

NARRATED TRAVEL AND RHETORICAL TROPES:
PRODUCING “THE TURK” IN THE TRAVEL WRITING OF CYPRUS, 1955-2005

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN RHETORIC, COMPOSITION,
AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2009

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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NARRATED TRAVEL AND RHETORICAL TROPES:
PRODUCING "THE TURK" IN THE TRAVEL WRITING OF CYPRUS, 1955-2005

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching
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ABSTRACT

Travelers' experiences in Cyprus and the texts they produce in light of these encounters function rhetorically, informing cultural relations among people of different societies. When the efforts of these travel writers are taken to be rhetorical, critics position themselves to identify how ethics, politics, and aesthetics of narration and self-representation create the tropes that fix other people in ideological space. This analysis examines the production of difference in selected travel narratives set in Cyprus in the later modern era, which coincides with the rise of anti-colonial politics, nationalism, and globalization (1955-2005). To further focus the analysis, I attend mostly to the representation of "the Turk" in this textual genre. An introductory chapter examines the rhetorical situation of the travel text of Cyprus, exploring rhetorical and critical concepts such as ethos, rhetoric as popular culture, and tropology; it also surveys the landscape of Cyprus as a destination of travel and introduces some of the major texts to be considered. Subsequent chapters explore the rhetoric of narrated travel writing set in Cyprus according to its variations in style and historical epoch. The critique examines the ethics of narration and representation in memoirs, travelogues, political journalism, guide books, and ethnographies by a diverse range of writers including Lawrence Durrell, Colin Thubron, and Christopher Hitchens. A concluding chapter considers alternative, rhetorically self-conscious forms of travel and writing that suggest different possibilities for an ethical future of travel, travel narration, and cultural encounters.

CHAPTER ONE

NARRATED TRAVEL AND RHETORICAL TROPES:
PRODUCING “THE TURK” IN THE TRAVEL WRITING OF CYPRUS

In a first-person essay published in 1999 for *Harper's* magazine, Sebastian Junger captures the bizarre spectacle of the Green Line that divides the island of Cyprus:

The line has a strange pull to it, like the edge of a cliff or a third rail; it was the first place I went when I arrived in [Greek-controlled] Nicosia. I dropped my bags at the hotel and walked past the fancy shops on Ledra Street to a cul-de-sac, where some staging had been set up against a concrete wall along the line. It's the only place where tourists can look out over the rubble of no-man's-land, and a flight of metal stairs has been installed to encourage viewing. While I was there an English family arrived and trudged dutifully up to the platform, children licking at ice-cream cones and parents fiddling with camcorders. They looked over the railing at the ramshackle Turkish positions a hundred feet away, clucked their disapproval, and had their photo taken with a young soldier who was standing guard nearby. Then they wandered off to do more shopping. (Anderson and Junger 46¹)

He offers the visual contrast between south and north. “Ramshackle positions” on one side square off against “fancy shops” on the other, suggesting a Turkish north that suffers impoverishment and a Greek south that enjoys affluence and the company of the European world. The narration also demonstrates how Western tourists who visit this site gaze in judgment at its condition. Junger registers a contemptuous sneer at the tourists, who strike him as too righteous for the occasion. If he correctly assumes that they come to know Cyprus through episodes such as the surreally routinized stop-and-peek visits to

¹ Scott Anderson and Sebastian Junger co-wrote this piece for *Harper's*, with Junger covering and reporting from the south and Anderson from the north. They are credited separately for their respective entries within the text.

Green Line positions—squeezed between shopping and clubbing in Ayia Napa—then the tone seems apt for the occasion.

Of course, the principled Western correspondent and the Western tourists he scorns may share more in common than Junger imagines, given his, and others', admittedly irresistible attraction to this living monument of war and division. His description of the Green Line, like other travel texts, contributes to its continued centrality as a trope for the entire island: broken, tense, bizarre, alluring, tragically beautiful, frustrating...even dead. The space dividing north from south and Turk from Greek functions as a central character in the “cover story” of Cyprus, one that hails travelers as they take in its landscape. What does a writer do with this feature of Cyprus that entices travelers, personally, to its proximity? How will the Green Line and the rest of Cyprus be constructed by those who visit and for what kind of stories? In my rhetorical study of travel, I posit that writers like Junger face a familiar and yet daunting ethical challenge. At their best, they aim to travel in a spirit of openness, curiosity, and responsibility. In Cyprus, that means being in a land and writing about people that, like many places in the world, face a painful political environment that is, for the outsider, as confusing as it is unforgiving.

The Green Line identifies the island and its people through their conflict, offering a sufficiently compelling image to represent a land where two communities live apart from one another, fixed in a complex, longstanding conflict of regional and global significance. Since 1974, an internationally monitored demilitarized zone has buffered the two communities that once lived side by side in towns and villages throughout the

island.² The current physical arrangement has invited traveling observers to assume essential, irresolvable differences between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots.³ Junger's arrival episode at the Green Line in Nicosia at least creates a space for critique of this exasperated status quo. However, like most of the travel writing dealing with Cyprus since 1955, his own narrative nourishes several of the binary pairings that have long delimited cultural relations and conflicts on the island: Christian and Muslim, Greek and Turk, sun-seeking European tourist and politically-sensitive Cypriot, Western imperial/colonizing agent and Eastern colonized subject. Such differences unfold for and are constructed by Western writers, who navigate complicated physical and emotional terrain on the island. Writing about personal travel experiences and troping the landscape and people in Cyprus thus provides a substantial rhetorical challenge for travelers, journalists, and other writers. In essence, their task compels them to dance through minefields, posing predicaments of positionality for narrators who look to situate themselves self-consciously within the stories they narrate.

In a textual genre as self-conscious as travel writing, rhetorical criticism has an abiding interest in the study of how first-person narrators develop ethos, represent the

² The expression "Green Line," actually dates to 1964, when a British officer used a green pencil to indicate the cease-fire lines separating Turkish and Greek sectors of Nicosia in early inter-communal fighting.

³ Greek and Turk may be essentially different, but here and elsewhere they are not rendered equally responsible for the conflict. Junger bears a cynical contempt for the naïveté of the tourists, exposing the ease by which people can release righteous indignation—here, the Turks take the full brunt of it. How these tourists became so certain of the malice of the other is a question few travel writers trouble themselves to consider. I credit Junger here for reporting what he sees but not explicitly editorializing about the conflict per se. His own political position aims for neutrality, but he writes for a politically partisan magazine like *Harper's*, and the backdrop to his story—the ongoing ethnic conflicts in Kosovo and the Balkans—suggests a frustration with the cycles of violence so difficult for people to escape. Yet aside from his worldly curiosity and professional mission, his own dash to the Green Line upon arrival in order to gawk at the open wounds of war bears striking superficial similarity to the ogling of the European tourists he mocks.

other, and contribute to discourse production through their texts. The context under specific consideration here is that of the Western travel writer who narrates experiences from abroad to be consumed by domestic audiences “back home.” The political effects of such travel writing can be far-reaching, informing people’s subjectivities and sustaining forms of knowledge that often fix people of non-Western lands in subordinate relation to the US and the European Union. Travel, travel writing, and the consumption of travel writing can all be conceived of as rhetorical, as “the management of meaning” (Brummett xxi). If we are to assume these texts to be significant in moving audiences and constructing a credible vision of Cyprus, these narrators have in some way created an appealing ethos—though not for every audience, nor in every moment of an internally contradictory travel narrative.

Ethos Defined in Rhetorical Traditions

The concept of ethos has evolved through the ancient, medieval, modern, and then postmodern traditions. While the term “ethos” has always been popular across a range of genres—in academic contexts such as literary criticism, political science, and cultural studies, and also in journalistic discourses—its roots are as an Aristotelian *pisteis*, a rhetorical appeal in triadic association with pathos and logos. Ethos has a long tradition of shifting significations, typically beginning with Aristotle, whose usage of the term reveals contradictions in the relations between language and content, or between idealism and materiality.

Though some debate exists on the point, Aristotle seems to have intended ethos to be the development of character, “ethos demarcated by excellence or defectiveness, showing men up as good or bad” (Gill 151). Character would be established through content of a speech, not necessarily its language or style. Speakers generated ethos by referencing external factors like age, nationality, level of education, and so on. Gill notes that while later Greek scholars made few improvements on the notion of ethos, Cicero and Augustan writer Dionysius of Halicarnassus did elaborate on it. These two writers do associate ethos with styles of oratory; Cicero in particular associates ethos and pathos with the middle and grand style of later rhetoricians (152).⁴

In the case of Dionysius, we see a departure from Aristotle in some ways. While in Aristotle’s case ethos also is associated with “self-presentation” of the speaker with an emphasis on character (not emotion), Dionysius at times allows that ethos can be about the proper style of speech rather than just content and can involve inducing the proper emotional response in an audience (158). Gill writes that “the extension of ethos to an effect produced in the listener (putting him in the state of mind to respond to the ethos of the speaker) is none the less a marked development from Aristotelian usage” (159). One could say that ethos here crosses into and shares some of the province of pathos, an interesting question that is beyond the current parameters of discussion. However, this

⁴ Gill explains that the emphasis on style extended to the actual performance of rhetoric in public: “[Cicero] also stresses, much more than Aristotle, the idea that an orator should himself express, with some intensity, the emotions he wants to induce in others, and that he should (like a good actor or dramatist) work up in himself the emotions he wants to express” (157). The difference in context may account for this difference in emphasis: Cicero had in mind the advocate speaking on behalf of a client, while Aristotle had in mind the speaker defending himself. I think that if we allow that one rhetorical purpose of a traveler and travel writer is to deliver defenses or critiques of a home society or civilization, then the Aristotelian explanation of style is very much applicable to this study.

matter of the audience's relationship with a rhetor and the terms of association has evolved to the point where we now consider audiences as co-constructors of rhetoric, rather than passive recipients of oratory.

A contemporary articulation of such thinking comes in Joanna Schmertz's essay "Constructing Essences: Ethos and the Postmodern Subject of Feminism" in which she argues for a reconfiguration of ethos, authority and agency. Citing Karen Lefevre, she departs from Corbett and other more classically trained rhetoricians in claiming that "ethos is created by both listener and speaker in a negotiation in which neither has the final say" (84). Given a telos of feminist critique of rhetoric's historical association as a locus of male privilege, Schmertz also determines to ground and contextualize rhetoric in material relations of the speaker and the audience. I hasten to add the imperative that we incorporate into our ethical calculations the subject(s) of discourse who are themselves not specifically addressed, yet are represented in the content of rhetoric. In the context of my project, I mean specifically the people of a travel destination being written about *by* traveling subjects *for* (primarily) domestic audiences. Lefevre, Schmertz and others demonstrate how ethos is negotiated between audience and speaker. What still needs to be accounted for is how ethos considers its relations to those not inherently part of the rhetorical situation of a writer.

Contemporary rhetoricians have managed to resolve the tension between text and context through terminological means. Schmertz explains Crowley's distinction between "invented" ethos and "situated" ethos. The former is created by a speaker via linguistic devices, while the latter concerns ethos that is vested in a speaker's name or social

position (84). The terminological differentiation is helpful given that rhetoricians have disagreed historically about the etymology, and whether ethos is something to be manufactured within the text itself (Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, with a qualifying note⁵) or something that precedes the text. The dispute turns on whether ethos is created by superb communication or by the status of a speaker as a classed, sexed, nationalized, or politicized being.

Another recurring issue in discussions of ethos turns on problems with Cartesian subject-object relations. Conceptions of ethos informed by earlier theories of rhetoric warrant reconfiguration given the theoretical problems raised by post-structuralist critiques of a unitary, stable speaking subject—a master of language and signification. For Schmertz, ethos should involve a blurring of the presumptive subject-object boundary, wherein modern agents act on objects in the world: “Unanchored from the speaker, the audience, and the speech, ethos becomes Ethos, and in doing so floats above its mere instantiation in material objects. It colors the rhetorical situation, signaling a convergence or lack thereof between its elements, but does not reside within it” (85).

So what does this reconfigured, postmodern ethos look like? Schmertz invokes the well-traveled jargon of “contingencies, indeterminacy, provisionality,” as the originating loci of such an Ethos. Still, her generative questions for creating a place from

⁵ Kennedy's 1991 translation of the *Rhetoric* demonstrates that Aristotle was himself not always so certain about this clear demarcation, as he would see, for example, the builder and the building as one and the same. Therefore, the *Rhetoric* doesn't make for a simple, foundational Enlightenment text where subjects are free-floating agents who act in the world on objects from which they can be easily distinguished (See Schmertz).

which to speak are valuable to this project for problematizing relations among speakers, their audiences, and those represented by their rhetoric:

Thus, rather than asking “How may I name this context,” a pragmatics of naming would ask, “What does this act of naming do?” In naming the self, it would ask “What does it mean to identify myself in this way? What sort of agency does this position enable and restrict?” In naming others, it would ask not “Who is X” but rather “What is X now?” or “What is X here?” Like Aristotle’s conception of ethos [...] a pragmatics of naming would eschew a fixed separation between subjects and objects. But it would also recognize that these boundaries need to be drawn and redrawn for different political exigencies. (88)

Schmertz seeks a new ethics of the rhetorical situation, whereby the speaking subject, in some complicated relation with his audience and subject matter, takes responsibility for disclosing and examining her position, its authority, and its signifying powers. In the writing context imagined by travel writers, the impact of one’s words on others, not just the audiences invoked but also those represented in their narratives needs to posit fundamental responsibility or reciprocity. “What is X now” or “What is X here” are questions that may or may not be on the aesthetic radar of the travel writer. Travel as rhetoric, on the other hand, foregrounds such questions of ethos, compelling the interest of writers whose narratives influence cultural attitudes and geo-political relations.

Travel and Travel Writing as Global Rhetoric and Popular Culture

Modern rhetoric is understood to be communicative action that operates not only in occasional or specifically persuasive discursive contexts, but also on quotidian levels, for example, in the everyday words and speech acts of popular forms of cultures.

Consider, for this discussion, the matter of travel writing, especially the first-person

travel narrative so popular in diverse forms of media such as the travelogue, the guidebook, the video documentary, or the travel blog. As easily recognizable and widely circulating cultural artifacts, travel writing texts accomplish a great deal rhetorically.

Barry Brummett explains the linkage between rhetoric and popular culture and accounts for the influence of such texts:

If *culture* means those objects and events that nurture, shape, and sustain people, then *popular culture* must be those artifacts that are most actively involved in winning the favor of the public and thus in shaping the public in particular ways. Popular culture is the cutting edge of culture's instruments that shape people into what they are. The work of popular culture is therefore inherently rhetorical, and it is an arena in which rhetoric as the management of meaning must be most actively engaged. When we consider the rhetoric of popular culture, then, we are considering how artifacts work to influence us and to make us who we are, and how cultures symbolically nurture and engender their members. (xxi)

Rhetorical inquiry can discern the presumed values, knowledge, and experiences of the writer and those addressed. Travel writers do so much more than report or document from afar. They organize meaning, categorize cultures, and posit civilizational assumptions found in their points of departure. When confronted with people whose experiences, histories, and material lives differ from their own, travel writers inevitably weigh in on matters of human rights, freedom of speech, gender equity, and the politics of historiography; whether audiences expect or demand conscious commentary or judgments on the part of these writers varies according to the rhetorical situation.

This dissertation examines how travel writers “win favor” with audiences through their narrativized accounts of travel. The way a writer constructs narrative voice, a personal character, and a moving story gives many audiences a window into the writer's

imagined place in the world and social relations with global others.⁶ Travel writers composing first-person narratives effect a textual presence that becomes part of the literature of a place, both mediator and agent in the production of what and how audiences may come to know a destination. The question of self-representation, then, could be said to pose an ethical challenge to writers (though not all appear inclined to imagine their efforts in such terms). Rhetorical, literary, and cultural critics may rightfully roll their eyes at transparent prefatory disclaimers like “this travel book is not a political book”; scorn notwithstanding, even in a place like Cyprus, many travel narrators appear convinced that an apolitical text can not only be imagined but produced and consumed.⁷

Debbie Lisle, in *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, equates travel writing with diverse media forms, including “policy documents, eye-witness accounts, newspaper stories and documentaries” (33). Through its work as “part of the discursive terrain that shapes the ‘real world’ of global politics,” travel writing informs our knowledge of the world (33). “To put it another way,” she continues, “travel writing is an important part of the *narration* of global politics—it is one of many types of representation that shape time/space-specific events according to wider structures of

⁶ So, too, can we speculate about the audiences who are not addressed in a given narrative. In particular, I have in mind here the peoples and cultures of now-distant realms who have provided the material for the travel tale. For this project, the extent to which the travel writer invests energy in a future, enduring relationships with visited peoples and places figure heavily in the ethics of travel writing.

⁷ Both Lawrence Durrell, author of *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, and Oliver Burch, author of *The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus*, preface their travelogues of Cyprus as “not political” in nature, a claim that post-colonial scholars like Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, David Spurr, and many others would see as naïve at best, spurious at worst.

global power” (33).⁸ Travel writing may lack the academic rigor of a disciplined historical analysis and the depersonalized detachment of social scientific inquiry; yet as popular and descriptive accounts of place, they function as constitutive elements in the formation of knowledge about places and peoples.

Travelogues thus narrate the “facts” of global politics. For the liberal Western subject, such privilege represents an opportunity to address the flaws and inequities produced by a triumphalist Western hegemony. Travel essayist Pico Iyer could hardly be more sanguine when considering the motives of “the traveler”—by which he means that well-meaning sovereign who acts in humanist traditions to better the world and the self, via travel. In his essay “Why We Travel,” Iyer ascribes pretenses to the motives for travel that are lofty by any measure, but not so easily dismissed:

We travel, then, in part just to shake up our complacencies by seeing all the moral and political urgencies, the life-and-death dilemmas, that we seldom have to face at home. And we travel to fill in the gaps left by tomorrow’s headlines: When you drive down the streets of Port-au-Prince, for example, where there is almost no paving and women relieve themselves next to mountains of trash, your notions of the Internet and a ‘one world order’ grow usefully revised. Travel is the best way we have of rescuing the humanity of places, and saving them from abstraction and ideology.

The liberal humanist is bound to admire Iyer’s noble goal of “rescuing” people and places whose identities have been overdetermined by forces of obscure origin: exactly how and why they have become abstracted and ideological goes unquestioned. Iyer, in referencing

⁸ To support her case, Lisle includes a revealing anecdote about how President Clinton, in the midst of the Balkan Wars of the 1990s and the taxing global efforts to find a solution to the fighting, read Robert Kaplan’s bestselling travelogue *Balkan Ghosts*. Kaplan’s work graciously displays its own indebtedness to the efforts of earlier travel writers, including Rebecca West, whose *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is widely regarded as among the most influential travel texts ever written about the Balkans. Through this genealogy of travel writing, a powerful politician gathers a sense of the historically-determined and complicated terrain of Balkan cultural politics.

“tomorrow’s headlines,” intimates that stultifying media discourse and the unexamined confidence of globalization functions as a leveler of economic inequities. Worth noting here is Iyer’s unwillingness to locate these inequitable effects as the product of diverse forms of colonialism and hegemonic discourses of “the West,” where privileged material conditions in Europe or the US posit the presumed superiority of these nations to poorer countries around the globe.

Sociologist Dean MacCannell’s study offers an implicit criticism for such unwittingly triumphalist configurations of the traveler or tourist. In his 1977 book *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, MacCannell follows the tourist to the destination in order to better understand what this particular industry and its signifying practices explain about modern (Western) societies. His study focuses more on the symbolic values that accrue from collective acts of tourism than on the self-consciously produced subjectivity of the traveler:

In the establishment of modern society, the individual act of sightseeing is probably less important than the ceremonial ratification of authentic attractions as objects of ultimate value, a ratification at once caused by and resulting in a gathering of tourists around an attraction and measurable to a certain degree by the time and distance the tourists travel to reach it. The actual act of communion between tourist and attraction is less important than the *image* or *idea* of society that the collective act generates. (14-15)

The “tsk tsk” of the tourist delivered at the Green Line in the opening passage, in other words, communicates a pity that positions the Westerner as the one who has arrived, while the Cypriot continues to toil in the wake of an unrealized or misshapen modernity. Here, MacCannell provides critics of travel literature with a sense of the interpretive stakes involved in studying modern tourism and its effects. He directs us to consider

“ceremonial ratification of authentic attractions”—and travel writing certainly functions as part of this ratifying process—rather than the personal mechanics of sightseeing.

Though his context focuses more on domestic tourism, MacCannell’s analysis encourages critics to explore what it might mean for US and other Western travelers to visit Cyprus, Turkey, or the Middle East. What images or ideas prevail in the representation of travel to such places today? A concern with the writer’s purpose and state of mind matters in an analysis of ethos, but so, too, does consideration of the politics of movement (or displacement) and context. In essence, it privileges the individual act over the ideas and ideological forces generated by and/or prior to the action. For example, many people move about here and there, but not all are white, male, middle-class US or British citizens with the resources, the first-world passports, and inclinations to arrange such picaresque journeys on their own terms.

Caren Kaplan carries the critique of modern travel considerably further than Iyer and MacCannell in her discussion of the effects of tourism. Like MacCannell, Kaplan focuses less on the autonomous choices of a given traveler and more on “the tourist” as an ideological construct that performs a vital role in the project of modernity:

If the tourist traverses boundaries, they are boundaries that the tourist participates in creating; that is, an economic and social order that requires ‘margins’ and ‘centers’ will also require representation of those structural distinctions. The tourist confirms and legitimates the social reality of constructions such as ‘First’ and ‘Third’ Worlds, ‘development’ and ‘underdevelopment,’ or ‘metropolitan’ and ‘rural.’ Created out of increasing leisure time in industrialized nations and driven by a need to ascertain identity and location in a world that undermines the certainty of those categories, the tourist acts as an agent of modernity. (58)

Contrasting these philosophies of travel reveals a stark tension over the matter of agency for the tourist. Iyer's sensitive, well-educated, and well-financed traveler may offer a liberal corrective to the excesses of globalization. Travel, he claims, can disrupt this knowledge for an individual who knows how to do it right—where to go, what to see, how to be.

The effective limits of Iyer's traveler are set according to notions like awareness or enlightenment, directing travelers to construe their wanderings as the vehicle or muse for personal enrichment. What Iyer politely refuses to acknowledge here is that in the US and elsewhere, people have been duped into believing in and naturalizing myths of their own global importance and centrality. The traveler celebrates the reach of his or her own agency, a move accomplished subsequent to setting aside abstraction and ideology.

Kaplan's tourist, on the other hand, remains integrated in global politics, as the traveler or tourist's economic successes, manufactured desires, and endless pursuit of fulfillment of these desires makes this subject complicit with the discourses of colonialism and its enduring effects in the post-colonial era. She asserts that "the tourist acts as an agent" performing on behalf of the West to promote the project of modernity in ideological regimes that are sustained symbolically through metaphor. Travel writing is an important conduit through which these metaphors circulate culturally.

Travel writing is produced through rhetorical moves on the part of writers who deliver insights into not only the landscape but also the cultural identities and ideological allegiances of the predominantly Western narrator. Sometimes, the assumptions and privileges of travel writers may be ascertained more easily than others. Many post-

colonial critics deplore what they perceive in the relations between narrator and object of travel and curiosity. Kaplan essentially posits domination as an effect of narration:

the occidental ethnographer, the modernist expatriate poet, the writer of popular travel accounts, and the tourist may all participate in the mythologized narrativizations of displacement without questioning the cultural, political, and economic grounds of their different professions, privileges, means, and limitations. Immigrants, refugees, exiles, nomads, and the homeless also move in and out of these discourses as metaphors, tropes, and symbols but rarely as historically recognized producers of critical discourses themselves. Euro-American discourses of displacement tend to absorb difference and create ahistorical amalgams; thus a field of social forces becomes represented as a personal experience, its lived intensity of separation marking a link with others. (2)

For Kaplan, people caught in the crosshairs of narration function as material for travel writers, who typically locate themselves as self-consciously constructed, rhetorically-motivated characters in scripts comprehensible to a privileged and rarely questioned “home” or “center.” Travel writers accomplish this through a variety of means, such as routinely paying genealogical homage to their predecessors—travel writers of earlier ages and imaginary cultural affiliations reaching far back into the recesses of antiquity.⁹ They freely dabble in research, analysis, and citation practices that many scholars would consider arbitrary, even reckless. At their most indulgent, travel writers miraculously construe civilizational certainties about the people who occupy a landscape, such Turks, Greeks, and Cypriots; this is often accomplished with an economy of language that

⁹ Plenty of earlier travel writing exists on Cyprus, as evident from a brief look at the diversity and depth in texts like Claude Delaval Cobham’s *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus*, Tim Boatswain’s *A Traveller’s History of Cyprus*, and *English Travel Literature On Cyprus (1878-1960)* edited by Eroulla Demetriou and Jose Ruiz Mas. Ancient Greek and Roman travelers, and later the medieval French and Italians, followed by the Ottoman and British writers and scholars make for a rich tapestry of what has often been construed as “travel literature.” Texts from before 1960 remain significant for Cyprus studies for many reasons, especially due to the continuing fascination they hold for contemporary travelers like Durrell, Thubron, and Burch.

dismisses with qualifying concessions, like “in the cases of many of the Turks I have met” and so forth. Instead, audiences are delivered “the Turk,” “the Greek,” and “the Cypriot.” Nevertheless, as indicated by the work of many post-colonial scholars and critics, travelers and travel writers inform local and global discourses. The effects of this discursive power are mixed, according to the context of narration. Cyprus is like any destination of travel, in that the identity of the traveler affects the experience of travel and the traveler’s relations to the other. Given its trying political dynamic, who you are tends to matter a good deal—as much or more than it does elsewhere.

The personal thus shapes key aspects of textual production: the experience of travel itself, the narrativization of the travel, its reach to the writer’s imagined communities back home. Travel writers tend not to examine closely the matter of how “the personal,” as a political and ideological category, informs the production of their travel narrative, as well as the texts of the primarily Western writers whose paths they retrace. The extent to which personal prejudices and allegiances—according to lines of nation, culture, religion, race, gender, language, and class for example—shape travel narratives, inflect its analysis, or enable its troping of land and people poses an important challenge for critics and audiences to consider. Consumers of travel literature, it should be mentioned, remain a central part of the rhetorical situation, as their own aesthetic preferences validate some narrating personae while rejecting others.¹⁰

¹⁰ Audiences, too, cannot avoid complicity in the cultural reproduction accomplished through the circulation of these texts.

As for the craft of the first-person narrator, a continuum begins on one end with the solipsistic and self-absorbed storyteller, whose endless personal perambulations and private musings diminish or even eclipse the landscape; on the other end comes the ostensibly present yet more or less fully-cloaked narrator who remains virtually invisible and off-limits within the text. As might be expected, travel writers vary in how much detail they invest in the development of a personal self. In the case of Oliver Burch, author of *The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus*, which I examine more closely in Chapter 4, the writer weaves a thread of personal evolution through the narrative to illustrate his discovery that Turks of Cyprus are not exactly the threatening creatures that lore has made them out to be. In acknowledging the effects of personal and cultural bias, his narrative is fairly unlike others. Most travel writers practice their craft in a way that deflects or conceals material personal involvement in a narrative. For example, few writers challenge themselves to calculate the effect of their own presence in their destination of travel, as well as the potential effects of the text they will produce on domestic or global English-language audiences.

If travelers from places like the US or the UK recognize any national complicity in the shaping of the landscape, they often choose not to examine or even acknowledge this—a politically exonerating, if predictable maneuver that tacitly accepts the inevitable scarring of the landscape and fortifies a distance between narrator and “the material.” In considering Cyprus, that means reading the space as a once-colonized island of the Levant considered by many to be a gateway to the Orient, if not, in select places and

times, the Orient itself. Edward Said's formulation of the problem of the Orientalist writer describing the East captures the ethical challenge:

Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. (20-21)

Though I find this particular articulation of his theory of Orientalism too deterministic—one cannot ever be an ethical Orientalist? Is the existential split always already upon the writer and the people she visits?—Said is right to observe the problem of exterior positioning of writers whose nations, passports, and embodied difference obviously inform their experiences of travel and writing. To write, for example, that the Orientalist, or traveler “is *never* concerned with the Orient” fails to acknowledge the possibilities of writers who have already imagined an ethics of writing that shows concern for the Orient or for others. But when people travel for leisure, for military service, for language training in order to have careers in business or government, the likelihood will often be that this ethic, if cultivated, will subordinate itself to other motives and obligations.

Still, in Cyprus like anywhere, some writers have remarkably lucid moments and demonstrate ambitious awareness of the politics of space. All are affected by forces like the Cold War, colonialism, European racial politics, and other such ideological behemoths that leave everyone—visitor, Cypriot, Greek, Turk, Briton, American—liable to effects of history and global politics. Still, travelers, writers, and audiences do exercise agency and make decisions that fuel larger cultural narratives-to-be. This study uses

rhetorical inquiry to shed light on the machinery of cultural production, with implications for travelers, travel writers, their audiences, and cultural critics.

Project Overview, Methodology, and Text Selection

This dissertation examines how narrators construct the self, the other, and the relations between the two in the context of modern travel writing set in Cyprus, 1955-2005. Through a close reading of several primary texts, this analysis probes the following: the circumstances of production for these texts; the writer's rhetorical creation of a credible, sympathetic narrator; the dominant themes of these travel texts; and these texts' differential construction of the other, in particular their troping of "the Turk," but also their troping of "the Greek," "the Cypriot," and the island of Cyprus itself. This latter focus on tropology requires some conceptual unpacking before returning to the matter of narration and rhetorical situation.

In the essay "Four Master Tropes" published in the appendix of *Grammar of Motives*, Burke identifies metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony as "master tropes" deployed not only for "purely figurative purposes" but also—as nonfiction writers, journalists, critics and others should agree—to discover and describe "the truth" (503). In other words, troping gets things done, shapes perspectives, and functions rhetorically. In *Appeals in Modern Rhetoric*, Killingsworth explains:

the idea of *troping*, or turning a phrase, captures a truth about rhetorical appeals that we are liable to forget: They always involve swerves, indirections, substitutions, twists, and turns of meaning. Love is not a rose after all, so what do we gain rhetorically by identifying the one thing with the other? [...] Tropes help us to classify and study other functions of

appeals. They suggest how one position (author, audience, or value) can relate to another. (121)

And so to borrow from Killingsworth, I understand a trope to be any figurative language that suggests a “turn” or “twist” on the conventional meaning of a term or expression. Tropes, in other words, make for particularly useful analytical tools for the study of cultural narratives, especially the sort under discussion here. In regard to texts such as first-person narrative essays, memoirs, and travelogues, the story is presumably based on the lived experiences of a traveler with a place. In the context of travel, audiences expect what is alien or different to be rendered not only comprehensible, but also entertainingly so, in the form of an engaging story.

In *The Content of the Form*, Hayden White posits an inevitable literary or figurative component to the narration of lived, material experiences. He writes, “If there is any logic presiding over the transition from the level of fact or event in the discourse to that of narrative, it is the logic of figuration itself, which is to say, tropology” (47). For those disinclined to approach travelogues as figurative productions, White reminds us that “a narrative account is always a figurative account, always an allegory” (48). The rhetorical analysis of this study identifies these figurations as they elucidate the modern identity politics unfolding within the text, especially as it concerns the narrating subject.

For personal and political reasons I focus this analysis on “The Turk,” a signifier I place in ironic quotations. The intent of such a move is to heighten awareness of the complexity and internal variety too often overlooked in centuries of travel literature produced by Western writers to capture and essentialize a wide, dynamic, and shifting range of significations. As for the political exigencies of such a study, I point to the

importance of Cyprus as a focal point in Turkey's complicated relationship to Europe and the European Union as a suitor nation-state: one long kept at arms length for fear of its presumed civilizational differences. Justifiably or not, the Cyprus problem periodically moves to center stage in Western discussions of Turkey's place in the world. The textual analysis performed in this study emerges from close reading of travel narratives that provide audiences with representations of Turks and Cyprus intended to resonate with European and other Western audiences. My rhetorical approach to travel writing means constantly attending not only to *what* these writers produce, but also to why they write as they do under given circumstances, for certain audiences. However, I have deliberately avoided a "one size fits all" methodology, instead preferring to examine each text on its own terms, accounting as responsibly and accurately as possible for factors like mode of travel, relations to place, time period, form, and so forth. I have attempted to account for the dominant themes and rhetorical dimensions at play in each travelogue considered, leading to some diversity in analytical focus across each chapter.

At the outset of this project, I reviewed travel compendia that have served me well enough in my own travels, like *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide*, which in some respects introduce competent overviews of the political situation and offer helpful recommended reading lists. Unfortunately, books of this sort follow a fairly rigid formula that obscures the personal, preferring instead a more depersonalized, holistic, politically safe representation of a place, one that inevitably settles for a largely uncontroversial, conventional reading of the status quo. Though I willingly concede that writing in these guidebooks presents a narrative voice (even without a first-person narrator), the rhetorical

analysis can be more trenchant and expansive when the provenance is known and the writer is actually a character within the narrative. Without the writer's name and participation in the narrative of the place—as is often the case in multi-authored, logistics-oriented guidebooks like *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide*, as well as in other series where the writing is consistently depersonalized and focused on the destination—the analysis suffers from the omission of relevant and significant contextual knowledge about the author. This could lead to unwelcome generic speculation on important issues in production.¹¹

While several primary texts receive attention in this study, including the *Harper's* article excerpted at the outset of the chapter, I primarily discuss the book-length travelogues of the modern era of armed conflict and partition, beginning in 1955 and extending to the present. I choose 1955 as a starting point as this was the year when Greek guerrillas began attacking British colonial interests, which effectively put Cyprus on the global map as a land of political turmoil.¹² Lawrence Durrell's *Bitter Lemons*, the central text of Chapter 2, narrates events of this time period. The most recent texts included in this study were published in 2005, chronicling events from the 1990s and into

¹¹ An interesting case could be made for studying the ethos and politics of guidebooks like *Frommer's*, *Lonely Planet*, *Rough Guide*, and so on. For example, Tom Brosnahan, the author of the first *Lonely Planet: Turkey* books, has also just published a memoir from his time in Turkey. The purpose of this memoir, *Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, and Brosnahan's own cultural politics, become a central concern of his own personal story of coming to know Turkey, in particular as a writer, editor, and partisan advocate in a campaign to put Turkey on the map as a popular destination of modern travel. As Brosnahan happened to be a Peace Corps volunteer and unreconstructed nationalist in the 1960s, one could argue that the template for English-language travel literature was forged along rigid, yet often invisible lines of Cold War politics.

¹² The matter of when, exactly, Cyprus became a "problem," represents a contentious question. While widespread violence began in 1955, British travelers have been writing about the political situation in Cyprus and the popularity of enosis since 1878 (Demetriou and Mas). In that year, the first soldiers and colonial administrative personnel began to arrive to occupy the island, followed by adventurers eager to map and inventory the empire's newest possession. Acts of resistance to colonial authority in Cyprus have a long history, including the 1931 riots that burned Government House to the ground.

the early years of the new millennium. Travelogues—longer, narrated texts documenting personal experiences of writers—have been chosen because they generally feature richer detail concerning both narrator and the objects of narration. They also tend to carry greater potential to continue circulating among English language audiences primarily in the UK, Europe, and the US; such texts become valued resources for those with an interest in travel, Cyprus, and the oftentimes troubled relations between people of East and West.¹³ The story behind the texts selected for this study runs parallel to the modern history of Cyprus itself.

For all the glossy guidebooks, the stunning ruins of antiquity, and the inviting Mediterranean beaches, the Cyprus of the decades after the 1974 coup d'état and invasion has enjoyed a tenuous security at best.¹⁴ The proximity of the Green Line and the fervor of the conflicting communities' distrust of the other side have undermined the coherence, stability, and fictive 'peace' so essential to most functioning modern tourism. Since the cease-fire of 1974 and its subsequent population exchanges, people in Cyprus have lived with neither war nor peace. Though extremists may no longer sow mayhem against each other directly, symbolic violence has continued, enacted through bitter propaganda disseminated through virtually every imaginable aspect of public life, including state-sponsored domains such as tourism, education, the arts, and the professions. Whether

¹³ Scholars and cultural critics in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey have read and discussed some of these texts, but given the travel writers' obvious attention to Western target audiences "back home," my primary interest is in the reception of this literature among these audiences.

¹⁴ I would argue that they have "security," but not "peace." Many Greek Cypriots continue to profess a fear of a future attack by Turkey, often justified through what Papadakis calls the "myth of Turkish expansionism." See *Echoes from the Dead Zone*. While the large Turkish military presence in the north has reduced Turkish Cypriot anxiety about an attack from the Greeks, they harbor their own fears about a change in the status quo. Their parallel myth concerns the belief that EOKA/Enosis remains popular, and that a solution could return them to the peril of Greek nationalists, whose extremists would again attempt to drive them from the island.

sparring through their respective national media outlets or squabbling over terms of representation at international forums, people of each side tend to distrust the motives of the other. As the conflict has been internationalized since the 1950s, people of both sides have long courted the sympathy of the outside world. Travelers to Cyprus come to know the place in over-determined political circumstances. In order to demonstrate how Cyprus stands in distinction to other travel destinations, one need look no further than the island's two respective "mother countries," Turkey and Greece, and how travel writing has thrived in these nearby lands.

An effort to catalogue recent travel literature and narratives about Turkey or Greece turns up a slew of material published in the past few decades: dozens of book-length travelogues, memoirs, first-person political narratives, as well as many more shorter essays published in a variety of venues, such as anthologies like *Travelers' Tales: Turkey* or *Travelers' Tales: Greece*, or in online compendia like "bootsnall.org." Such has not been the case for Cyprus. Although the island merits its own *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide* editions, the *Let's Go* series has subordinated the island and its million people to minor sections in its larger books on Greece and Turkey. In an arrangement that essentially recognizes partition to the mother countries rather than troubled independence, the Turkish north finds itself included in *Let's Go: Turkey* while the Greek south of the island gets covered in *Let's Go: Greece*. A recent search on the bootsnall.org website—where travel writers post first-person narratives written as long as a decade ago

and spanning to the present—turned up not a single entry on Cyprus.¹⁵ The links to Greece and Turkey, of course, overflow with material from aspiring travel essayists.

Why has so little travel writing been produced about a place with astounding historical ruins, glorious beaches, proximity to three continents and the Middle East, endlessly theatrical political intrigue, and other sources of interest? One rather obvious spatial explanation would be its liminality within the European imagination. In simple cartographic terms, Cyprus is so far south and east in relation to Brussels and Amsterdam that it is probably one of the last points to be noticed on most maps of Europe. Despite an extraordinarily rich history and landscape, Cyprus could be overshadowed by the ancient glories of Egypt to the south and the sacral appeals of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands to the East. In more recent centuries, it has been the pawn in imperial games carried out by Venetians, Ottomans, and Britons—significant, but not exactly an indispensable piece. The Ottomans did not invest much in Cyprus nor rely on it strategically; the British insisted on its importance during the Cold War. Though Cyprus became independent in 1960, they have never left, despite the ill will created by the anti-colonial struggle.

The violent past and current militarization of Cyprus probably has done more than anything else to tarnish its attractiveness for most potential tourists and travelers. Cyprus has had something of an image problem as the home to Europe's last divided capital, a place that has been reductively configured as "a problem" for five decades and counting. Even without actual fighting, the island suffers from its reputation. In one revealing anecdote, a writer pitching a travel piece about Cyprus in 1999 to his editors at *The*

¹⁵ These results were from a search on the web site in May, 2007.

Atlantic Monthly had to first convince them that he would indeed be safe during his weeks of frolicking around the sights of the south (Burns 30).

No collection of late twentieth-century travel writing about Cyprus exists, in any language, though if one did, most likely it would be in English given the association of the genre with colonialism, and the British imperial presence from 1878-1960. The most comprehensive anthology published, *English Travel Literature on Cyprus (1878-1960)*, stops at the end of the British colonial era. Narrative texts from the time of the Cyprus Republic and into the present era of inter-communal warfare, coup, invasion, partition, and stalemate (1963 to the present) have been produced mostly for newspapers and magazines by war correspondents from Western nations. As might be expected in an environment where high-stakes international players mediate a decades-old ceasefire between warring people, sober political memoirs outnumber inspiring travelogues, creating a relative paucity of literature that could strictly be considered “travel.”

Political pundits pushing their own take on the island’s recent history bear titles like *Hostage to History* and *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*. To the extent that these texts deploy personal narrative or landscaping of the island, they largely dominate what passes for post-1974 travel literature about this place.¹⁶ Ultimately, these works focus on the politics and history of the island as the expense of cultural lives and the quotidian. Their narratives provide assorted political explanations for what has made Cyprus so vexed,

¹⁶ I refer here to Christopher Hitchens’ well-known *Hostage to History: Cyprus from the Ottomans to Kissinger*, which I take up in more depth in Chapter 4, and Andrew Borowiec’s *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*. Another more recent political memoir of this type is William Mallinson’s *Cyprus: A Modern History*. These titles represent but a few of many recent “memoirs” focusing almost exclusively on the politics of Cyprus, with the rhetorical purpose of allocating responsibility for the continuing stalemate, rather than attending to how a writer came to know a place through travel.

with travel serving as a subordinate lens for interpreting the landscape. Yet travel experiences of political and diplomatic writers find their way into the literature, and some more traditionally travel-focused writers have continued to write about Cyprus. My focus in this study, however, rests primarily on these latter, more readily identifiable “travel” texts, which continue to impact people’s present, lived experiences—in EU and Western cultural politics, for example. Table 1-1 below provides titles, authors, publishers, genre, year, and my own brief commentary about production and circulation.

Table 1-1: Select Contemporary Travel Writing on Cyprus¹⁷

Title	Author	Publisher & Genre	Year	Production and Circulation Notes
<i>Bitter Lemons</i>	Lawrence Durrell	Faber, London. Memoir, travelogue.	1957	The author’s literary fame keeps <i>Bitter Lemons</i> on the map, and just about every subsequent travel writer, guidebook, and cultural commentator seems obliged to mention it. Carries literary interest, especially for Durrell scholars; very well-known memoir consistently recommended for Cyprus study and travel.
<i>Journey Into Cyprus</i>	Colin Thubron	Penguin, London. Travelogue.	1975	Thubron traveled by foot into the remote villages of the mountains and plains on the eve of the island’s catastrophe. For better or worse, key elements of narrator’s own subjectivity remain shrouded in mystery. He deals judiciously with both communities in depth, compassion, and humor. Recommended reading for travelers to Cyprus; also of special interest for foot travelers and Thubron’s admirers.

¹⁷ Few book-length narratives of life on the island that are not political accounts of the island’s troubles from 1955 to the present, nor exclusively academic, appear to exist. The decades after the 1974 coup d’etat, Turkish invasion, and partition have produced a bounty of political punditry, memoir, and anthropological study, but travelers and/or travel publishers and editors seem largely to have taken a pass.

<i>The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus</i>	Oliver Burch	Ashford, Buchan & Enright, Southampton, UK Travelogue.	1990	The book's surprisingly naïve Orientalist title and small publisher herald its relative obscurity. Despite its aesthetic shortcomings—Burch was nowhere near as accomplished or prolific as Durrell or Thubron—no other book before or after has treated the north of Cyprus and the Turks with the depth or insight as <i>Infidel Sea</i> . Occasionally mentioned and recommended for travel and study to Cyprus, but mostly restricted to the Turkish north, which few tourists actually visit for more than a day or two.
<i>Echoes from the Dead Zone</i>	Yiannis Papadakis	I.B. Tauris. London. Personal narrative informed by anthropology but written for the non-expert reader.	2005	The story embodies the methodology: a Greek Cypriot scholar frustrated by the nationalisms that have torn his homeland apart, he spends time in Turkey studying Turkish, then lives and studies in the north to see how 'the other side' lives. Slowly making a name for itself among travelers and also scholars in Middle Eastern, Near Eastern, and Cyprus studies.
<i>In the Land of Aphrodite</i>	Libby Rowan-Moorhouse	Book Guild Publishing, Sussex, England. Travelogue, memoir.	2005	Despite its predictable Turkophobia, <i>Aphrodite</i> offers insight into village life, as well as what living in Cyprus can be for women expatriates of Western extraction. For the tens of thousands of Brits relocating to or vacationing in Cyprus, this one is being marketed as required reading.
<i>Cyprus: A World Apart</i>	Seamus McHugh		1999	Obscure in comparison to the others in this study, but interesting for the way it positions itself—as an impartial, apolitical guidebook for the non-expert traveler. His temporary home and perspective rest squarely in the south with the Greeks of Cyprus, making his daytrips to the north revealing. Not often mentioned and difficult to find in and out of Cyprus.

Lawrence Durrell's memoir *Bitter Lemons* and Colin Thubron's travelogue *Journey Into Cyprus* represent the two best-known travel texts about Cyprus. Given this influence on subsequent travelers and writers, each receives its own separate chapter in this study, Chapters 2 and 3, respectively. The remaining texts I will be studying were written after 1974, and most of these will be considered together in Chapter 4. Given this study's focus on the Turks of Cyprus, an important contextual note regarding how travelers encounter the island and its people needs to be taken into account.

Since 1974, most visitors to the island have arrived through the internationally-recognized points of entry in the south, and they have tended to remain in the south for the duration of their visit. The literature about this Cyprus, the Greek-controlled Republic of Cyprus, tends to produce landscape pieces of people whose lives have been radically rearranged by war—in many cases by personal tragedies such as loss of livelihood, dispossession of land, the death of a loved one, and so forth. Roughly one-third of Greek Cypriots were displaced by the 1974 invasion and subsequent population exchanges. Yet travelers to the north can also discern a national narrative of victimhood from Turks of Cyprus, with their own distinct stories of personal suffering. Each side bears the effects of war. True, Junger's description of gawking tourists at the opening of the chapter confirms that, to some degree, the conflict itself has been commodified.

Sites along the Green Line and elsewhere have become incorporated into the sensitive modern tourist's comprehensive itinerary—along with beaches, Greco-Roman ruins, medieval castles, Ottoman-era public works, and pristine Orthodox churches of the cities and countryside. In the larger picture, however, most visitors can easily recognize

how the Green Line and the nationalist monuments of Cyprus function speak the tragedies of the island. They are too ubiquitous for most visitors to ignore. Even with recent developments easing restrictions on travelers' movements on the island, the Green Line remains intact, though at least most writers have the ability to pass through and experience both sides of the island in the coming decades.

Any text concerning the period from 1974-2003 emerges from an era when travel from north to south was impossible and travel from south to north was restricted to one-day passes grudgingly released to foreigners, who were then discouraged from spending money and prohibited from returning with goods from the north. Such measures, and the continuing lack of a proper resolution to the Cyprus problem, make the presence of conflict even more difficult to avoid. Still, some strive in earnest to render Cyprus as "normal" as possible for a storied Mediterranean island of famed antiquities, ancient civilizations, natural beauty, and political intrigue. A few writers aspire for rhetorical achievements well beyond this relatively standard fare. Chapter 5 of this dissertation considers just such a text in its goal of proposing an ethics of travel writing and reading; it examines Yiannis Papadakis's *Echoes from the Dead Zone*, as this unusual and important narrative suggests a different type of travel and a different ethic of relation to the other.

Before leaving the issue of existing travel literature and text selection, I feel obliged to point out the obvious masculinist slant of this study, as it considers only one text authored by a woman. While women in the north and south are not off-limits to male travelers, they historically have had a much easier time meeting and interacting with men.

Thus, the experiences and perspectives of Cypriot men naturally come off as normative and universal—when other texts available to travelers often serve to counter these cultural histories. Cynthia Cockburn’s *The Line: Women, Partition and the Gender Order in Cyprus*, for example, is an ethnographic account of women’s political lives and projects in the face of a protracted conflict situation. Her portraits of Cypriot women complement and contrast the cultural characterizations that emerge in existing travel narratives. Almost never do writers focus on women, much less through a “transversal feminist” political agenda. By supplying oft-ignored stories of Cypriot women, *The Line* offers at least one map of the experiences of women on the island, who are routinely ignored or inaccessible to the primarily male travelers who have visited since 1955.

In fact, Cockburn’s text illustrates the problem. Travel writing, like travel itself, has been an historically male-dominated enterprise, and Cyprus has been a site of curiosity for several British male travel writers. In the spaces where travel writers meet the land to make cultural history—the coffee shop, the castle ruin—women are often absent. Yet their experiences, stories, and contact with travelers should be no less important and representative. Though an increase of women travelers and travel writers from the UK and elsewhere may lead to more culturally complicated narration in the future, one can also hope for the possibility of Greek and Turkish Cypriot women writing in English about their experiences on the island. With more women involved in travel and travel writing, the ethics of encounter and the troping of people and landscape would undoubtedly mirror some of the same historical and cultural narratives put into discursive

play by men. But the people, land, and landscape would surely be different than what has been imagined by British writers like Durrell, Thubron, Hitchens, and Burch.

On Rhetoric and Scholarly Ethos: A Personal Note

Personal travel experiences in Cyprus, supplemented by intensive study of the contemporary travel accounts from the island, lead me to posit an uncontroversial yet significant claim for those approaching travel writing rhetorically: if a traveler plans to meet the people there with the intent of writing about it later, locals will almost unfailingly want to know the angle: who is this person? What is the source of this interest? Some of this interest could be attributed to a simple human curiosity quite understandable for people living on an island, albeit the third largest in the Mediterranean. The suffocating saturation of political significance in the minutiae of daily life accounts for the rest. Some travel writers do not much care for this curiosity, as it shifts the focus back onto the visitor, politics, and personal agendas. Even worse, reciprocity or engaged dialectics on the part of the traveler threaten to disrupt the privileged totality of the gaze and the project of representing the other. Many travel writers prefer that contingencies of the self stay off the table and anonymous. Colin Thubron, in his 1975 travelogue *Journey into Cyprus*, takes to feigning sleep when he tires of personal questions. Aspects of his own identity remain inaccessible to both his audiences and the locals he encounters during his travels. Of course, not all writers avail themselves of the political cover available through the depersonalized aesthetic norms of narration. Yiannis Papadakis's 2005 book *Echoes with the Dead Zone*, presents an

alternative ethos for travel narration, where the storyteller becomes available, even vulnerable within the journey of travel and through the written text that politicizes the personal (see Chapter 5).

As this study emerges from personal experiences living among Turkish people, traveling in Cyprus, editing travel writing, and studying rhetoric, it makes sense to start with the personal, a self-accounting that contributes to the framing of this study. Furthermore, the rhetorical analysis to come later makes ethos and the politics of narration a central matter. Beginning with the personal takes me back to the summer of 1994 to my first visit to Cyprus. Back then I was a wide-eyed twenty-five-year old living abroad for the first time in my life. If I had any inchoate pretensions of occupying a grander subject position, such as “a traveler,” they took a backseat to the time-sensitive promise of bourgeois leisure. Teaching English writing, literature, composition, and language to private high school students in Istanbul, Turkey, had its benefits, including summer vacations to tourist destinations in the Eastern Mediterranean. As an educated and curious young person I cared about politics, history, and culture, but not more than the appeal of cheap, scarcely-populated beaches. Modest economic privilege and regional proximity delivered me to Cyprus, where I got my beaches, just a lot fewer than I had expected.

Rather than sunbathing, most of my time in those two weeks went into dusty minibus rides and hitchhikes to the stunning sights of the north. The landscape included outrageously beautiful gothic castles—unlike any I had seen in Turkey—dotting the Five-Finger mountain range just a few sky miles from the sea. I met mostly easygoing and

open-hearted people, from both Turkey and Cyprus, with lots to say about the politics of the place. As for the Turks of Cyprus, certain qualities distinguished them from the Turkish people I had been coming to know in Istanbul. They spoke Turkish differently, spoke English with British accents, and sometimes drank brandy sours with particular enthusiasm. Did northern Cyprus have more distinctions from Turkey than similarities, I wondered? This possibility surprised me given the material, historical, and political connections to Turkey that superficially dominate the land and landscape of northern Cyprus. To visit this politically isolated community takes only a short flight or boat ride from various parts of Turkey. Many Turkish TV broadcasts give weather reports on the north. Back then, going to northern Cyprus meant going to a place where the people spoke Turkish, read newspapers from Turkey and largely considered themselves Turks. How different could Turkish Cyprus be from Turkey?

The answer to the above question would be “very different,” were the matter taken up in isolation. The question begs at least this follow-up: How different was the south of the island from the north? This, too, might produce a superficial response of “very different.” Only years later would I begin to discover how much the Greek people of the south and the Turkish people of the north had grown apart since the troubles of the 1950s. Indeed, all I knew of Cyprus at the time was limited to Turkish Cypriot or Turkish perspectives, viewpoints that often turned out to be at odds with those held by most people outside of Turkey. At the time, I was so cavalier about my trip that I neglected to adequately prepare for the passport complexities of visiting north Cyprus. I had read or heard beforehand that getting a stamp from the authorities of the Turkish Republic of

Northern Cyprus in my passport could jeopardize travel to Greece, but I forgot to request a stamp on a separate sheet of paper. Fortunately, that passport expired before I began to make visits to the Greek-controlled and officially recognized Republic of Cyprus.¹⁸ On the whole, the first visit just left me stunned, delivering the first of many partial apprehensions of Cyprus. After this initial visit, I took several other trips from Turkey into northern Cyprus, during which additional complexities and tensions within the Turkish Cypriot perspective became apparent. What I failed to fully appreciate was just how atypical my understanding and experience of Cyprus was when compared to the prevailing wisdom of travelers and publics in Europe and the US.

Most travelers to Cyprus in the post-1974 partition era—even after the easing of travel restrictions in 2003—have entered through the south (a relative few choose to visit the north for more than a day). The typical visitor to Cyprus usually becomes familiar with the culturally Greek south part of the island and their respective cultural narratives to account for Cyprus. Though in recent years travel back and forth between north and south has become possible, most visitors to Cyprus have comparatively little contact with the Turks who inhabit the area north of the Green Line. Unlike most, I had heard some of the Turkish perspectives about the Greek-controlled south of the island, the people, and the history, but on the whole the place seemed mysterious to me.

With travel and research has come increasing awareness. In the summers of 2004 and 2007 I finally had the opportunity to enter Cyprus from the south to see what was for

¹⁸ I did not have to find out for myself whether I would have been turned away from the south of Cyprus or Greece with the “illegal” stamp—I have heard from other travelers and it is reported in some guide books that travelers are sometimes questioned by authorities in Greece about travels to Turkey and northern Cyprus.

me “the other side,” meet many of its people, and explore its lands. During these later visits, I was working on cultural education projects designed for US school teachers. My role had switched from an earnest travel enthusiast based in Turkey to a cultural facilitator on a federally-funded project run through the US Department of Education; now, in addition to expanding my own understanding, I was framing and interpreting Cyprus for others via design and implementation of programs that teach cultural history to US school teachers.¹⁹ My niche within the “Teach Cyprus” projects was as someone with linguistic and cultural knowledge relevant to Turkish Cypriots and Turkey.

To sum, my familiarity with north Cyprus comes from multiple visits over parts of two decades. In this time as a traveler and more recently as a cultural tour guide, I have intensively studied Cyprus via firsthand visits, but also through scholarship, including a comprehensive exams list, a published article, a successful Title VI grant proposal, and participation in academic seminars and conferences. But that is not how most people who might end up visiting, relocating to, or otherwise considering the island would come to know it. They might just as likely settle for a travelogue or other nonfiction essay about the place. Some of these are well known, others obscure, but each tells an important story of Cyprus, rendering land into landscape as it arranges people and places into an inherently rhetorical narrative logic.

¹⁹ The trips were run through Fulbright-Hays study abroad grants awarded to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona. These educators create and implement lesson plans based on what they have learned of Cyprus for classes of their own students. They also are encouraged to share what they have learned with audiences within their professional and personal communities.

CHAPTER TWO
LAWRENCE DURRELL'S *BITTER LEMONS* AND THE RHETORICAL TROPES OF
THE TURKS OF CYPRUS

In *Rhetorical Landscapes in America*, Gregory Clark distinguishes between land and landscape, and in so doing asserts the rhetorical nature of travel writing, a genre prone to fixate on the symbolic dimensions of land:

Landscape is not the same as *land*. *Land* is material, a particular object, while *landscape* is conceptual. When people act as tourists, they leave the *land* where they make their home to encounter *landscapes*. *Land* becomes *landscape* when it is assigned the role of symbol, and as symbol it functions rhetorically. (9)

In other words, when tourists—and most likely travel writers, though they may quibble with the terms—put “land” into language, they reshape “land,” the material object, into “landscape,” the symbolic construct of profound discursive capacity. Lawrence Durrell assigns his share of meaning to Cyprus and the island’s people via the landscaping he manufactures in his memoir, *Bitter Lemons*, a text also known in later editions as *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*. This study focuses on the production and effects of Durrell’s deployment of the symbolic throughout his narrative. To illustrate, I begin with rhetorical analysis of an ominous scene from the memoir, when the island appears on the brink of violence.

In the passage that follows, Durrell displays two vexed and recurring tropes central to the landscape of *Bitter Lemons*. The first trope is indolence, a staple of the Orientalist travel writers in the Near East (Spurr; Said). Both Greeks and Turks, it

appears, suffer from this ambiguous deficiency. The second trope is the Turk as cold-blooded, calculating reptile, capable of fearsome comportment in the face of impending violence. They unfold as follows (text quoted as it appears in original, without indentation):

The evening was very still, and the cool silence of “The Tree of Idleness” engulfed us like a mountain pool. Sabri was up there, sitting under the leaves contemplating a black coffee [...] “Sit, my dear,” he said gravely, and I sat beside him, soaking up the silence with its sheer blissful weight. The sea was calm. (Somewhere out of sight and sound the caique *Saint George*, loaded with arms and some ten thousand sticks of dynamite [for the Greek Cypriot uprising], was beating up the craggy coast by Cape Arnauti, making for a rendezvous near Paphos.) “It is so peaceful here,” said my friend, sipping his coffee. “But for these bloody Greeks Cyprus would be peaceful; but we Turks haven’t opened our mouths yet. We will never be ruled by Greece here; I would take to the mountains and fight them if Enosis came!” Oh dear! (Lawrence Durrell, *Bitter Lemons* 175)

This gripping passage depicts a combination of Orientalist landscaping and narrative intrigue, as Durrell juxtaposes the tranquility of the sleepy island with the imminent arrival of arms to begin a campaign of terror. The scene, a coffee shop under a famed ancient tree in the village of Bellapaix, appears saturated with images of inertia, conveying the classic trope of the Near East as a luxurious space where nothing ever happens, unless, as in physics, an outside force acts upon it. Terms like “still,” “silent,” “idleness,” and “calm” suggest indolence, a quality that Durrell considers endemic and essential to the character of the land and its peoples, and one wholly in synch with a colonialist’s approach to the subjects of empire.

Life was not to be so uneventful, of course, in Durrell’s troubled years in Cyprus. In the 1950s, when the languid Levantine island found its peace disturbed by those who had been reliably docile subjects for so long, the British authorities and political leaders

were outraged and indignant.²⁰ Their response: a harsh counter-insurgency campaign which enlisted Turks of Cyprus, like Sabri, as auxiliary forces. Durrell's dramatic representation of Sabri in the above excerpt—a man also described earlier in the narrative as a “true Turk”—at least partially illuminates the cultural politics and material circumstances that led to the intercommunal fighting that erupted in 1963. On this account, at least, Durrell appears to have hit the mark. On a host of separate matters, civilizational and other, Durrell's work has generated political and scholarly controversy for its deployment of the symbolic as it renders the landscape into travel literature.

The Context and Critics of Durrell and *Bitter Lemons*

Several critics have established how *Bitter Lemons* and the Durrellian oeuvre reads as colonialist, even racist in its rendering of people of the Near East, including Cyprus (Tournay; Calotychos; Gwynne). This scholarship, cited elsewhere in this chapter, provides examples of how Durrell articulates a certain colonial order to a world culturally dominated by people like himself: white, male, European, colonial administrators. The anti-colonial struggle of Cypriot Greeks posed an unexpected challenge to this order. Greeks of Cyprus hoping for an end to British colonial rule—and no one disputes that an overwhelming majority of them felt this way then—were, in effect, Durrell's political adversaries, and usually take the brunt of his insult and scorn. Like the Greeks of Cyprus, the Turks, too, suffer their share of the indignities as

²⁰ Reluctant to part with a strategic Eastern Mediterranean crown colony and stinging from the loss of the Suez Canal, they did not take kindly to enosis-minded Greek guerrillas who were soon to begin attacking colonial targets.

landscape fodder for a colonial narrative. Yet despite some bizarre ethno-national characterizations of Turks in *Bitter Lemons*, Durrell's Sabri is at least afforded the stage long enough to articulate what many Turks of Cyprus must have been feeling in these times: "we Turks haven't opened our mouths yet" (175). Durrell's decision to give voice to a Turkish Cypriot expressing a national sentiment may be the closest a Turk comes to demonstrating an autonomous, rationalized political will in *Bitter Lemons*; in the few other moments where Turks appear in the narrative, they emerge largely as foils in a storyline that serves up "the Turk" as a host of imaginative and contradictory signifiers that purport to capture an essentialized, ethno-national character.

For readers and critics with abiding interests in Durrell, Cyprus, travel literature, or post-colonial studies, *Bitter Lemons* has garnered its share of attention. Few critics, however, have offered more than passing comment on his depiction of the Turks of Cyprus, even though they are present throughout his narrative in varied and intriguing forms. For the few who briefly consider Durrell's representation of Turks, the consensus has been that *Bitter Lemons* does them no favors as it circulates in global public spheres. Petra Tournay, in examining the text as a product of colonialism, offers the general conclusion that "if the representation of the Greek Cypriots has been rather unfavorable, the few references to the Turkish Cypriots are even less so" (162). Michael Given, in his insightful study of the absence of Hellenism from the landscape of *BL*, notes that for Durrell, "the Anatolian [e.g. 'Turkish'] character is soft, dreamy, and indolent, expressed in the great theme of sleep and idleness" so present in the narrative (58). These critics have noted the torpor associated with Turks and other Eastern Mediterraneans, yet the

picture, upon closer inspection, is more complicated; hence, the need to look more deeply and specifically at the qualities assigned to Turks of Cyprus.

A focus on Turks and representation provides an opportunity to consider how a travel text like Durrell's continues to provide English-speaking audiences in the U.S., the U.K., and elsewhere with popular, literary discourse on Turks, Muslims, and Middle Easterners. Readers likely glean from *Bitter Lemons* that Turks, as members of this languid ethno-national group, simultaneously and paradoxically embody qualities like wisdom and stupidity, languor and thoughtfulness. Further, they are seen to be Zen-like, slow to anger, guileful, and, composed on the one hand, while on the other they can be cold-blooded, fatalistic, and elemental. Their spirituality and mystical qualities are constructed as cultural assets, at least in a romantic, anti-materialistic sense, but their purported backwardness and potential cruelty come off as civilizational deficits. Such a burgeoning inventory of significations constitutes quite a burden for one ethno-national subject position to accommodate, but contradictory and all-encompassing cultural generalizations have long been stock features of travel narratives set in the East, *Bitter Lemons* serving as a fine example.²¹

Analysis of the discursive practices and ideological assumptions common within the genre of travel writing, such as those that reoccur in the discourses of imperialism, explains some of this ambivalent rhetoric of the Turks in Cyprus. The focus on the question of ambivalence and colonial representation returns later in this chapter, at which time I take up how Stuart Hall (and others) have noted how these contradictions are

²¹ The text, universally considered a non-fiction memoir, but at least partially fictionalized, and its author have explicit cultural associations with travel writing.

inherent to the cultural binaries constructed in the representation of the colonial other (262-63). A close reading of Durrell's *Bitter Lemons* and analyses of secondary sources that treat the memoir, Durrell, and the genre of travel writing, demonstrate how the Turks in Cyprus have been cast as contradictory and ambiguous. On the one hand, they are marginal, peripheral, typically silent characters, yet they are also imagined as potentially fearsome, even awesome creatures who contribute to the landscape of the island's most famous piece of travel literature. They could hardly be more, given this particular historical writer and the circumstances of empire in Cyprus. Imperialism informed the political landscape for anyone in Cyprus, but Durrell's life on the island eventually becomes consumed with responding to the threat of the enosis campaign to end British colonial rule and, at least for many, unite the island with Greece. These events deeply damaged Durrell's romantic affections for the Greek world and drove the narrative to its final form and content. In this larger picture Turks would play a relatively minor, yet intriguing role.

Though his popularity has waned in recent decades, Durrell remains a familiar modern writer due to his novels, poetry, essays, and correspondences with luminaries like Henry Miller. The influence of Miller, a celebrated American author whose famed memoir *Tropic of Cancer* pushed the envelope of US censorship laws of the 1930s, can be seen in the content of Durrell's best known work, *Justine*. The steamy novel was the first work in a quartet set in Alexandria and written during his time in Cyprus.²² Though

²² The tetralogy of critically and commercially successful novels referred to as "the Alexandria Quartet" include *Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive*, and *Clea*, four books written from distinct perspectives about a single event happening around the time of WWII in Alexandria, Egypt. As for his literary reputation, one anthology promising a collection of "some of the world's best books," includes Durrell's *Justine* in the lead

Bitter Lemons lacked the sex appeal and sexuality of these more renowned antecedents of travel literature, two million copies have been sold worldwide, and the book remains a popular memoir, especially among English-speaking travelers to Cyprus. They may hear of *Bitter Lemons* through references in many English language guidebooks on Cyprus, which typically cast it as a bittersweet account that captures the atmosphere of Cyprus in one of its most momentous times. As such, it continues to affect how audiences imagine Cyprus and its landscape. Australian diplomat Alexander Downer, the most recent UN negotiator appointed in the summer of 2008 to work on Cyprus, comes to his position as an admirer of Durrell's writing, including *Bitter Lemons* (Christou). It would hardly be difficult to imagine him gearing up for his Cyprus assignment by taking another look at Durrell's Cyprus.

What accounts for the sustained popularity? Decorations heaped on *Bitter Lemons* in the UK have done their share to celebrate its reputation. Vangelis Calotychos, an elegant and informed Greek Cypriot critic of *Bitter Lemons* and the British role in Cyprus's misfortunes, explains its standing in the UK (and the West):

In Britain, the work received critical acclaim and is often considered 'undoubtedly the finest piece of literature to come out of the Cyprus affair.' It even won Durrell the Duff Cooper Memorial Award (presented by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother) and the offer, albeit rebuffed by Durrell, of a decoration, the Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. (170)

Admirers of Durrell and this work, some no doubt swayed by such seemingly lofty praise, tend to focus on his craft and virtues as a storyteller and landscape artist, while

category of "On Everyone's List of Literary Classics," between Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (Kanigel).

neglecting to consider how politically interested (and politically, ideologically troubling) the narrator and narrative turn out to be. Some admirers have also done their share on behalf of Durrell's reputation in Cyprus. Penelope Tremayne, the expatriate nurse and writer who moves into Durrell's Bellapaix home after his departure, wrote a starry-eyed paean titled "Memories of Durrell," a flattering, occasionally defensive reminiscence of the author as a superior, transcendent, lovable man constitutionally incapable of hating others. Tremayne is unsurprisingly mum on the messier matters of his complicity with the British colonial presence and the policies that exacerbated the violence on island. Essays like Friedman's and Tremayne's focus on the writer, the artist, and the person, but not so much the rhetorical situation and the impact of his musings on others, especially Cypriots.²³ Perhaps, too, some have been assuaged by the remarkable prefatory comments, which posit that *Bitter Lemons* "is not a political book but simply a somewhat impressionistic study of the moods and atmospheres of Cyprus during the troubled years 1953-56" (9). Whether rigorously ethnographic or superficially impressionistic—and, for the most part, *Bitter Lemons* is neither—to deny the political character of a personal narrative about life, culture, and politics on Cyprus just on the eve of and during a guerrilla war appears preposterous.²⁴ Apparently critics can forgive Durrell for this

²³ Tremayne appears to be responding to Greek nationalists who were at odds with Durrell for his decision to work for the British colonial authorities, but she does this by focusing on innocuous anecdotes, rather than the material political realities of colonialism's messy swan song in Cyprus.

²⁴ And for that matter, any personal narrative is "political" in its capacity to project, affect and neglect attitudes that inform arrangements of power. But even those who would quibble with this would be hard-pressed to deny that someone working the Public Relations department of a political authority waging a harsh counter-insurgency would have a hard time writing a first-person narrative account of Cyprus that was not a "political book."

fanciful disclaimer, some even noting *Bitter Lemons*'s political knowledge as part of the book's allure.

Friedman, for example, praises its aesthetic achievements and political acumen, seeing *Bitter Lemons* as the best of the author's trilogy of island books (the others were *Prospero's Cell* and *Reflections on a Marine Venus*):

Bitter Lemons not only captures an atmosphere and a tone, a way of life and a people, but it details and examines the destruction of the Cypriot peace that culminates in the disastrous outbreak of civil war. The sense of place, then, is brilliantly and appropriately subordinated to the sense of the moment. (64)

In the case of this quotation, as in the rest of his generally adulatory essay, Friedman presents scant evidence to substantiate such glowing remarks. He cites a letter Durrell wrote to his friend, the aforementioned and celebrated bohemian Henry Miller, an interview with Durrell, and other primary sources from the author; however, he cites no secondary scholarship or even travel writing to measure the accuracy of Durrell's assessment of Cypriot culture and politics. The factually incorrect mention of *Bitter Lemons* as a text that explains "the outbreak of civil war" thus becomes telling. Durrell's narrative ends in 1957 during the anti-colonial/enosis campaign against the British, years before widespread intercommunal fighting begins throughout the island; though Durrell's dialogues with Sabri hint at the depth of the distrust between Greeks and Turks, precious little else documents, explores, or assesses the rising tensions between the Greek and Turkish communities from 1953-57 in Cyprus.

Nor does Durrell consider the role the British may have been playing in exacerbating this aspect of the political conflict. Friedman also confuses this later

fighting with “civil war,” a term that suggests a considerable degree of functional, political integration before the violence commences. The Greek and Turkish communities shared power unsuccessfully in the independent Republic of Cyprus for barely three years before the island erupted again in 1963. For the four centuries prior, though they lived side-by-side in cities and some mixed villages, they largely existed as distinct, imperial subjects of Britons and Ottomans.

As for Friedman’s estimation of *Bitter Lemons* as a “brilliant” subordination of place to moment, it would be more accurate to note that Durrell told the story according to the narrative arc of his own life on the island. The first half of the book traces his life in the village and attempts to capture the essence of the Cypriot landscape—or better, to use Cyprus as a canvas for the aesthetic practice of his belief that landscape determines character; the latter half deals with the deepening political crisis, which Durrell himself played a role in as a public relations official. The book’s narrative structure and focus seems more circumstantially arbitrary than artfully conceived. Besides, if this really was not a “political book” as Durrell insisted, then how or why would the subordination of place to moment be desirable? In marketing terms, the arrival of a political crisis gave the island unexpected international attention, and Durrell capitalized on the island’s notoriety by getting *Bitter Lemons* done and published while Cyprus remained a hotspot of world news.

More common among contemporary scholarship are pieces critical of Durrell’s patronizing, self-aggrandizing characterizations of Cypriots—Greek and Turkish—and their island. The good name and generally unsullied reputation of *Bitter Lemons* has

puzzled and troubled Cypriot audiences, as well as scholars and others well-acquainted with the politics and cultures of Cyprus. Greek and Greek Cypriot writers and intellectuals have long assailed the book as essentially propaganda for British interests in Cyprus. Costas Montis, a famed national (and deeply nationalist) Greek Cypriot poet, went so far as to pen a personalized rant, now available in English, titled *Closed Doors: An Answer to Bitter Lemons by Lawrence Durrell*. Scholars with even less partisan, nationalist interests have taken note of *BL*'s thinly-veiled racism. In her reading of the text as a product of colonialism, Tournay specifically notes "some of the recurring tropes of colonial discourse, such as the native as a child, the native as a cunning or morally deficient person" (159). Other writers make much of the paternalistic relationship between Durrell and the Cypriots, whose childlike innocence and charming sleepiness, Durrell feared, would be threatened on the world stage without the protection of the British (Calotychos 179).

One of the most trenchant critiques of *Bitter Lemons* comes from Michael Given, whose analysis makes a strong case for the inherently political, rhetorical nature of travel writing—even when the textual focus purports to be the innocent literary landscaping of the travel writer. Durrell himself invited his readers, and all travelers, to consider questions of landscape through an essay he published in 1960 titled "Landscape and Character." In this piece, Durrell lays out his essential philosophy of life and travel writing.²⁵ Simply put, "landscape determines character." That is, people do not mold the land and saturate it with meaning so much as the land shapes them, ascribing to them

²⁵ Durrell does not here credit Herodotus for this thesis, but may elsewhere, given his knowledge of Greek language and ancient literature.

qualities that are inescapable, a sort of destiny. Durrell explains the theory, and the charge of travel writer, as follows:

I have evolved a private notion about the importance of landscape, and I willingly admit to seeing ‘characters’ almost as functions of a landscape. This has only come about in recent years after a good deal of travel [...] as you get to know Europe slowly, tasting the wines, cheeses and characters of the different countries you begin to realize that the important determinant of any culture is after all—the spirit of place. Just as one particular vineyard will always give you a special wine with discernible characteristics so a Spain, an Italy, a Greece will always give you the same type of culture—will express itself through the human being just as it does through its wild flowers. We tend to see ‘culture’ as a sort of historic pattern dictated by the human will, but for me this is no longer absolutely true. I don’t believe the British character, for example, or the German has changed a jot since Tacitus first described it; and so long as people keep getting born Greek or French or Italian their culture-productions will bear the unmistakable signature of the place.

And this, of course, is the target of the travel-writer; his task is to isolate the germ in the people which is expressed by their landscape. (3)

Through Durrell’s conceptual lens, an example might play out this way: if you take a person from the (indolent) East and transplant this subject into the heart of an empire 1,000 miles to the (industrious) West, within a generation or two, the Easterner will embody the hyper-rational efficiency and emotional composure of a Western subject. Conversely, an expatriate who stays in the East too long will assume its own lethargic pulse. Durrell’s geographic determinism appears to betray misgivings for some of the effects of modernization and development and blindly overlooks the power dynamic at work between the narrating subject and his objects of interest, in this case the denizens of a supposedly sleepy island of Durrell’s beloved Oriental East. His philosophy functions as a travel writer’s assertion of essential and enduring difference—an eternal call to travel and encounter “the Other.” Such a philosophy constitutes a depoliticizing gesture that

conceals the positionality—and the power—of the narrator, as it redirects us to focus on mythical abstractions of land, architecture, and people.

In the case of Cyprus, Given argues that Durrell effectively, and perhaps deliberately, dehellenizes the landscape, putting into doubt, omitting, or simply not seeing what could arguably be construed as evidence of Hellenic or Greek cultural heritage—a move of obvious political import. His narrative privileges the achievements of medieval European rulers of Cyprus while diminishing (even *effacing*) the uncomfortable presence of “Greek” culture, whose professed descendants had so rudely and audaciously turned against the patrimony of a colonial regime that Durrell supported. *Bitter Lemons* and Durrell operate under the remarkable pretense that the land tells the true story, while the narrators merely serve as the medium. Given notes the folly of such a position:

Durrell, Harrison, and others like them claimed that the landscapes, histories, and architectures they produced were authentic expressions of the country itself, not inventions of their own artistic imaginations. And yet it is clear that they were as much the fathers of these landscapes as the children. This may have been a conscious and deliberate manipulation of history for political ends, or else a genuine expression of the worldview of historically situated individuals. What is clear is that Durrell’s construction of the landscape and character of Cyprus radically contradicts his own claim that human beings are an expression of their own landscape. From *Bitter Lemons*, it seems that both people and landscape are expressions of the writer. (62)

Under other circumstances, such as the travel writing Durrell composed on the politically untroubled Greek islands further west, explicit linkage with Hellenism would be normative. One rendering of the politics of such prose, then, would follow as such: in a place like Rhodes, where the British have no colonial interest and the Turks had been

expropriated to Anatolia, Durrell was a loyal and enthusiastic Hellenophile; in Cyprus, he was a lapsed one. And the Greeks of Cyprus, perhaps as punishment for insufficient gratitude to Durrell and the British, suffer the indignity of a dehellenization of the landscape of Cyprus. Either way, such a structural ploy locates Greeks and Turks as effects of landscape. The British—unsurprisingly—float above consideration as relative newcomers not yet tainted by the deleterious influence of this sleepy island. If anything, the British have culturally appropriated the role of guarantor of the island’s cultural treasures. Greek claims to historical dominance and continuity are negated, indirectly delivering partisan Turks a felicitous public relations gift, through no achievement or effort of their own.²⁶

As for the Turks, their representations, as suggested earlier, invite a host of intriguing possibilities. The following section analyzes how Durrell writes about Turks, considers the forces that may have shaped his writing, and assesses how *Bitter Lemons* informs readers’ impressions of “Turk” as a cultural signifier in an era of civilizational conflict configured too often as a clash of East and West.

Reptilian Turks and other Troublesome Troping in *Bitter Lemons*

Bitter Lemons focuses first on Durrell’s life in Bellapais, a small, Greek-populated village adjoining the ruins of a 13th-century Frankish abbey overlooking the sea on the northern shores of Cyprus. Durrell’s daily routine—as well, perhaps, his preference for company of Greek or English-language speakers—conspires against much

²⁶ The rightful custodians for a land so rich in history and strategically significant, of course, are none other than the British, as Durrell implies in *BL*.

social or professional contact with the Turks of the island. In the narrative, readers are introduced to only two actual Cypriot Turks. The more memorable and elaborated character is Sabri Tahir, a roguish, self-employed businessman based out of Kyrenia. At first, Sabri seems to be little more than a colorful Levantine character whom Durrell hires to help him locate and purchase a property to renovate and inhabit. Later, Sabri's clandestine activities as an auxiliary police officer and Turkish militia member serve as foreshadowing of the island's irreversible turn to violence.

Durrell and Sabri cross paths occasionally over the years the author spends on the island, and within the narrative Sabri's character takes on the considerable freight of an entire ethno-national subjectivity: he functions, for Durrell (and his curious Western readers) as the embodiment of "the true Turk," among many other things. Durrell's descriptions of this man are utterly fascinating, and in some ways utterly contradictory. He seems to have genuine respect for Sabri as a businessman and affection for him as a friend: nonetheless, Durrell's physical descriptions of this "true Turk" locate him as an ethnic representative of a group associated with a host of dubious creatures of nature and myth: reptiles (48), sharks (67), and dragons (54), to name a few.²⁷ Shortly after introducing Sabri, Durrell notes that "what was truly Turkish about him was the physical repose with which he confronted the world [...]. The Turk has a monolithic poise, an air of reptilian concentration and silence" (48). So Sabri, like all "true" Turks, has the

²⁷ Decades later, Sabri Tahir, in a discussion with *New York Times* Istanbul Bureau Chief, prolific author, and erstwhile travel writer Stephen Kinzer, defends Durrell against criticisms leveled against him, casting him as a good man who had no prejudice of Turks or Greeks. Hitchens, in the prefatory notes to the second edition of his book on Cyprus, gives Durrell "something of an apology" for giving *Bitter Lemons* short shrift in the first edition. Within the text itself, Durrell seems to take pains to insulate himself against such criticism by recalling fondly the times when Sabri and he share confidences—albeit as two presumably superior sons of colonialism, British and Ottoman Turkish, respectively.

bearing of a lizard, presumably capable of waiting indefinitely and without distraction for its prey, or for nothing at all: a creature unburdened by the human need for language use, cold-blooded in its calculations.

A similar pattern in the Oriental construction of landscape has been identified by Meyda Yeğenoğlu, in an analysis of 19th-century European travel writing about Istanbul, who notes that, “The Orientals are hidden not only behind their words but also behind their silence, for even their lips are a veil; true life is missing, its absence is dissimulated by appearances and masks” (50). Yeğenoğlu’s context differs in that she studies the Western writer’s fixation on the veiled Muslim women of the Ottoman capital, but the interpretation of the silence as dissemblance, pregnant with the potential for trickery, is a well-traveled Orientalist trope. Durrell appears to be dipping from the same well in his construction of Sabri and other Turks as bearers of “silence.” One interpretation of this language could certainly be along these lines of “dissimulation” or concealing, with textual evidence available to suggest Durrell at times viewed Turks as a threat. Sabri may have been an intent listener, a thoughtful interlocutor, and a shrewd business operator, but in this instance his “monolithic air” conveys more spooky cultural prototype than admirable advocate.

Not just Sabri suffers from reptilian troping. Near the end of the narrative, Durrell visits the seaside retreat of a Muslim religious figure, a Turk in Cyprus whom he refers to as “hodja,” a title signifying a devout man who may perform some religious duties, a

purportedly wise and spiritual person.²⁸ Durrell resumes his troping of the Turk as reptile, an unmistakable echo of his representation of Sabri: “[The hodja] spoke in his gobbling Greek letting the reptilian lids of his eyes fall shyly” (239). Gazing through the hodja’s windows to the soul, Durrell’s metaphor fails to apprehend even the same species looking reflecting back to him: “gobbling” Greek, whatever that might sound like, appears not to be the sound a human might produce. The hodja’s Greek would have been heavily accented to Durrell, who studied the dialect of the modern Athenian on the mainland, not the appreciably distinct Cypriot Greek. Further, the Greek spoken here is by a non-native speaker who learned the language through his contact with Greeks on Cyprus, rather than through the scholarly methods of Durrell’s youth.

Tournay reads the scene as “yet another standard cliché in colonial discourse according to which non-Western people are depicted as incoherent. It never occurs to Durrell to question his own inability at speaking Turkish” (162). Nor have critics acknowledged this critical linguistic deficit that Durrell experienced with Turks, which certainly played some role in his preference for attending to the lives of Greeks in Cyprus. The scene here highlights yet again the contradictory nature of Durrell’s discourse: he admired the hodja, ostensibly enjoying his company while the two men took in the waves while Durrell stepped out of time. Durrell also appears to have shared a typically colonial, expatriate affection for the elemental, mystical, anti-modern ways of this religious figure.

²⁸ Caricatures and comedy about hodjas have proliferated for centuries in Ottoman and Turkish cultures, a history Durrell appears unaware of.

Shortly thereafter—in an exuberant moment on the balcony when the sun sets on the sea and Durrell indulges in nostalgia for the ancients—the writing continues with tropes from the animal world, creating further ambiguous effects in terms of representation of Turks:

When the old man came to join me on the terrace his red turban threw a patch of dancing scarlet on the wall behind us. He crouched down beside me, motionless as a tortoise, unspeaking, and together we gazed into the heart of darkness which had begun to overflow and trickle out of the valleys towards us. (240)

Though the scene appears to trouble the gazing narrator, as the imagery used to describe nightfall carries a gothic tone of foreboding, for the most part the mood and Durrell's association with the hoja suggests harmony. Who knows if the feeling is mutual. This non-English speaking Turk's earlier linguistic effrontery and Durrell's linkage of the hoja with the tortoise hardly suggest respect. Yet Durrell appears to have derived sufficient pleasure from the moment to wax poetic, nearly positing a state of communion with the hodja. For the analysis I have been developing thus far, the hodja's figurative linkage to a tortoise bears consideration. As far as reptiles go, they have enjoyed their share of benign associations with qualities like wisdom, sun, and longevity, with the latter perhaps suggesting a reverence for the ancientness of the Turk, the Muslim, and the Oriental. Perhaps Durrell's senses were impaired by being taken with the red turban: travel writers working in the Middle East, the Balkans, and North Africa have long been spellbound by the threads that rest upon others' heads.²⁹ Yes, they may indeed be cold-blooded, reptilian

²⁹ One decorated travelogue on life in modern Turkey, Jeremy Seal's *A Fez of the Heart*, fuels its narrative engine with the promise of a quest for meaning through the study of the fabled fez of late Ottoman times. The fez was outlawed in the 1920s in Turkey in order to make way for Western-styled brimmed hats for male citizens who would no longer need headgear designed for Muslim prayers.

creatures, but in a scene like this one—unlike the charged political atmosphere of his balcony encounter with Sabri—the energy of the life force remains at rest, moving at the existential pace Durrell preferred at this moment.

Durrell ruptures the tension of the darkening skies with a moment of nostalgia for the presumptive progenitors of European civilization who lived and ruled in Cyprus so long ago. Like so many other colonial Britons and their descendants, uncomplicated adoration for the ancients of Greece and Rome comes with the territory. He writes,

It was a blessed moment—a sunset which the Greeks and Romans knew—in which the swinging cradle-motion of the sea slowly copied itself into the consciousness, and made one's mind beat with the elemental rhythm of the earth itself. He said nothing and I said nothing; we simply sat there together as if bereft of the power of speech, watching the night encircle us. (240)

For a moment, Durrell almost seems to be identifying with the preternatural, spiritual being whose presence he shares. He savors the silence. Time compresses within the narrative as Durrell invokes the ancients to express his wonder at the coming night.³⁰ The hodja, like Sabri earlier, becomes for Durrell transformed into an almost pre-conscious creature of instinct. The narrator in this case envies the purportedly non-intellectualized moment, the unrationalized occupation of time, maybe even life without time, as he and the hodja take in the “rhythm of the earth itself” (240). As for the hodja, his role shifts into an observer of the subjective whims of the narrator. And, at that moment, he once again assumes the qualities of a reptile: “I started to walk towards the sunset along that ivory sea-line while he stood, motionless as a lizard, watching me” (241). Muslim Turks,

³⁰ The scene also includes Durrell mentioning the “Greek” presence on the island, a point that weakens Given’s argument for Durrell’s dehellenization of the landscape. They may not always be physically present, but Durrell has a hard time shaking their echoes when celebrating the island’s storied history.

to summarize, are here naturalized and associated with a kind of nativist idealization, making them inscrutable yet paradoxically imbued with the awesome simplicity of other ancient creatures of nature. Taken as such, they, like nature, are to be both admired and feared.

These moves could have been taken to mask other motives or betray an anxiety about how little the narrator truly understands about Turks. What Durrell and so many other travel writers seem to screen from possibility is that the Turk, the hodja, even the reptile may watch the movements of a stranger like Durrell in order to better understand the world, to interpret the cultural qualities of difference the stranger embodies, to analyze their presence and impact: in short, to be an acting subject in the world, a politically-situated agent in history.

Durrell, in a few moments, ascribes more than animal qualities to Sabri and the hodja, going so far as to turn Turks into monsters, at which point his poetics appear to become either careless or baffling. Turkey, the country, becomes the foreboding region of origin for larger, more dangerous, and more magical reptilian beasts: dragons. In describing a thunderstorm that hits Kyrenia on the island's northern coast, a mere forty miles from the Anatolian shores of Turkey, the Turk graduates from the imagery of nature to that of the supernatural. Durrell compares the lightning to "dragons from Turkey" (54). Sabri then appears out of this menacing storm come from the north, "between thunder-flashes like an apparition from the underworld" (54). From dragons, Durrell reaches further into the recesses of demonology in casting Sabri as a ghost from a netherworld.

One might be tempted to wonder now what exactly Durrell has to fear about Turkey and Turks to fix them as a locus of the supernatural. Yet effects of this type of representation appear to carry the same sort of ambiguity as his other reptile troping. While in one sense, the creatures suggest a force with the potential to wreak awful havoc, they also may be held in a kind of awe. For example, though dragons may be wondrous for qualities like their ancientness, their power, and their wealth, they would be horrifying to encounter when angered and are preferable when beheld from a distance. Perhaps audiences interpret his writing as innocent literary indulgence, a sort of carefree camp not to be taken too seriously. The spirit of this discussion, though, is to invite a kind of dialogic approach that attempts to calculate how Turks might respond to such metaphor. I find it hard to imagine that its reading publics would deem it too innocent or innocuous given European travel literature's complicity in the racism of imperial discourse.

Durrellian and colonial apologists may now object that the analysis makes too much of this reptilian rhetoric, and that above all, Durrell not only has no beef with Turks, but, in fact, he admires them. Sabri is portrayed as an aesthetic wonder, a man of many skills, but above all a person of extreme patience, calculation, and well-expended, purposefully deployed energy—laudatory cultural qualities, it would appear. Durrell, however, diminishes this praise when he compares Sabri's personal industry to that found in the other Turks of the island: "[Sabri] is a pretty sharp business man, of course, which is not usual among Turks who are always half asleep" (51). Durrell emphasizes this essentialized sloth again later in the text, invoking the authority of the historian Sir Harry Luke to buttress his case, as if further evidence were even necessary. Luke describes to

Durrell how “the Cypriot character” has been softened by the Anatolian presence: less industry, ambition, enterprise, but more grace, dignity, gentleness (106). These like-minded colonials paradoxically deplore the Muslim Turks and their Anatolian indolence, yet at the same time find these qualities preferable to the pluck and independence of the Greeks, who were now putting paid to the colonial domination of Cyprus.

Durrell provides another example of this sort of backhanded compliment when crediting the Ottoman Turks for the merits of the millet system, wherein religious leaders exercised autonomy over their respective peoples (Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Greeks, Orthodox Armenians, and so forth) in the political life in the empire. He explains that the millet system granted Greek Cypriots religious, language, and limited self-rule rights as a “recognition perhaps of the enviable qualities of restlessness and imagination that they themselves lacked” (123). Durrell, in the ideological pattern so prevalent in colonial discourse, demonstrates reluctance to bestow unqualified remarks of praise for Turks, whose character, in this text, settles for ambivalence and paradox.

Nor should this type of representation necessarily be surprising given the long tradition of Orientalism found in European travel texts, and so well-documented and analyzed by others (Said, Spurr). Yet the coherence and stability of this troping gets continually undermined by certain material presences contradictory to the imagery above. The lazy Turk? Not only does Sabri put in long hours of physically and mentally taxing labor, but so do the men in his employ, *in Durrell’s own narrative*. These reliably lethargic creatures also conduct the research and physical tasks needed to buy property, erect buildings, and network with Greek and British interlocutors in commercial

exchanges upon which their livelihoods depend. Instead, we are left to wonder what drives these naturally scheming, cold-blooded, reserved, and reptilian beings. Durrell's writing on these matters is at odds with itself: Are these pre-rational creatures actually concentrating, reasoning, and planning—or just passing the time? Perhaps, goes the thinking, the ambiguity serves them well at the inevitable moment when circumstances become favorably arranged for an attack. Within such a threatening discursive orbit, it becomes easier to understand how quickly and naturally European and Western outsiders came to sympathize with Greek Cypriots in the aftermath of 1974.

On the quality of personal industry, a splendid irony unfolds near the end of the narrative, when Durrell sees Sabri for the last time. The author and a Greek Cypriot friend have set out for an afternoon picnicking and gathering flowers; they come across Sabri on the way, engaged in a project with a work crew of fellow Turks. Sabri jokingly laments that some people have to work for a living. At least Durrell chooses not to inquire as to how well the crew handles its tasks while “half asleep.” Then again, this cultural proclivity for ease turns out to be not altogether an undesirable quality as seen above in Durrell's celebration of the hodja's attunement to nature.

Sabri also allows his British admirer a glimpse into the spirit of pleasurable ease known as *kayf* (*keyif* in Turkish). In addition to being Turks, Sabri and the hodja are Muslims, though in Sabri's case this would be a more cultural religiosity than one practiced daily in ritual. Their respective practice of and association with Islam apparently affords Durrell an opportunity to explore the more mystical side of these Turks. Though some of Durrell's writing on this subject features expansive, even

farfetched cultural elaborations, his exploration of the religiosity and essential Easternness of the faithful is rendered in a spirit of appreciation. His discussion of *kayf* illustrates this perspective:

[Sabri] was obviously endowed with that wonderful Moslem quality which is called *Kayf*—the contemplation which comes of silence and ease. It is not meditation or reverie, which presupposes a conscious mind relaxing: it is something deeper, a fathomless repose of the will which does not even pose to itself the question: ‘Am I happy or unhappy?’ (73)

To the extent that religious practices of Muslims offer Durrell an antidote to the alienating pace and project of modernity, they become admirable, despite the unsettling possibility that Durrell finds Muslims or Turks incapable of posing such a fundamentally rational, humanist question. Further, the idleness that merited disparagement elsewhere resurfaces, yet now the quality appears socially sanctioned. In his representations as a reptile, Sabri bears the ambiguous pre-rational comportment of the animal world. Here, Durrell introduces an almost sublime spirituality, and the roguish commercial operator acquires the unsolicited association of religiosity, which to this point had not been mentioned as part of his character.

In fact, like Cypriot Turks of his and later generations, Sabri has most certainly been more deeply affected ideologically by the secular nationalism of Atatürk and Republican Turkey than by Islam, the state religion for centuries of Ottoman rule. Durrell’s portrayal of *kayf* conveys no such socio-historical nuance. He also fails to recognize that *kayf* can just as easily be considered a cultural practice of mixed origins, as applicable to the material lives of the secular as to the pious. Instead, he delivers the concept as a “wonderful Moslem quality,” and so we understand its province as

essentially religious. But within his narrative, ethnic and sectarian signification slide arbitrarily back and forth, in and out of the few descriptions of Turks. For good measure, Sabri, like most Cypriots, drinks alcohol, common enough among the island's Muslims, but somehow disorienting (though surely welcome) for Durrell: as the above scene unfolds, "a bewildering succession of cold beers" arrive at the table (73). Thanks to their de facto association with Islam, deserved or not, Turks, on the question of *kayf*, end up sounding like enviably wise, spiritual beings.³¹ Political and cultural factors operative at the time offer tantalizing explanations for Durrell's occasional, skin-deep remarks of affection for Turks. The British provided considerable support for the Muslim religious community on Cyprus, with their financial and other support for the religious schools, *tekkes*, functioning as a balance against the growing fervor for Turkish nationalism and the interests of Turkey.

Perhaps had Durrell encountered more Turkish Cypriots, he would have been less inclined to pronounce so confidently on the signifiers of an authentic cultural identity. Perhaps not. In any event, such is not the case with *Bitter Lemons*. In Durrell's narrative, Turks and Turkish communities are virtually absent with the exception of Sabri and the lonely hodja. But if Turkish Cypriots were approximately 20 percent of the population at this time, what accounts for such scant attention in Durrell's text? Could the absence be arbitrary? Durrell was not a recluse, nor was he loafing and picnicking during his years in Cyprus. He performed his share of labor—teaching at a school for girls in Nicosia, then

³¹ The Ottomans rarely garnish much praise from European travel writers for their three hundred-plus year rule of Cyprus. They tend to be remembered for the violence of the conquest of Famagusta, the flaying of the Venetian commander Bragadino, and the pre-emptive murder of dozens of bishops and Orthodox Greek clergy in Cyprus at the outset of the 1821 Greek War of Independence.

later taking a job with the British colonial authorities, specifically charged to perform damage control and spin for the flagging government as it waged a harsh counterinsurgency that was detested by the Greeks of Cyprus.³² In none of these capacities does he appear to have been provided with any memorable contact with Turkish Cypriots. They are virtually unmentioned during episodes from the narrative about the growing fervor of *enosis* amongst Greek schoolchildren (in an increasingly segregated society), the violent backlash against the guerrillas and their sympathizers, and the narrator's stint as a public relations official in the employ of nervous colonial authorities.

One obvious explanation for their almost complete omission from Durrell's narrative concerns political exigencies: At the time of his stay in Cyprus, Greek Cypriot nationalist guerrillas (often schoolchildren as young as 12-14) fought colonial Britons while the Turks of Cyprus mainly observed, albeit with great unease. Though some were forming militias and developing other contingency plans behind the scenes, they were not yet stealing the headlines, nor doing much of the actual fighting—though some were hired by the English as auxiliary police.³³ As neither a teacher nor as a public relations official would he have needed to meet and interact with Turks. Nor did many Turkish Cypriots find themselves within the sphere of Durrell's private life as a colonial resident, for motives that range from lifestyle preferences, civilizational associations, and chance.

³² Sabri, for what it's worth, gave Durrell an earful on the matter on multiple occasions, egging him and the British into taking stronger measures to bring the Greeks to heel.

³³ Within a year of his departure, the first barbed-wire separations of the two communities would be established after an act of Turkish subterfuge (Hitchens 3-4).

As a Greek-speaking (and soon to be disillusioned) Hellenophile, Durrell had every motive to settle among Greek Cypriots. His fluency in modern Greek provided him an entrée for interaction with the locals and the production of elaborated scenes and mini-dramas: the raw material, in other words, for a travelogue where the narrator can be more than a bit player dependent on the English skills of Turks or the translations of others. Given his education and cultural affinities, to seek out a Turkish village and live amongst Turks as he immersed himself in their Cyprus would have seemed (to many Western audiences) strange. That said, Durrell puts himself in the hands of Sabri, who brings him to a “small Turkish house” in Bellapaix, which appears odd, given that the village was constructed and inhabited by Greeks. Durrell may not have wanted to live among Turks, but his architectural fancy of a home where their difference becomes materially present demonstrates a desire to have them somehow within his orbit as a writer tasked to producing the essential difference of the polyglot Levant.

Though Durrell may be above all an unapologetic colonial Briton, his linguistic and literary interests are linked deeply with ancient and modern Greece.³⁴ While Durrell makes much of the differences of Cypriot language and culture in comparison to the purportedly cosmopolitan Greeks of Athens, his cultural affinities rest squarely with Greek Cypriots, not the Turks. Despite rhetorical attempts to appear an evenhanded colonialist (granting the contradiction in terms), Durrell settles on a politics that strives to protect the status quo. His position: the British colonial interest had to be protected for the time being, but talks with the Greek Cypriots could be started at some vague point in

³⁴ In the narrative, Durrell comes to sympathize with the widely held view that modern Greece is much more the inheritor of Byzantium than of ancient Athens of its moments of apex.

the future for greater political autonomy. Many Greek Cypriots desired an immediate end of colonial rule and rights of self-determination, setting them at odds with Durrell. That did not necessarily drive Durrell into a cultural alliance with the Turks, even though he and many other Britons had considerable sympathy for the Turkish resistance to enosis. Many subscribe to the theory that the British deployed classic “divide and rule” tactics to exploit the political differences between Greeks and Turks, in an effort to forestall enosis.³⁵

Though such political exigencies are significant in understanding the complicated history of modern Cyprus, they do not appear to have deeply affected Durrell and his attitude towards Turks. These fairly dramatic developments seemed to have outpaced the author’s efforts to analyze and process the troubling politics of Cyprus. Instead, he mostly broods on the deteriorating cultural and intellectual bonds shared by Greeks and Britons from the time of Byron, a mythologized alliance driven by the inherently hostile and threatening presence of the Turk. At the narrative’s conclusion, Durrell and Panos toast to English and Greek solidarity, “a dying affection which might never be revived [...] of an England and Greece which were bondsmen in the spirit” (222).

But of course, just as Durrell has pronounced last rites on the symbolic passing of the age of British philhellenism, he opens the case for the connection once more,

³⁵ One source of controversy noted by many observers of and participants in the Cyprus conflict concerns the British policy to use Turkish auxiliary forces as police during the EOKA campaign. As the relations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and economies became further strained, many unemployed Turkish men joined the police. In some cases, their work had been linked to economic activity controlled by Greek Cypriots, but they were fired or “voluntarily” left work because it became too dangerous to continue. This example can also be seen as part of a larger plan for the British to actively cultivate the development of Turkey’s interest in Cyprus.

suggesting that some bonds may be eternal. Or, to borrow from the sentiment of Calotychos, the British and the Cypriots go on “loving each other to death.” Durrell’s last taxi ride in Cyprus included the wistful opining of his driver to make the point:

‘Even Dighenis [popular celebratory pseudonym for EOKA leader General Grivas],’ he said thoughtfully, ‘they say he himself is very pro-British.’ It was one of those Greek conversations which carry with them a hallucinating surrealist flavour—in the last two years I had endured several hundred of them. ‘Yes,’ he continued in the slow assured tones of a village wiseacre, ‘yes, even Dighenis, though he fights the British, really loves them. But he will have to go on killing them—with regret, even with affection.’ (251)

Civilizational “affection” of this sort almost never marks the relations that Greeks and Britons share, respectively, with Turks. In fact, I can recall no such examples in any travel writing about Cyprus that I am familiar with. Colin Thubron, writing almost two decades later, harbors neither the same romance about Greek-British cultural and historical ties, nor the same fear of their differences, but his travelogue *Journey Into Cyprus* (to be discussed in Chapter 3) does bear some of the same hallmarks of Turk troping found in *BL*.

Stuart Hall, among others, reminds us that ambivalent effects are created when representations of the Other fix people according to poles of a reductive binary. Yet very few binaries could be considered neutral, as one pole tends to dominate the other (235). The representations of Turks in the colonial and Near Eastern contexts in Durrell’s world, when situated within real-world power relations, likely contribute to readers’ impressions of “Turk” as a mysterious and dubious element. The dragon-Turk may be fearsome on the one hand and wondrous on the other, but one struggles to imagine how the benign qualities of creatures supplant their less appealing associations as members of the reptile

world. Though indolence may also be accompanied by a corresponding and coveted “bliss,” *Bitter Lemons* invites readers to detest laziness more than they may be inclined to celebrate the virtues of contemplative ease. While not altogether hostile to Turks, *Bitter Lemons* certainly operates within the traditions of Orientalism, and Durrell’s imaginative, contradictory portraiture of Turks contributes to harmful, long-standing stereotypes of these people in the world. Cultural groups constitute the raw material to be shaped according to Durrell’s demands for a personal literary aesthetic and an expression of the cultural politics of the day.

CHAPTER THREE

NARRATING FROM AN INTIMATE DISTANCE:

COLIN THUBRON'S TURK TROPING IN *JOURNEY INTO CYPRUS*

If you've ever taken a creative writing class, you will have had this maxim drilled into your head. Don't tell what your characters are feeling—show it. Reveal their inner selves through what they do and say. Let the reader draw the conclusions. The same is exactly true for travel writing. Your piece will be much more powerful and successful if you engage the reader in the creative process of figuring out how the people in your tale are being affected. By the same token, don't spell out the fact that *you* were moved by an experience—make the reader moved by the way you describe the experience. Re-create the experience so that the reader is in your shoes—and is moved just the way you were. (Don George in *Travel Writing*, a popular handbook for travel writers published by Lonely Planet, 75)

When it descends from the heights of mountain ranges and hotel rooms, the gaze of the Western writer penetrates the interiors of human habitation, and it explores the bodies and faces of people with the same freedom that it brings to the survey of a landscape. [...] An entire tradition in Western literature [...] has built around this trial of penetration into the interior spaces of non-European peoples. In these interiors the confrontation of cultures takes place face to face, or rather eye to eye, and it is here, at close range that the gaze of the writer can have its most powerful effect. (David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 19-20)

Don George's advice for aspiring travel writers makes for a compelling articulation of the conventional Western travel writer's mission: come to a confident interpretation of the (other) culture and then render that culture comprehensible through narrative. The story George has in mind privileges a script that diminishes or even effaces the travel writer's role in the tale, the personal relationships a writer may develop with

others, and the material circumstances of travel. If a writer develops attachments to a place or person, the aesthetic prescription would be to conceal these connections in order not to obscure the message of the story. After all, “an entire tradition of Western literature” continues to be nurtured by publishers and reading publics who naturally look for landscape, rendered as meaningful, to serve as the featured aspect of the story. “Show, don’t tell” may be helpful advice to promote more engaging, descriptive prose, but to construe this practice as a charge to “reveal [other people’s] inner selves through what they do and say” puts the whole enterprise of travel writing in an ethical bind. Postcolonial scholars like Spurr and so many others argue that tropes of travel literature produced by Western writers about the East, like surveillance and aestheticization, demonstrate the ways that this “eye to eye” discourse operates: Western writers probe into their subjects for clues of cultural essence, as well as the signs that will configure their meaning for their domestic audiences.³⁶

In defense of craft and method, one could argue that accomplished travel writers need to deploy and perform “intimacy” just to have narrative material in the first place. When studied in this light, Colin Thubron’s Cyprus travelogue *Journey into Cyprus* could be identified as part of larger ideological formations—another white, European, male, entrepreneurial writer out to render an Eastern landscape comprehensible through a non-fiction account of his experiences.³⁷ Thubron’s mode of travel, distinct among most

³⁶ For the full discussion of these tropes, see Spurr’s *The Rhetoric of Empire*, chapter one, “Surveillance: Under Western Eyes,” and chapter three, “Aestheticization: Savage Beauties.”

³⁷ Though I consider texts of these sorts creative non-fiction by genre, a case could be made for reading this text and other travelogues as fiction, given that travel writers have been well known to compromise veracity as they compress and manipulate time, characters, and events in a travel story in order to enhance

others who have written about Cyprus as a destination of travel, is to walk the island, narrating from the footpaths of his journey. As a self-conscious travel writer passing on foot through towns, villages, and fields in the Cyprus of 1972, one would expect plenty of close encounters with the locals. Thubron's near singular focus on people and landscape—illuminating, at times, as it is—erases nearly any trace of the personal; in short, while sharing the intimacy of others he erects a distance between narrator and landscape, emphasizing the ephemeral nature of the contact and his privileged, insular vantage point.

I call this master trope “intimate distance,” and I argue that it spawns a host of other conventional and particular tropes of travel and travel writing, evident through rhetorical analysis of Thubron's 1975 travelogue about his trek across Cyprus on the eve of war. This chapter continues with an overview of *Journey Into Cyprus* and its standing as one of the more well-known travel texts set in postcolonial Cyprus, followed by further explanation of this rhetoric of “intimate distance” as a master trope of the narrative. The remainder of the chapter examines some of the dominant tropes of the Turk produced in Thubron's narrative and through his narrating perspective.

its aesthetic appeal. Distortions of this sort and outright fictionalizations posing as nonfiction are endemic to the genre. For a recent example of a guidebook writer who “wrote up” places he never even visited, see Thomas Kohnstamm's book *Do Travel Writers Go to Hell?* Regardless of what a text like *Journey Into Cyprus* gets labeled, the point is that these narratives are read and consumed as nonfiction; as such, they merit critical attention for their continued production, circulation, and effects.

Behind the Turk Troping of a Foot-Traveling Writer

In July 2007 at a bookstore located inside an international airport of the Republic of Cyprus, a conspicuous display of books—a two-pack sealed in clear plastic wrap and stacked in clever circular formation from floor to eye level—rose to greet thousands of visitors. Inside the packaging were two beach-vacation ready, rental-car friendly paperbacks. One was a mystery set in Cyprus whose author and title I have forgotten. The other I recognized by its title, a newer edition of Colin Thubron’s *Journey Into Cyprus*, a travelogue first published in 1975 that details a British writer’s travels by foot across the island in the spring and summer of 1972. Front cover advance praise from *Bitter Lemons* author Lawrence Durrell, discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, demonstrates the discursive linkage within the genre of travel writing.

Though perhaps not so well-known outside of the context of Cyprus or to audiences unfamiliar with Thubron’s decorated body of travel writing and fiction, the non-fiction memoir *Journey Into Cyprus* continues to reach readers, especially travelers to and writers engaged with the island. Thubron’s detailed, nuanced landscaping and sympathetic, often humorous interactions with the people he encounters make his books appealing to travelers. Though *Journey* may not be terribly familiar to US readers, the same cannot be said in the UK and among other English-speaking audiences. Don George includes *Journey* in a list of twenty travel literature classics (248). *Journey* has also seen its way into the dispatches of correspondents feeding stories to Western media outlets.³⁸

³⁸ In Michael Theodoulou’s “Divided Cypriots unite to preserve ancient Famagusta,” the writer, a *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent, invokes Thubron to testify to the glory of the medieval ruins within Famagusta’s walls.

Guidebooks and reading lists for Cyprus invariably recommend it to those curious about cultural life before partition. Thubron visited Cyprus less than two years before the tumult of 1974 transformed the island forever; the book was published one year after the war. Unlike *Bitter Lemons*, virtually no criticism exists on *Journey into Cyprus*. Durrell's success with *The Alexandria Quartet* and the literary fame it afforded him could explain the greater interest in *BL*, even though some consider Thubron among the greatest living practitioners of his trade in the UK.

Journey Into Cyprus blends different narrative styles, reading sometimes as a landscape-centered travelogue, other times as a humorous memoir of the narrator's foibles among the Cypriots. When not offering his own idiosyncratic take on the island's history, culled from earlier travelers and Western historians, Thubron's narrative weaves in and out of the modest homes and villages of mostly rural Greek and Turkish Cypriots, who took in and sheltered the author during his 600-mile walk across the island. The writing is picaresque, moving through the landscape according to the whims of the narrator, who says little about why he chooses certain routes and destinations, only what the preceding literature and his encounters reveal to him. Thubron bemoans how the island has fallen from its pre-war halcyon days when he posits in a prefatory note that "the world which [*Journey*] depicts—a mosaic of Greek and Turkish villages interknit—has seemingly gone for ever, and such a journey, wandering at will among the two communities, is now impossible" (xi). This treasured mobility enables Thubron's insightful encounters with Cyprus locals, Greeks and Turks. Though his narrative demonstrates a host of complicated subject positions—brave, border-crossing traveler;

erstwhile peace-maker; romantic; ascetic; spiritual skeptic; ambivalent nationalist—as the lead character in his own narrative, Thubron largely follows the aesthetic practices of many other successful travel writers by obscuring his own character’s motives, desires, cultural influences, and political and national identity sentiments in favor of intense scrutiny of landscape.

The Space of Intimate Distance

In describing this travel writer’s narrating position as one of intimacy, I have in mind the notion of the portraiture or photographic “close-up” taken in the home or private company of others. As a foot traveler apt to arrive at his destination without car or entourage, Thubron lands himself in the living quarters and sometimes in the intimate lives of everyday Cypriots. Attaining this intimate position affords Thubron the advantage of a partial view of Cyprus from the perspective of Cypriots.³⁹ Travel writers routinely deploy more conventional means of plying their trade, such as some form of private transportation to get places and nightly hotel accommodations for shelter, decompression, and a modicum of writing comfort. These would typically be supplemented by an English-speaking guide who is often well-versed in officially-sanctioned national ideologies and sometimes vetted and trained by ruling authorities. Without such standard amenities, the narrative unfolds with pleasant and unpredictable interactions in the homes, villages, agricultural fields, and checkpoints where the spin of

³⁹ I use the term “perspective” with a nod of recognition to its favored status in so much of the work of Kenneth Burke. In fact, he confidently substituted perspective for “metaphor,” positing that “metaphor is a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else” (503).

conflict becomes tempered by tea, small talk (sometimes impassioned), and the local lives of Cypriots. Thus, the journey produces an “intimacy” that many travel writers—and consumers of travel literature—would find enviable.

Thubron chooses a mode of travel with a rich and venerated literary lineage, romantic to some, but one that must have seemed unfashionable to most, perhaps even anti-modern. As he explains, “To experience a land as varied as Cyprus, I wanted to walk. [...] To go on foot was to entrust myself to the people, a gesture of confidence, and to approach the land as all earlier generations had known it, returning it to its old proportions” (2-3). With the many privations and physical challenges of foot travel come payoffs in the form of regular, intimate proximity with the people, as well as a chronological or geographical mechanism to construct a story. By walking, Thubron creates circumstances conducive to a more picaresque tale: the narrator ambles from monastery to enclave to ancient ruin, never knowing exactly who or what will come across his path next as he crosses lines and checkpoints patrolled by armed militia and soldiers.

Traversing the island by foot, from Greek-controlled territory to Turkish enclaves, Thubron’s literal crossing of checkpoints and contested territories enables him to cross borders that had already been separating people from one another. At his most ethical and responsible, he demonstrates an ability to narrate the conflict with the complexity it deserves, and without the debilitating partisanship that marks the discourse of Cypriots and many others whose writing and narration represents life and culture on the island. Thubron’s travel methodology, marked as it is by the privations and difficulties attending

the foot traveler, either inspires or deludes him to imagine relations of intimacy, even reciprocity:

[W]alking has its compensations. Because it shows trust, it is the surest way to reach a people's heart. In these remote villages the hiker is an almost unknown phenomenon, and his eccentricity momentarily places him on a level with the poorest, and excites a mingled curiosity and concern. And another, subtler factor is at work: so slowly does he travel that the country takes on larger proportions; a man walking among the ruins of the past finds himself knit to the ancient scale of time and distance. (177)

Two rewards become available for the foot traveler, both of which display key principles the writer holds about his travel method: walking creates cultural access to the people of today and it affords travelers an existential link to the seemingly lost worlds of the past. In the case of the former, Thubron's humble walker ethos does appear to have earned him substantial intimacies with the salt of the earth, relations that have in turn informed a compelling narrative. The text accomplishes much more than Durrell or almost any other travel writer seeking to acquaint readers with the realm of cultural positions available to the Greeks and Turks of Cyprus before partition. In terms of cultural experience and analytical material, Thubron's chosen foot routes put him in the position to meet more Turks than encountered by most travelers. In the dozen or so travelogues and travel texts reviewed for this study, only Oliver Burch's *The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus* and Yiannis Papadakis's *Echoes from the Dead Zone* provide more in-depth description of Turkish Cypriots.⁴⁰

Any personal intimacies Thubron himself may have shared with these people, however, such as details about his family, his social class, or his own relationship to

⁴⁰ I take up these two texts in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, respectively.

national identity, were not included in *Journey*. Perhaps he simply chose not to interact with people in this way, and surely the rigorous pace of travel conspired against much depth in his relations to Cypriots. Then again, as suggested by his comment that he was too different from others to be understood, conversations involving personal details and values simply may not have happened because the cultural chasm was too wide. Most first-person references in *Journey* refer to Thubron's physical journeying over the land he perceives and renders into landscape; occasional private thoughts and witty asides to his audience occur regularly, but the narrative remains aloof from matters of personal complicity or conviction regarding issues like the British role in Cyprus, the Cold War, nationalism, or racist discourses of colonialism. Any attitudes or convictions emerge through his selective takes on history or intimate descriptions of his interactions with others.

The "distance" I perceive in his narration appears to have been created deliberately. In the article "A Life in Full," a feature piece about Thubron published in *The Independent*, critic Andrew Barrow observes of Thubron's encounters with locals that "most of the conversations tend to be one-way affairs [with the locals doing the talking]—and this is how he prefers it." Thubron claims in the interview that those he meets "do not have the materials to understand much about my world," and, writes Barrow, they "must find Thubron an enigmatic figure, to put it mildly." With little further explanation—for example, some particulars concerning this mysterious and incomprehensible world the author occupies—Thubron posits a veritable chasm of difference between himself and those he encounters in his journeys. His travel method

would certainly appear to contribute to the mystery, as most foreigners would not end up so off-the-beaten paths, especially not without a vehicle. In *Journey*, when people try to push him for his convictions or push him into the script of his own making, he self-consciously deflects. What he fails to acknowledge here is the potential value in people's curiosity about him—a curiosity no less important or natural than his own sense of wonder about the people and lands of his travels. Assumptions on the part of both traveler and local, like “he must be a spy” or “they couldn't possibly understand who I am,” if dealt with head-on, might not only constitute intriguing travel discourse, but also reduce some of the distance between narrator and landscape. Such conversations rarely surface in *Journey*. Thubron likely informed some Cypriots about “what he is,” but perhaps these conversations were deemed too didactic, too abstract, insufficiently entertaining, or otherwise inappropriate for the service of the narrative.

An overarching rhetorical purpose of travel writing, as mentioned earlier, is to capture an insider's look at a place, to render the place and people knowable and culturally different—not, necessarily, to cast the narrator as a character to be scrutinized along with the locals. The narrator's celebrated romps with the locals thus appear to be as much about distance as intimacy. And when privileging the distance term, an elaborate, considerable divide emerges in paradox: despite the writer's lack of knowledge of the landscape and its difference, the place is nonetheless delivered as familiar, known with a descriptiveness, specificity, and troubling certainty. Spurr likens the dynamic to that of the supervisor in Foucault's panopticon, wherein “The writer is placed either above or at the center of things, *yet apart from them*, so that the organization and classification of

things takes place according to the writer's own system of value" (16). Though characters from his travels hail his gaze and return his curiosity with stories of their own, these responses come to us filtered through the writer's privileged and "disproportionate economy of sight" (17). Thubron and many other travel writers accept this distance as an inherent, perhaps essential feature of the task of storytelling about the other, rather than as an ethical challenge that demands critical, self-reflective practice, especially in the context of travel to a historically saturated landscape currently experiencing armed conflict.

Troping the Cypriots Circa 1972

To take up the representation of "the Turk" in Cyprus and within *Journey* first requires some accounting for the term "Cypriot." By the time of Thubron's visit to Cyprus in 1972, Greek nationalists in particular were asserting an unquestioned Greek essentialism for Cyprus along the lines of roots and race. In a kind of tragic, inevitable, dialectical dance, Turkish Cypriots found themselves turning to Turkey and Turkish nationalism for a sense of political identity and a corresponding ethno-national historiography. The term "Cypriot" had become a term of identification that neither Greek nor Turk was keen to appropriate, despite the fact that both communities had been living as Cypriot citizens for a dozen years.⁴¹

Still, the term finds ready use in travel writers' presentation of a historical narrative of the island, and Thubron's construction of the island is no exception. One

⁴¹ Turkish members of the government withdrew in 1963, effectively ending the power-sharing experiment of the Republic of Cyprus.

ethical problem with using Cypriot without qualification means that historically-time compressed pronouncements on Cypriot character have a specific, and specifically non-Turkish, meaning. When Thubron makes a generalization about Cypriot peasantry in the Byzantine or Venetian periods and suggests a cultural continuity to the present—as he and many other travel writers are wont to do—the signifier means Greek Orthodox Christian Cypriots. This history does not necessarily preclude any responsible deployment of this term, but rather demonstrates the effects of unexamined claims of historical continuity. Put another way, when travel writers to Cyprus wax poetic about the ancient, unchanging character of the people of the island, they are, for all intents and purposes, constructing an imaginary and exclusionary “Cypriot” subject sealed off from those who do not consider themselves ethnically Greek, especially Turks, but also including Armenians, Maronite Christians, Arabs, and others who may have lived in Cyprus for centuries. Turks, for example, see fewer correspondences with a Cypriot historical narrative that suggests uninterrupted Greek continuity through the Hellenic, Roman, and Byzantine eras through to the present.

Yet at the same time, Turks in Cyprus—regardless of their personal political inclinations or whether the year is 1958, 1972, or 2008—could hardly escape the label of “Cypriot,” even if it appears as the back half of an ambiguous hyphenation. And given the symbiotic and discursively productive relationship between travel writing and colonialism in Cyprus and elsewhere, that means “Turk” or Turkish-Cypriot in Cyprus will bear its share of symbolic heft in terms of colonialist tropes like feminization. Thubron, after providing a brief explanation from Herodotus about the cults of Aphrodite

active on the island in ancient times, offers one of the first of many generalizations about the supposedly soft, feminized character of “the Cypriot,” transferring mythical qualities of the ancient to the not-quite-there-yet moderns: “The Cypriot rites [of Aphrodite] lacked both the harshness of the Asiatics and the austerity of the northern Greeks. Then as now, there are signs of mellowness in this island moored between Europe and Asia. The Semitic passions are tempered, the Greek pride blunted” (9). In contrasting the soft islander with the “Asiatic” and “Semitic,” Thubron appears to be writing in barely coded language to convey that Cypriots distinguish themselves from the angry Arabs to the east and south, and the humorless dignity of the Greeks to their West.

For Greeks of Cyprus, religiosity typically explains the gentle ways of the Cypriot: “The Cypriots, I rather think, were natural members of this dazzling hybrid, Byzantium. They, like it, lay midway between the classical and the oriental. Their softness and conservatism were not Hellenic. To them the character of the Greek mainland was unsympathetically masculine” (102). I have difficulty discerning whether Thubron speaks here of attitudes held by Cypriots in the age of Rome, Byzantium, or modernity—again, with continuity assumed, there can be no compelling motive to wonder. As for the case of the identity of the contemporary Cypriot, feminization still applies to the modern Cypriot. In a mountain village where the allure of the city and Europe would appear to threaten the charm of the place, Thubron continues to trope an eternally easygoing Cypriot:

Education is the newfangled god of all these villages, the door to a bourgeois paradise which is welcomed by men whose fathers have broken their lives harrowing rock-filled orchards. The Cypriots take easily to the towns. As soon as they have shed their mountain robustness, they soften to

a Mediterranean suavity, almost a voluptuousness. Doubtless they have been accused of this ever since the first Athenian tourist returned home from the temple harlotry of Paphos. Without the Arab's harsh intensity, nor that spine of Greek pride, their hallmark is this nascent sensuality and gentleness (shade of Aphrodite) *which has not altered since recorded time.* (128)

His generalizations, devoid of human context in this case, lack even the compromised intimacy that I have laid out to this point. Yet the passage suggests a different type of distance. Embedded within this character description rests an uninspired attempt to distance himself not from Cypriots but from other unnamed observers, presumably travelers, who through the ages who have accused Cypriots of carnal indulgence. And once the conventional wisdom and prejudicial record has been brought to light, the damage has essentially been done. Any doubts about Thubron's own take on this easy Cypriot may as well have been put to rest in critical remarks concerning the violent tactics used by the Greek Cypriot fighters in EOKA against the British and those within its own ranks. Thubron writes just a page earlier that such violence was "extraordinary for Cypriots, whose peaceableness has made them the natural subjects of empire. They have always been mellow, masters of flexibility" (127). Such a remarkably brazen naturalization of conquest functions as a not-so-subtle rationalization of the recent British occupation, not to mention the centuries of domination by outside powers that began in 1191 with Richard the Lionheart's arrival on the way to the third crusade. Anyone embodying the signifier of "the Cypriot" apparently remains a suspect candidate for sovereignty, Turks of Cyprus included.

Like others before him, Thubron cites many examples of Cypriot character that pre-date Ottoman times, thus loading the trope with a decidedly Greek flavor. The

standard nationalist line among Turkish-Cypriots and their patron kin in Turkey dismisses “Cypriot” as a 20th-century fiction.⁴² By disowning the term, Turks recuperate some of the dignity missing from the notion of this eminently-ripe-for-conquest “Cypriot”; on the other hand, to beg off of the label “Cypriot” simultaneously diminishes their connection to the land, at least compared to their fellow Greek (and now rival) islanders. The alternative identity position available, “Turk,” also could be said to carry a sort of ambivalence—and, in the years since 1974, an intra-communal dissonance. The point here is that, in the theater of global cultural production, how one looks from outside—as Cypriot, Turk, or Greek—becomes extremely important.

At the outset of his text, Thubron proposes that to be Cypriot is to embody *mélange* and mixing: “So rich and complex is the island’s history, so various is the blood which it has mingled, that it is impossible accurately to trace its maturing. The country’s pageant is that of other races: of western powers travelling eastward—Mycenaeans, Romans, Crusaders; and of eastern powers west—Egyptians, Phoenicians, Turks” (4). Of course, Thubron then proceeds to spend the entire remaining narration examining distinctions and evidence of civilizations retaining differentiating racial and cultural qualities.

As for the Turks of Cyprus, though they lived as subjects of British colonial rule for almost a century, they also inherit associations with the three centuries of Ottoman rule, as well as whatever sort of identity they had been developing for themselves in the

⁴² Former President and longtime political leader Rauf Denktaş took up the ethnic essentialist line with dark humor: the only true Cypriots, he remarked, are the donkeys of the Karpas. For Denktaş and nationalists of Greek and Turkish persuasion, Cyprus is an island with Greeks and Turks.

twelve years of independence prior to Thubron's time on the island. In Ottoman times, and into the British era at the end of the 19th century, most of today's Turkish Cypriots would have been spoken of and classified administratively as Muslims rather than as Turks. Locating experiential material to explore, for example, how much a people's Anatolian or Central Asian racial origins affected their character—a typical traveler's question, but not necessarily mine—depends very much on how much actual contact they can manage.

Though his endlessly nomadic agenda conspires against repeat visits and more conventional friendships of the sort Durrell enjoyed with Sabri, readers come away with a broader spectrum of characters from whom to glean knowledge of Turks. Like Durrell, Thubron finds "Turk" a bountiful, mysterious signifier, open to memorable moments of descriptive license. Often, the writing in *Journey* deploys tropes that deliver an ideologically hefty "Turk," essentialized as a mixed bag of laudatory, condemnatory, and ambivalent tropes: on the one hand, he finds Turks anti-materialistic, solemn (ironically similar to the "northern Greeks" referred to elsewhere), hospitable, easygoing yet solemn, and generally kindhearted. Yet in one memorable episode, the Turk becomes a signifier invoking demons of nightmarish racial memories, terribly tempered and warlike. As for their personal industry and political maturity, Thubron finds them alternately charming and pathetic: indolent dreamers, frugal but without much ambition, and, like other Muslims and Easterners, suffering from an enviable fatalism that may be central to their humanity, but which renders them still insufficiently modern, 'unarrived' subjects. The remainder of this chapter makes sense of these tropes, examining how they emerge from

the perspective of intimate distance and arguing that they are organized into a kind of vision that rhetorically accomplishes specific cultural effects—namely, a critique of race-based nationalist political identity and the violence done in its name.

As briefly mentioned before, Turks of Cyprus sometimes, according to principle or the selective omissions of travel writers, pass out of the messiness of “Cypriot.”⁴³ Their ethno-national affiliation with Turks, not to mention Islam, the Orient, and Orientalism, however, rarely escapes notice. And so, like Turks in Turkey, they bear a mixed legacy within Western imaginations. Turkophobia and a generalized, civilizational fear of the East operates as a familiar trope for European and American travelers and their audiences. Though US popular culture has the distinction of having produced *Midnight Express* and several other texts that posit fearsome, backward, and otherwise alien images of Turks, prejudice against Turks in European countries appears to be far worse and widespread than in the US.⁴⁴ However, this anxiety about what a Turk is capable of represents only one side of the story Thubron has to tell about their status in the Cyprus of 1972.

Despite trafficking in some of the same Orientalist paranoia about the existential threat of being swallowed by the “Moslem Sea,” *Journey*’s primary accomplishment is to trope the Turk as a dignified, kind, transparently salt-of-the earth cultural being—a

⁴³ In the decades leading up to 1974, many Turks of Cyprus had come to emphasize their Turkishness in order to promote the cause of *taksim*, or partition. In a discussion with a Turkish Cypriot at a checkpoint, for example, Thubron questions how a Turkish Cypriot can rightfully call himself a Turk when he has never even been to Turkey. When Thubron asks “Do you feel a Turk?” the man replies confidently that “I am a Turk” (180).

⁴⁴ Oliver Burch provides a brief but colorful history of European prejudice against Turks at the outset of his travelogue *The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus*. For more timely analysis of this question as it plays out in European publics today, see Azade Seyhan’s “Is Orientalism in Retreat or in for a New Treat? Halide Edip Adivar and Emine Sevgi Ozdamar Write Back” and Sabine Strasser’s “Europe’s Other: Nationalism, Transnationals and Contested Images of Turkey in Austria.”

romantic, patronizing construction in one sense, yet also a product of the hospitality and kindness of the people he encounters. As we shall see, his admiration of Turks in Cyprus could also be understood as a dialectic response to the racism directed towards them, and the British, by many of the Greek Cypriots he encounters, which is where I will begin the analysis.

The Picnicking Turkish Pilgrims of Hala Sultan Tekke

In the course of his narrative, Thubron depicts encounters with many Turks of Cyprus. This study focuses on three particular episodes: the picnicking pilgrims of Hala Sultan Tekke, an unknown and unnamed group of Turkish Muslim women visiting a shrine outside Larnaca; the Ghaziveran enclave episode, in which he is befriended by the mukhtar's son and his village cohorts, who treat the writer to a rousing night out; and his verbal sparring with Kemal the Terrible Turk, a rambling dialogue with a nationalist ideologue who, among other rhetorical moves, presses Thubron for an explanation of why Western writers tend to historically identify more with Greeks than with Turks. I examine each of these narrative episodes in turn, focusing on the tropes that emerge and how they can be traced to the perspectives of intimacy, distance, and the ambiguous synthesis of intimate distance.

Thubron's encounter with women bathers represents a methodological departure of sorts, in that he remains not only socially but physically distant from the people he describes. He actually has no contact with these women, though they may in fact be aware of his presence nearby. The scene he creates suggests he may have been something

of a peeping tom, keenly observing and imagining from afar, easing through the orchards outside Hala Sultan Tekke, a pilgrimage site for Muslims adjoining a salt lake just outside Larnaca.⁴⁵ During his visit to the shrine, Thubron describes not only what a small group of Turkish women do and how they dress, but also what must inevitably be on their minds. The narrator postures as the presumptive modern, based on his pronouncements about the qualities of Islamic cultural practice. He determines that what these women are thinking includes not a wisp of doubt or skepticism about the supremacy of faith to explain the workings of the world:

I went into the orchards where the women had settled with much smoothing of skirts and rearranging of veils. Their laughter flowed under the trees. In the deep and unexpected grass, overhung by fruit as in the Moslem paradise, they looked already as if their prayers had been answered. *Certainty, truth, lay comfortably about them. Strong in the unquestioned*, under the cracking dome and palm shadows, they talked and smiled pleasantly together. (193, italics mine)

Although the expression “strong in the unquestioned” could be read to suggest something akin to an *a priori* incapacity for reflection and inquiry, Thubron almost seems to envy these women their certitude. The scene is intriguing not only for how it depicts these women’s tender human qualities and their ease in transitioning from worship to picnic, but also for its suggestion that the comfort they appear to enjoy this afternoon derives from their religious faith. One basic critique of this “certainty” trope for character or faith concerns its accuracy, or even its capacity to be measured: How does a writer actually know and understand what people do and do not question? The existence of pilgrimage sites and shrines like the Hala Sultan Tekke testifies to a sort of complicated anxiety

⁴⁵ The site is a shrine that commemorates the location of the death of the prophet Mohammad’s maternal aunt, Umm Haram.

about certainty itself. Further, and in more concrete terms, Turkish Cypriot men and women had been undergoing dramatic changes in identity and political status for close to a century.

Turks of Cyprus had been economically privileged as Muslims in the Ottoman millet system, then later subject to British colonial rule, during which time they began to undergo shifts that would subordinate their sectarian identity as Muslims to a national identity as Turks. Leaders in Turkey and in Cyprus have constructed secular national political ideology to be synonymous with Turkish national identity, further marginalizing religion from the preferred track of the modern subject; however, the women, Thubron would have us believe, have been keeping the faith and traditional ways of thinking while shielded from modernity.

Troping on women as repositories of tradition has been around for a long time, and especially important in the era of nationalism, according to Yuval-Davis: “Discourse and struggles around [...] ‘women following tradition’ (as have been expressed in various campaigns for and against women’s veiling, voting, education and employment) have been at the centre of most modernist and anti-modernist nationalist struggles” (23). In the particular case of Turkish Cypriot women, they most likely were familiar with Atatürk’s political ideas, such as Turkish nationalism, secularism, state feminism, and so forth, as Turkish national textbooks became part of the education system in the schools after the Second World War and in some cases even earlier (Kizilyurek and Gautier-Kizilyurek 41). Thubron may even be vaguely aware of this context, yet he still casts the influence of religion as dominant. To suggest that Thubron intended only to depict a religious mood

that guides the worshippers to feel more “certain” and comforted after prayer would probably be the most generous reading of what drove him to these conclusions.

In the next move of this narrative episode, he essentially repeats the pattern of flattering, quotidian physical description, yet this time Thubron takes his readers a titillating step further: the women shed some of their clothes, scrub their legs, and all but turn pilgrimage into party:

[T]he women had thrown modesty to the winds. They had peeled off their stockings, rolled up their skirts and were squatting on the Roman capitals to wash their thighs at the fountain. One old lady had a bottle of brandy tucked at her side, so soon are Islamic precepts forgotten, and there I shall remember them, laughing and scrubbing round the pool on stones from an age which had once, like they, been certain of its gods. (194)

Despite his barely contained exuberance at stealing glimpses into women’s personal space and spiritual lives—and seeing them laugh, drink, and enjoy each other’s company—Thubron finishes the passage with a peculiar and unflattering linkage of these women to god-fearing ancients of the island. Both, he claims, were “certain of [their] gods.” The trope of the Turkish Muslim woman comforted by an unquestioned core of faith sets up an implicit hierarchy. At the peak, Europeans like Thubron shoulder the burdens of a modern subject’s radical doubt, while the masses to the East stagnate below in superstition. In the case of Thubron’s picture of pre-1974 Cyprus, embedded in the rhetorical situation of the narrative are a handful of particularly painful ironies.

Thubron, as a citizen of empire, comes from a society that has, in anthropologist Rebecca Bryant’s terms, helped to shape the terms by which modernity will be realized (5). Religious practices and cultural values of Greek and Turkish Cypriots become saturated with meaning and attention, as the narrating subject romanticizes and fantasizes

a mythic epoch of the faithful that comes off as reductive in its characterization of the faiths of others. Nothing, for example, deters Thubron from troping the island as historically in peril from Islam, as seen in his gushing praise for the Latin Kingdoms that had to get by in spite of Islam: “For long periods the island was at peace. Alone in a Moslem sea, an aura of romance encircled it” (157).⁴⁶ Later, in accounting for the demise of the Latin Catholics in Cyprus, he again equates Islam with “threat” and, at the same time, makes subtly disparaging remarks about the Greek Orthodox Church: “With their kingdom drowning in an Islamic sea, the Lusignans gave up persecuting their fellow-Christians, and as early as the fourteenth century the resilient Greek faith began insidiously to absorb them. The women were the first to succumb. They began to attend Orthodox services” (206). For the brave-hearted European Christian, the choice framed here was either “drowning” in the treacherous waters of Islam or “insidious absorption” into Eastern Orthodoxy. The women, apparently weaker by nature, took the first step down. If history shapes the landscape, then Cypriots seem to lose either way when compared against an idealized and religiously corrected British intellectual subject.

Elsewhere in *Journey*, Thubron accounts for Turkish Cypriot or Turkish motives with non-religious explanations, which makes the misguided confidence of the Hala Sultan Tekke episode—and what Thubron imagines it may have meant to be a Muslim in

⁴⁶ Thubron was hardly the only European intellectual taken by allure of this island as the “last” outpost of (Western) Christendom to be found in the East, as he explains: “[Cyprus] inspired the poets Philippe de Novare, who fought in its civil wars, Chaucer, Petrarch and Guillaume de Machaut. Thomas Aquinas dedicated his treatise on kingship, never finished, to the young Hugh II, and Boccaccio his *Genealogy of the Gods* to Hugh IV. The island royalty held a half mystical appeal. In the cathedral of Famagusta, nearest of their cities to the Holy Land, the sovereigns on their accession were still crowned kings of Jerusalem. They were heirs to the dashed hopes of the waning mediaeval age, the lost conscience of Christendom” (157).

modern Cyprus—so intriguing. In the telling, he appears to have neither perceived nor accounted for dramatic shifts occurring in the political and cultural landscape of Turkish Cypriots. According to Kızılyürek and Gautier- Kızılyürek, “Towards the end of the 1930s, the modernists gained the upper hand and the Turkish Cypriot community began to replace the Islamic elements of their identity by secular ethnic elements, as they were developed in Turkey” (42). The scene Thubron constructs could align with some material community of Muslim Turkish women, who just so happen to be pious, mirthful, and rock-solid about their religious faith. Though this may not be entirely implausible, social history suggests they would have hardly been considered typical in terms of their presumed faith and Islamic piety, nor in the corresponding absence of “questioning” in other aspects of their lives. Perhaps religion and its faithful adherents serve a useful function within the travel narrative of the arrived modernist, as their subordination reifies the supremacy of skepticism.

Tension about the place of accommodation of faith in the lives of 19th- and 20th-century Cypriots have been examined recently by scholars such as Bryant, whose study *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus* sees the formation of an identity politics in Cyprus based on the struggle over terms of constructing a “modern” subject. She writes that,

The project of modernity was essentially an ethical one, aimed at dispelling the illusions of religion and discovering the ‘real’ truths upon which a better life could be founded. The contradiction at the heart of this ethical vision was that it was founded on a belief in the universally human that was realized in culturally specific terms. (5)

During the anti-colonial struggle of 1955-1959, most Greeks of Cyprus imagined and hoped their freedom would arrive in the form of *enosis*, the union of the island with Greece, not independence. Turks of Cyprus countered with calls for *taksim*, or partition, wherein they would be “free” to develop a closer relationship with their ethnic kin in Turkey. For Cypriots, like so many millions of others people in developing “modern” societies of the Balkans and the Middle East, those “terms” of modern political identity inevitably lead to discussions of nationalism and the symbolic construction of nations. And so, through this master trope of “intimate distance” interconnected tropes such as nation, race, gender, and religion play out in, and *as* the landscape of Cyprus, a former and recent subject of empire that became a modern country beset by dual and competing nationalisms.

At Hala Sultan Tekke, stolen intimacy affords Thubron and his narrative an appealing glimpse of Cypriot lives. Writing against a conventional script, these women laugh, drink, and are comfortable with their bodies. Yet the distance of this perspective cannot be underestimated. Thubron, after all, does not hear them speak or understand their words; they may not even know he is nearby observing them, and his take on their essence rings shallow against the political facticity of late-20th century Cyprus.

The Turk at Ghaziveran: Dignified in Squalor, Decent of Spirit

In my discussion on “the Ghaziveran episode” I begin with Thubron en route to Ghaziveran. He stops at Kokkina, a village on the northwest coast of Cyprus that witnessed episodes of violence in the 1960s and continuing siege-like conditions during

his visit. Here, Thubron takes a moment to make some of his first cultural generalizations of Turks, serving up qualities like fatalism, dignity, and natural ease as cultural norms; he makes no distinction or qualification of the trope to the context of Cyprus as he echoes the nomadic past associated with Turks of central Asia:

Even in squalor an air of sufficiency remained. The uprooting of more settled peoples, whose lives are twined in their possessions, can be devastating. But living frugally, and not caring overmuch for business, the Turk, when the time for change arrives, will collect his household on the backs of donkeys and carry it away with as little loss as such a change allows. (53)

“The Turk” in one sense appears to receive sympathetic treatment here as a dignified, resilient person whose resolve bests that of more sentimental or materialistic others who become overly attached to their land. Then again, one might naturally wonder how someone is supposed to feel in such conditions, given the political turmoil and displacement that occurred throughout the 1960s and was happening at the point of Thubron’s journey as well. I do not mean to discount any lingering cultural influence of the nomadic ways of past or contemporary people ethnically identified as “Turks” in Cyprus. However, based on very little experiential evidence at all—the narrating perspective in *Kokkina* is all distance, no intimacy—Thubron tropes Turks as the inevitable outcome of a racial destiny and continuity with the past, which severely underestimates the potential impact of civil upheaval and fighting on people’s outlooks and values.⁴⁷ In entertaining so much speculative writing about an obscure, shared “Turk”

⁴⁷ Elided here is the reality of substantial migration of Turkish Cypriots to places like London, Australia, and Turkey, for political and economic reasons. According to Robins and Aksoy, “Turkish Cypriots migrated from Cyprus largely as a consequence of the bitter ‘inter-communal’ conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s, and then the political and economic problems of the 1970s and 1980s, following the partition of the island. Britain was their favoured destination because, as former colonial subjects, they had, or felt that

from the past, Thubron seals off a more accurate and insightful picture of the people he encounters. When he arrives at Ghaziveran, the narrative regains its intimate distance, and all that perspective's privileges and pratfalls.

Thubron walks through a checkpoint into the village and falls into the company of Hussein, the *mukhtar*'s son, who gives him a Turkish Cypriot narration of the fighting in 1964, followed by a night filled with food, film, booze, and gambling. He finds the Turks in this episode appealing: likable, kind, and humorous—yet not without their imperfections, as we shall see below. What Thubron hears and experiences happens through the facilitation of Hussein, who seems to embody many of the qualities Thubron ascribes to the essential Turk, despite his somewhat exceptional status as the son of the village leader. Using Hussein as material to substantiate certain cultural conclusions, Thubron posits the Turk as anti-materialistic, content to live with a simplicity shaped by the apparently inexplicable influence of “Anatolia” rather than the more modernized, creature comfort-oriented “Mediterranean.”⁴⁸ The latter distinction comes across as a coded binary substituting for the more explicit and politically exigent split between Greek and Turk, or even West and East.

Taken as a whole, however, the Ghaziveran scene presents a picture of an internally complex and diverse community whose differences were probably effaced by the threat of attack and war. At a makeshift casino, Thubron takes note of the solemn air among Turkish Cypriots and the absence of an “effervescence” associated with the

they had, a ‘special’ historical relationship with the colonial heartland. In Britain, however, it turned out that they quickly became an ‘invisible population.’ Very little has ever been written about them” (685). History may testify to more tumult than the solemn donkey ride out of the village suggests here.

⁴⁸ In *Bitter Lemons*, Durrell invoked a similar trope, and my own travels through rural Turkish Cyprus in recent years confirm this observation.

Greeks of Cyprus: “They did not quarrel [while gambling]. Perhaps they felt too threatened from outside” (76). And, as the quotation suggests, the difference could have less to do with “culture” than with the dire material circumstances of the times.

Nor was there total unanimity in perspective even in the midst of enclave. An unusual and revealing discussion with Hussein and Rashid, ushered in with an abundance of booze, demonstrates some of the complexity within the political identity of “the Turk,” as well as anxiety shared by many Turks about their standing among the English. The young men’s passionate desire to be understood and recognized by the world is matched by Thubron’s equally stout resolve to stay a step removed from the political fray. I quote at some length to capture the dynamic of power relations at work in Thubron’s travel experience and his narration of these events:

That morning the radio had given out news of two Englishmen kidnapped and killed by Turkish anarchists.⁴⁹ Hussein had fallen into a bitter silence after telling me [...]

‘Now the English will think us barbarians,’ said Hussein tightly. ‘It will take years to forget.’ [...]

But after three bottles of weak brandy and a dish stacked with kebab, Anglo-Turkish relations looked less hopeless to them. Rashid had dissolved into a beneficent heap, splashing the drink down his throat and rolling his eyes. Hussein’s flowered collar was spotted with fat; he grinned idly at the wall behind Rashid, at himself, at me. Would the English forgive them in time? He picked up the last bottle; the dregs gurgled into my glass. What did the English think of Turkey? If you said ‘Turk’, what did they feel?

I pretended to have my mouth full.

But the English knew, didn’t they, that Turkey would never go Communist. Never, never. Communism was of the Evil One. And they

⁴⁹ Though left-wing or “anarchist” organizations were operating in Turkey at the time (just as they were in places like Italy, Germany, and throughout Europe at the time) and known to target US and British political and economic interests, I have been unable to verify this particular event. The more noteworthy point concerns the importance of Turkey as a Cold War ally to the U.K., a political necessity troubled, perhaps always in doubt, due to an unsettling (and simplistic) racial memory of Europeans. Some have obviously nourished this anxiety for political purposes in places like Cyprus.

understood, didn't they, that Cyprus should be partitioned? And if they didn't, could I say so in whatever-it-was I was writing?

Rashid jerked upright and shouted: 'And can't you put me in? I expect you're writing history, but surely, somewhere...' the Roman curls danced round his dissolute head. 'I know! Make me a cave-man! That's historical isn't it? After all, I eat with my hands, and I look like...well...you see me!'

It was true. The degenerate and the primitive coexisted in him. Neolithic jaw, prehensile stance, overcast eye-sockets.

'Put me in!'

So there he is. (74-75)

Hussein makes no differentiation between Turks in Turkey and those in Cyprus, which Thubron allows to go by without remark, thus positing a sort of national and cultural unity with Turkey. Had Hussein chosen this example of kidnap and murder as a way to differentiate the political scene in Cyprus and Turkey—Turks of Cyprus as distinct from Turks of Turkey, and both communities socio-politically heterogeneous—then he could have passed off this action as something not to trouble Thubron. For example, "these were extremists in Turkey, their problems are different from ours here in Cyprus," and so forth. Instead, Hussein assumes a sort of filial guilt for the work of "anarchists" who happen to be Turkish. For his part, Thubron never betrays any real concern about this event or his personal safety, at least not that he reveals in the narrative. This may be roughly equivalent to a person from an Arab or Muslim country visiting the US and having the locals apologize for the violence and inhumanity of their own people. This particular patch of dialogue demonstrates that organized and violent political currents opposed to the US, the UK, and other "imperial" powers exist within Turkey. And the introduction of internal political conflict among Turks represents more complexity than

typically afforded in travel literature that imagines “the Turk” to be a monolith of an ethno-national signifier.⁵⁰

Hussein lays bear his anxiety over the reputation of Turks in the West and the problems of racial memory among Europeans, who may be inclined to see them as “barbarians.” The discussion amounts to little of consequence as Thubron takes a pass, at least in the narrative, when queried on the image of Turks in the UK. Again, he slips out of an uncomfortable situation, this time giving Hussein the stage to trope himself and “his nation” in more positive lights. “Turk,” Hussein argues, means an anti-communist political asset that the British should support according to Cold War logic. From his perspective, the Cold War affords Turks an opportunity to secure an allegiance from a powerful Western nation with an historic stake in Cyprus. How these current political affairs and historical prejudices play out culturally in the UK remains external to the narration, however, as Thubron shifts the storyline into physical humor.

In the passage above, Thubron jokes his way out of some honest and potentially painful intercultural dialogue: “I pretended to have my mouth full,” he deadpans upon sensing the delicacy of the discourse (75). Thubron again displays his preference for politics in small doses, as he leaves aside Hussein’s pleas in favor of a rather humiliating, if invited description of Rashid. This character, a friend of Hussein’s who fought against Greek Cypriots as a youth during a siege of his village, appears comfortable with self-deprecating humor. Who knows what Rashid would make of his figural construction as a

⁵⁰ Since Turkish Cypriots formed their own governing authorities and political parties after partition, plenty of different political entities have existed. Until the 2003 elections, right-wing nationalist politics held sway. Leftists, trade-unionists, and those ambivalent about Turkey and nationalism have always been present among Turkish Cypriots, but perhaps not so easy to locate for the itinerant foot traveler.

man of ambiguous racial heritage (Roman curls), making for yet another unexpected, and perhaps unintentional contrast within the norms of “Turk.” To complete the scene, Thubron gives Rashid his wishes—fifteen minutes of fame according to the premise that any publicity, even humiliating caveman humor, trumps the obscurity of Cyprus in a Turkish enclave. For Thubron, better levity than the unpleasantness of engaging Hussein’s anxiety about relations between Europe and Turkey. He saves argument for Kemal, the least appealing of the many Turks encountered in the narrative, and one of the few who seems to shake Thubron out of his deliberate posture of distance—albeit due to a fair share of belligerence and bombast.

Intimacy and Distance: Kemal the Terrible Turk, Colin the Ghostly Greek

Near the end of his journey, Thubron awakens in a hotel in Famagusta to the greetings of Kemal, a dogmatic, pan-Turkic nationalist who makes a point to speak with Thubron. After greeting Thubron, Kemal leads him on an interpretive walk through town during public festivities to commemorate the declaration of the Turkish Republic.⁵¹ Kemal delivers a series of monologic rants that push Thubron’s Western liberal buttons. The chauvinistic rhetoric ushers out of Thubron a “ghostly Greek” voice that speaks up on behalf of the Greeks of Cyprus so maligned by Kemal. Setting aside Thubron’s outburst at the old Turkish Cypriot treasure hunter peddling antiquities on the Black Market, his encounter with Kemal raises his narrating hackles more than in any other

⁵¹ Naming this character “Kemal” could be interpreted as a deliberate reference to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, nationalist icon and founder of the Turkish Republic (though no Pan-Turkic ideologue); however, Thubron nowhere indicates that he has changed the names of those he meets in his journey to protect their anonymity after publication. And for a Turk of Cyprus born after 1923, Kemal would surely have been a popular name.

scene in *Journey*. Though he seems to make little progress in affecting Kemal's worldview, Thubron does offer several revealing retorts under his breath complicate Kemal's monolithic projection of Turk while simultaneously critiquing him and other ideologues of Cyprus for their bigotry and irredentist politics of hate.

Kemal is an English-speaking Turk of Cyprus, strongly opinionated, relentless, and educated—he carries a copy of Toynbee's *War and Civilization* when he bumps into Thubron. His chest-puffing nationalist rhetoric grates on the narrator, who gets his fill of Turkish pride, the glory of the Turkish nation, and the need for symbolic actions to keep the Turkish Cypriots together.⁵² Thubron politely shares his company while barely concealing growing disgust for Kemal's ideas about race relations in Cyprus, the island's history, and the true nature of the Turk (206). Still, some of the pejorative language used in describing “the Turk,” such as his narration of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus, betrays an inherently condemnatory tone, established well before he takes the brunt of Kemal's bellicosity. In referring to the aftermath of the siege of 1572, Thubron writes that “the Turks had overrun the island” (206) and had torn up the bones of the last Latin monarchs and “threw them into the sea” (207). Thubron wields the savagery of Lala Mustapha Pasha and the Ottomans against Kemal's boasting about his ancestors, yet in the relish of retelling these acts of violence and desecration he suggests a deeper racial misgiving about Turks.

⁵² I refer here to Kemal's “reading” of Toynbee as a misreading because he concludes that the history of war and domination naturalizes a certain order in the world, such that some people are fit to be enslaved and others are fit to rule. Toynbee apparently compiled *War and Civilization* in order to demonstrate the horrors of war and urgently make the case for modern nations to act and prevent further calamities. Kemal, like many Turkish intellectuals, would have come to know of and revere Toynbee for his reporting of the Turkish perspective during the War of Independence in 1923. I do not imagine he would have approved of Kemal's appropriation of his scholarship.

Kemal deflects the topical focus away from the Ottomans and onto the Venetians, but this accomplishes little more than further frustrating Thubron. Kemal makes the case that whatever the Ottomans' excesses, their predecessor regime had its own often overlooked flaws. Each of these claims would make for intriguing entry points into sustained discussion of the Venetian and Ottoman imperial reigns in Cyprus; such does not occur, as Thubron's own melancholia over the demise of Western European Christendom in Cyprus displaces the debates over historical injustices and political memories. Thubron reveals not-so-subtle sympathy for Western civilization, which operates in historical contradistinction from Turkey, as he ambles with Kemal through the famed, disintegrating Gothic ruins and subtly mourns their fall into ruin at the hands of the Ottoman, and now Cypriot, Turks. He describes "churches, which ascend like broken prayers" within the ancient city walls now lived in by Turks (209).

Kemal's own identification with the Ottomans, who he refers to in the text with the plural pronoun "we," obviously contributes to the adversarial relationship they create in Famagusta. The two continue to parry about history, with Thubron "relentlessly" advancing the case for the Turkish commander's evil and the Venetian commander's unjust demise. Kemal eventually concedes a few points to Thubron's recriminations, even though Thubron assumes Ottoman sources to be false, with only the word of the Venetian/Western sources to go on as reliable (211). As this tense debate about the history of Famagusta occurs, the celebrations of Turkey's declaration of the republic jar the two discursants back to the present, but Kemal's fervor has deeply impressed, even frightened Thubron. With singular attention to detail available through their passionate

exchanges, the narrator attributes Kemal's motives and nature to dark forces within his ethnic self:

Kemal showed the terribleness of the Turk when aroused. At any mention of Ottoman atrocity his burly hands ground fiercely at his knees and his face darkened with patriotism so that one forgot the intellectual forehead and noticed instead his belligerent mouth and nostrils. (211)

My focus here is not on the historical debate about the circumstances of the bloodbath that followed the siege of Famagusta in 1572, but as part of the character study of Kemal that locates him as a critical and controversial representative of “the Turk” in the imagination of Western observers. In Thubron's defense, he later attempts to dismiss Kemal as just another passionate, or hotheaded, or overly defensive Turkish Cypriot when chiming in on matters of identity and nationalism: “You're not typical [...]. I've found your people vary,” he claims (214).

Still, Thubron's narration delivers—with Kemal's own blessings—a centuries-old trope of the terrible Turk. Kemal functions as both advocate for and perfect foil of this script. He and Thubron have arrived at an agonistic intimacy, struggling to forward their respective agendas, though yielding little. The distance Thubron prefers elsewhere in the narrative concerning his own political allegiances and the conflict in Cyprus dwindles as he concludes that, pitted against aggressive ideologues like Kemal, his loyalties lie with the long-suffering, imperially subjugated Greeks of Cyprus. Kemal seems to have intuited all along where Thubron's deep-rooted sympathies lay, as he demonstrates with a partisan, racist rant about the Greeks and unexamined Western identification with Greek culture:

‘Mine are a good people,’ said Kemal as we followed the crowd into the streets, ‘and Cyprus is ours by right. We are conquerors, warriors. The Greeks are only merchants.’

‘This is an age of merchants.’

‘You in the West,’ he growled, ‘you think too much of the Greeks. You exaggerate. Don’t forget, civilization came from the East.’ His thatch of black hair flopped morosely on his forehead with each stride. ‘In any case, these Cypriots—are they Greeks? No!’ He stamped in time to the music. ‘No! No! No! They’re a mongrel lot. Arabs, Arameans, Phoenicians. Slave peoples! All this about ENOSIS—why should they want to be united to Greece? It’s a charade, a trick. There’s no drop of Greek in them....’ (212)

Thubron challenges the ludicrous essentialism, contradictions, and double-standards in Kemal’s own fantastic Occidentalism with direct rebuttals unlike any found elsewhere in *Journey*. Tellingly, Thubron pitches his narrative voice in these moments of greatest critique, speaking not as himself but as “the churches [that] cried out not to be betrayed” (213). He objects not, for example, as the British citizen and former colonizing agent, but as the “ghostly dissenting Greek [...] in my mind” (214). Thubron’s narration suggests that this phantom Greek resides within every Western subject because of an intellectual or cultural debt to Hellenism, positing an undeniable, historically material difference with Turks and Turkey. Whether Kemal’s politics can be said to have the last word in the narrative remains an open question. Thubron’s close-range descriptive work in this passage effectively undermines some of Kemal’s posturing, just as it sketches the breaking points of an intimacy available to this particular traveler in a given historical moment.

Though the banter between the two men becomes testy, Thubron does include a tender, humanizing picture of Kemal that disrupts the discord, if only momentarily. Kemal pulls him aside and insists that “he hadn’t meant to be aggressive [...] but he

badly wanted the world to understand his country. Not only his country, but his whole people” (213). Still, Thubron ultimately distances himself from this race-based rhetoric, disengaging from Kemal’s vision and favoring instead a series of petty asides, muttered objections, and clever, detached ironies through which it becomes clear that the two discursants, despite what must have been hours together, have not even agreed to disagree. Thubron’s intimate look at Kemal represents the most exhaustive discussion of any sort of coherent historical narrative for Turks. Though Thubron clearly insists to Kemal that “his people” are hardly a monolith, giving Kemal the longest and final word makes it difficult for any Turk to recover the distance created by the passage.

Rhetorical Purposes and Political Effects of Intimate Distance

Tragically, nationalist movements, which have used the universalist rhetoric of rights and the more antique claims to historical priority to claim their own privileged possession of territory and statehood, have rarely had many scruples about violating the rights of others [...]. Neither the Greek *Megali Idea* nor Greater Romania showed much respect for the principles of cultural autonomy, linguistic homogeneity, or ethnic self-determination within a separate state when it came to the claims of others. *Nationalism’s cultural and contingent origins have never prevented appeals to primordial roots or race*. As the claims to nationhood metastasize into the evils of ethnic cleansing and genocide, the task of intellectuals to remind us all of the imaginary quality of much of the ideology and history that has gone into the making of nations becomes all the more acute. (11-12 emphasis mine)⁵³

Scholars of nationalism Suny and Eley identify history, land, antiquity, culture, roots, and race as significant features of nationalist movements and politics. In order to

⁵³ My point here is certainly not to call out Greeks or Romanians, as other nationals (Britons, Americans, Turks, and so forth) have modern histories, even narratives of origin, marked by rationalized violence against racial others.

measure and assess the effects of intimate distance, I begin this conclusion with this above passage, one very much relevant to the context of Cyprus, where irredentism has informed extremist variants of Turkish and Greek nationalism. Suny and Eley warn of the dangers of nationalism when its logic goes unchecked and unchallenged, which constitutes a call to action on the part of intellectuals to demystify and critique the imaginary dimensions of the nation, especially as its success threatens others.

Their rhetorical purpose of Suny and Eley is to pose a challenge to “intellectuals” to contest fictionalizations of history and nation that have led to the suffering of those who fail to conform to an idealized national identity. Travel writers like Thubron produced through scholarly research, creative journalistic methods, and accomplished storytelling—Thubron’s *Journey Into Cyprus* creates moments where a narrating intellectual appears up to the task these scholars present. At other times in the narrative, as evident in this chapter’s analysis, the narrator very deliberately evacuates the scene of dissension, ostensibly following the travel writer’s mandate to demonstrate “what your characters are feeling” (George 75). This rhetorical move tethers the potential solipsist to a finite and less ethically demanding task, as it situates a focus external to the narrator’s actual subjective impressions, such as dissonance, ambivalence, doubt.

That said, intimate distance cannot help but reveal implicit assumptions and positioning from a reluctantly personal narrator. In the case of racial troping, readers will certainly take in their share when Thubron narrates conversations that represent the perspective of Greeks, who typically hold negative attitudes to Turks. In such moments, Thubron, despite some of his bizarre typecasting of Turks elsewhere in the narrative,

repeatedly speaks well of Turks to Greeks, as if trying to correct their racism and morally instruct them on their politics. To illustrate this rhetorical purpose and conclude this chapter, I end with one final example from the text that demonstrates Thubron's awareness of the severity of the situation in Cyprus. As a liberal narrator frustrated by the discourses of hatred, he provides counter-narratives to the bigotries he sees so often elsewhere in his journey. Here, the narrator takes on a position of moral investment, and he uses the experience as an opportunity for a superlative compliment to the openness of a Greek Cypriot:

‘And where would you have slept tonight if not here?’ the farmer asked. ‘This part is not good for strangers. A man must know his way about.’

‘I'd planned to stay at Pano Koutraphas.’

He stared at me. ‘There is no more Pano Koutraphas. Our people came from there, many of them. But when the trouble started they ran away. And the Turks too—fled.’ He began to scowl at the floor. ‘They're ready to kill one another now. Yet they'd lived together for centuries in one place. You would see them sitting—Greek and Turk together, Turk and Greek.’ He aligned his forefingers in a gesture of concord. ‘It's very strange.’

I said bleakly, ‘I've liked the Turks.’

Always before, in other families, this opinion had been greeted with silence, the nearest to a rebuke which a Greek will show a guest, or else had been swept away in a gale of political recrimination. But now I heard the farmer say; ‘Yes. The Turks are all right. They are a decent people.’ I smiled back at him in amazement, a great warmth spreading through me. His remark was like one of those comets which burst in a summer sky—lonely among thousands who allowed the Turks no human quality, but a promise that other worlds and other possibilities existed, however remote.

‘This trouble...’ he began, shifting uncomfortably in his chair. ‘This trouble...’ He held out his hands, clenching and unclenching them, until they drifted back onto his knees. ‘I don't know.’ He bowed his head. ‘I simply don't know.’ (135)

Here, Thubron allows himself to express some of the pain and frustration of the political situation. The result: an illuminating if ethically compromised script narrated by a secular, humanist, colonial, white, male character seeking identification with varied ethno-national “others,” including Turks. He returns them the favor by narrating their words, actions, and interactions with dignity, humor, empathy, superiority, and lament. Overall, the narrative implicitly posits the supremacy of Western secularism and the cultural and political hegemony of the UK and the West over modernizing, developing societies like Cyprus and Turkey. Thus, in one sense, people and landscape remain fixed at an insurmountable symbolic distance, in the gaze of colonialism and its attendant tropes. On the other hand, the characters and places he encounters provide in this narrator a range of emotions and complications; he sometimes reveals and addresses the effects of travel and encounter, but, by discursive design, most often leaves them unresolved, at a tantalizing and intimate distance.

CHAPTER 4
DAY-TRIPPING TO THE DARK SIDE:
THE ETHICS OF NARRATING AN ISLAND DIVIDED

In previous chapters, I have examined the rhetoric of narrated travel writing, especially the way travel writers trope the people and land they encounter, often according to material, subjective dimensions of the situation. Lawrence Durrell, in his desire to locate Cyprus in the Oriental East, coaxes mystery, spirituality, and reptilian intrigue from the Turks of Cyprus. Colin Thubron scripts more grounded, textured, and illuminating scenes of his intimate encounters with Turks. Like Durrell, he deflects away most details of his own participation in—even construction of—these portraits. I have alluded to an ethics of travel in my analysis of these travelogues, and now I will more explicitly critique the ethics of travel narration in the context of Turk troping in partition-era Cyprus. In Chapter 5, I articulate possibilities for what ethical travel and travel writing can look like. In this chapter, I begin by sketching out an ethics of travel narration and then move into an analytical discussion of these ethics.

Narrators of the texts I have examined demonstrate mixed motivations as travelers and writers, often according to subjective positionality. Some writers from this chapter are political correspondents, another two are an artist/writer and a teacher/guidebook writer, respectively; both accompany spouses on overseas work. Another writer is a self-professed “walker” and travel writer, who also has had a career in the automobile service industry, which plays a considerable part in his experiences in the north of Cyprus.

Differences in the writers' rhetorical purposes and ethical appeals certainly affect the ethical balance. These first-person narrators reveal varying degrees of self-consciousness about the politics and ethics of travel and writing on the north of Cyprus, a place generally configured as "the dark side" through tropes like poverty, victimization, and fatalism.

Ethics, Writing, and Encountering Other People

Any viable definition for an ethics of writing must eventually turn to questions of responsibility. In the context of travel narration, responsibility concerns the types of relationships created by travelers and their audiences; I understand these to include the domestic and global audiences that consume travel writing and the people and landscapes they encounter during their journeys. Assessing ethical performances becomes even more complicated when these travelers write themselves into the experiences. How much does it matter for travelers and travel writers to tell their stories with a sense of the consequences—a sense that circulation produces effects?

With Gary Olson, I locate responsibility as central to my analysis of the ethical appeal, to the ethics of writing. Olson speaks broadly to the ethics of writing scholarship and teaching in light of postcolonial critiques on rationality and the "appeal to rules, rule books, priests, and philosophers." His explanation of ethics resonates in the context of travel narration:

Ethics is the encounter with the Other. By definition, all human interactions entail various encounters with an Other, and because we all bring to these interactions our own agendas—our own wishes, desires, needs, motivations—and because these agendas are often in conflict (or at

least not in perfect concordance), we are constantly negotiating and renegotiating our interactions. Furthermore, few if any interactions are between equal players; power differentials invariably are at play. Consequently, *how* we interact with an Other—how we balance our own needs, desires, and obligations with those of the Other—is precisely what ethics is about. *How* we effect this balance of needs, desires and obligations, how we negotiate our encounter with the Other, is a weighty responsibility. [...W]e must *actively participate* in our own moral decision making, no longer abdicating our responsibility to external forces. (Olson 85)

The practice of ethical communication serves as a constant feature of everyday life, as writers, scholars, students, and ordinary citizens face the responsibility of negotiating our desires with others in relations typically marked by inequities of power. Taken out of context, the final words of the above excerpt could suggest greater autonomy from “external forces” than is possible in a world where people cannot always know what compels them. Understanding socio-cultural forces and pressures that discipline human behavior circumscribe agency is a constant and uneven struggle. Ethical negotiations between writers and cultures have their inevitable fetters, but a writer still has to produce, and they clearly exercise agency while narrating their experiences and impressions. In complicated political and economic circumstances, they select and deflect from fragments of memory and cultural narratives already in circulation to tell their stories of Cyprus and of themselves.

Olson forwards the imperative for writers, teachers, and travelers to balance personal “needs, desires, and obligations” with those of their interlocutors. For ethical communication to occur in the context of travel and travel writing, the narrator needs to be more than merely open to dialogue and listening. In encounters with difference, an ethical narrator must want to hear the stories and experiences that people and landscapes

desire to speak. Balancing and negotiating difficulties aside, one cannot begin to engage this type of ethical calculation without knowing the desires, motives, and obligations of people in other lands. Power differentials must be taken into consideration. In *Behind the Smile*, a study of tourism in the Caribbean, George Gmelch delineates the economic dimensions of interactions between traveler and tourist industry worker—such as the local Turkish Cypriot tour guides, private drivers, and restaurant operators who are “encountered” by the travel writers of this chapter. He writes,

Workers, who are mostly from modest educational and social backgrounds, intermingle with guests from distant lands and cultures who have different lifestyles and levels of income. What also makes the interaction unique [...] is that during the interaction one is at leisure while the other is at work. One has economic assets but little knowledge of the local culture, while the other has cultural capital but little money. (25)

Travel writers who visit northern Cyprus certainly suggest the kind of economic disparity Gmelch describes. In fact, as we shall see in the case of tourist industry employees in the north of Cyprus, the trope of the impoverished Turk functions as a central symbol in much of the “dark side” discourse. Never do these writers explain their criteria for the assessment of poverty, nor do most look close enough to perceive differences that would complicate or even disrupt the trope. In partition-era travel writing on the north of Cyprus, characters’ self-representation and the landscape itself document the economic differences among Turks; visible signs of prosperity like the more-than occasional mention of Mercedes, for example, testify to this complexity, yet some socio-economic realities need to be taken into account.

In the case of north Cyprus, the economics of embargo complicate the rhetorical situation of encounter, especially in the familiar context of touristic consumption.

Travelers coming from the south to the north have faced fairly strict prohibition of goods purchased in the north, thus stripping away one key dimension from the commercial nature of tourism.⁵⁴ Travelers like Hitchens, Junger and Anderson, MacHugh, and Rowan-Moorhouse, who could do no more than day-trip to the north from the south, needed to immediately post any purchases to the UK or elsewhere. Based on these accounts, many travelers choose beforehand not to purchase. The ethics of something as simple as shopping constitute a risky proposition; the purchasers could risk causing serious offense to their Greek Cypriot hosts, with whom many travelers have already forged relationships, and, to some degree, loyalties. Merchants in the north, on the other hand, are by many accounts very thankful for visitors who come to their country and patronize its economy. Responsibility to, not to mention identification with the people of a land, as we see, poses its own ethical dilemmas particular to travelers and writers of divided Cyprus. One such considerable danger of travel and travel writing concerns negative identification.

By negative identification, I mean writing that, in its efforts to be persuasive, makes an identification with one group and against that group's adversaries—guilt by association that facilitates the production of rhetoric that locates a given narrator or text in presumptive conflict with people about whom the traveler or writers knows little.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ People on day-passes who buy from merchants in the north had to either consume or smuggle purchases back into the south. Travelers arriving from Turkey, with connecting departures across Europe and the Middle East, could in the past and still can buy as much as they wanted. As mentioned elsewhere, this type of traveler, for example, Oliver Burch, is about 1/10th the amount arriving to the Republic of Cyprus.

⁵⁵ See Kenneth Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives* for a discussion of identification. Negative identification, in a personal sense, also refers to the challenges in my own processes of coming to know Greek Cypriots. As a traveler who had previously lived in Turkey and traveled exclusively in the north of Cyprus, my reflexes have been to bring to bear cultural knowledge and relationships from these contacts.

Such has been the case in much of the travel discourse of Cyprus, as we will see in several of the texts under consideration. In the case of partition-era travel writing in Cyprus, studying the ethics of narration means, in this study, examining the balancing of a traveler's needs and desires with the complex, internally diverse needs of peoples and landscapes at odds within and among themselves. Ethical writing unfolds with awareness of some of its own limitations, its own desires, and openness to hearing the narratives of others. Before proceeding, we need to better understand some of the circumstances and travel literary traditions of this particular site of discursive production, the partition-era Cyprus that begins in 1974 and continues into the present.

The Physical and Symbolic Landscape of Partition-Era Cyprus

The travel narratives of Lawrence Durrell and Colin Thubron, in retrospect, convey ample anxiety over the future of the island—anxiety that the upheaval of 1974 appears to have validated. Durrell's dying colonial bastion faded quickly into history, to be succeeded by Thubron's "nervous co-habitation" and enclave-era Cyprus, which itself turned out to have been a fleeting precursor to the ethno-national division of the island. Contemporary travelers to Cyprus may recognize remnants of these earlier times, as well as certain cultural continuities, but the Cyprus troubled in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s by colonialism and reluctant, embattled sovereignty now finds itself essentially divided in two.

Semi-permanent features like the Green Line separating north from south, as well as the off-limits military bases serving forces from Turkey, the UK, and the Greek-

Cypriot controlled Republic of Cyprus, continue to restrict the movements and inflect the narration of travelers. In such an environment, several questions pertaining to the ethical dimensions of narration and tropology emerge: what stories get told about Cyprus and why? How do travelers narrate their experiences and imagine the island's cultures? For writers engaging in first-person narration of travel in Cyprus, what aspects of the personal does a landscape strewn with reminders of war evoke upon visiting and describing the island? And how do these narrators, shaken to varying degrees by war and its unresolved wounds, trope Cyprus and its people—especially the Turks—in these narratives? To what extent does politics function as the dominant, over-determined lens for any narration of Cyprus? To answer such questions requires an examination of the travel narratives available in English from the period after 1974 to the present.

Rhetorical analysis of the travel texts of partition-era Cyprus, I argue, demonstrates how spatial orientation of the traveler determines the narrative arc and symbolic contours of the landscape. Specifically, the stories emerging from writers based in the south of Cyprus tend to imagine a one-dimensional type of Turk. Only one in-depth narrative of travel has been set in the north to offer a more complicated picture. Little has changed to affect this imbalance. Since the spring of 2003, Greek and Turkish Cypriots and international travelers have been able to easily cross from one side to the other. Though this has led to more contact between people of the north and foreign travelers, most travelers to the island, before and after this development, continue to begin and end

their journeys in the predominantly Greek and internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus.⁵⁶

According to information provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Washington, DC, Greek Cypriots have made a remarkable recovery, at least until a decade ago, when tourism reached its apparent peak:

As a result of the invasion, tourist arrivals had declined sharply with only 47,085 tourists visiting the island in 1975 as compared to 264,066 in 1973. However, through the serious efforts exerted by both the Government and the private sector the tourist industry was revitalized and Cyprus was soon re-established on the World Tourist Map. By 1979 tourist arrivals surpassed the pre-invasion levels and in 1999 tourist inflow reached 2,434,285. (“Information on the Tourist Industry”)

The 2005 edition of *The Rough Guide to Cyprus* claims two million visitors come each year to the south, half of whom are British, followed by Scandinavians, Germans, Greeks, and Russians (9). In an average year, in other words, about one million travelers and part-time residents from the UK come to Cyprus, as do many additional English-speaking travelers from other countries, including those who may read travel writing and produce their own texts. In contrast, the Turkish north, according to one travel-industry website operating consistently since 1994, received in the same time period a mere fraction of this, only 79,615 people from places other than Turkey; the number rises to a total of 414,015 counting visitors from Turkey, many of whom come for shopping. While the foreign visitors to the north climbed steadily to 132,985 in 2003, this still demonstrates the statistical likelihood—approximately ten times more likely—that a traveler’s trip to Cyprus will mean a trip to the Republic of Cyprus, not to the north. If a traveler does

⁵⁶ Most, but not all travelers can now pass easily through the checkpoints. Turks from Turkey still face restrictions on their travel to the Republic of Cyprus, as Turkey refuses to recognize its legality.

come to the north, however, the odds are strong that this will be an English-speaking traveler from the UK.⁵⁷

Partition-era travel writing about the north of Cyprus often comes from the accounts of people making a day trip from the internationally-recognized, Greek Cypriot-controlled Republic of Cyprus. The book-length travelogues *In the Land of Aphrodite* by Libby Rowan-Moorhouse and *Cyprus: An Island Apart* by Seamus MacHugh represent two longer texts of this kind that I will examine in this chapter. These writers experience and narrate Cyprus from the perspective of the south, implicitly and explicitly equating “Cyprus” and “Cypriot” as Greek; “Turk,” as we shall see in the analysis, functions as a signifier of otherness. Though they face subtle and not-so-subtle pressure to not visit the north, Rowan-Moorhouse and MacHugh steel their nerves long enough for a series of revealing visits that constitute a distinct phenomenon I dub “day-tripping to the dark side.”

Travel narratives set in the Turkish-controlled north of Cyprus by a narrator who is staying in the north represent another type of experience. For a variety of reasons, mostly political, only one book-length account like this exists in the period after partition: Oliver Burch’s 1990 *The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus*, a text I examine in considerable detail later in this chapter. Scott Anderson, who contributed to the *Harper’s* essay “Dispatches from a Dead War” also based himself in the north for his part in that writing project.⁵⁸ During these writers’ respective visits to the north, travel from to the

⁵⁷ According to *The Rough Guide to Cyprus*, 5th edition, only 30,000-60,000 guests visit the north each year, led by Britons (9).

⁵⁸ “Dispatches from the Dead Zone” is a sort of hybrid genre where the writers—two political correspondents for *Harper’s*, one assigned to the south, one to the north—give roughly equal interest and

south was virtually impossible. What they imagine of Greek Cypriots is informed by their encounters with Turks of the north and whatever they hear from other expatriates or media. As the only text of its kind, Burch's travelogue proves a compelling study of an internally complicated and divided community routinely portrayed by travel writers as a socio-political monolith.⁵⁹

Narrative and tropological analysis of this range of texts, looking specifically at how writers construct their encounters with Turks in Cyprus, demonstrates how diverse narrating perspectives differentially inform the way these writers navigate the contested political and symbolic terrain. Specifically, the Turkish-controlled north of Cyprus that came into existence after 1974 only sporadically finds itself fully included in symbolic constructions of an inclusive "Cyprus." Most narrators, at one time or another in their stories, construe Turks as other to Cyprus. Several dominant tropes for the Turks, as well as for the land and landscape they inhabit, emerge in this corpus of texts, including, for example, the Turk as a denizen of a generalized "dark side"—somber, impoverished, meek, and pitiable; yet, as the circumstances change, paradoxically threatening, especially as the association concerns Turkey. In Burch's travelogue, and occasionally in the texts of Hitchens, MacHugh, and Junger and Anderson, the writers offer more complicated portraits of socio-political differences, ambiguous memories, racial

investment to the two landscapes. As a product of the pre-2003 era of highly restricted movements of people, this approach represents a creative effort to see the island's politics in greater breadth and accuracy. Though it clearly poses more complexities, costs, and logistical challenges, stationing one reporter on each side of the line constituted an improvement over the hearsay of day-tripping.

⁵⁹ Very few travelers have been able to experience and examine Cyprus from both sides of the Green Line, but as we will see in Chapter 5, one writer created the opportunity and exercised sufficient wherewithal to cross over. In so doing, he abandoned the comfortable political certainty for the possibility of knowing and writing about each side more ethically.

differentiation, and other intriguing distinctions which have largely been, for all intents and purposes, beyond the ethical reach of a generation of travel writers.

Day-Tripping to the Dark Side with Christopher Hitchens

Beginning perhaps with Durrell's *Bitter Lemons* and carrying through the narratives of subsequent expatriate narrators like Penelope Tremayne, Thomas Foley, and Colin Thubron, Cyprus has long been characterized as a nexus of darkness, sadness, and fatalism. More political rant than travelogue, Christopher Hitchens's book *Cyprus: Hostage to History* essentially extends this trope of Cyprus, south and north, as a somber land victimized by others. He certainly merits consideration in this discussion for the sheer influence of *Cyprus* on travelers and expatriates in the partition era. The fact that Hitchens has composed prefaces to three separate editions of the book also demonstrates a certain ethical investment in how the island's problems progress—his analysis is regularly deployed in global political and cultural theaters, especially those of Europe and the US.

As a political narrator, Hitchens plays up the woe in knowing Cyprus and its misfortunes too well to enjoy it as a site of romantic enticement: often stunningly beautiful, but always bittersweet. His account incorporates some narrative elements familiar to travel writing, including a touching daytrip to the village of Bellapaix in the north, once the home of Lawrence Durrell, now the idyllic home to a group of villagers who were relocated here from a village in the south after 1974.

The Bellapaix Turks hail in the main from Mari, a dusty and undistinguished hamlet off the Limassol road. My friend brought them

photographs of the village, which they had not seen for several years, since the ‘population exchange’ of 1974-75. The effect when she produced the pictures in the coffee-shop was extraordinary. Men ran to fetch relatives and friends; a circle formed in less time than it takes to set down. The snapshots were passed around endlessly—‘Look, someone’s put a new window in old Mehmet’s house’—‘There’s a lick of paint on the old store.’ The *mukhtar* of the village treated us to coffee and drinks; our efforts to share the bill were (as always in Cyprus) regarded as just this side of a grave insult. We eventually had to leave, because of the curfew that falls along the border just after dusk. But we were pressed to stay until the very last moment. These people, living in a village which is coveted above all others by tourists and outsiders, were actually nostalgic for the shabby but homely Mari. (26)

Hitchens’s narration profits from the inside connection his friend shares with this group of people. Without her contacts, perhaps *Cyprus: Hostage to History* would be devoid of even this passage, a gentle rendering of their emotional attachment to a humble home village. Before and after this passage, in more typical form, he implies that their presence on this coveted location is illegitimate and unfortunate for a site so hallowed to expatriates and poets. An allowance to these villagers of a sort of dignified humanity here barely balances out criticisms of Turkish Cypriots elsewhere in the text for political clumsiness and deplorable amnesia.

Like the day-tripping travelers who follow in his footsteps, Hitchens indulges in some of his own elegiac writing in trying to capture the sad beauty of the island:

In a fashion, I envy those who can continue to see Cyprus [as a place blessed with an abundance of allure sufficient to distract visitors from the longstanding international political problems]. But I am a captive of a certain limited knowledge of the place. The eastern Mediterranean affords few better evenings than the one provided by the dusk in Nicosia, the capital. The Pentadactylos mountains, so named for the five-knuckled and fist-like peak which distinguishes the range, turn from a deep purple to a stark black outline against the sun. To the newcomer, the sight is a stirring one. But to many of my friends, the mountains at that hour take on the look of a high and forbidding wall. Beyond the peaks are their old homes

and village, and the charm of the sunset is dissolved into an impression of claustrophobia. (19-20)

While most of Hitchens's text turns on political intrigues, analysis of documents, and interviews with figures central to the story of Cyprus, here he invokes a certain spirit of travel narration—though the condescension implied by addressing other travelers as ignorant newcomers may detract from the appeal of his melancholy landscapes. As for how he views the north, in this passage and elsewhere in his book, Hitchens demonstrates a primary loyalty to the suffering of displaced Greek Cypriots, despite his occasional jab elsewhere at EOKA and its right-wing links to the Greek junta.⁶⁰ The Turkish Cypriots, in this narrative, are the pawns for Turkey, which is itself a proxy for the British and the Americans, who Hitchens sees as the main players in the demise of the Republic.⁶¹ What he sees in his political accounting and produces in the making of the landscape largely corresponds with this ethical vision.

Distance, Distortion, and the Dark-Side Day-Trip

As for texts that more readily pass for travel writing, two book-length travelogues published in the partition era illustrate what typically emerges as “the Turk” in literature informed under a travel regime involving only day passes to what are considered the occupied territories of the north. Published in 1999, Seamus MacHugh's *Cyprus: An Island Apart* represents more of a conventional travel guide, in that the author makes an

⁶⁰ He also uses the platform to indict the Cold War-era players like Denktash, Turkey, the CIA, and Henry Kissinger, a figure he ultimately (and wrongly) holds responsible for 1974.

⁶¹ Hitchens's book disputes the ethnic-autism thesis used by diplomats and policy-makers inclined to point to Cyprus as a model for the future of places like the Balkans. In his account, he routinely downplays material factors on the ground in Cyprus leading up to 1974, leaving the particular policies and actions of players like Denktash, Archbishop Makarios, and the moderates of both societies largely unexamined.

earnest effort to provide travelers with a sense what to expect at the island's premier sites of interest in the south and north of the island. He narrates his visits to historical sites and his observations of the political landscape, but his writing constructs the landscape of the north of Cyprus by glossing the discourse of other travel writers or historians of Cyprus.

Libby Rowan-Moorhouse's *In the Land of Aphrodite* could better be described as a memoir or illustrated diary than a travel book. Her purpose appears less contrived and more picaresque, with writing that follows her personal life around Cyprus, which takes her to some but certainly not all of the places most celebrated among travel writers and tourists. What these texts share, however, is a fairly standard picture of Cyprus, Cypriots, and the conflict as seen from the vantage point south of the Green Line. Neither writer looks to propagandize on behalf of Greek Cypriots, yet the land and landscape they inhabit challenges each respective narrator's range of possibilities at almost every moment. No matter how historically innocuous the ruin, site, or city, the landscape continually plunges travelers back into conflict—with features like the appalling yet alluring Green Line, mountainsides turned into national flags, and so forth. In these narratives, the Turks of Cyprus living in the northern part of the island are often reduced to a host of simplistic tropes in which they play the role of pitiable victims of more powerful forces, lacking in agency, presumed to lack in political complexity and will, yet ultimately guilty by association for the acts of Turkey in 1974.

Rowan-Moorhouse's *In the Land of Aphrodite* narrates—and pictorializes, with her own illustrations—her life in Cyprus in the late 1990s. Her travelogue offers slices of life and reflections of a writer who often makes the effort to know the people of Cyprus,

especially those in the village where she and her husband lived, to whom she dedicates her book “with affection.” She has colorful stories to tell and memories to nourish, as the inspired reflection on Greek Cypriot cultural character suggests in the opening quotation.

Here now in the south [of Cyprus], at the end of the twentieth century, prosperity reigns. Only the ugly tenement blocks outside Nicosia, built for the refugees in the seventies, remind us of those desperate times. Living in such conditions was anathema to rural Greek Cypriots, many of whom built themselves new houses, got jobs in tourism and the manufacturing industries and, in record time, pulled themselves up by their boot straps. No so in the north, where many go on living in rural poverty. (119)

Turks are a people not well known to the writer, but she at least has the symbols of the landscape they control. From what she sees and has heard, they “go on living in rural poverty” or some such well-deserved misfortune. Herein lay an important ethical lapse common to the travel narration of post-partition Cyprus; Turks of Cyprus have typically found themselves both physically off-limits to world travelers and also tainted with a political stigma, regardless of whether or not they have had a chance to meet the travelers who write them into deficit positions. Rowan-Moorhouse, in this passage, has narrated from afar without meeting the so-called rural impoverished masses herself. What she knows about the north comes through the stories and discourses of Greek Cypriots, other expatriates, and the mass media available in English. Rowan-Moorhouse seems to collect her information and knowledge from English-language newspapers supportive of Greek Cypriot narratives of Cyprus history and politics. These papers refer to the north as “occupied” in most official mentions of its name.

Rowan-Moorhouse’s isolation from the north comes to an end when she agrees to accompany a Greek Cypriot friend on a quixotic, improbable return to the house and

village of her birth, under the pretense of the two making a conventional tourist's visit of the north's highlights.⁶² Their Turkish driver, Ahmed, allows that times were better for him when Greeks and Turks were living together. The narrator and her friend interpret this dissatisfaction to be tantamount with self-hatred, oppression, and pity:

Our driver introduced himself as Ahmed. As our journey progressed, bumping along in the burgeoning heat in his clapped out taxi, he thawed a little. Just a little. He expressed regret that the life of the old days had gone. It was better, he said, when Cyprus was a united country, when Turk and Greek lived in harmony together. (148)

We do not exactly know what was better before 1974 for Ahmed, but his expression of this preference naturally registers on Rowan-Moorhouse and her Greek Cypriot companion's radar as evidence for the injustice of 1974 and the status quo. His iciness is considered either the natural or the pitiable outcome of the political and economic situation in the north. In the episode where they drive by the exit to her family's village and home, Ahmed refuses to stop there because the visit would be unauthorized and the secret police are following regardless. He professes to feel badly about their inability to visit and would not personally mind her going. Though none of this should be logically construed as a desire for Ahmed to be a neighbor again to Maria or Greek Cypriots, Rowan-Moorhouse's narration leaves him as a pitiable figure:

Ahmed made sure we reported back to the border guards sharp at 6 p.m.
 "I'll come back," Mary told him. "Who knows? Next time our island may be free!"
 Ahmed, looking Mary in the eye at last, gave a sad, unhopeful smile. (153)

⁶² Greek Cypriots were only granted access to the north in exceptional circumstances. Mary was the name used for Maria, a Greek-Cypriot who was raised in Australia and who travels with the narrator using this passport.

To her credit, the narrator actually ends the journal entry for her visit north with this image, unadorned by commentary, which invites alternative readings of this “unhopeful smile.” Earlier, I referred to the dangers of negative identification, which appears to have happened here, as Rowan-Moorhouse, through her emotional connection to Mary, essentially fails to register Ahmed as a complicated person who, though unhappy with the status quo, may not share her metaphor of the Cyprus problem as one of “freedom” on one side and not the other. That unhopeful smile could have just as easily been a polite way to communicate exasperation or polite resignation: “we’re stuck here on Cyprus, aren’t we?” he could well be suggesting. A little more time spent in the company Turkish Cypriots, in different circumstances—such as without the company of a Greek Cypriot refugee and the interference of secret police—may have enabled different stories to emerge, allowing for at least some dim light to be cast on the dark side.

As an outsider or day-tripper to the north driving their own private vehicle, Seamus MacHugh and his wife have little contact with Turkish Cypriots aside from crossing point officials, paid tour guides, and people working in restaurants or tourist sites. Not to diminish the importance of travelers from outside Cyprus making contact with those living in Cypriot realms, but the more ritualized travel encounters may present little more than a distortion of the people. For MacHugh, the Greek Cypriots are Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots are Turks who are “entitled to call themselves Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots” (276). The narrator provides a sense of how this differentiation plays out through the description of his first daytrip to the north: “The border crossing. Cypriot side, Sunday morning, 8 a.m.” (108). Referring to the south as the “Cypriot side”

represents a not-so-subtle take on who represents the legitimate claim to the term.

Travelers moving from south to north typically abide by the political logic that posits an authentic Cypriot as “Greek” unless appropriately qualified. Though his expressed intent is for a kind of fantastic or miraculous reunion of Greeks and Turks, he realizes the unlikelihood of this happening anytime soon, given the tensions of the late 1990s and the increasing separation and distinctiveness of the two groups.

Holding an unsteady grasp of political and demographic realities in the north sometimes leads to hasty conclusions, such as when he and his wife approach the Venetian walls of Nicosia and he notes that he has, in tense times, “seen small groups of Turkish Cypriot youths approach the rampart edges, not more than 100 m from a UN outpost, to jeer and shout abuse at the Greek Cypriots below” (109). Having spent a good deal of time in Turkish Nicosia myself, I want to suggest that these “angry Turkish Cypriot youth” were more likely bored Turkish conscripts, some amped with unhealthy doses of nationalist fervor, with another dull day off from military duties; most likely, they have not ever directly encountered a Greek Cypriot, nor does their family share a history of direct conflict with them, as might be suggested by including this group among “Turkish Cypriot.” Immediately after this, as if to ameliorate any perceived slight to the Turks of Cyprus, MacHugh remarks on the warm, if slightly off-beat reception they receive upon arrival at the checkpoint in the north:

At the Turkish crossing the officials couldn't have been more pleasant or accommodating. They must have been individually selected by the Northern regime for their low key amiability. The girl who took our money gave us a 'Good morning' smile and continued munching her breakfast. The soldier-policeman who came ambling over to our car, leaned familiarly on it and told us we were welcome, that we could say as

long as we liked and wished us a pleasant time in the Northern Republic. Neither side stamped our passports, the Greek Cypriots because they don't recognize the North as an independent state, the Turkish Cypriots because they're poor and need tourist dollars. (109-110)

Here, MacHugh has left readers with contradictory initial images of people in the north: first, angry Turkish Cypriot youth engaged in hostile exchanges with Greek Cypriots, which certainly sets a dark tone for the north, followed by “low-key amiability” and warmth. The speculation that these minor officials would have been “individually selected” betrays an interpretation of this kindness of the Turkish Cypriot officials as exceptional—an uncommon human resource and labor asset of the north carefully extracted by a cunning state apparatus. Yet, even this kindness may not be so much natural as it is a product of economic necessity. His narration fails to wonder whether this state of affairs is the work of cunning or circumstance, national need, or nepotism. When an overenthusiastic “soldier-policeman” ambles over—giving away his lack of social awareness by “leaning familiarly” on their car—he comes, as the narrator explains, as the representative of a poor, needy state. The Turk of Cyprus seems not to hold together for MacHugh, perhaps because they are deemed an unfortunate fragment of a ruptured whole.

Like the response of many visitors from around the world who witness the unhealed wounds of the Green Line, MacHugh indulges a desire to dream, in sanguine abstraction, of a brighter tomorrow. After experiencing the propaganda-scarred road connecting the two sides of divided Nicosia, one poster being noted as a “particularly gruesome murder,” he writes, “From the ashes of a discordant past, Cyprus, phoenix-like, as so often throughout its long history, can rise again to become a unitary state where the

rights of both its peoples are equally respected. But it will take goodwill and compromise on both sides” (111). He recites this wish for a unified Cyprus repeatedly, typically at moments when the tension he reads in the landscape makes the unlikelihood of resolution appear to be the safest bet going for the speculative at heart. The thought of what he sees in the north continuing along to its logical evolution into a distinct socio-economic destiny from the south sends the narrator into a frustrated rant that equates the Turks of Cyprus with spiteful children, incapable or uninterested in grasping what is good for them:

Granted that the North is overall poorer and less technologically sophisticated than the South, the people there will, nevertheless, become increasingly accepting of the Status quo, wanting henceforth to continue being bosses of their own destiny, like an adolescent child running away from home and being satisfied to live in a garret as long as he can do his own thing. (112)

The arrival of one of the colonialist’s favorite metaphors for the Other seems striking at this particular moment in the narrative, when MacHugh moves off the script he has prescribed for this book—an apolitical travel book—to explain his own hopes for grassroots movements in both communities to create an environment conducive to a united future of Cyprus. Though not cast as petulant children, the Greek Cypriots, like the Turks, cause him irritation at failing to share and then demand a realization of this desire.

In terms of locating a personal history and any personal complicity he, his nation, or his civilization may have for the misfortunes of Cyprus, MacHugh—an Irish-born expatriate married to an American and based in New Zealand, whose national allegiances remain difficult to pin down—chooses not to dwell on the past. Unlike Durrell or Thubron before him, he takes a transparent swipe at the politics of the UK, at “a

manipulative colonial power” acting in its own interests to set the island’s division in motion (112). For the most part, MacHugh’s ethical vision looks forward to a future other than that imagined by the “hate machines” of the status quo, one that takes up the vision of those who hope for an end to the Green Line and for those who work actively for reconciliation. This vision gets expressed in his portrayal of Cuma Mertel, a guide he and his wife hire to take them to see the sights of the north. He embodies some of the familiar and favored Turk tropes for a day-tripping traveler, such as kind, open, fatalistic, and anti-materialist, yet with some interesting twists:

Cuma Mertel, a slight, active man in his late 40s with short dark hair and the almost obligatory Turkish mustache, told me he had two daughters and two vines. He loved all four and, though a Muslim, always managed to keep aside some of his grapes to celebrate Christmas. Sandra and I were in his golden Mercedes 220 taxi on the road to Famagusta. Cuma (pronounced “Juma”) spoke English well and did his best, without much practice, to keep up his Greek. Born in a small village, west of Larnaka, he had moved north following the Turkish invasion in 1974.

Would he like to go back?

No, why go back, life moves on. Here I have my house in a little village on the hillside, we always have water and I bring some every day to my friends. Here are my vines and my two daughters—and one grandson, he added with evident satisfaction. Why go back, my wife and I are happy here but I would like the Green Line to go. I have friends on the other side I would like to meet again, Greek Cypriot friends, he added.

Does he think the Green Line will go?

Only God knows, not the politicians. He stopped a moment to consider further. Maybe, he added, if the Americans wish it. (157)

In the context of Turkish politics, a mustache, it should be pointed out, can signify quite a bit about a man and his politics depending on how it is trimmed; based on his conversations with the narrator and his wife, Cuma is clearly not a firebrand nationalist nor an anti-imperialist leftist. Having any mustache at all unhelpfully signifies to this traveler one thing: “Turk.” More meaningfully, Cuma functions as a kind of idyllic,

idealized figure of a man of simple tastes who eschews politics for family and land and who wishes for an end to the stalemate but—as MacHugh is wise to qualify—not a return to the deprivations of the pre-invasion status quo. The passage’s closing comment about “Americans” blends Cold War savvy with old-world fatalism that sees Greek and Turkish Cypriots as pawns, playing into Hitchens’ and many Cypriots’ own beloved “pawn” trope.⁶³ Though at least partially disproven, the trope carries on as an alluring explanation for the people’s troubles. Some writers specifically question this deployment of Cyprus and its people as the face of a future where peace gets imposed top-down by outside forces upon a people deemed too primordially at odds with one another to create their own peace.

Learning to Live with Darkness: The Sad Face of Peace in Partition Cyprus

To do the reporting for their gloomy 1999 *Harper’s* essay “Dispatches from the Dead Zone,” Scott Anderson and Sebastian Junger each traveled to a respective side of the island. Judging from the tone of their narration, they both found Cyprus a hard pill to swallow. Yet other than occasional irritation at the overly scripted cultural narratives of the people they encountered, neither writer reveals too much in the way of reader-response narration—where they are both recording, responding, and creating their experiences in ways that connect these experiences to their personal lives.

⁶³ Historian Jan Asmussen’s recent book, *Cyprus at War*, based on archival research from the period of the coup d’etat and invasion, finds no evidence of US and UK conspiracy to divide Cyprus in 1974. In fact, it argues that opposite: that the Turks outmaneuvered the U.S., and that Kissinger, rather than acting as a puppeteer of assets and events, was several steps behind his former student, Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, perhaps because of the turmoil caused by President Nixon’s troubles.

Anderson and Junger write closer to the style found in the political reporting of Hitchens—a largely depersonalized narration focusing intensively on the landscape and its dominant discourses. Occasionally, they offer disparaging remarks, exasperated sighs, and frustrated asides at what the face of post-ethnic landscapes looks like. This tone of dissatisfaction suggests how these sober portraits of peoples and landscapes of Cyprus are being deployed. The troping performed by Junger and Anderson serves these writers' rhetorical purpose: to chronicle the evolution of "peace" in Cyprus as a somber, even distasteful alternative to ethno-national warfare raging elsewhere in the world.

From the beginning, the text demonstrates eager self-consciousness, as an editor's note gives an evenhanded distillation of the period from 1974-1999. A map of the island in its current geo-political configuration, unattributed but apparently created for the *Harper's* piece, includes a long explanatory text box. Through measures such as this, the writers and editors use the complicated politics of naming and transliterating the towns and cities of the island to establish with audiences the difficulties of reporting ethically from a place so saturated with conflict. Realities like this have cultivated within the piece's narrators a sort of silent disapproval and disappointment at the effects of war on people and landscape. The epigraphs selected to begin the narration of the south and the north establish the haunted tone of the piece, leaving little enthusiasm about the futures of those who have experienced war and continue to live in its symbolic and material proximity. Junger opens the essay by positing in Cypriot character a sense of eternal victimization at the hands of unthinking others:

A fool throws a stone into the sea and a hundred wise men cannot pull it out.

—Cypriot proverb

Scott Anderson's opening section begins with this equally haunting proverb:

“I will tell you a story about Cyprus. Once there was a snake, and one day this snake came into the house of a man who had a son. The snake bit the man's son and that son died, so in his grief the man took up a knife and cut off the snake's tail. The next day the snake came back and said to the man, ‘Okay, now let's be friends.’ The man said, ‘We can never be friends, because you killed my son, and that is a pain I will carry in my heart forever, and I cut off your tail, and that is a pain you will carry in your heart forever.’ So, that is why there can never be peace in Cyprus.”

—elderly Turkish Cypriot woman

Hitchens, incidentally, uses the same epigraphic structure in his book, suggesting a prevalent fatalism and mournfulness about the past and the harms people have done to one another. As these cultural iterations emerge from the people themselves, rather than from the likes of those suffering from war and struggling for peace the world over, the writers essentially structure their text to make the Cypriots appear to speak their own sad Cyprus.

To illustrate one of the more salient constructions of this metaphor of Cyprus as a sad place for good people, Junger and Anderson make the final case for this gloomy vision through the parting image of a disillusioned Turkish Cypriot trapped in the conflict of the island. As their writing begins, so it concludes. Whatever else may come through in their reporting and narration of the two communities, “Dispatches” does its best to suggest a joyless landscape of people who no longer dare to dream:

Back in Lefkoshia I leave Ayshen at the entrance to the Office of Public Information and watch her walk slowly, head bowed in sadness, up the entranceway. It occurs to me that it is the people like her—the earnest, the

‘peaceniks,’ the good-hearted and forgiving—who are the last, quiet victims of this place. They are to be found in Bosnia and Serbia and Kosovo as well, of course, those who refuse to believe that a culture once torn apart can’t be put back together again, who forever wait for their day to come. (62)

In one sense, making a place for sadness constitutes an ethical move—an honest, principled emotional encounter with the lived effects of conflict, war, and unresolved hostility. However, after enough repetition of the scene, one begins to wonder why the concordance of grief so routinely accompanies Turks of Cyprus who come into contact with day-trippers and other short-time visitors to the north.

For Anderson and Junger, who travel to Cyprus in an effort to imagine how the conflict there may provide a glimpse into the rather unattractive face of peace in the war-torn Balkans, the narration of Cyprus serves the interests of pragmatists. An earnest concern with understanding dominant narratives, as articulated by politicians, political parties, and journalists, leads them logically to see the tense and unappealing visage of the status quo, which continues to produce formidable obstacles to reconciliation.

People from outside naturally want to know not only how the two sides have arrived at this point. In “Dispatches from a Dead War,” blames passes from player to player. They report that travelers to Cyprus, who mostly visit the south, look to the north of the Green Line and see Turkey and Turks of Cyprus as largely responsible for the tragedies of the island, rather than international players or Greek Cypriot leaders and regimes. If attitudes of Western tourists in Cyprus can be taken as representative of wider public attitudes in the US and Europe, then the following example—an explanation from

a Greek Cypriot soldier queried by Junger about the hazards of patrolling the Green

Line—demonstrates who gets to play the heavy in his cultural script:

The soldier had an M-16 slung around his neck and spoke fair English. I asked him if he and his buddies ever talked with the Turkish soldiers on the other side, but he told me that this was the one spot on the Green Line where the Turks don't post guards. Apparently, tourists who step up to the platform occasionally get carried away and start yelling, and the Turks don't want to deal with that. Elsewhere, though, the Turks will shout insults at the Greeks or throw rocks.

“Do you ever yell back?” I asked the Greek soldier.

“No,” he said, smiling. “We are careful not to provoke them, because we are the weaker side.” (47)

This narration adds no commentary, though one cannot help but wonder whether this tradition continues in any form to this day, now that tourists and Cypriots can now pass freely through the Green Line. In any event, Turks appear to live on the defensive here, especially since earlier in the passage Junger pointed out that a Greek Cypriot decided to moon a Turkish soldier in the buffer zone and was immediately shot and killed. Taken as a whole, their essay sees neither side as innocent; each has refined a narrative of victimization, wherein little sympathy is afforded to the other side. MacHugh, Thubron, and others hope for better days ahead and glimpses of people who have tried to make their peace with the past and with their neighbors. Junger and Anderson report no such possibilities, especially in regard to the north of Cyprus.

When the narrative switches to Anderson in the north, he picks up on the story of Cyprus where Junger left off, at the Turkish invasion of 1974. Anderson does not conceal his cynicism towards the Turkish narrative of 1974 as the salvation of the Turks of Cyprus: “If not much of a ‘Peace Operation,’ the first phase of the Turks’ 1974 invasion was also not much of a military triumph” (51). I will return to the matter of national

memory in a moment. Anderson briefly recounts some of the early blunders in the campaign, which the government of Turkey has made efforts to hide or downplay. Though Greek Cypriot and Greek forces fought bravely, they were overmatched by Turkey's military forces. Martial prowess and love of war has long been a trope of the Turk—the warrior from the Asian steppes in Thubron and Durrell's Sabri come to mind. What apparently strikes and displeases Anderson is the seeming disjuncture between faces of war and peace. The grandeur of victory finds itself somewhat diminished in juxtaposition with the shabby conditions on the ground. He writes of the contrast,

It's all a little hard to imagine at ground level, however. Up close, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus resembles nothing so much as a quiet, slightly raffish tourist destination. The once-pretty villages along the northern coast have been transformed into sprawls of cheap hotels and fish restaurants, weird concoctions in faux-Tudor or –Bavarian style to lure the British and German vacationers who predominate. (52)

Measured against a time of “pretty villages” located somewhere in the indeterminate past, Anderson sizes up the landscape and finds it unappealing, polluted with tourists and the trappings they require rather than as it was in earlier, colonial days: pristine, idyllic, and authentic.⁶⁴

Commercial developments do their share to pock-mark the landscape, but these aesthetic deficits pale in comparison to some of the political monuments constructed by Turkey and Turkish Cypriots to celebrate 1974 and remember the suffering of the past. In what must be considered a rite of passage for the visiting correspondent to the north, Anderson writes up his experience of the Museum of Barbarism, the site of a gruesome

⁶⁴ Much of the architecture was likely erected while the town grew as a tourist destination in the 1960s, when it was controlled by the Republic of Cyprus.

murder of the family of a Turkish officer in the 1963. His visit provides one disturbing illustration of an official, public, national narrative of victimization. Episodes like this one present public memorials as political facts and a complete correspondence between monument and mentality. When considering the north's political leader, Anderson follows a similar sort of logic; he makes the case that the north of Cyprus is an immature community led by a cartoon-character obstructionist.

Anderson's cynicism about the north, its regime, and its people reaches its apex in his portrayal of President Rauf Denktash, a London-trained lawyer dubbed a "purported warlord" in this piece. The south of Cyprus as reported by Junger uses no such tribal terminology. In this light, Anderson's troping could simply be done to season his script with a Middle Eastern flavor. As the passage progresses, however, the writing demonstrates something short of reverence, respect, or responsibility for the leader of the Turkish Cypriots:

As purported warlords go, Rauf Denktash, the president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, doesn't much look the part. A short portly man of seventy-five who bears a striking resemblance to Homer Simpson, he speaks English with just the trace of a British inflection—a result of his legal training in London in the 1940s—and is most often photographed in baggy sweat suits. On this day, sitting in his office in the heavily guarded Presidential Compound in downtown Lefkosa, he wears a business suit. The office is spacious and sunlit, and he shares it with a large aquarium of tropical fish and three very noisy parakeets, in a cage beside his massive desk. (56)

Denktash could either be an eccentric, an oaf, or an imposter of a statesman. In any event, Anderson would have readers believe he leads the unquestioning people of north Cyprus with a uniformity teetering on the brink of despotism. In 1999, Denktash may have been

a respected representative of his people, but he certainly had plenty of domestic adversaries, whom Anderson dismisses with alacrity, using not even anecdotal evidence.

Even more remarkable is the degree to which his take on the “Cyprus problem” and how to resolve it is shared by his countrymen. If a visitor to the TRNC is not careful, he or she will be subjected to the “Denktash history lesson” by virtually anyone. Across the political spectrum—and with over a dozen political parties, that spectrum runs from hard-socialist to neo-fascist—nearly all party leaders have adopted Denktash’s talk of a ‘bi-communal confederation,’ even if they can’t quite articulate what that means. To a degree I’ve not encountered in any other ethnic conflict zone in the world—not in Bosnia or Sri Lanka, certainly not in Israel—the Turkish Cypriots appear to speak as one, and they have chosen Rauf Denktash to do the talking. (57)

Time and political reality has rapidly spoiled Anderson’s confident troping of the Turks of Cyprus. As fate or unimagined political agency would have it, within a few years of this essay, Denktash was pushed into retirement by the results of democratic elections by his own people. As of the summer of 2007, he still maintained these posh offices in Nicosia and kept an open door to journalists and other international visitors willing to listen.⁶⁵

Still, not all Turkish Cypriots so fondly remember him for his stubbornness and reluctance to negotiate for a settlement to the problem. At rallies in support of the Annan Plan, his opponents carried placards reading “Denktash to the south.” Though “Dispatches” could not have predicted such results, Turkish Cypriots were soon to vote the opposition into power and subsequently support the Denktash-reviled and UN-backed Annan Plan. Their “purported warlord” found himself marginalized and then out of power through peaceful elections. Repudiating a hardline-nationalist strongman may

⁶⁵ I visited Denktash with a group of US schoolteachers who were traveling in Cyprus as part of a Fulbright-Hays study abroad grant.

appear to deliver a gratifying political blow to the forces that have kept Cyprus bogged down in stalemate, but Turkish Cypriots of all sorts find themselves caught up in the collateral damage that tropes of despotism and despair. Anderson's co-narrator Junger winds up in a similar sort of fatalist stance.

Junger sums up what he sees as the template for intransigence, using superficial prosperity to stand in for a lack of interest in putting in the taxing work of reconciliation:

I walk downtown for lunch. The weather has cleared, and English tourists are again out in force. They wander in and out of Gucci and Benetton shops and sit at cafes with their faces turned to the sun. A few blocks away, thousands of Turkish troops wait in bunkers for their orders to attack. It'll never happen, I think. They already have what they want. (61)

Greek Cypriots have prosperity and commerce, Europeans have a tourist destination, and Turks have their own land with which to do as they please. Junger here creates and then deflates the prospect of future hostilities when he constructs the whole image of soldiers who "wait in bunkers for their orders to attack"; he diminishes the threat by casting it as part of a cruel and elaborate performance to nourish the status quo.

Anderson and Junger both dismiss of the bi-communal peace efforts, based on their interactions with mournful people like Ayshen mentioned above, who is herself jaded about the prospects for peace. The rhetorical efforts of Denktash and his supporters, seems to have led outside observers to believe that Turkish Cypriots and Turks would never affect grassroots political change, and that momentum for reconciliation would never amount to much. Bi-communal peace activists and international observers, however, have been quick to counter that, just a few years later, these social movements were crucial in changing governments in the north and creating momentum for the Annan

Plan, which passed with 65 percent support in the north, against the will of Denktash and other nationalists.

If disconcerted audiences had failed to comprehend the futility of hoping for something better in Cyprus, these writers repeat the unpleasant—and often vigorously contested by Cypriots—likelihood that “by steadfastly clinging to the rhetoric of a quarter-century ago, by stoutly refusing to make any concession, you finally have to conclude that it’s because they want it this way” (62). Anderson and Junger invite readers to see Cyprus, in this regard, as not the problem but the solution. The future of peace does not look so pretty, they argue, but imperfect peace can be stomached more easily than the war zones of the Balkans in the 1990s or the Cyprus of 1955-1974.

Near the end of his own contribution to “Dispatches,” Anderson narrates his visit to the martyrs’ villages near St. Barnabas, which compels him to also mention the mass murders of male Turkish Cypriots in 1974. Despite his cynicism at the outset over the partisan narrative of the Turkish Cypriots, he indulges in the more disturbing aspects of the conflict that materially inform their strong feelings behind the conflict. Two villagers explain the massacres of Tashkent (Tochni), they and the interpreter collapse into tears, and the weight of the history saturates the narrative. Whatever else could have transpired during his visit here—what the people desire, how they live—fails to make the final edit, as the freight of history punishes the living. Unburdened by the quotidian and submerged in political rhetoric, Anderson pushes the analogy of sad Cyprus as far as it can go. He speculates about how best to interpret and situate Cyprus for general readers and extend their experiences to the wider affairs of humanity:

But if the history of Cyprus—indeed, the history of most of the world—reveals anything, it is that there is no such thing as justice: you live in your house until the day someone comes along and throws you out, and then he lives there until someone else comes along to throw him out. Just where do you pinpoint the moment in this island's history and say, 'Here, we will right this wrong,' and let all the previous ones go by the wayside? Obviously, you cannot afford to go very far back, because in Cyprus, as everywhere else, there is always a prior victim. (62)

Ultimately, people are tortured souls, no match for the relentless, daily recurrence of history. What these reporters have seen of war and suffering in Cyprus, in Sri Lanka, in the Balkans informs their rhetorical purpose and haunts their narration. They demonstrate little capacity, however, to layer story upon story—to imagine the stories not being told, the ones that come with confidence, with intimacy. For political correspondents like Junger and Anderson and the Christopher Hitchens of 1984, who travel to destinations on budgets and deadlines, those types of stories may be harder to come by. Thus, Cyprus—north and south—becomes the dark side.

Compared to the texts of Hitchens, MacHugh, and Rowan-Moorhouse, the landscape takes a coherent political shape, but one that nonetheless elides cultural differences. The politics arrive in monolithic clarity, perhaps because of rhetorical purpose—the desire to analogize Cyprus with the ongoing tensions in the Balkans. Nor should we discount the subjective dimensions of travel, the different possibilities for encounter, identification, and creative relations. What might be possible, for example, when relations of travel occur during a more extended stay in a place—rather than days or weeks? What might happen differently by living for months in a place, meeting people who are not necessarily affiliated with governments or speaking on behalf of political parties? What other tropes and ethical relationships could emerge by visiting the barracks

of Turkish soldiers stationed in the north, the businesses of Turkish Cypriots who used to work with the British, frustrated members of the Maronite community, opinionated Danish peacekeepers, and others often unseen and unvoiced in the travel narration of Cyprus? Only one text of that sort actually exists about the north.

Letting in Light on the Dark Side: Oliver Burch's Troping of North Cyprus

Those who do encounter the Turks of Cyprus for more than the sporadic day trip have found that inquiry into people's experiences, desires, needs, and obligations can produce some of the same stories and tropes from the day trip travel account, such as fatalism, somberness, and cultural uniformity. Yet these primarily pejorative conceptions of the north represent just the beginning for writers who have traveled extensively or lived in the north. Not surprisingly, given international restrictions and boycotts of the north, few such accounts exist. *The Infidel Sea: Travels in North Cyprus* by Oliver Burch serves as the only book-length travelogue set in the north of Cyprus after 1974.

His intriguing narration of life in the north in the late 1980s has apparently failed to reach and inform subsequent narrators like MacHugh and Rowan-Moorhouse, for whom Turkish Cypriots are a monolith. Taken in comparison, *Infidel Sea* presents a much more complicated picture of the people in the north, offering a richer sense of the challenge and possibility of negotiated and balanced ethical narration. In particular, he threads into his accounts of the north and its people more of his own subjective screens—such as nation, civilization, and personal prejudice—than any traveler considered to this point in this study. And during his months living in the north with his wife and two young

boys, he comes to know less abstract, more vulnerable, and more complicated people than the political monoliths imagined by so many previous and subsequent narrators of the north. People, for example, who bear their own internal political and cultural divisions, provincial prejudices, and personal anxieties about what the future holds for them in the limbo of political life in the north.

Burch's 1990 travelogue takes at least some effort to explain the historical sentiments that have rendered Turks, from the birth of the Ottoman empire in the 14th century, as suspicious and fearsome to the British and other Europeans. In constructing a history of this phobia, Burch essentially traffics in the same Orientalist clichés. His narrative begins an opening foray into the trope of terror through its unnecessarily ominous title, based on an evening departure from London: "Night Flight." He sees Cyprus, as a whole, as "an outpost of a series of Western civilizations which met the shock of more primeval forces from the East which flowed around it like a hostile sea" (1). Burch seamlessly exchanges "hostile" for "infidel" in describing the eastern Mediterranean waters that surround Cyprus. He even narrates the island's history from the perspective of Greek Cypriots when he explains at the outset that, "In 1974 the infidel sea betrayed *them* again" (2). "These" Cypriots do not happen to be the Turkish kind, and the narrator posits a sense of European identity that is inclusive of Greeks and Greek Cypriots, but unclear about where to locate Turks of Turkey or Cyprus.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Burch on occasion stands up to chauvinism he encounters towards Greek Cypriots in the north, but, like Thubron he seems ethically committed to an independent position in regards to the conflict. He had intended to travel to the south and write a subsequent book focusing just on the south, but for reasons I have not been able to determine, that project never materialized.

In outlining his own thesis for European sentiments towards Turks, he chooses not to burden the language with diplomacy:

But, even as a western European, I was aware that my own psyche contained a racial memory, a legacy of those long border struggles between civilizations, cultures and religions, an almost instinctive fear of malevolent forces which come from the East. This racial memory can be found all over Europe. ‘He’s a Tartar,’ they say in England of a man with a dangerous temper. ‘There are Moors on the coast,’ they say in Spain, when times are troubled. (2)

Burch further confesses that growing up in the UK and Europe meant considerable exposure to negative stereotypes of Turks: Edmund Spencer, Delacroix, and others offer unveiled contempt and precious little in the way of complimentary remarks on Turks through history. Other critics have painstakingly documented these historical grudges impressed upon cultural memories.⁶⁷ Burch’s travelogue at least makes the effort to acknowledge that European travel writers bear the burden of such prejudice. They clearly affect the screens he deploys to actually witness Cyprus, searching as he occasionally does, for British influence on the landscape. Specifically, he looks for and remarks upon British architecture, culture, presence on the landscape, such as the graves of soldiers and civilian expats. He notes the presence of the graves of a British couple who had been living in Cyprus 24 years before they were killed in the 1974 invasion, for example (210).

The extent to which Burch actually challenges these assumptions remains a separate question. After putting his civilizational cards on the table, he makes numerous

⁶⁷ Arguments about the historical roots of European cultural prejudice towards the other in the Enlightenment period, for example, reveal a disjuncture from actual encounters and relationships between people of the British and Ottoman Empires. Nabil Matar makes this case persuasively, allowing that Muslims could do little about these negative attitudes. For example, “Britons categorized the Muslims [of north Africa and the Ottoman Empire] as barbaric even though they, the Britons, had not dominated them, perhaps even because of it: the Muslims were doomed to alterity whether they were conquered (as the American Indians had been) or not” (15).

rhetorical gestures that convey the civility, warmth, and hospitality of Turks in Cyprus, and thus appears to be interrogating his own prejudice, which he forecasts at the outset of his narrative. Should his encounters and narration be taken to demonstrate a change of heart or an ethical achievement in a land and among people so regularly configured through negative tropes? And how could his experiences be so different from other travelers—why might he get along so well with Turkish Cypriots and come to know them better than most others have before and after?

One primary reason for this writer's constructive encounters with the Turks of Cyprus concerns the way he meets people: as a traveler staying in the north, and thus able to meet people on their own schedules, in the evenings or early in the a.m. Another factor may include his status as a husband and parent, traveling with his wife Joan and two boys, age nine and ten, in a region where tourists have repeatedly been warned not to visit because of its illegal status and lack of emergency resources normally available to travelers, such as embassies and consulates. Burch probably earns many people's respect by demonstrating a willingness to trust that he and his family will be safe and happy in north Cyprus. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Colin Thubron's concern was that people in the Middle East may have assumed him to be a spy or otherwise suspect. Whether the grounds for trust justifiable or not, having children present likely dispelled some of this potential mistrust.

Finally, the writer's nationality and language appear to serve him well, although others like MacHugh, Rowan-Moorhouse, and Hitchens do not always appear to enjoy similar goodwill. Contrary to the logic that would assume people in the north to be

distrustful of the British for its colonial past or its historic hostilities with Turkey, nationality and language put Burch into a position of shared cultural affinities with the many Turkish Cypriots. Some men and women worked on British sovereign bases in Cyprus in the 1950s and 60s, and other Turkish Cypriot men served as auxiliaries or guides during the counter-insurgency against EOKA, especially those old enough to have lived through the 1950s. After making a promise to a new acquaintance from his travels, for example, the man tells Burch and his wife that “as you are an Englishman, I know that you will keep your word” (207). These subjective dimensions have much to do with how and why the writer’s narrative allows for some light to penetrate the dark side.

While the narrator and his family’s cultural identity certainly comes into play, Burch focuses throughout on far more interesting and typically less examined storylines regarding cultural identity and character of the Turks of Cyprus and the land where they live. In the case of Famagusta, Burch puts his fair share of energy into whimsical discussion of what makes a city oriental and poses the question of Famagusta’s proper cartographic location: East or West? What he sees and hears of Famagusta convinces him that, if he was not in the East before, he has now arrived: “it seemed to us that [Famagusta] was an oriental city” (87). He continues, “One might imagine oneself in the old quarters of Damascus or Jerusalem, but surely this could not be Europe?” A nargile fired up, along with the sight of a Turkish bride in a “winged head-dress of Central Asia” confirms the status of this city as at least a gateway to, if not the an actual entry point, the Orient (87). By the way, for Burch, ‘orient’ here likely includes signifiers like the following: mosques, palm trees, mainland Turks, and poverty. So what does that mean

for the rest of the north? Has the colonial light been cast on the rest of the Turkish Cypriots to keep them out of the darkness of the orient? For all his self-effacing concern about representation, *Infidel Sea* is still deeply indebted to earlier travel writers and the discourses of colonialism.⁶⁸ With the prejudices of history churning in the background, Burch navigates through some ethical challenges more deftly than others. Much like Thubron, Burch generally prefers to concentrate on the words and profiles of the people his visits, and none are more important than Salih.

Burch dedicates *The Infidel Sea* to Salih, the kindly, cultured, and industrious Turkish Cypriot gardener and handyperson working at their villa who befriends the narrator and his family. Salih quickly impresses Burch—through his own words and deeds—as antithetical to stereotypes of the indolent or unworldly Turk.⁶⁹ He speaks four languages and consistently works long days. He is also the first of many Turkish Cypriots Burch meets who worked as a soldier for the British, an historical reality that becomes just one of many that distinguishes these Turks of Cyprus from mainland Turks (11).

Salih demonstrates how some Turks of Cyprus participate in their own debasement when he remarks on the odd hitchhiking behavior of three men he and Burch pass on the road: “‘Lazy Turkish mens,’ he murmured. ‘Cyprus no is Evropa’” (83). Another Turkish Cypriot, this one a young man born in London and working on a construction project in Famagusta, also bemoans what he sees as the indolence of other

⁶⁸ Burch seems especially fond of Samuel Baker’s account of Cyprus from 1879, when the writer essentially catalogued Britain’s “new possession” (80). He also mentions the scholarly work of Claude Delaval Cobham, which culled together and translated 80 earlier works of historians and travelers to Cyprus.

⁶⁹ For a fuller discussion of this Orientalist assumption, see Chapter 2, where I discuss Durrell’s invocation of this particular trope.

Turkish Cypriots. He explains that he has a contract because the people of the town are “too bloody lazy” to do the project on their own (98). Rather than emerging from the travel writer, indictments concerning the lack of sufficient personal industry come from Turkish Cypriots themselves—granted, Burch may have considered these self-criticisms too intriguing to leave out; he may also be using them as a form of political cover: “Look, it’s not about *me* thinking people do not work hard enough—they believe it of themselves.”

Like many who travel with the motive to encounter cultural difference, Burch prefers Turkish Cypriots as they are—somewhat frozen in time, disconnected from Europe, isolated economically and culturally, rather than how they might turn out should they continue looking to the West for inspiration. For example, he bemoans the occasional “weakness” of Turkish Cypriots for the allure of French or European style, when the indigenous, “authentic” Cypriot style surpasses it in craft and meaning (208). But there remains plenty of space for a distinctive character, as ample evidence and encounters demonstrate how Turkish Cypriots are secular, drinkers, and ascetics, with the exception of their preference for brandy and, upon financial success, the beloved Mercedes (194).

When given the chance to articulate a racial, civilizational character in Burch’s narrative, Turks of Cyprus assert a distinct and essentially “white” identity, as when the narrator asks a restaurant owner about the future, and who will help the Turkish Cypriots:

“Take my word for it, we must look to Europe. The other Muslim countries have nothing in common with us but the religion. Look how the Arabs treat their women; they still make them cover their faces. We are Europeans and we are white. What have we in common with people like

that? Besides, the Arabs are all busy trading with the Greeks. I came to London one time, to visit friends, and everywhere there were rich Arabs. One day, in a restaurant, I was almost the only white man there. I found that extraordinary. I did not expect that in England.'

'You have some Negroes here.'

'Ah, but they are Turks, not Africans.' (204-05)

Cultural logics fueled by sexist or racist abstractions over the status of women or the color of people's skin appear here and elsewhere in *Infidel Sea*.⁷⁰ However, in this passage comes a dialogue that explicitly addresses what other writers and informants have only alluded to earlier: that Cyprus is European and Cypriots (Greek and Turkish) are white; further, this particular Turkish Cypriot informant suggests that Turks are the "negroes" of Cyprus.⁷¹ When an Englishman refers to "negroes" in Cyprus and a Turkish Cypriot answers "yes—but not from Africa," one would be foolish not to allow for the possibility of a misunderstanding between the two speakers. One interpretation could be that Burch was referring dark-complected Turkish Cypriots or Turks of Famagusta, some of whom have the blood and physical appearance of black Africans (97).⁷² This particular Turkish Cypriot may be referring to not only skin color but also to migrant workers from

⁷⁰ In Burch's discussion with a Turkish Cypriot of Kokkina who is bitter about the support Europeans have provided for their Greek Cypriot co-religionists, this man brushes off the idea of Muslim countries chipping in to help Turkish Cypriots: "We are Muslims, but we are Europeans, not Arabs or Africans. Only Turkey helps us" (129).

⁷¹ Arabs are treated with a general lack of respect in this passage and elsewhere in the discourses of travel literature of Cyprus. The irony of all the protestations of racial and cultural difference here becomes apparent at other times in the text, as Burch reports that Turks of Cyprus are clearly doing business with Arabs and monitoring their markets closely (129; 228). Not only do Turkish Cypriots—many of whom know their Turkish nationalism and World War I history too well—traffic in this prejudice, but so, too, do many travel writers like Thubron and Durrell, in subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

⁷² These Famagustan Turks could likely have arrived through migration or through the slave trade, which as late as the 19th century was still operating covertly through Kyrenia, so as not to offend the European consuls in Larnaca.

Anatolia who now find themselves at the lower rung of a class or caste system that produces whiteness and darkness to demarcate “authentic” Cypriot identity.⁷³

If the narrator had any discomfort at the prejudice displayed by Turkish Cypriots against mainland Turks, he does not share this with readers; instead, he identifies with the often English-speaking Turks of Cyprus, like Sevinç, Bayraktar, a woman Burch and his family helped with a broken-down car. Ms. Bayraktar invites the Burches to dinner with her husband, a man fond of politics who enjoys the company of people interested in hearing his views on Cyprus. Over more than one bottle of raki, Mr. Bayraktar appears not to disappoint, holding forth on a range of issues. His description of the Turks who have moved to Cyprus after 1974 illustrates the extent of the perceived differences between Turks of Cyprus and the migrant workers from Turkey: “they are all nomads who don’t trust the rule of law. If there’s a problem, they solve it themselves because they don’t trust the authorities. If they can’t resolve it they go back to Turkey. It’s their way” (214).⁷⁴ Burch documents this prejudice without comment, choosing not to wonder how “all” of these apparently undesirable people could be nomads of the sort suggested here. Most certainly, they represent considerably more socio-economic diversity than suggested by the accounts of islanders unaccustomed to living with outsiders. In my own travels in Cyprus, I have met Turks from the mainland who have worked in seasonally in restaurants and hotels and year-round in sectors like education and finance. Relations

⁷³ Mainland Turks who have moved to Cyprus have sometimes been insultingly referred to as “black beards” for their dark complexions.

⁷⁴ The attitude Ms. Bayraktar displays about Turks, that “they are all nomads,” may have been widespread among Turkish Cypriots at the time of Burch’s visit in 1987; I have detected some softening of this type of prejudice in the intervening decades, as Turkish Cypriots have realized that not only are not all Turks who come to Cyprus for work “nomads,” but that these people are not quite as they have been made out to be by islanders unaccustomed to living with outsiders.

between Turkish Cypriots and people from Turkey of diverse socio-economic or regional backgrounds are not always so simple or comparable.

Travelers and visitors to Cyprus cannot so easily perceive internal differences concerning Turks and Turkish Cypriots living in the north. If a visitor raised the topic with a nationalist Turkish Cypriot or Turk, they may brushed aside the issue, since dissatisfaction with life in the north is used against them by Greek Cypriots and other enemies of Turkey. Burch, however, manages to meet people like the Bayraktars, whose stories and impressions disrupt the monolith of the north as the dark side. She explains to the narrator how Greeks in Limassol helped her and comforted her in 1974, when she was in danger (191).⁷⁵ In another example, she complains about the presence of Turkish soldiers in the near proximity to Kyrenia and claims that this probably kills the tourism and deprives Turkish Cypriots with the outside contact they desire (191).

A profound ethical challenge to Burch concerns the level of complexity he will allow for these contentious cultural differences. Seamus MacHugh probably misspoke of “Turkish Cypriot” gangs roaming the Green Line in Nicosia, whom I imagined to be off-duty conscripts from Turkey; given the opportunity to travel in the north at greater length, he may too have learned of further socio-cultural cleavages among the hundreds of thousands of Turkish men serving in the military in Cyprus. When he does chime in on the distinctions he perceives among Turks, Burch remarks on the superior human quality of “privates in the conscript army,” whom he prefers to the NCOs and officers that he

⁷⁵ Later, she indicates her belief that Makarios was actually a good person who just could not control his people, a sentiment I have not before or after heard from a Turkish Cypriot. However, she also claims that Turks of Cyprus have never married Greeks, and that living apart from them is necessary. Turkish Cypriots will marry people from outside the island, including British and Americans, but not Greeks.

considers to be “another breed” (15). These primarily mainland Turks win his heart with their kindness. Perhaps Burch did not entirely trust the sincerity of these warm encounters. To insulate his affections against what could be an elaborate and well-orchestrated ruse, Burch suggests that these soldiers have been “carefully instructed to show every consideration to foreigners, for the authorities were desperate to re-establish tourism, which had virtually dried up after the invasion” (15). This considerable attention to the motives of ordinary soldiers’ kindness—Were they just following orders? Are they from different social classes, with different levels of exposure to Western cultures?—leaves out other worthy possibilities: they could have been deathly bored, starved for human contact, curious about who would be visiting Cyprus at this time, and so forth.⁷⁶

Burch’s apparent dislike of Turkish officers presents yet another intriguing case of how national identity represents an underlying current that informs the encounters of the narrator with people of the north. Elsewhere in *Infidel Sea*, the narrator reveals almost no negative sentiments towards people he meets, but here the tension seems palpable.⁷⁷ One wonders if the animosity he develops, augmented by the views of Danish members of the UN forces who also disliked the Turkish military, is because these men have been more broadly indoctrinated in Turkish nationalist narratives and motivated to serve

⁷⁶ Travelers to Cyprus can often be quick to assume, with some justification, that people are coached in how to treat others in order to win political favor in what appears to be a politically terminal condition of conflict. I have my doubts about this thesis. On my first visit to Cyprus, when wandering with a companion along the Green Line in Nicosia, we approached too closely for the comfort of a young Turkish sentry. He brought his weapon down and pointed it directly at us, at which point we quickly turned around and left. Apparently, he missed the briefing from military and other authorities about the desperate need to treat tourists with gracious indulgence.

⁷⁷ Another example of Burch becoming upset came during a discussion of politics, where a Turkish Cypriot criticized the British for the conflict with Ireland. Burch confesses to being tempted to bring up a host of political problems Turkey faces in its relations with the West: the Armenian massacres, the Kurdish issue, and so forth, but decides to back off instead.

Turkey's interests. Turks of Turkey and Turks of Cyprus have a divergent historical relationship to the British; for the former, the British were World War I rivals who occupied Istanbul; for the latter, they were the political buffer between themselves and enosis. As a traveler sympathetic to the landscape of Cyprus, he prefers to hear the nostalgic views of Turkish Cypriots who worked with the British in the colonial era, some of whom longed for them to remain in Cyprus as rulers beyond 1959. If the north continues to be plagued by tropes of darkness, Burch's inquisitive eyes land on the agents of Turkey to explain the source of this misfortune.

Taken as a whole, *Infidel Sea* surpasses most other travelogues by rescuing the people of the island—in this case, Turkish Cypriots—from the trope of victimized other and allowing them to be credible, complicated historical subjects. Few other travel accounts of life and culture in Cyprus would allow one to gather as much about the north. Burch's text creates space for credible counter-narratives to the dominant accounts of Turkish and Greek Cypriot nationalist discourse, making readers wonder about both the veracity and utility of the same sad stories of Cyprus. Burch's extended stay in the north is not quite the dark side promised by the other narrators of "occupied Cyprus," but rather an illuminating account of a complicated socio-political world. As a narrator, he has journeyed into what some may purport to be a fault line between European and Eastern civilizations to discover that the lines are never as clear as they appear from a distance; the layers of cultural complexity in the north of Cyprus tend to proliferate endlessly.

Only an unusually singular-minded or unreachable visitor could fail to apprehend the scars of unresolved conflict and the enduring effects of war. Travel narratives and

literature that does exist from 1974-2005 cannot help but reflect the politics of prolonged conflict, challenging writers with daunting physical and political conundrums like the following: which Cyprus should be visited, the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus of the Greek Cypriots or the unrecognized and (as-of-this-writing) still under EU sanction north of the Turkish Cypriots? And at what political and personal costs, especially since the nation-states and travel agencies of Europe and the US essentially follow the Greek Cypriot policy that views travel to the north as illegal, even dangerous?

Under these circumstances visitors come to know Cyprus. For people living in the north of Cyprus, most travel writing of the partition era narrates what they call their home with respect and responsibility for Greek Cypriots displaced by the fighting of 1974. In limited contact with Turkish Cypriots and Turks living in north Cyprus, most writers have typically produced what one would expect from casual contact with a land and people stigmatized beforehand as sorrowful, isolated, impoverished, and controlled by outsiders. Turks of Cyprus, in other words, have been left largely out of the picture when writers construct their ethical appeals.

When incorporated into the imagination of a traveling writer like Oliver Burch, who comes to know them better than most, the troping takes on a series of compelling twists: Turkish Cypriots given voice through his narration invite themselves into the European family and appear by and large to be welcome, though some of their ethnic kin from Turkey remain suspect for a variety of reasons. Culturally naturalized qualities like anti-materialism and even poverty are offered political and economic justifications—people who lived through inter-communal fighting and enclaves assert their preference to

sacrifice prosperity if that will bring security. And long racial memories that saturate the literature of contact between east and west find little real correspondence with the realities of people living in the north. Writers have configured the partition-era north as inherently and singularly dark. After examining the ethical production of these texts, one can be fairly confident that the forces that keep out the light often accompany the writer from the place of origin, rather than emanating radiantly and self-evidently from the destination itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

ETHOS AND THE RHETORIC OF TRAVEL WRITING:

IMAGINING AN ETHICS OF ENCOUNTER

Denken ist danken, Martin Heidegger wrote: thought is gratitude. Thanking consists in receiving with embracing hands what is given, holding it together, and showing it to, sharing it with, others. Speaking and writing about what one has seen, and experienced—what one has been given—can be thoughtful, can be thankful. Thoughtful speaking and writing put forth the overall design and inner force of the data—the given—detailing their aspects and inner relationships for view, sharing them with others.

Thoughtfulness begins in opening one's heart to what is given. It involves vulnerability and risk. (Lingis 195)

Probably most travel writers, whether they consider travel writing as rhetoric or imagine their narration as an ethical act, would want to have their work considered “thoughtful speaking and writing.” Alphonso Lingis, venerable philosopher, teacher, and, in the passage above, rhetorical traveler, locates “the given” with “the experienced,” and thus compels in speaking and writing an attention to the personal. Rather than the detached abstraction so common in travel narration, with its monarchical tropes, he imagines how the traveler, speaker, and writer needs to be present, available to others and to the effects of telling stories. The narration of experiences to others, with others, presents “vulnerability and risk.”

I add my agreement about the importance of fidelity to the “inner force of the data,” and a personal role in the telling. I also acknowledge and affirm that stories of travel are quotidian, part of global cultural landscapes; they are told regularly and will continue to be told by all travelers and consumed by heterogeneous audiences. Given this

reality, scholars, critics, writers, and audiences should insist they be narrated ethically: that is, attendant to travel and travel writing as rhetorical, consequential, co-created in language with other people, and thereby infused with concern for the ethical component of their production.

Travel, travel writing, and the consumption of travel texts involves complicated configurations of motive, with varying degrees of responsibility to others and openness to risks. This dissertation argues for a rhetorical response to the challenge of ethical narration in travel encounters. Though hardly the readiest or most available motive to adopt for hedonists, armchair travelers, market-savvy editors, ironically detached critics, or fatalistically resigned postcolonial scholars, it constitutes a way forward through paralysis or counterproductive silence. Rhetorical travel means an ethical mandate and a point of departure for future projects of travel, writing, and encounters with difference.

Ethos and Ethical Narration

Perhaps the very fear of uncomfortable contingencies like “vulnerability and risk” leads writers to seal themselves off from complicity in a sticky status quo, mischaracterize their experiences during travel, or cast generalizing and putative claims from afar about other people, often simply some earlier traveler or authority had gotten by with these words before. Though measures of this sort may sometimes produce winning results for imagined audiences back home, the victory comes with its price: future travelers may face a rhetorical burden not easily borne; people of landscapes

distorted live with the prejudices done in their names while domestic reading publics carry on with their cultural and economic privilege intact.

Writing on Cyprus constitutes a particularly challenging site to investigate the rhetorical dimensions of travel literature and the ethical aspects of travel writing and storytelling. The land and landscape have been marked by colonization, ethno-national conflict, and an unresolved war between two proud communities who are themselves former subjects historically, and differentially, linked to imperialism and colonialism. Unsurprisingly, then, the travel writing about this place and people depends on tropes of conflict, seemingly impelled to narrate how the landscape speaks of impending war, the 1996 violence on the Green Line, the effects of earlier fighting, and so forth.

These stories of Cyprus told by travelers circulate to global audiences, producing wide-reaching effects beyond those that may have been intended, consciously or not, for audiences “back home.” Guidebooks, travelogues, memoirs, dispatches, blogs, and other forms of travel narration operate rhetorically in the sense that they orient readers about not just what to see and do, but *how* to experience a country and appreciate its differences. Travel writing moves bodies and shapes worldviews. For postcolonial scholars of the past several decades, this power has often been interpreted as racist, imperialist, hegemonic, and otherwise nefarious. Travel writing has functioned as a source of consternation and the impetus for critical intervention.

In my opening chapter, I demonstrated postcolonial critiques on the effects of travel and travel narration (Kaplan; Pratt; Spurr; Said). These critics and many others have noted the perils in travel writing and its representation of the other. For centuries

great texts from the Western traditions of travel—such as Homer’s *Odyssey*, Marco Polo’s *Travels*, William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Mark Twain’s *Innocents Abroad*, and many other texts—have contributed to the consolidation of divisive cultural and material borders that make travel and travel writing anything but an innocent enterprise. As a traveler, a scholar, a teacher, an erstwhile activist, an editor, or a rhetorician, what can be done about this? This study of travel narratives and first-person writing set in Cyprus has informed my understanding of how to proceed critically in imagining ethos in the rhetorical situations of travel, with implications for the travel writer, editor, publisher, and consumer of travel writing today. Travel, travel writing, and reading are rhetorical acts that are inherently ethical, compelling us to make a place for ethos and the personal in aesthetic and critical approaches to imagination, production, and interpretation of these experiences and their textual effects.

An ethics of travel, travel writing, publishing of the texts, and their subsequent consumption and circulation by global audiences interrogates motives for travel, ways of travelling, the rhetorical dimensions of narration, and the diverse audiences for whom such texts matter. While I do not mean to naively discount the apologists of empire and colonialism, I do see possibilities to critically own up to, write against, and otherwise account for the legacies and traditions of travel narration. Syed Manzurul Islam, a scholar particularly interested in establishing an ethics of travel writing, identifies the challenge as nothing less than to imagine how a genre that functions as a “machine of othering,” troping essential difference at every turn, can be more than this (118-208). He directs us,

for example, to Italo Calvino's contention that travel texts tend to systematically erase the point of origin—Marco Polo's Venice in his case, Lawrence Durrell's nomadic colonial past in the case of writing set in Cyprus—and displace traces of a genealogy that has everything to do with a particularized construction of the other (Islam 71-72). Calvino's critique shifts the focus from the cities of the travelled landscape to the city of the narrator's origin, better to know the terms of projection. In rhetorical terms, this means calling upon travelers, whose narration routinely looks to either elide or uncritically exalt the self, to make personal, subjective screens part of the story and part of the encounter. This is no easy matter, of course.

For moments of optimism against the weight of colonization's legacy, Islam notes that ethical travel writing is possible, and it occurs when lived experience, language, and narration disrupts borders, as travelers and their texts fall off the maps, break through rigid lines, and embrace difference and opposition (77). What does it take to accomplish such ethical travel and travel writing? To start, we would be wise to revisit the notion that subjective positions like writer, traveler, tourist, post-colonial critic, publisher, transnational activist, scholar, and student-writer always already arrive as distinct, often oppositional terms. All, I argue, share the ethical challenge of writing about difference.

Ethics of Narration in the Travel Texts in Cyprus

In the case of Cyprus, the corpus of primarily book-length travelogues and related genres from the last fifty years includes the texts of literary luminaries, political pundits, foreign correspondents, enterprising expatriate travel writers, scholars who write personal

narratives, and others. Each negotiates the ethical landscape according to varying dimensions of subjective experience and rhetorical purposes. Anxiety over risk and responsibility, as examined in the opening epigram by Lingis, may have led *Bitter Lemons* memoirist Lawrence Durrell to numerous instances of what I consider ethical lapses, such as the dramatic and fictionalized killing of a Greek Cypriot friend at the close of his narrative, or the troping of Turks as mysterious creatures of cold-blooded composition. Though creative liberties are to be expected in a work of fiction, they become ethically suspect when passing as ‘non-fiction.’

Diverse motives could be read into Durrell’s subordination of the given and experienced to such brazen strokes of fiction. Perhaps he just believed that such a wrinkle made for the better story to mark the violent passing of the colonial era. For certain, Durrell’s narration strikes back at the anti-colonialist social movements and guerrilla campaign that had soured Cyprus for him. Perhaps his heart had already been so pained by the betrayal of the Greek Cypriots against the British Empire and the traditions of Anglo-Greek historic relations that he could imagine no other story. Or maybe Turkish Cypriots were too irresistible as cultural material saturated with symbolic potential. Rather than embrace their differences, he uses Turks as a distant canvass on which to project myriad Orientalist tropes. Had he lived, spoken, and written *Bitter Lemons* more personally enmeshed in “the givens” of Cyprus, more open to its stories, a different, more ethical text may have come of it. Some writers make more substantial investments in getting into the details of experiences, opening one’s heart—or at least small parts of it, in select places—to the quotidian, the people, the landscape. Had this been the case with

Bitter Lemons, the narration may have been a touch less bitter and probably no less famous.

Though Durrell shares the regular and personal company of some Cypriots, they become more distant to him throughout the narrative. Political circumstances and personal choices disable opportunities for intimacy, and too often Durrell narrates primarily from a distance. Subsequent writers—Colin Thubron primarily, and also Oliver Burch and Yiannis Papadakis—have demonstrated more investment in establishing personal relationships and arranging close contact with people in Cyprus. The latter two writers fare better ethically in terms of their narrator's availability to change, sense of reciprocity, and critical self-awareness. Thubron's narrative takes us into the given, the exceptionally ordinary, as well as, on occasion, the personal; however, he compromises his intimacy with a distance that keeps his interlocutors at arm's length. The chauvinisms and darker achievements of nationalism and empire's legacy fail to reach his narrating core, an aesthetically motivated, self-contained narrator, driven at times by an ethos wishful for an end to the conflict, yet less open to being moved to personal change by the people and land of his 1972 travels in Cyprus.

I call his narrating perspective "intimate distance," a position of value and power that finds its ethical capacity sometimes restricted by the traveler's or narrator's reluctance to be fully present to others. All too often, transformation is imagined as arriving from the narrator to the people of Cyprus—in the form of respecting antiquities, loving one's neighbor, and showing the good manners not to interrogate the travel writer, since he is supposed to be the one asking the questions. Cypriots and their storied

landscape ultimately earn his respect and affection, but readers fail to perceive that any core has been moved.

In the post-1974 partition-era of Cyprus, where travelers and writers have faced politically-determined restrictions of movement, as well as the symbolic and material challenges of representing the Green Line and other dead zones of Cyprus, encountering others has everything to do with how writers negotiate travel experiences in the midst of unresolved war. For the Turkish Cypriots, who live in the north and whose mother country, Turkey, often finds itself singularly culpable for the current political landscape of the island, travel writing exists largely as a genre that produces a phenomenon I call day-tripping to the dark side. Most travelers to Cyprus see the north from the “free” side of Cyprus, in the Greek-controlled Republic of Cyprus. The narration of the north typically unfolds from the discursive landscape shaped by its co-islanders in the south, whereby its politically contentious features become determinant of its character and ultimate value: a place of sadness, disempowerment, exploitation, neglect, and economic stagnation.

For those travelers based in the south but willing to visit what the south and most of the world refers to as “the occupied north,” some of these tropes become more complicated, as narrators scan the landscape for signs of meaning to satisfy their curiosities and rhetorical purposes. Christopher Hitchens, Libby Rowan-Moorhouse, and Seamus MacHugh, writing in the respective genres of political memoir, travelogue, and travel guidebook before the 2003 opening of the Green Line to almost unrestricted travel, manage to shed slivers of light on the cultural life of the north. Hitchens configures

Cypriots themselves as minor players in their own national tragedy; he chooses to focus on and refute the widely circulating and much-repeated belief that ancient hatreds have produced the suffering of Cyprus. His ethical move is to narrate closer-to-home contemporary global political developments in Cyprus like colonialism, the Cold War, and a relatively ineffectual international commitment to the island.

Rowan-Moorhouse fails to register much beyond a forbidding and pathetic landscape; the only Turk she meets, her driver, is rendered as a sort of domesticated bogeyman: sad, trapped, and himself a victim of Turkey's whims and malice. Her own sympathies, quite understandably, rest with her hosts, whose stories of the history of Cyprus she has come to know, whose newspapers she reads, whose air, land, and food she shares as a resident of a village in the south. While her narration of Cyprus may win favor among some audiences—particularly expatriates and Greek Cypriots—for others less well known, their desires remain opaque. Her relationship to their experiences and histories escapes attention in this travelogue, while her narration fails to acknowledge that the north and its people remain so unimaginable.

Aside from a few sobering remarks about the unlikelihood his desires, MacHugh—the final day-tripper of this genre examined in Chapter 4—just wishes these formerly peaceful neighbors of north and south could get along again and live together. That would mean that his hosts, the truer Cypriots, could at least return to visit, perhaps to mourn, their lost homes, orchards, and possessions. Neither writer makes too much of their own personal investment, desire, and experience, though each reveals emotional effects of travel and company shared among people living in such proximity to painful

memories and seemingly intractable conflict. Ethos can perhaps be measured instead, if insufficiently, by the values implicit in the writer's articulation of a transformed landscape—wherein certain myths could meet their makers.

Scott Anderson and Sebastian Junger mark the logical endpoint of the absurdity of Green Line narration, as each writer travels to and interprets the respective party-line rhetoric of north and south in an effort to offer Cyprus not as the interminable problem to ethno-national difference and conflict but as the sober solution to stanch the bleeding. A narrator able to be affected by the landscape and its people travels to the island like a patient going for medicine. In terms of personal revelation, the narrators convey a razor-edged cynicism that overrides more personal encounters and effects. By the end, each writer has tired of the intransigence of Greek and Turkish Cypriots locked in dead-end postures of righteousness.

Rather the opposite of MacHugh and Rowan-Moorhouse, Anderson and Junger narrate the contours of a landscape where the best chance of peace continues to mean more of the same. Getting to know the other has meant surrendering to unpleasant realities. Their abortively political telos conspires against the grey areas of cultural conflict. Seeing the future of Cyprus, for the most part, means talking to men in politics, rather than men, women, and children outside the most public and overdetermined sphere. Thus, their purpose and mode of narration seals them off from those in Cyprus who might continue to dream of and long for something different, for cracks in the monolith.

English auto-mechanic cum travel writer Oliver Burch, his wife, and their two children experience partition-era northern Cyprus in an intensity and intimacy unmatched by any other travel text. At times, Burch eclipses the distance so often erected and maintained between traveler and local, Briton and Turkish Cypriot. Unlike Thubron, for example, he often plunges immediately into politics, if the occasion so warrants. He narrates many of his own commitments to and affiliations with nation, race, and history. With the invitation of these rhetorical dimensions to the narration comes a questioning of knowledge, of convictions. Burch leaves open for future exploration several ethical problems with Cyprus, with travel, with nations and cultures. Contradictions show little capacity for easy resolution, and without easy answers, the narration approaches the ethics of encounter imagined by Lingis. Burch travels with gratitude for his encounters, even some of the painful or uncomfortable ones that an editor looking to smooth over some of the bumps and hiccups of cultural contact might otherwise have excised. He locates his own racial prejudice as part of the story of Cyprus, making efforts to address these subjective dimensions of narration—however imperfectly—with respect and responsibility for both Turks and Greeks of Cyprus, as well as for the British domestic audiences that have consumed travel narration for centuries. Published in 1990, no other book-length travelogue of the north exists; too small is the market and perhaps too heavy is the political price for supporting such an effort.

Though more of the same would always be the safest prediction concerning the future of travel discourse on Cyprus, the emergence of hybrid-genre narratives of Cyprus does offer something in the way of ethical alternatives to the status quo that I have

sketched in this dissertation. Editors at hallowed periodicals like *The Atlantic Monthly* may fear or doubt the safety or touristic potential of a place like Cyprus, but such predictable ignorance has not prevented mobile activists, scholars, and writers of different nationalities to set their sights on Cyprus and embrace on the task of narrating its landscape.⁷⁸ Their work has begun to penetrate the formidable shell that sustains protracted conflict and its attendant fatalism.

Ethnographic Travel Writing: Ethos Alive and Echoing from the Dead Zone

In the preface to the second edition of his book *Cultural Intimacy*, anthropologist Michael Herzfeld sets out his vision of the ethical challenge of representing others while engaged in the study of cultures:

While we still study society and culture ethnographically—that is, by describing the minutiae of everyday life at a fairly microscopic level—our work is done in the context of far larger dynamics in which we ourselves are willy-nilly cast as the representatives of powerful and sometimes hated external forces. Nor can we ignore these entailments as our predecessors sometimes did with such blissful ease. To many people throughout the world we are both signs and the agents of an intrusion, not just into private lives, but also into the privacy of nations. (ix-x)

Though Herzfeld's primary audience may be scholars and students in his discipline, the message he delivers could as well apply to travelers and writers: tread lightly and cautiously, aware of "larger dynamics," "entailments," and the disruption to personal and national privacy inherent in experiences like traveling, writing, and otherwise

⁷⁸ Burns explains how the legacy of violence continues to shape the reputation of Cyprus as a travel destination. Of the process of pitching this story to editors at *The Atlantic Monthly*, he writes, "political realities and bureaucratic contrivances may suggest to some that visiting Cyprus is dangerous. Indeed, the question of safety was raised by *The Atlantic's* editors when I proposed this piece. I dutifully consulted my Cypriot friends and government authorities. They were dumbstruck" (30).

encountering and being present for the other. Who can do this, and how? What might it look like? In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said refers to shifts occurring within the discourse of the Middle East Studies Association, which led to the emergence of “a metropolitan story of cultural opposition to Western domination” and “a new receptivity to both liberation movements and post-colonial criticism” (261). Said speaks foremost about scholarly, popular, and other forms of representation of the Arab world; he aspires, in general terms, to promote discursive production leading to the growth “of independence, of human rights, and freedom from outside (often imperialist) interference and internal corruption or collaboration” (261). As a writer committed to the ethical examination of internal struggles within both communities of Cyprus, and, to a lesser degree, the tensions within the mother countries of Turkey and Greece, Yiannis Papadakis could be said to fulfill the criteria of one of these rebels. His poignant ethnographic narration of Cyprus and cultural histories of the eastern Mediterranean offers a challenge to the idea of travel and travel writing-as-usual in the region.

Papadakis’s book *Echoes from the Dead Zone: Across the Cyprus Divide* narrates his travels into and beyond the Green Line and so-called dead zones of Cyprus. He also travels in this personal journey from his home in Limassol, in the south of Cyprus, to the US, the UK, Turkey, and Greece: all the principals, in other words, in the story of modern Cyprus. An anthropologist by training, Papadakis blends ethnographic research methods with the motives of rhetorical travel and illustrates what ethical travel writing set in Cyprus can look like. Though the book could best be considered a scholar’s personal narrative, I choose to locate it in this study because Papadakis travels to the other side,

the so-called “dark side,” and narrates his contact with Turks in remarkable depth and nuance.

Unlike most other writers I have studied in this dissertation, he personalizes the experience and works to establish through his narration an ethos based on responsibility, revelation, and personal rigor. I acknowledge that few travel writers have the advantage of intimate—if often skewed—knowledge of a place before a visit, as well as intensive language study and a fairly sophisticated curiosity about how Cyprus is construed differently on both sides of the line, in Greece, Turkey, the US, and the UK. These contribute to the writer’s ability to ask a wider range of people more precise questions, often in their native languages. They affect the quality of the encounters. Ultimately, what invigorates *Echoes from the Dead Zone*, from my perspective of rhetorical travel, concerns the writer’s determination to operate intimately with an aim to bridge differences and respond to people fairly—to go across the divide, rather than cement the division.

The narrator encounters considerable challenges: almost irreconcilable differences emerge with people of all ethno-national groups, including among Greek Cypriots. He makes tortured compromises about how to continue his research, how to travel and live among others. These ethical doubts and contradictions serve as part of the story itself, never nearing solipsism or overtaking the narrative. In an opening passage, as he describes his first trip to Istanbul, Turkey, where he will be living in a country and among a people demonized by mass media and public education in the Republic of Cyprus,

Papadakis puts his anxieties on the table, yet with a twist: his parents, at least on the surface, did not harbor the basic fears he had been schooled to expect:

ARRIVAL [IN TURKEY, CIRCA 1990]

On the plane my stomach took over. What would happen once I arrived? Would I be taken for interrogation? That much I had to be realistically prepared for. Would I be put behind bars for a few days until they checked things out? Perhaps I would disappear into a prison.

I had told my parents in Cyprus where I was going. I was very pleased that they did not create a huge fuss when I told them. They were very worried, naturally. I expected them to try to dissuade me. I was almost shocked by how understanding they were and how much they trusted me. There was no talk of the film *Midnight Express*, no mention of Turkish atrocities. (3)

Life in Turkey for a Greek Cypriot presents him with some challenges, but these have less to do with personal security than interpersonal navigation. The questions foregrounded at the outset find their correction in his daily experiences studying the language, interviewing his sources, and working through his cultural prejudices. For example, the Turkish Cypriots and Turks he befriends in Turkey rarely mix socially, leading to tensions in his daily life that help him to understand the complicated cultural histories that divide people within an outwardly coherent façade.

Near the end of his book, Papadakis—raised in the heart of the conflict, yet somehow insulated as a child from its everyday reach into the lives and hopes of all Cypriots—demonstrates through personal narration how travel to “the other side” and beyond has deepened his understanding of the forces that have shaped his life. In so doing, he articulates a compelling sense of responsibility relevant to people of Cyprus and beyond. He acknowledges how, after so many encounters with Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, and Turks, the discordant voices of these perspectives leave him

without easy answers, with doubts about his own ability to live his principles and face the challenges of past, present, and future:

I was still trying to shake off the weight of responsibility. I, who was born in 1964, born of and with the Green Line, I, who never did anything, surely I was not responsible. We, the young, had nothing to do with it. We bore no responsibility. But there were many kinds of responsibility. Responsibility for committing acts of violence was only one. Perpetrating atrocities only became possible under conditions that, if not encouraged, at least allowed them to happen. This was the responsibility of indifference and inaction. The largest atrocities had often been committed by a few who lived in a society that did not care. A society that did not want to know, one that did not care enough about the victims to bother to know. We still refused to assume any responsibility for the pain and misery we had inflicted upon each other. This only left the wounds festering until acknowledgement and forgiveness was offered. Sadly, even that did not always work.

What about outsiders' responsibilities? Britain, the USA, the mother-fatherlands. They had serious responsibilities without doubt. But I came to believe that more than enough had been said in Cyprus about their roles, though not enough in the countries themselves. In Cyprus we always spoke of others' responsibilities and so little about our own. (236)

In other words, Papadakis's narration of Cyprus leads him to direct us all to the stories we need to be telling, rather than just the ones most readily available given each subject's treasured cultural orientations. Rather than being evasive or distant, he insists on presence, on personal responsibility to others—even when that means the other person is an intelligence agent or a political adversary. In the passage above, the reference is to the highest profile players and stakeholders in Cyprus. Though western powers have had their influence, he speaks here primarily to Greeks and Turks of Cyprus, including himself. The critique he brings against his own society's selective remembrance of the past could easily be applied as well to the Turks of the north and the national and international foreign interests who have always had a part to play in Cyprus.

In a walking tour with myself and a group of Fulbright-Hays study abroad fellows in the summer of 2007, Papadakis extended his interest and range of ethical responsibility beyond those normally taken into account, such as Greece, Turkey, the UN, the EU, and so forth, to include less enfranchised and represented others. He mentioned specifically the tens of thousands of guest workers on both sides of the line. Few travelers have paid much attention to these people, but without them the tourist industry and economy could not function: the Sri Lankans, the Philippinas, the Poles, the Pakistanis, the Arabs, and others whose visible presence is undeniably ubiquitous in Cyprus. Yet they are almost always left out of the landscape in descriptive contemporary accounts of cultural life on the island.⁷⁹

Final Thoughts on the Future of Travel and Travel Writing

But would people inclined to read travel writing actually prefer to read a text like *Echoes from the Dead Zone* when *Bitter Lemons* or *In the Land of Aphrodite* promises either a higher pedigree from its narrator or more readily identifiable tropes of the island? Would audiences for travel texts prefer to hear an earnest expatriate's interpretation of the landscape or a worldly Greek Cypriot scholar's? As travelers, global citizens, and scholars, our ethos needs to accommodate multiple perspectives. All travel and travel writing is rhetorical. Despite his personal connections to the island, language skills, and anthropological training, one does not exactly have to be a metropolitan rebel to create

⁷⁹ Cynthia Cockburn's *The Line: Women, Partition and the Gender Order in Cyprus* offers extended treatment on this community of guest workers, examining, for instance, the experiences of women left out of most discussions of the type of society Cyprus will become in the future.

rhetorical appeal by telling a story well and ethically. How do rhetorical critics, travelers, and writers bring such narration into being? Alphonso Lingis suggests that what it may take to make such writing happen rests within each of us as humans concerned for each other, as people capable of courage and trust. He writes,

Courage and trust have this in common: they are not attitudes with regard to images and representations. Courage is a force that can arise and hold steadfast as one's projections, expectations, and hopes dissipate. Courage rises up and takes hold and builds on itself. Trust is a force that can arise and hold on to someone whose motivations are as unknown as those of death. It takes courage to trust someone you do not know. There is an exhilaration in trusting that builds on itself. One really cannot separate in this exhilaration the force of trust and the force of courage. (x-xi)

The rhetoric of travel and travel writing broadly conceived still needs to account for the effects of ideological structures like imperialism, nationalism, or the Cold War. The agency available to acts of travel and writing should be exercised with courage and trust—at the risk, always, of vulnerability. Will I be considered naïve? Will my editors and publishers accept my work? Have not a generation of domestic audiences been reared into believing, following the lead of Paul Theroux, that cynicism is seductive?

Even if a traveler does muster the courage to trust, will people for whom this person is an outsider accept and invite the visitor into a space of intimacy—if so, then what will happen? To narrate a place like Cyprus calls on the traveler to digest and then frame the stories of people who have suffered and who continue to mourn their losses. Yet it also means seeing more than the political rhetoric that so often delimits the complex character of people and landscapes. Travelers need the courage to construct relationships to people and places that invite the landscape to speak other truths.

For the Turks of Cyprus and the northern land they have lived on since 1974, travel narration has too often settled on seeing a darkness appealing in its simplicity, yet shallow in its ethical production. Fuller stories have been and may yet be told by narrators working beyond conventional prescriptions of a fulfilling travel experience. These narrators see and begin to make sense of north Cyprus through the stories of the people who live, sweat, laugh, and cry on the land—repatriated Turkish Cypriots who have lived abroad; young demonstrators, men and women, who took to the streets to pressure Rauf Denktash from power just a few years after Anderson and Junger's confident insinuation of its impossibility; reluctant army conscripts from towns in Turkey surviving their national service in the blistering heat of a Cyprus summer; migrant workers from Anatolia looking to save money and move on; expatriates from London and Sydney back for extended stays with family; grizzled TMT veterans distrustful of negotiations with Greek Cypriots but somehow hopeful about a better future; persistent bi-communal activists trying to keep up their own and others' spirits after the failure of the Annan Plan in 2004. In the broader discursive picture of travel and writing that suggests such a heterogeneous landscape, master tropes may begin to crack against the weight of contradictions and uncertainties. Different tropes, rhetorical tropes will emerge, as well as more ethical stories that do the bidding of a narrator brave enough to commit to an ethics of travel and writing fueled by responsible and reciprocal relations of global citizens.

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