Turkish-Cypriot communal past, and the radical change in its human landscape, gave rise to new forms of cultural identity first expressed as nostalgia for a purer past. The Jasmine Revolution that arose from this new movement expressed resistance to the corruptions of a nationalist politics that had linked a Turkish-Cypriot future closely to the economic and political fate of "motherland" Turkey.

The Jasmine Revolution opposed traditional nationalist leaders in its call to negotiate reunification with their Greek partners on the basis of a proposed United Nations plan (popularly known as the Annan Plan) and thereby to ensure Turkish-Cypriots' entry into the European Union. Within this framework, jasmine came to represent a city that before its division had been multicultural, as well as a call for a re-valuing of local identities in the face of the divisive nationalisms of the "motherlands." It was, then, easy enough for the Jasmine Revolution to be translated into a semblance of bicomunalism. But the demand for reunification of the island, to which the symbolism of the jasmine came to be linked, actually contradicted the forms of embodied memory evoked by the flower. For even in İl Adalı's demand to be given back her jasmine, it is clear that what she actually wants to regain is a form of communal past specific to the Turkish-Cypriot community. The call to create and multiply is one directed at Turkish-Cypriots, as are the sites of memory that she evokes. Rather than a multicultural nostalgia, this is instead a nostalgia for a period when Turkish-Cypriots lived in enclaves, a period of deprivation but also of solidarity. And because it was that specific past that gave the flower its evocative power as a unifying symbol, subsequent events have shown that even the jasmine may have its thorns.

Neoliberal nostalgia

Both nostalgia and revolution are forms of return, ways of interpreting the political present as a decline or loss. The term *nostalgia* is a neologism

of the late eighteenth century, used to refer to the *algos*, or longing, for *nostos*, or return, specifically to the homeland (Boyer 2006; cf. Seremetakis 1996). Revolution, similarly, “means both cyclical repetition and the radical break” (Boym 2001:19; also Arendt 1963). Even the ruptures of revolution call for a “return” to a purported truth, whether a more just world or the “truth” of our political being. Moreover, both the “illness” of nostalgia and the promise of revolution came into being as we know them today with the rise of the nation-state, which led to a change in the meaning of history itself (Koselleck 1985; Latour 1993). Ironically, the understanding of history as time that arose in the late eighteenth century made history unique and unrepeatable, giving to revolution an orientation to the future and making nostalgia its only possible return to the past. And if there is always an element of self-deception in nostalgia, it also creates a simulacrum of return that itself becomes a force in the revolutionary reorientation of the present.

For more than a decade, the eastern Mediterranean has been affected by a wave of multicultural nostalgia, a longing for times perceived as more cosmopolitan and peaceful (Abou Ghaida and al Zougbi 2005; Della Dora 2006). Remembering the Alexandrias or Jaffas or Smyrnas (Izmirs) of the early twentieth century also allows one to wag a finger at the intolerance of nationalism, which cleansed those places of their minorities. In Turkey, one form that this has taken is that of a neo-Ottoman revival (Bora 1999; Çınar 2001), including a new style that might be described as retro-Oriental: the revival of the narghile in funky cafes with cushions on the floor, belly-dance classes for middle-class professionals (Potuoğlu-Cook 2006), and international fashion designers who revive Ottoman styles. Another form it has taken is a longing for a Levantine cosmopolitanism, one that included Christians, Jews, and various Europeans and so seems appropriate for a globalized age (Komins 2002; Robins and Aksoy 1995). The latter trend includes the revival of the music, food, and writings of the Ottoman religious minorities.

These various forms of neo-Ottomanism meet at the point where they express a form of cultural self-confidence, a supposed comfort with a past that was already global, and one in which the empire was not Europe’s petitioner but its equal. At the same time, they express a Muslim cultural hegemony that emphasizes the multiculturalism of the empire when religious minorities lived under Muslim rule. Conveniently, the same minorities whose cultures are now celebrated today number only in the thousands and thus present no internal threat. At the same time, this multiculturalism for the most part excludes ethnic minorities such as Kurds, Arabs, and Africans, who are assimilated as part of the Ottoman past’s Muslim majority. Ironically, then, this form of nostalgia has

been used both by those who long for a more “European,” multicultural Turkey less affected by the homogenization of Kemalist nationalism, and by Kemalists themselves, the individualization of whose memories makes space both for a more heterogeneous past as well as for a “nostalgia for the modern” (Özyürek 2005).

In Cyprus, too, a wave of nostalgia was churned up by neoliberal reforms that increased inequalities and appeared to destroy the communalist dreams of early nationalisms. For Turkish-Cypriots, post-World War II nationalism had taken the form of a resistance movement, the *Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı* (Turkish Defense Organization), or TMT, which demanded division of the island in response to Greek-Cypriot calls to unite the island with Greece.⁴ By the time of the island’s independence in 1960, the TMT was already well-organized throughout the island, if less well-armed than Greek-Cypriot paramilitary forces also in operation there. Fighting broke out during the last few days of 1963 and in the first few months of 1964 in response to struggles over power-sharing arrangements in the new constitution.

Most independent reports and first-person accounts suggest that this fighting primarily took the form of Greek paramilitary attacks on Turkish-Cypriots, some of whom were targeted for their involvement with TMT.⁵ Certainly, as a minority, Turkish-Cypriots felt threatened, and many fled their homes and retreated into enclaves. These were usually Turkish-Cypriot villages to which Turkish-Cypriots from neighboring mixed villages retreated, and some were Turkish-Cypriot neighborhoods that could be easily guarded. But the largest enclaved space in the island was in the capital of Nicosia, whose division had already in some fashion been cemented since 1956.⁶ By early 1964, the Turkish-Cypriot areas of Nicosia were soon crowded with newcomers, many of whom had been displaced from surrounding villages or who had relatives in the capital.

This is a period of Turkish-Cypriot history that remains obscure and largely unwritten. It is certainly clear that conditions in the enclaves varied, depending on their location. Turks from Lapithos (a town in the Kyrenia district in the north), interviewed by Bryant, emphasized repeatedly their dependence on Turkey for foodstuffs and salaries. It was clear, for instance, that those who lived in the Boğaz camp between Nicosia and Kyrenia had worse conditions than those who managed to find space in the cities. But in all cases discussions of the decade between 1964 and 1974 would slip into wistfulness; even though conditions were hard, they were hard for everyone, people would say; there was equality, and everyone worked together.

In Nicosia there was even more than that. The decade of their enclavement gave Turkish-Cypriots their first professional theater, their

first radio station, and their first pop music groups. Girls wore mini-skirts, and boys grew their hair long in keeping with the fashions of metropolitan centers. Rock bands with names like “The Squares” played Beatles songs, then disbanded as members took up their rifles for guard duty. It was the Turkish-Cypriots’ first experience of having their own space, and it was a space that most believed would eventually become their own country, with Turkey’s intervention and support. It was a time of hardship and hope, when everyone had the same duties and everyone pulled together. Although it was a period of abjection, it was also a period when Turkish-Cypriots refused to accept their abjection, instead recreating the very social order that had cast them off.⁷ And the enclave was also a space that they vigorously protected, so that even during the easing of tensions after 1968, Turkish-Cypriot fighters refused to allow Greek-Cypriots to enter the areas under their control (Volkan 1979:101–105).

After 1968, when restrictions on movement were eased, some Turkish-Cypriot youth went to study in Turkey on *mücahit bursları* (fighters’ scholarships) and many were incorporated into the leftist movements then gaining strength in the universities there. They returned from Turkey to unemployment in the enclaves, where they joined others who had participated in the first years of the struggle, but were increasingly dissatisfied with the direction that the Turkish-Cypriot administration was taking. Richard Patrick, writing of this period in some detail, notes that there was increasing resistance to TMT’s control in a period of relative calm, and that many Turkish-Cypriots wished to see more power in the hands of the civilian, rather than the military, authorities (1976:156–165). Although the growing power of political leader Rauf Denктаş remained relatively unchallenged during this period, fractures were beginning to appear in the political structure.⁸

The growth of alternative political possibilities was interrupted when a Greek-sponsored coup overthrew President Makarios in July 1974, provoking Turkey’s long-awaited military intervention. As Greek-Cypriots fled the northern part of the island, Turkish-Cypriots moved in and took over their abandoned properties, creating new hierarchies from the spoils of war. Some grew rich from the war, while others were unable to do so for nepotistic or political reasons; still others refused to do so on principle. Large numbers of immigrants arrived from Turkey and were granted Greek-Cypriot land and houses in an attempt to prevent their owners’ return.⁹ Amidst the euphoria of a military victory and the founding of a new state, the inequalities between those who benefited from the spoils of war and those who had not, or between Turkish-Cypriot villagers and the new immigrants, seemed minimally important. But they would grow important later, beginning in the late 1980s, by which time it had become

clear that the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus would not be recognized by any country besides Turkey and that the north of Cyprus would remain economically and politically isolated.

The result of that isolation has been twofold. Economic and political isolation has tied northern Cyprus to Turkey in ways that no independent state would be bound. As during the period of the enclaves, large sums of money are allocated by the Turkish government to support what has come to be recognized by the European Court of Human Rights as its “subordinate authority” in Cyprus. Much of this money ultimately goes to a swollen bureaucracy that has ballooned to fulfill Turkish-Cypriots’ dreams of becoming civil servants.¹⁰ Turkey also stations an estimated 30,000 troops on the island, and the border between Turkey and northern Cyprus has remained porous, resulting in an influx of migrant workers in recent years that has changed the human landscape.

At the same time, that isolation caused a sense of being cut off from the world, of languishing in another time. Turkish-Cypriots could travel to very few places with their TRNC passports and so for many years accepted Turkey’s offer of Turkish passports. Economic ties to other countries were tenuous and difficult to negotiate, a situation made worse by a 1994 European Court of Justice decision to require the Republic of Cyprus’s stamp on all exports from Cyprus.¹¹ As a result, the sense of being enclaved continued, and this sense was encouraged by long-time Turkish-Cypriot leader and president Rauf Denktaş, who continued to behave as though Turkish-Cypriots were under siege.

The Republic’s 1997 application to enter the European Union and a major economic crisis in Turkey in 2001, following on the heels of a Turkish-Cypriot banking crisis, provoked considerable unrest in northern Cyprus. At the same time, Turkey was engaged with Greece in a lessening of tensions that was also part and parcel of an emerging neo-Ottoman nostalgia. The renewal of Greek-Turkish relations came to be known as “earthquake diplomacy,” since it followed the countries’ mutual aid in the wake of two earthquakes in 1999 that killed more than 20,000 people in Turkey and about 2,000 in Greece.

Television clips of Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem and Greek Foreign Minister Yiorgos Papandreou dancing the *sirtaki* (a lively Greek dance) on the Greek island of Samos astonished many in Cyprus, who still had not comprehended the changed climate in Turkey. One author wrote of that surprise in a memoir completed during the period of the Jasmine Revolution:

One day while we were on holiday, I was in Istanbul with my husband walking from Taksim Square to Beyoğlu when we noticed a voice emanating from one of the music shops. What we heard was a song in Greek. As we were

walking, on every side [from all the music shops] we heard songs in Greek. They say “Music has no country.” In any case these Greek songs played at high volume weren’t unfamiliar to us. But to play even one of the songs being played and enjoyed in Istanbul would have been objectionable in Cyprus! (Konuloğlu 2005:292)

These changes, along with the dissatisfaction of a youth that now used the internet to understand their isolation more clearly, resulted in a call for change that Denктаş and other nationalist leaders refused to hear. And they refused to hear that call even when Turkish-Cypriots were presented with a United Nations plan that would have led to their integration into the European Union as part of a new member state.

Soon it was common to hear Turkish-Cypriots complain that they lived in an “open-air prison” whose guardians were the Turkish generals who were supposedly there to protect them. These criticisms intensified following the murder of journalist Kutlu Adalı in 1996 and, four years later, the arrest of newspaper publisher Şener Levent and several members of his staff on charges of treason and spying for the Republic. Levent was publisher of the newspaper *Avrupa (Europe)*, whose name later changed to *Afrika*, and a fierce opponent of Turkish-Cypriot leader Denктаş. When an estimated 30,000 Turkish-Cypriots from across the political spectrum gathered in Nicosia to protest Levent’s arrest, it was an expression of their discontent with the sense that the fate of Turkish-Cypriots was hostage to the whim of Turkey’s generals.

It was at this historical conjuncture that nostalgia for *yasemin kokulu Lefkoşa* (jasmine-scented Nicosia), the Nicosia of a youthful communal past, came to represent the lost hopes of a community whose struggle for self-determination appeared to have been hijacked by those sent to save them. The reference to Nicosia’s narrow streets, to specific shops and the scent of coffee, to the simple pleasures of life together, was also a longing for a different sort of isolation, one of an interdependence that was lost through dependence on Turkey. In that sense, it appropriated themes from the multicultural nostalgia then prevalent in Turkey, which included references to a de-politicized past intimacy and a longing for the homely signs of difference—the food and music of minorities, and a recognition of their influence on contemporary Turkish culture. In Turkey, this included best-selling memoirs of the 1923 population exchange between Turkey and Greece and nostalgic trips to Greece for the *mübadiller*, the Muslims exchanged in that period. It also included films such as *Kayıkçı (The Boatman)*, about a Turkish-Greek love affair, and *Πολιτική Κουζίνα* (translated into English as *A Touch of Spice*), about the longing for Istanbul by Greeks now living in Athens. This passion of difference culminated in the success of a television series, *Yabancı Damad*

(*The Foreign Groom*), that began its run in late 2004 and showed the difficulties of and prejudices engendered by a Greek-Turkish marriage.

The majority of these nostalgic cultural productions suggest that the antidote to the heavy hand of nationalism is the intimacy of romance. Esra Özyürek insightfully discusses the way that Kemalists in Turkey have commodified the nationalist past in the form of memoirs, photographs, and scenes of the private lives of the early Republican period, thus creating “a new set of everyday practices, affective expressions, and ideological imaginaries that define themselves in the private, but are also intimately connected to the formal political field” (2006:279). This privatization of the political appears to reduce social relations to a form of preference and the political field to a matter of individual choice.

Kabrislilik, or Cypriotism, was an idea with roots in the island’s workers’ movements, whose members came from all Cypriot communities and which always contained an element that saw the nationalisms of Greece and Turkey as imperialist. In the critiques of the left, those nationalisms and their manifestations in Cyprus were bourgeois movements aimed at the protection of class interests. Although Cypriotism gained considerable support among Greek-Cypriots in the middle of the last century, it always had only a handful of supporters in the Turkish-Cypriot minority, whose own political identity developed in large part from a sense of being under threat. Ironically, it was only at the turn of the millennium, with the support of nationalists who favored self-determination and a growing bourgeoisie, that *Kabrislilik* gained popular currency in the Turkish-Cypriot community.

Cypriotism was the form taken by a cultural resistance to the perceived colonization of the island by Turkey.¹² This came to be expressed especially in the longing for Nicosia, the capital and center of Turkish-Cypriot cultural life that also presented the visual proof of Turkey’s intrusion. What was deceptive about this form of nostalgia, however, is that although in some manifestations it bore the signs of other forms of cosmopolitan nostalgia, including memoirs of mixed neighborhoods and life with Greek-Cypriot neighbors (e.g. Gürkan 2006, Hikmetağalar 1996), it was not for most people a nostalgia aimed at reunification, and *Kabrislilik* did not necessarily imply a common identity for the entire island. Rather, *Kabrislilik* implied the resurgence of Turkish-Cypriot demands for self-determination, this time posed in opposition to the domination of Turkey. One of the primary slogans of the period (and the name of a platform of parties and other organizations) was *Bu Memleket Bizim* (This Country is Ours), while demands to recover their own political will were metaphorically expressed as the right of Cypriots to “take back their jasmine.”

Jasmine, then, became a reference to a perceived time of purity, a purity that appeared to have been soiled by Turkey's intervention and whose loss could be most viscerally experienced inside the walls of old Nicosia. Although the movement based itself in local identity politics, at the same time those who most vociferously proclaimed the loss of a culture were also those most closely tied to a movement for self-determination. Hence, the call to "take back our jasmine" was also a call to become once again *bu memleketin efendisi* (this country's master). The longing for a past when they were "this country's master" was also a longing for a specific period of Turkish-Cypriot history defined by isolation in enclaves, the struggles of the *mücahitler*, the masculine swagger of youth, and a new sense of dedication to the land for which they fought.

The jasmine of revolution

Beginning in 2002, the revolution's most visible sign came to be mass meetings held in the central squares of old Nicosia, areas near the presidential palace where Denktaş had long kept a hold on power. These protest meetings began at the end of that year, when UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presented a reunification plan that both sides declined to accept. By mid-December, the European Union invited the Cypriot Republic to join the Union even without its Turkish-Cypriot partners, leading Turkish-Cypriots to spill into the streets in protest against the perceived intransigence of their own leadership. These repeated protests led to significant and lasting changes: the opening of the checkpoints that divide the island on 23 April 2003, the election of long-time opposition leader Mehmet Ali Talat to the post of Prime Minister of the Turkish-Cypriot state in January 2004, a referendum on a reunification plan that was supported by Turkish-Cypriots but rejected on the Greek-Cypriots, and the 2005 replacement of Denktaş by Talat as President of the unrecognized state.

The slogans of the revolution divided the populus not into left and right, but into those who were considered *statükocular* (supporters of the status quo) and those who wanted a solution. The leaders of the revolution claimed that Turkish-Cypriots would become "masters of this country," and they attracted the growing Turkish-Cypriot bourgeoisie, historically quite conservative, with promises that *dünyaya bağlanacağız* (we will be tied to the world). Among the new parties, coalitions, and platforms that emerged during this period was the *Çözüm ve Avrupa Birliği Partisi* (Solution and European Union Party), which held its own rally in Nicosia before the December 2003 elections that would ultimately lead to the replacement of Denktaş. Party leader and businessman

Ali Erel¹³ addressed the crowds with a by-then familiar summary of the state of affairs:

We Turkish Cypriots are in distress. We've been left with no choice but to live under embargo. We've been isolated from the world. We've been left unemployed. We've been separated from sources of production. We've been forced to emigrate. We've been separated from our children. Mothers cried and still cry. But the most important thing is that we haven't been the ones with a say in our own future (*kendi geleceğimizde söz sahibi olmadık*). They even see a referendum as too much for us. (*Kıbrıs* 2003)¹⁴

Significantly, all of Erel's proclamations about the state of the Turkish-Cypriot community are cast in the passive tense, a common way of expressing the sense that Turkish-Cypriots have been victims of a regime too closely tied to Turkey, and especially to elements of its deep state. The revolution was cast as a way of gaining a voice and asserting one's political will, or as the party's candidate for Nicosia parliamentary representative, Doğan Harman, proclaimed, "They call democratic people's movements velvet revolutions, but we here in Cyprus will realize a jasmine revolution" (2003).

In speeches from the period, it was repeatedly stressed that the *statüko* (the status quo) would not ultimately lead to recognition of their state's independence, as the *statükocular* insisted, but only to closer and closer ties to Turkey. At another rally before the December 2003 elections, Mustafa Akıncı, leader of *Barış ve Demokrasi Hareketi* (Peace and Democracy Movement) and a long-time opponent of Denktaş, emphasized that Turkish-Cypriots wanted neither to be a minority in a unitary state controlled by Greek-Cypriots nor subject to Turkey's military and political bureaucracy. While Denktaş and the *statükocular* opposed a unification plan because they believed it would destroy the TRNC's supposed sovereignty, Akıncı emphasized that the only road to true sovereignty was a solution and European Union membership. "Which sovereignty are they talking about?" he asked. "Now the money isn't ours, if anything happens in Turkey our people become poorer by half overnight." He emphasized that overthrowing the *statükocular* "will ensure that the Turk of Cyprus will be the master in his own house" (*Ortam Gazetesi* 2003). Significantly, in his speeches Akıncı repeatedly stressed that "the season [of jasmine] has come."

Jasmine, then, became the symbol of the people taking back their voice, becoming again "the masters of this land." And in both implicit and explicit ways, jasmine was tied to a Nicosia that had come to represent Cypriots' loss of their own culture. The old city walls encompass a palimpsest of Venetian, Ottoman, and British colonial housing, but

by the early 1980s Turkish-Cypriots, like their Greek-Cypriot neighbors across the divide, began to desire something more “modern.” With the passage of a law impeding new construction inside the city walls, Cypriots began to move into new neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city. One author comments,

Every day the known faces of the men who wander the neighborhoods with their handcarts selling fruits and vegetables began to see fewer of their old customers, the ones who would sit in front of their freshly scrubbed doors and gossip in loud voices with their neighbors: Everyone had started to move into the outskirts of the city, into the apartment buildings and council housing with its tiny gardens and orderly, cookie-cutter houses. (Bizden 1997: 82)

These new neighborhoods sprang up to meet the needs of a new Turkish-Cypriot middle-class, one that had fought for self-determination only to find its bourgeois dreams stopped by city walls. The apartment blocks and identical council housing gave momentum to a construction sector that would gain speed as the millennium approached, when northern Cyprus experienced a boom in property sales to foreigners.

This construction boom intersected with the growing refusal of Cypriots to work as unskilled laborers and so created a labor gap that would be filled by workers from Turkey, especially from poorer areas in the south and southeast. Although many of these workers initially were housed on the construction sites, the construction boom of the 1990s and early 2000s soon made that untenable. Many of the old houses of Nicosia’s walled city were turned by their owners into hostels for these “guest workers,” further accelerating Cypriots’ move into the suburbs and their distancing from the historical city center. It increased, as well, both the decay of the walled city and a discourse around that decay, as former Ottoman mansions were left unrepaired and used as slum housing for a cheap labor force that the new economy required, even as Cypriots complained that the walled city has been “colonized.”¹⁵

This increasing distance from the historic center of Turkish-Cypriot cultural life, as well as the sense that it had been unrecognizably transformed, made it an appropriate symbol for a movement that saw itself as culturally and politically “under siege.” This was exacerbated by the growing confusion between workers and “settlers,” those Turks who had arrived from Turkey following the 1974 war and been granted citizenship and Greek properties. For most Turkish-Cypriots, there was no distinction between “settlers,” who had the right to vote and whom most Turkish-Cypriots believed used that vote to impede the island’s reunification, and persons who migrated temporarily because they could not find

work in their home regions.¹⁶ In these circumstances, the growth in the walled city's Turkish immigrant population seemed to present visible and tangible proof that Turkish-Cypriot culture was under siege and that Turkish-Cypriots' political will was being taken from them. As one academic who lives in Nicosia recently remarked, "I have no problem with my housekeeper, who's worked for me for 20 years, or with the neighbor with whom I play backgammon. My problem is when they interfere with my political will." This was also cast as a problem of "being in exile in one's own homeland," making the reclamation of "our jasmine" a return to a past uncontaminated by Turkish interference.¹⁷

In common parlance, the purity and whiteness of jasmine, with its roots in Cypriot soil and its association with a nostalgic Nicosia, was contrasted with *fica*, a Turkish-Cypriot word for seaweed that is among several slang words used to refer to the immigrants from Turkey who have "washed up" on Cyprus' shores. Seaweed arrives with the tide, covers the beaches, and clings to swimmers' skin. The word expresses quite neatly the sense that the poor workers, many of Kurdish or Arab origin, constitute an unwanted invasion that spoils the landscape as seaweed litters a pristine beach. In contrast, jasmine is an indigenous flower that one plants and carefully tends, and its pure, fresh whiteness contrasts with the dirty brown of dead *fica* washed on the shore. It connotes the lost innocence of summer evenings when young men would buy necklaces made of the flower for their sweethearts, and in that sense it also connotes the lost innocence of the city.

Following İl Adalı's proclamation that demands her jasmine flowers, numerous writers began to engage in Nicosia nostalgia as a way of talking about the political present. The trend began with several columnists for *Kıbrıs* (*Cyprus*), the only newspaper in the Turkish-Cypriot north with no party affiliation and which, for that reason, also has the largest circulation. Nicosia was described as a place from which they had been alienated, "the final state of a lover who has taken the wrong road [i.e., become a prostitute]." It had been transformed from a place of familiar faces, familiar sights and sounds, to one in which the wanderer through its narrow streets hears accents and languages that she doesn't recognize, sees the faces of dark men who are unfamiliar to her.

The bazaar is no longer traversed by peddlers with their handcarts selling *muhallebi* (milk pudding) sprinkled with rosewater, and the side streets are no longer filled with the odor of familiar Cypriot foods. "The scent of pots just beginning to boil emerges from the houses. There's definitely no scent of *molohiya* or *kolokas!*"¹⁸ one opines. "The new residents of old Nicosia have not yet become accustomed to these authentic foods." Although the author proclaims that, "they'll become Cypriot

and they'll become accustomed" (Tolgay 2003), other writers contrast the familiar scents of the past with the odor of *lahmacun*, a spicy pizza from the southeast of Turkey whose aroma permeates certain of Nicosia's backstreets. The scent of *lahmacun* that invaded the nostrils of those who wandered Nicosia's side streets came to represent an unwanted intrusion, one that was cast as Eastern, backward, and unfamiliar. And so just as the dirty *fica* contrasts with the jasmine's purity, so the heavy aroma of *lahmacun* in the streets is compared with the heady scent of the jasmine. The odor of *lahmacun* becomes a sign of the city's corruption, like the scent of a prostitute at the end of a long night.

Indeed, Nicosia is often cast in these writings as a woman who has been sullied:

While passing the whitewashed houses, the odors that emanated from them told us what was being cooked that day. The whitewashed houses were this city's symbol. At one time they were like the white, flawless face of a woman. In all the clean innocence of the jasmine scent that soothes the soul . . . (Doğrusöz 2002:102)

The same author goes on to remark that the white face was soon flawed:

First shadows began to appear on her face, then black spots. With time the black spots multiplied. According to some they were just a few unimportant pimples, while according to others they were an illness that had no cure. Those who said it was an unimportant illness soon realized that they had been wrong. The black spots multiplied even more. . . . The pure white face had lost its magic. Both the face and the tongue were gradually obscured. (2002:102)

Doğrusöz later explains the black spots as "an occupation by persons with different languages and different skin" (2002:103).

Another author who has written about the use of the symbolism of Nicosia comments on this feminization of the city:

The Nicosia of symbolism is a living, breathing lover; Nicosia is a motherly city who always forgives, whose fragility, irritability, betrayal and unhappiness are always temporary. The city inside the walls is one, in these images, that never ostracized its own people or sent them to live in the new neighborhoods outside its walls. . . . Instead, the walled city that has now lost its squares, its fairgrounds, its coffeehouse culture, its bazaar area has been 'duped.' Hopeless and silent, the walled city's eyes have been bound with black tape. . . . Nicosia's walled city is a lover whose ears are deaf, whose eyes are blind, and who cannot make a sound.s (Bizden 2006: 69–70)

In Bizden's ironic summary, the old Nicosia of Turkish-Cypriot writers' imagination is the tarnished lover led down the wrong path, now indifferent to her future. And as Bizden also remarks, the images of Nicosia as the helpless, dishonored lover not only served to mobilize a Turkish-Cypriot community that also felt that it had been duped and corrupted, but to do so while demonizing the sights, sounds, and smells of an other.

Soon it became common to personify places and things that, like the Turkish-Cypriot community itself, appeared to have lost the purity of their past because they had been duped by false promises. In one such portrayal, written on the day of the first election that shook the status quo of Turkish-Cypriot politics, people and place join together in the effort to rid the island of its oppressors:

14 December 2003, Sunday . . .

06.50: I'm watching the Beşparmak Mountains. . . . The Beşparmak Mountains are Troubled. . . . It is as though they want to rise from their place and stretch towards Nicosia. . . . As though the carob and olive trees are going to fly from the earth . . . In the mountains there is an election excitement, the excitement of salvation. . . .

11.30: I go to vote. . . . At the polling station everyone I meet, both people I know and those I don't know, says "inşallah we'll win". . . . The Cyprus Turk has taken his fate in his hands. . . . Who can stop him . . .

12.00: I return home. . . . The jasmine in the doorway has reared itself. . . . As though it wants to give the message, "I'm here". . . . The jasmine that I pass by without noticing every time I enter the house wants to make itself known. . . . And the mountains continue to watch us . . .

15.00: The radio is playing Onur Akın. . . . Onur Akın is singing, "I think of leaving here without even a jacket". . . . I say to myself, "No". . . . "We won't go". . . . We won't go anywhere and leave the jasmine, the Beşparmak Mountains. . . . We will realize the Jasmine Revolution. . . . Because we are of this place . . ." (Ergüçlü 2004)

What is significant here is not only the personification of the landscape, which joins in their struggle, but also the reiterated claim that "we are of this place."

This sense of Cyprus as a Turkish-Cypriot *patrie*, a homeland, was one that came rather late to the community, which for so long had participated in a nationalism that saw Turkey as the "motherland." It was only in the period of the enclaves, the period when Turkish-Cypriots were under siege and began to defend their community and the places where they lived, that Turkish-Cypriots began to develop such an attachment. Prior to this, *Kıbrıslı Türk* (Turkish-Cypriots) had called themselves *Kıbrıs*

Türkü (the Turks of Cyprus), indicating an only contingent relationship to place. Turkish-Cypriots easily emigrated to the Turkish mainland, and one of the greatest fears of Turkish nationalists in Cyprus was that the Turkish-Cypriot community, once under siege, would abandon the island entirely. As one sociologist eloquently puts it, “It would not only require many deaths to identify Cyprus as the *patrie* for the Turkish Cypriots but also the realization that the Turkish Cypriots died for Cyprus, and for specific places in Cyprus. It was at the juncture of killing and dying for Cyprus that the Turks of Cyprus became Turkish Cypriots” (Akay 1998:35).

Hence, personifying particular places and things and making them participants in a Turkish-Cypriot future is a metaphorical strategy that has roots in a specific moment of the Turkish-Cypriot past, one in which they fought for existence and in the process also learned that they were fighting to become “masters of this land.” Not coincidentally, the walled city of Nicosia was the center of that struggle, the site where a community recreated itself, declaring its independence from Greek-Cypriots at the same time that they declared their ties to the island. And so the nostalgia for a lost city evokes a time—another time—when Turkish-Cypriots were under siege and when, in the face of that, they declared their ties to the island and determination to remain there. The reference to a “jasmine-scented Nicosia,” then, not only evokes a purer past in contrast to the corrupted present but also calls for memories of resistance.

The jasmine of memory

Why is it that we always feel a great desire for the old, for past times? . . . Was there no pain or worry then, and if there was, why were people more comfortable, happy, and content? . . . The women sweeping and washing the front steps of their houses was the first sign that the breezy, jasmine-scented, fun-filled summer nights of Nicosia were about to begin. While the men were heading to the coffeeshop, the women would gather in front of the houses, and while one strung jasmine flowers on a palm branch or a string, the others would sort *muluhiya*.¹⁹ After that, both men and women would make their way to Çağlayan, where the summer [open-air] cinemas were. In the cinemas, Sunday was the last day not to miss the new Turkish films that would begin their showings on Wednesdays. In the summer months, there would be a festival air in Çağlayan. The People’s Garden next to the People’s Cinema, a little further on the Çağlayan Bar; or a little further than that the Crystal Cinema and beside it the Lights garden were all full to overflowing . . . (Eminoğlu 2007)

In most photographs and films of Turkish Nicosia of the 1960’s, one sees only misery: women cry, children snuffle, and men defiantly face

the cameras with their outdated rifles. And indeed, it was a time when Turkish-Cypriots were subjected to indignities at Greek-Cypriot checkpoints, when they had little access to supplies or even to fresh fruits and vegetables, and when as a result they were highly militarized and dependent on both the local Turkish-Cypriot administration and the Turkish “motherland.” Extended families crowded into small houses as relatives fled their villages; supplies from the villages had to pass through Greek-Cypriot checkpoints, where they were often confiscated or left to spoil; and children of both sexes were trained at very early ages to participate in the defense that became the primary occupation of the community.

And yet existing alongside this real suffering (as well as its representation) was something else: a world apart, in which the exceptional life lived in the enclaves was normalized and where, indeed, their isolation produced a certain form of enjoyment. The first serious intercommunal fighting and flight from villages occurred after 21 December 1963; by January 1964, Turkish-Cypriots had not only begun the organization of a state within a state but had even set up a post office and produced the first postage stamp of the separatist administration. Those who were children in the Nicosia enclave recall that life went on for them without much change, apart from the influx of unwanted refugees from the villages. As one local businesswoman recalled, speaking of a horrifying event in her own enclave when all the women and girls were on the verge of suicide to avoid the threat of rape, “It’s strange to look back on it now and realize that I wasn’t really afraid. Because we were all together.”

Not only were they “all together,” but social and economic differences were flattened, as everyone was subject to the rulings of the administration and the needs of community defense. Every man and boy able to hold a rifle was a *mücahit*, while women stitched uniforms and girls cleaned and loaded guns. Boys as young as 12 would go to school in the day and take up guard duty in the evening, destroying many of the traditional hierarchies between younger and older men. Everyone who was not able to continue in his profession—especially men displaced from the countryside—was made a professional soldier and given a small salary. And so in the face of a threat to the community’s existence, Turkish-Cypriots were “all together” not simply as a group that had been randomly forced together, but as a body that would work together as one. Their lives were given purpose and meaning as a whole, as a group under threat, and for more than a decade Turkish-Cypriots dedicated themselves fully to this common goal.

The “breezy, jasmine-scented, fun-filled nights of Nicosia” that the author above remembers were from precisely this time. It was at this time that Turkish-Cypriots founded their first state theater, created at the

command of the Turkish military commander then in charge of Nicosia and tied to the Department of Education (Ersoy 1998:73–74). There were beauty contests, bicycle races, and an abundance of sports teams. Stadiums filled equally for soccer matches and pole-vaulting contests. Cinemas showed the latest Turkish films, and famous artists came from Turkey to boost Turkish-Cypriots' morale. They also performed in the cinemas, which became the center of Turkish-Cypriot social life, along with *mücahit gazinoları* (fighters' clubs). Both the cinemas and fighters' clubs became the stages for rock bands with names like the Signals, the Storms, and Flag Quartet, all comprising young men who let their hair grow in imitation of the Beatles and the Monkees, but who also took up rifles when they were not entertaining with their guitars (Adanir 2001). Although the songs that these groups sang were taken from the popular repertoire of the period and spoke to freedom and love, some of these groups took their names from the code-names of their military commanders.

Even in 1968, when restrictions on movement eased, Turkish-Cypriots remained in their enclaves and refused to allow entry to their Greek neighbors. Psychoanalyst Vamık Volkan, who had emigrated to the United States in the 1950s, described his return to the island to visit relatives in 1968 and Turkish-Cypriots' reaction to the opening of the barriers: "The first taste of freedom," he notes, "paradoxically evoked symptoms like those of depression" (1979:102). He goes on to observe that "[t]heir confinement had given them out of a situation of great discomfort and some danger a world shared with their compatriots. . . . This world was now gone, and its inhabitants were faced with the humiliating recognition that a prosperous Greek life-style surrounded them on every hand" (1979:103). He remarks that this damaged sense of self-worth was relieved in part by continuing to deny Greek-Cypriots entry to the enclaves and so maintaining a certain secrecy about, and therefore control over, their lives.

The enclaves, therefore, constituted not only a state within a state but also a world apart and self-contained, where Turkish-Cypriots maintained some form of control and therefore had a sense of determining their destiny. Nicosia became the site where this was most vividly realized, as a completely Turkish social and cultural life flourished in a way that it never had before. Everyone was in some way involved in the struggle, but men and boys especially benefited from their participation in the defense, which gave new meaning to traditional values of manhood. At the same time, it was, in the cities, also a period of modernization that followed closely developments in Turkey, tying Turkish-Cypriots' social

and cultural development to that of the new state that they hoped to found.

This was, then, a period of suffering and struggle whose orientation towards a better, independent future gave it the character of hope and whose communitarianism made it also a form of enjoyment. It was this combination of struggle and hope, or suffering and enjoyment, that makes the period suitable for a nostalgia that calls for the same in the future. Moreover, as Akay notes above, this was the period in which the struggle descended from the realm of abstract ideology into the daily lives of persons who fought and died for the right not only to exist in the island, but to have some form of control over their future there. Hence, the “jasmine scent of Nicosia” carries with it not only a longing for a presumably better past, but specifically for a past characterized by an egalitarian struggle for an independent future.

Some final petals

The revolution that overtook northern Cyprus after the turn of the century was one that had some base in the leftist movements with bicomunal roots that had for decades supported reunification under a federal government. But those groups and parties had long remained marginalized, unable to gain a hold on power. What gave the Jasmine Revolution a mass base was the growing sense that those who had been in power for so long were unable to adapt to the changes brought by globalization, including changes in Turkish politics and the promises of the European Union. They remained bound by a nationalist politics that no longer seemed fit for the present, and especially not for the demands of increasing numbers of educated youth to be “tied to the world.” As both the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey drew closer to Europe, northern Cyprus remained on the outside, and many people expressed fears that “the last train is about to leave the station.”

In this context, the scent of jasmine evoked a period of hope and struggle, but also ties to a place and a past that in the enclave period acquired an explicitly and exclusively Turkish character. The longing for the scents and sights of Nicosia’s walled city and its backstreets was also the longing for a period when self-determination seemed on the horizon and when deprivation was accompanied by enjoyment because it was shared by all. It was a longing for a period and a place where for the first time Turkish-Cypriots developed a life separate from their Greek-Cypriot neighbors and where they enjoyed some form of control, including the ability to prevent entry into their neighborhoods. It was

a world unto itself, where “[t]hose who lived together inside developed a world of their own, one in which the reality of hope was tinged with magic and illusion” (Volkan 1979: 83).

It was also a world that had become “Turkified” through music and theater, and especially through the cinema that became the primary distraction and source of hope and inspiration for a community under siege.²⁰ The attractive, white-skinned actors in Turkish films represented models of an alternative modernization, one that both resisted the West and accepted Westernization. It was only after 1974, when Turkish-Cypriots encountered both the Turkish state and its less privileged citizens in their daily lives, that this dream of a Turkish modernity began to collapse. In this sense, the growing *Kıbrıslılık* that emphasized local foods, dialects, and habits, and the nostalgia that accompanied them, might be seen in parallel with East German *Ostalgie*, which, as Daphne Berdahl remarks, came “to symbolize the loss of an illusion of the ‘Golden West.’” As in East Germany, where “the loss if this illusion has been one of the most formative and disorienting aspects of re-unification,” Turkish-Cypriots’ increasing incorporation in the culture of Turkey brought them face to face with a Turkey that was poorer, darker, and more complex than the Turkey of their earlier imagination (1999:177).

Paradoxically, though, this nostalgic return to a period before “the Fall” also brought about and so coincided with another Fall, namely, that of the ceasefire line that divides the island. And that line has come to symbolize yet another Fall—the Fall from the grace of coexistence with one’s Greek-speaking neighbors. Indeed, insofar as Nicosia nostalgia is a form of “structural” (Herzfeld 1997) or “restorative” nostalgia (Boym 2001), one aimed at lamenting a communal fall from grace or even restoring the community to its origins, it is also one that makes explicit nostalgia’s obsession with boundaries and their maintenance, with the purity of an unsullied past or the innocence of ignorance.²¹ In this case, the fall from faith in a Turkish modernity recalls the fall from grace of a peaceful, intercommunal past. What makes it different from other forms of structural nostalgia, however, is that it points to a fall that also produced a form of resistance and therefore explicitly calls for a remembrance that is revolutionary.

Of course, nostalgia is never neat, and its meanings are both polyvalent and contested. Lamenting this fall from grace has also infused Turkish-Cypriot nostalgia with a seeming cosmopolitanism, or longing for a multi-cultural past. But while the invocation of “jasmine-scented Nicosia” may be another instance of the re-emergence of the local in the global, the structure of feeling that this nostalgia evokes is far from cosmopolitanism. By recalling a time when Turkish-Cypriots worked

together despite class or status differences, it calls for resistance to Turkey's control over Turkish-Cypriots' fates. But at the same time, it gives that moment of collective history a particularly local character, represented by the jasmine, and casts those who live now in Nicosia's side streets as intruders, persons to be opposed and resisted. Nostalgia contrasts the jasmine's purity to the dirtiness of the *fica*, its sweet scent to the odor of *lahmacun*. In this sense, through nostalgia, "revolution" reacquires its original meaning of "return," creating political desires that link purity to exclusiveness and self-determination to a longing for the local.

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NOTES

¹The short essay in which this passage appears is entitled "Yaseminlerimi geri verin," "Give me back my jasmine flowers" (Adalı 2006:129).

²Kutlu Adalı was a journalist who was murdered for his opposition writings but who began his literary career as the publisher of the most staunchly nationalist Turkish-Cypriot newspaper, *Nacak*. Born in Cyprus, Adalı's family immigrated to Turkey when he was three, and he finished his secondary education there before returning to take a place in the growing Turkish-Cypriot opposition to Greek-Cypriot demands for union with Greece. He was at Rauf Denktaş's side as an advisor until 1972, and after the establishment of a separate state in the north became first the director of the Population Office then served in other posts in the civil service. Although he wrote articles critical of the government in the early 1980's, it was after his retirement from the civil service in 1985 that he began openly to write in *Ortam* and *Yeni Düzen* newspapers, criticizing the regime in the north. His 1996 murder remains unsolved, and in 2004 his family won a judgment in the European Court of Human Rights against Turkey for insufficiently investigating the case.

³In a fascinating and pertinent overlap with Adalı's call, Svetlana Boym notes that many writers have mastered the art of intimation with regard to the past. She notes, "Playing the game of hide-and-seek with memories and hopes, just as one did with friends in one's distant and half-forgotten childhood, seems to be the only way to reflect the past without becoming a pillar of salt" (2001:252).

⁴Although Turkish nationalism had existed in Cyprus from the early twentieth century, and especially after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, it was in the middle of the century that it became organized in opposition to the growing nationalist

demands of the Greek-Cypriot majority. In 1955, when Greek-Cypriots began an armed struggle to free the island from colonial rule and unite it with Greece, Turkish-Cypriots began to organize their own struggle in opposition to it. By the late 1950's this struggle was organized under the administration and command of TMT.

⁵The most thorough research about population movement in the period was conducted by geographer Richard Patrick, who observed the fighting as a Canadian officer of the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force. Patrick observes that although “[t]he official Greek-Cypriot position is that the major portion of the Turkish-Cypriot refugee movement was both initiated and directed by Turkish-Cypriot leaders in accordance with a contingency plan to facilitate the partition of Cyprus. . . . The author’s investigations reveal to his satisfaction that the overwhelming majority of Turkish-Cypriot refugees moved only after Turkish-Cypriots had been killed, abducted or harassed within their village, quarter, or in the local vicinity” (1976:344). Bryant’s extensive interviews with Turkish-Cypriots originally from or now living in the Kyrenia district confirm that most attempted to remain in their villages, but decided to leave when Turkish-Cypriots were attacked or killed in the vicinity.

⁶It was during this period that the first barbed wire was erected to divide Greek and Turkish neighborhoods. This was known as the “Mason-Dixon Line,” and it ultimately became the basis for the militarized division of the city. More conflict over the possible establishment of separate municipalities cemented this division in 1958. In 1963, when intercommunal violence erupted, United Nations peacekeeping forces were called in to guard what came to be known as the Green Line, a division that separated Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots in Nicosia and elsewhere and formed the basis for the line that today divides the island. For more on this issue, see Papadakis (2006) and Markides (1998).

⁷And insofar as the state-within-a-state was defined by the collapse of constitutional order, the space that Turkish-Cypriots occupied perfectly fits Agamben’s definition of the camp: “The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule” (2000:38).

⁸Rauf Denktaş was a successful lawyer, as well as one of the founders of TMT in 1958. He was elected president of the *Cemaat Meclisi*, or communal chamber, in 1960 but was not allowed to return to the island for four years after 1964, when he went without official sanction to the United Nations. He returned in 1968 to take up his former post, then replaced Dr. Fazıl Küçük in 1973 as leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community and vice-president of the Republic of Cyprus. After the island’s division, he emerged as leader of the new administration, in its various guises. With the declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983, he became its first president and remained in office until 2005, when he chose not to run against opponent Mehmet Ali Talat, who was elected in that same year.

⁹According to Mete Hatay’s research, this facilitated immigration ended in 1979, to be followed by waves of migration for work but without the privileges of citizenship and property granted to the first immigrants (2007; also Ioannides 1991).

¹⁰The common perception is that being a *memur* (civil servant) is a safe position, and it provides a guaranteed retirement, in the past at a very early age. In the past, one needed to work for only ten years to receive a government pension, and gradual increases in the retirement age have proven the source of much dissatisfaction in the community. The working period was increased to 15 years in 1986 and has gradually risen to 25 years. Many Turkish-Cypriots retain a preference for government jobs over jobs in the private sector, expressed even in a preference for families to marry their daughters to civil servants. On this preference for civil service positions, see Navaro-Yashin (2006b).

¹¹Throughout this article, we will use the “Republic of Cyprus” or simply “the Republic” to refer to the independent, bicomunal state structure established in 1960, which after

1963 took on an entirely Greek character. Any references to “the Republic” for the period after 1974 refer to the Greek-controlled areas of the island’s south, the only recognized government of the island.

¹²This is a subject that is well known in Cyprus but has received little academic attention. One anthropological attempt to investigate the formation of a “Cypriot” identity in reaction against both the politics of Turkey and the presence of Turkish immigrants unfortunately provides little critical reflection on the politics of such identity production and so ultimately reproduces this form of differentiation as a new type of “political conflict” (Navaro-Yashin 2006a). For a more complex and historically situated account of such reactionary forms of identity and their social and political ambivalence, see Ramm (2006).

¹³Ali Erel is an important figure because, as the president of the Chamber of Commerce, he drew a significant portion of the center-right into a movement for reunification. This movement, called *Ortak Vizyon* (Common Vision), incorporated more than 90 civil society organizations from across the political spectrum. It also drew the support of former supporters of the Denktaş regime, including Doğan Harman, quoted below, who served as Denktaş’s advisor until 2001. Harman is also the editor of *Kıbrıslı* newspaper and after 2002 became the host of a popular television program that draw a large phone-in audience and became an important forum for advocacy of the United Nations reunification plan.

¹⁴The call for a referendum on the future of the island became one of the most insistent demands of the movement, which saw it as the best way to regain their political will.

¹⁵In a peculiar and, for these authors, disturbing article, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2003) so generalizes this discourse of decay that she describes all of north Nicosia, including its busy shopping and entertainment district, indeed all of north Cyprus, including the lively port town of Girne (Kyrenia), as “deserted,” “abjected,” a “no man’s land” that is “between life and death.” While metaphorically and rhetorically these descriptions may capture part of the sense of living in an unrecognized state, they certainly do not exhaust that sense, which—as we plan to argue elsewhere, in an extension of the current argument—also contains an element of enjoyment.

¹⁶For an analysis of the broad spectrum of political alliances of Turkish-born persons settled in Cyprus, see Hatay (2005).

¹⁷For an analysis of this same period that focuses more on this sense of exile, see Derya (2007).

¹⁸*Molohiya*, a type of wild green, and *kolokas*, a type of root similar to a potato, are both important elements of Turkish-Cypriot cuisine. Although *kolokas* (in Greek, κολοκάσι) is also an integral part of Greek-Cypriot cuisine, *molohiya* is generally not known to Greek-Cypriots.

¹⁹An alternative spelling for *molohiya*. See note 18.

²⁰One author remarks that in a garage that had been turned into a cinema, “we watched one English and one Turkish film at every showing. We followed these films with such pleasure that we didn’t even notice how much the half-broken cane chairs were hurting ours rumps” (Balıkcıoğlu nd:9)

²¹One can see this, as well, in anthropology’s disciplinary melancholy for “lost” cultures spoiled by outside intrusion (Bissell 2005), and in social theory’s mourning for the pre-modern (Turner 1987; also, Pickering and Keightley 2006).

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