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THE MARTYRDOM OF THE MISSING



*There is danger in unnatural silence
No less than in excess of lamentation*

Chorus, in Sophocles' *Antigone* (1947: 174)

Introduction

In this chapter I examine how both groups have turned their missing into martyrs, though with significant differences. These differences are as much due to cultural symbolism as to the different political agendas of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot political leaderships. Briefly put, the Greek Cypriot missing have become metaphors or signifiers for the recapture of a past and a lost territory. As they possess an ambiguous liminal identity, being neither legally dead nor experientially alive, they share certain characteristics with saints or even with Christ. Turkish Cypriot missing persons are signifiers for a future for which they sacrificed their lives. They are therefore associated with the spilling of blood for land and security. There are political differences between the two groups in their attitudes towards the recovery of the bodies of the missing. This can be attributed to their different political agendas, as well as formal differences between Christianity and Islam in the theological significance of the body in the economy of salvation. Nevertheless I show that despite these differences between the political exploitation of the missing by their leaders, at the grassroots there are many similarities between Greek and Turkish Cypriot relatives towards the recovery of the bodies of their loved ones.

The Somatisation of Recovery and the Specularisation of the Self

The role and significance of mortuary rituals in Greek culture has received much attention from anthropologists in recent years (Caravelli, 1986; Danforth, 1982; Sarris 1995; Seremetakis, 1991). In this case we are faced with social responses to death from a political, symbolic and ethnic perspective where there have been no bodies to attend to. I begin by exploring how an extended mourning for the relatives, in particular 'the mothers' (itself a transfiguration of Cyprus as grieving mother), has been cast in terms that seems to permit a resolution of their trauma only through the recovery of the bodies of the Missing.

I then show that whilst relatives may be in a state of mourning, the missing are in a state that is more than just 'liminal'. In contrast to Bloch and Parry (1982), and other anthropological theorists, I argue that missing persons are existentially very dissimilar to those individuals who are in a state between their biological death and its social recognition. Rather, they have an existential ambiguity that transcends the normal social expectations of 'liminality', and thus exacerbates the grief experienced by the relatives. In the case of the Greek Cypriot missing, the fact that the demands of the relatives have not been resolved cannot be explained away by the suggestion that the relatives are not being 'realistic' and thus refusing to accept 'reality', or that the State has 'exploited' the issue. Although there are elements of both, the resilience of the issue suggests that far more complex factors are involved. Finally, I show that the demand for the return of the remains turns the missing into *ethnomartyres* (national martyrs). History, sedimented memories, symbolism, and gender identity coalesce in a potent mixture.

Since the mid-1980s the issue of the missing in the Greek part of Cyprus has become progressively expressed in terms of the rights of their relatives to recover their remains, and rights to (re)burial according to Orthodox rites. In 2001, according to a member of the Greek Cypriot team of the CMP, the return of the bones 'has now become the most important and the most symbolic theme in the talks between the two communities in the (UN sponsored) Committee on Missing Persons (CMP)'. In Chapter 3, I dealt with the political background and implications for such requests. We now need to concentrate on the more symbolic aspects.

The demand for the return of the remains of the missing can be seen as a coded set of statements about ethnicity, gender identity, and emotion. Let us begin with the terms used. When relatives demand the recovery of the *leipsana* of the missing they are using a word possessing religious and alimentary significance. *Leipsana* means relics, usually the remains of a saint. This also applies to those remains of martyred saints discovered buried without proper rituals. Significantly, relatives do not use the term *ptoma* (corpse), or the words for bones (*kokkala*, or *osta*, the latter being more formal, and used to refer to the bones of saints). A *leipsanothiki* is a place used to store the remains of monks, or a storage of relics usually of a sacred miracle-performing person (such as a saint). They can

also be items associated with, or intimate to, that person, or have miraculous powers. A *leipsanothiki* is different from an *osteophilakeion* – an ossuary where the bones are collectively buried or grouped after the decomposition of the flesh. A *leipsanothiki* is singular; an *osteophilakeion* is communal. A *leipsanothiki* displays stratification, status, and individuation. It can also be a source of power and grace. *Leipsanothikes* (pl.) are usually found in monasteries.¹ By contrast, an *osteophilakeion* is a collective ossuary, within a cemetery, of lay members of society where differences between individuals in terms of status, gender, and age are dissolved. In Bloch and Parry's terms it represents a depersonalisation of the dead. An *osteophilakeion* is not a source of power in the way a *leipsanothiki* is, which can become a site of pilgrimage. *Leipsana* represent signs of a good exemplary life, or of martyrdom. They are the signs that are left by a soul that has gone to paradise for the living as exhortations to lead a good life. They exert a powerful influence on the living as examples to follow, and exhortations to emulate. They are a source for the regeneration of the spirit and of the group. They are witnesses of truth – the truth of spiritual resurrection and of the eternity of the soul. By contrast, the collectivisation of bones (*kokkala*) in an *osteophilakeion* is a sign of the irreversibility of death, of its lack of discrimination, and of the temporality of the individual. They are, in effect, signs of the truth of the illusory nature of earthly life as a 'lie' (*imaste psemeta*), of its temporality, and its deceivability.

Leipsana are metaphors of liminality. In this respect the language used to describe saints and sinners can overlap. *Leipsana* suggest a state of partial decomposition. *Leipsana* are used to designate remains that belong to individuals in the first stage after burial and during the period they are actively mourned through *mnimosina* (memorial services), prior to their final dispatch. A body, which has remained partially decomposed, cannot be finally dispatched. It is still linked to this world and to the living. This could be because that person was a sinner. Sins (*amarties*) are manifested through partial decomposition, in and through *leipsana*. But partial decomposition could also be a sign that that person was a martyr, who was sinned against. In 1999 the monks of the Galactoforoussa monastery opened the tomb of the founder abbot and discovered his intact body. They immediately demanded the archbishop begin sanctification proceedings. The partial decomposition of the body is a demand for recognition from the living that the deceased was a witness (*martyras*) to God through his/her martyrdom. To assist the deceased to leave this world the body needs to be cut loose. It has to lose its link (*desmos*) with this world. Danforth suggests that 'the process of decomposition is metaphorically linked to the untying or "loosing" of portions of bodies of the deceased' (1982: 152). The notion of being 'bound' or 'tied' is linked with being under a spell or a priest's anathema (Blum and Blum, 1970: 75). Bodies that are tied, like those of massacred prisoners, need to be 'untied', 'loosened', or 'released' to assist the decomposition of the body and thus the movement of the soul to the other world. As long as the remains of the dead remain un-commemorated through proper ritual, then they are *leipsana*. Blum and Blum notes that 'for the

soul to depart this world the body must not only be returned to earth, but must be accepted by earth as evidenced by the “melting” (decay) [*leiosima*-PSC] as the flesh’ (1970: 70–1). Just as memorial services include prayers for forgiveness and for the decomposition of the body, partially decomposed bodies as *leipsana* are like curses of the dead upon the living, requiring proper burial for forgiveness to reign amongst men. *Leipsana* are thus also the somatization of liminality.

The term *leipsana* suggests liminality in another sense. *Leipsano* is used colloquially to designate somebody who is thin, undernourished and looks ghoulish or cadaverous. It thus suggests that even if we do find the missing alive they will look like dead people, because they have been treated badly, even tortured. It is the horror of every Greek mother that her son could look like a *leipsano*, thin and undernourished.

In modern, as well as ancient Greek culture, it is considered one of the worst fates possible for an individual’s body not to be buried without the proper religious rites. The remains of the missing thus need to be recovered because they were not buried properly by their loved ones, and are believed to be still roaming the earth. There are two reasons for this. The first is the fear of desecration of the corpse. This provides an entry into the reasoning whereby the Greek Cypriot missing have been increasingly turned into *ethnomartyres* (ethnic martyrs). There is always a fear that the bodies of the missing were either left unburied to be attacked and eaten by dogs, or else buried hurriedly in mass graves. The former has echoes with the gruesome state of Polynices’ ‘dog-worried body’ (*kypnosparakton soma*) as punishment for his crime in Sophocles’ *Antigone*. Leaving a body without burial is an outrage to the lower gods. In modern Greek Cypriot culture there is a double connection of dogs and carrion. Extreme right-wing Greek nationalists in Cyprus referred to Turkish Cypriots whom they killed as *shillii* (dogs) – the implication being that, like dogs, they could be killed with impunity. Communists received a similar charming appellation. In such situations there is a real risk of the transformation of analogy into metaphor. It is well known that taxonomic violence defined in ethnic terms (or what is now called ethnic cleansing) is accompanied, indeed justified, by attempts to render the other as an outsider and a source of pollution. However repellent such sentiments are, we must try to understand the cultural symbolism and structural logic that accompanies and ‘legitimizes’ such actions. Paradoxically, an analysis can help explain the transfiguration of the missing/dead (Greek Cypriots) into sacrificial victims or martyrs. Let us begin by noting the Greek alternation of Turks with ‘dogs’ (*shillii*). At one time it is Turks, who are killed as ‘dogs’ (*shillii*) and their bodies disposed of; at another time it is dogs that worry Greek bodies. Girard suggests ‘in tragedy everything alternates’ (1988: 149); ‘alternation is a fundamental fact of the tragic relationship’ (ibid: 150). Thus dog-worried bodies can also metaphorically mean that the missing were tortured and beaten (*vasanistikan*) by the Turks. In 1974 there were eyewitness accounts that the Turks beat captured Greek Cypriot soldiers very badly before killing them. This has been corroborated

by subsequent skeletal examinations during the 1999–2000 exhumations. Zur encountered a similar situation in Guatemala during *la violencia*:

It was terrible ... there were dead all around. Since we could not bury them, the dogs ate them. They carried bits of them around in their mouths ... the dogs were fat in those days (1998: 80)

Although there are indubitable differences between the Guatemalan and Cypriot cases, there is the common powerful theme of the defilement of corpses as carrion by dogs. Two things are distinctive in the Cypriot case: first there is a movement from metaphorical to analogical likeness and an eventual collapse of distinctions not just between humans and animals, and the reduction of the former to the latter, but also the collapse into animality, by both sides. Second, there is an alternation and symmetry between what happens to the Turks and what happens to the Greeks:

TURKS = *shillii*/polluting, therefore legitimated killing; metaphorical likeness.

Act of killing performs the transformation of Turks into *shillii*: analogical likeness.

Implications: Removal of distinctions between human and animal. Girard's 'mimetic desire'.

GREEKS: killed by Turks (*shillii*): metaphorical likeness.

Act of leaving bodies unburied performs the transformation of Greeks into *shillii*: analogical likeness.

Corpses of Greeks left improperly buried (worried by dogs): metaphorical and analogical likeness.

Implications: Reciprocal removal of distinctions between humans and animals

Removal of distinctions between Greeks and Turks

Alternation between Greeks and Turks.

Greeks and Turks become 'monstrous doubles' (Girard) of each other.

It could be argued that the disappearances of Greek and Turkish Cypriots were not only separated in time, but were quite distinct. This is correct, but if one were to approach them as a system not necessarily of 'exchanges' but as somehow causally related, and even bearing some structural similarities, then it is certainly worthwhile to examine them together because in popular consciousness as well on the level of political resolution they are linked together. According to Girard 'while acknowledging the differences, both functional and mythical, between vengeance, sacrifice and legal punishment, it is important to recognise their fundamental identity' (ibid: 25). This is an interesting handle on the issue. Contemporary political consciousness may be more comfortable with reciprocal disappearances as an example of 'reciprocal vengeance', even as 'legal punishment' (at least at the level of popular consciousness), because contemporary social science views nationalist sentiments *in extremis* as somehow 'irrational'. Contemporary political consciousness is less comfortable in perceiving such disappear-

ances as a 'sacrifice'. Yet it could be argued that the inexorable logic of the situation, as well as the meanings attached to such disappearances by political authorities (i.e. 'Creon'), finds such associations not just very easy to make, but essential for politics – both for the nation state and the Greek Polis. From this perspective, nationalism is not irrational, but it harnesses the seemingly 'irrational', and it does so by the recasting of deaths/killings as (ethnic) sacrifices made by martyrs.

Girard has suggested that 'wherever differences are lacking, violence threatens' (ibid: 57). Although his theory about violence and the sacred is perhaps too embedded in the logic and symmetry of tragedy, it helps explain the underlying logic of what can be called the unspeakable logic of sacrifice away from more 'romantic' interpretations involving structuralist substitutions. One could take his observation to mean that violence threatens not so much because of reciprocal killing (as indeed happened occasionally between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus during past ethnic disturbances), but because the violence in the new State achieved a new significance. It could be argued that the reciprocal disappearances of Turkish and Greek Cypriots *established a new means of signification of violence*. This introduced the removal of distinctions between humans (as members of ethnic groups) and animals through the treatment, disassembly, and rendering (including concealment) of the human body, and was displayed through accompanying discourses. These discourses included elliptical narratives: 'we should have cleaned them out' (*epepe na tous katharisoume*), and verbal-iconic representations: graffiti that remain as residues and as distillations of anticipated somatic desecration or subjugation, usually on burnt-out or destroyed buildings that witness the marks of presumed past aggression of the other (e.g. *Kalos Turkos, Nekros Turkos*: 'The only good Turk is a dead Turk'; *Turkos=Varvaros*: 'Turk=Barbarian'; 'Turk, suck my dick', the latter as performative utterance in English designed to be read, and thus witnessed, by everybody). Ethnic intolerance thrives as much as on the iconoclasm performed by the opposing group, as well as on the mournfully cherishing display of that iconoclasm by the iconophiles. At Galactoforousa monastery, a few miles from the Green Line in Cyprus, monks show visitors a room containing anti-Christian graffiti left by Turkish Cypriots who had forcefully taken over the monastery between 1963 and 1974, after the latter killed some monks and a twelve-year old novice. The cause for these killings was probably as much related to local conflicts over water rights, as to the then prevailing widespread reciprocal violence. The monks then fled to the safety of a nearby nunnery. On their return in 1974, they restored the monastery, but retained one room precisely as they found it, containing its distasteful graffiti. This they regularly show to visitors, exhibiting an ambiguous reverence towards a now-protected, intimate, pollution. Ethnic intolerance and cleansing generates an instant archaeology of destruction, as well as its solicitous conservation. One should suspend cynical scepticism towards such processes of folk-museology. They underlie many similar processes that emerged in post-1945 Europe with the preservation and restoration of ghettos and concentration camps.

The Green Line separating the two communities is another display area of ethnic intolerance. Here, gutted buildings with graffiti provide the area of interface with the monstrous double, and become totems of ethnic intolerance in a literal Levi-Straussian sense: good to think with, and especially subliminally as a simulated witness of ethnic incompatibility. Taken together, they perpetuate(d) an extreme nationalist discourse of insiders and polluting others who needed to be removed, and consciously reduce the (foreign) body to carrion. We thus have to appreciate that violence is not just the application of physical force. Each social system and each pattern of interaction has its own forms of violence, which include the production, distribution, consumption and exchange of violence as a system of signs. Girard further notes the ambiguity and arbitrariness of this type of violence 'the difference between sacrificial and non-sacrificial violence is anything but exact; it is even arbitrary' (ibid: 40), and that 'the sacrificial act appears as both sinful and saintly, an illegal as well as a legitimate exercise of violence' (ibid: 20). One could thus appreciate how the underlying logic of the disappearances orients towards an interpretation that suggests martyrdom.

A second reason for the necessity for the recovery of the remains of the missing is that by not being buried properly those murdered were turned into revenants. The term used is *vrykolakiasan*: they are/were turned into revenants. In Greek culture it is believed that those who have been murdered are turned into revenants.² As one informant said to the Blums in Greece, 'One of the worst curses you can put on a man is to say, "May you never decay." One who is cursed that way can become a *vrikolax* (i.e. revenant)' (1970: 75). The term *vrykolakas* can thus suggest either that the missing were murdered by the Turks, or that when they were killed (in battle) they were not buried (and thus mourned) according to proper rites. Revenants are believed to remain in exchange with the living (Danforth, ibid: 126). It is not just that the living have an obligation to lay the souls of the dead to rest. It is also that these individuals are *separated* from their souls, which are not laid to rest by the living: *I psyche tous dhen ksekourazete* (lit. , their souls are not laid to rest). As revenants they are symbols of liminality, distinct from their souls. This expression is also used of saints who were tortured. It is believed that their soul went straight to heaven. A secretary of the Greek Cypriot CMP team, after some hesitation, told me of a story she had heard from her neighbour. This woman used to visit the cemetery where her husband was buried. Some time ago she had certain dreams which troubled her greatly. As Danforth points out, dreams 'constitute a channel through which the dead are believed to be able to communicate with the living' (ibid: 135). She dreamt of men 'dressed in white like angels'. They told her that nobody mourned them and asked her for a *mnimosino*. 'She then realised that these were *agnoumeni* in unmarked graves nearby', she told me. She then held a service for them and they ceased to trouble her in her dreams.³

The recovery of the relatives and the missing is thus mutual and causal. Just as the missing have to be reunited with their souls and/to recover their identity, their

relatives recover themselves *as selves* through their reuniting of the missing with their souls. This has clear linkages with Lacan's notion of the Other, which will be explored later. But it raises an important issue about the nature of the *continuity of the self* in such situations of radical rupture. Writing on Guatemalan widows, Zur notes, 'Violence and terror dismantle established categories which are reassembled in new ways, causing confusion and hindering people's attempts to integrate the "self" of the past with the "self" of the present. Memories connected with disassociated aspects of the "self" frozen in the chaos of "that time", become inaccessible or unspeakable. And, in the end, they can neither be remembered nor truly forgotten' (forthcoming: 10).

Danforth has suggested that a purpose of mortuary rituals is to gradually bring about a common-sense perspective and awareness of the finality of death (ibid: 148–9). This is very similar to Freud's thesis on mourning and melancholia.⁴ In the case of *The Missing*, however, there is a double inversion. First, a common-sense acceptance that the missing are dead is precisely that which is rejected emphatically by the relatives, and implicitly by the state. Indeed, a common-sense acceptance is rejected as politically defeatist, while rejection of the status quo is justified as political realism. Such a climate of interpretation helps sustain a symbolic fabulation of the issue of the missing at the grassroots. While the missing are formally quantified and collectively mourned but not considered dead, the dead (casualties) are formally not quantified, but individually remembered. Secondly, the retrieval of the *leipsana* of the missing can be seen as a burial in reverse, just as the mourning of the relatives is mourning before the burial. Because the missing have not been buried properly, the retrieval of their *leipsana* is an exhumation of the bones, a simulation of the final (second) burial, in order to hold a proper (ritualised) first burial. The *leipsana* are to be exhumed to be buried as *bones*. It emphasises Bloch and Parry's point that it is the burial-ritual that creates the death rather than the reverse. Except that this has political and deeply emotional implications. One has to ask whether the relatives should have to travel along such symbolic journeys to recover themselves through the material recovery of their loved ones' remains to finally reach a common-sense acceptance of their non-reversibility (i.e., death)? Although I deal with this issue in greater detail in Chapter 7, I would argue here that the answer would seem to be yes if we examine the role of mourning through demonstrating. I discuss this below.

Much of the symbolism surrounding the missing is a complex mixture of Christianity and Hellenism. Many Greek Cypriots claim that the Turks may not give that much importance to burials 'because they are Muslims, but we as Christians do'. From fieldwork conducted among Turkish Cypriots I show below that this is far from the case. Turkish Cypriot relatives also wish to have bodies to mourn. The difference lies in the political attitudes towards mourning and the cultural constitution of sacrifice. The Greek Cypriots perceive a homology between what they fear was inflicted on the missing by the Turks and what the Ottomans inflicted on the bodies of Saints. In both cases the *leipsana* are hidden,

but discoverable. The *leipsana* have to be recovered, both to empower those who recover them, and because it is believed that such remains possess power. One could see these as very distinctive Lacanian symbols of alterity. As Bloch observed 'without the corpse the women can mourn but the regeneration cannot occur' (ibid: 43). Their bodies are also witnesses to their suffering and to the 'barbarism' of the Ottomans/Turks whom they indict. The mutilated body becomes for both groups an icon of the barbarism of the Other. Hence the suggestion on both sides that it is 'the other Creon' (i.e. the political leaders on the 'other side') who have prevented the proper burial of the dead. For the Greek Cypriots, obtaining the remains also represents a moral victory and a transcendence of the defeats of 1974. Like the saints they are *ethnomartyres* (ethnic martyrs). 'I see my parents as Christian martyrs. They died the death of martyrs for their religion and for their native land' was the comment of the priest Papa Loizos to Loizos on his missing parents (1981: 44). Obtaining the sacred relics of the missing, the *ethnomartyres*, means freeing (*yia na eleftherosoun*) their souls, like freeing the occupied territory. It is not difficult to view these relics as national objects of desire: 'they are both necessary for self-identity and a threat insofar as they reflect a disorder too unacceptable to be recognised as part of one's own order' (Shapiro 1997: 59)

Such individuals therefore are martyrs not because they died, but because interpretation subsequently suggests that there *was a sacrifice*. Ritual sacrifice, as Girard notes, has a dual aspect, 'the legitimate and the illegitimate' (ibid: 1). Significantly, he cautions that it resembles criminal violence. The victim is sacred only because 'he is to be killed' (ibid: 1). Such interpretations, such as that of the priest Papa Loizou, were applied retroactively in much the same way witchcraft interpretations are applied retroactively and selectively to extract, or even conjure, necessity out of chance. Otherwise the event would just be a criminal act, which it may well be from the perspective of international law. But modern politics from within the polity clearly understands and requires it to be both: a criminal act, absurd, irrational, ugly, illegitimate and prosecutable in international fora and courts of law, and 'legitimate', a sacrifice, noble, and necessitating further struggles. In the next chapter we shall examine how this duality is represented.

Finally, land and bones are intimately linked in Greek culture. This is different to the Turkish attitude where the *shedding of blood* that is important. The Greek national anthem by Dionysios Solomos contains the verses '*Ap'ra kokkala vgalmenil to Ellinon ta Iera! kai san prota andriomenil hairel o haire, Eleftheria*', linking exhumed bones, ethnicity, sacrality, and freedom. Novels such *Aeoliki Ge* (1943) (Aeolian Land) of Ilia Vanezis deal precisely with the recovery of ancestral bones. In this novel, villagers from Asia Minor are forced to abandon the land they have resided in for centuries, but they carry the bones of their ancestors and patron saint with them. President Clerides in his speeches often repeats 'We will never give up our land in Kyrenia where the bones of our forefathers are buried'.

There is however a difference between the relatives and the state authorities in the linkages they make between land (or the earth), and bones. For the state

authorities, bones establish a claim *to land*. As it is for Creon, land is a territory 'to be fought over, protected and ruled' (Segal 1981: 172). For the relatives, as for Antigone, it is the earth as *patrignoniki ye* (paternal land) that is important, and it is the continuing Turkish occupation of the north and refusal to return their remains that prevents them from properly burying their kin. For the authorities, by contrast, it is because our ancestors were buried in the north that we should not abandon our territory. Although relatives and state authorities might appear to be talking about the same thing, slight differences in nuances can sometimes be concealed from the participants themselves. There is a similar slippage in the employment of related key words such as the house/home (*spiti*), and properties (*periousiyes*). Officials present such demands for the return of bones in terms of an old, ethnic tradition, even drawing upon Homer's story of King Priam asking Achilles for the body of his son Hector back, a powerful and morally compelling image: 'We consider it our *klironomia* (inheritance, heritage). We consider it a betrayal that we left our dead behind. The Greeks have always honoured their dead'. Ancient Greek tragedy becomes a pre-run and a projection of the contemporary tragedy of Cyprus. In spring 1994 the Cyprus Theatre Group presented 'The Suppliant Women' (*Troades*) by Euripides in New York. 'The Archbishop, at the end of the performance said that seeing the widows in Euripides' tragedy pleading with the enemy for the return of the bodies of their loved ones for decent burial was as if many in the audience were witnessing the same scene enacted today in real life by the wives and children of the missing in Cyprus' (Biggs and Smith 1995: 193).

Liminality is a term that has often been used in anthropology in a metaphoric sense, as well as indicating a movement from one state to another. This applies particularly to mourning rituals, both for the mourned and the mourner. Yet to use the term liminal for the missing is to cast them facilely according to pre-existing anthropological categories, bypassing their existential ambiguity. The missing are not so much liminal. Rather they are neither formally considered dead, nor informally believed to be alive. On a definitional level this may seem to be a liminal state. But liminality is not usually a temporally prolonged state with no end in sight, and it has direction. Its nature is understood by all as it is set by custom. Its significance emerges out of bridging the gap and tension between two definite and socially recognisable states. In this respect the missing are existentially dissimilar to those individuals who are biologically dead but have not been fully despatched through rituals to the other world, even although the predicament of the relatives is presented as one of mourners who cannot terminate their mourning. The position of the relatives may formally resemble mourners, but the missing as existential characters to be recovered by their relatives have a different valency. Because they are neither formally considered dead, nor informally believed to be alive, they have an existential ambiguity, which can help explain the particular emotional tensions relatives have experienced. Let us examine this in greater detail.

Existential Ambiguity and the Aporia of Mourning

No friend to weep at my banishment
to a rock-hewn chamber of endless durance,
In a strange cold tomb alone to linger
Lost between life and death for ever

Sophocles' *Antigone* (1947: 163)

Relatives of the missing are in a state of symbolic impurity. They are 'set apart' socially and nationally, and set themselves apart, in terms of their own emotions through mourning, and in terms of societal views on mourning. Agni, the (Greek-born) wife of a missing Judge from Kyrenia told me: 'I could never open up my house gladly (*haroumenos*)'. The metaphor of the house as reflecting a psychological condition also occurs in the short story *The Mother of the Missing Person*, (1989) by Angeliki Smyrli, who makes the linkage between an 'Open heart, open house' (*Anikti kardia, anikto spiti*, *ibid*: 6) This is apparently based on Agni, the narrators' mother-in-law.⁵ An open house is a symbol of gladness (*hara*), generosity, communion with others, and growth. People are known to be open (*aniktos*), i.e. approachable or 'closed' (*klistos*), i.e. unapproachable. Agni was saying that she had withdrawn from society, and could not bring herself to fully open herself up. A closed house/ home is a symbol of withdrawal from society, of an incomplete household not in communion with the rest of society, and in its final stage before abandonment and decay. 'I thought nobody lived there', is a comment often heard when the last inhabitant of a closed house is buried, when dust finally covers all things. 'I could never open up my house gladly' thus means 'I could never open myself up. I am imprisoned by my unending mourning'. Mourning, confinement, and darkness are linked. Being in an (en)closed space is also an emotional state. In Greek it literally means to be worried: *stenohoria* (literally, a narrow space). Unending mourning, itself a travesty of mourning which should have an end, a mourning which searches for its own end, being closed in a restricted space, and pain, are related. One could argue that there is interchangeability between the missing and their mourners. The relatives of the missing are themselves the missing in search of their missing symbolically united with them. One newspaper photograph shows a group of relatives holding up placards. A young boy is standing with a placard hanging from his chest with the words: *Ime agnoumenos* – 'I am missing', or 'I am a missing person'. The child of a missing person has assumed the missing identity of his father. If the father cannot be mourned and dispatched, the boy himself has no ancestors, no identity. He is not an orphan, he is an *agnoumenos*– literally someone who is not known, lacking a social recognition and thus an identity. One can thus see how the recovery of the missing to be mourned is also a recovery of the self. There is something fundamentally at play here that recalls Lacan's notion of desire as a means to achieve identity coherence.

Because the missing are formally not considered to be dead, relatives have not been given the social license to individually interpret their situation and to familiarly negotiate any meanings they wish to give it. Up till 1999, there had been no institutionally sanctioned or licensed opportunity to perform the burial services for the missing. According to Orthodox and Christian theology generally, it is possible to hold mourning and ritual services for missing people who are presumed to be dead. This applies to sailors lost at sea, for example. This has not occurred in Cyprus in the sense of having become a widely contemplateable course of action. Quite apart from the natural resistance of the relatives to accept such a fact, there has also been an institutionally abetted rigidity to contemplate giving such perspectives much social currency. A compromise is usually reached by holding special prayers for their 'safe return' (Crowther, 2002: 27). The few memorial services for the missing that are held tend to be negotiated individually with the village *papas*, and are considered exceptional, and justified on individual 'psychological' (i.e., therapeutic) grounds, thus marginalise the mourner. But they are neither socially nor politically sanctioned. It was only with the slow retrieval of bones in 2000, through the exhumations and their identification that families began conducting mortuary rituals (*mnimosina*) (see below). This applied only to a few families whose relatives' bones were identified. Individuals are thus dissuaded from expressing their grief through rituals (*khideia*, *mnimonisino*) whose suitability is socially questioned for them. In most cases they do not have the bones to rebury which are behind Turkish lines. The Church's 'solution' to the dilemma between holding the normal memorial service (which would accept the missing as dead), or not holding services at all (which would imply not fulfilling a duty to the missing if they are dead), is through special prayers for their 'safe return' (Crowther, 2000: 27). This further insinuates doubt.

In such a context, suffering and the means to resolve the aporia of mourning, is expressed in three ways. The first is the concealment of suffering, and expressed in what can be called the 'Closed Home' syndrome, although the word syndrome is unpleasantly distancing. This is a grief hidden among close kin not provided with the social frameworks to express their grief, but nevertheless still isolated socially because the missing are presumed informally by many others not to be alive and yet considered legally and officially not to be dead. One could call this introjection. This affects the majority of relatives, and to a certain extent is also found among the Turkish Cypriots, though with some significant differences. A second form is through what can be called public ritual activism. This is a route followed by a relatively small number of women who participate regularly in demonstrations. A final third, which is rare, is expressed through active opposition to the authorities for abetting the concealment of the missing and their non-burial. In line with the theme of this book, one can call this the 'Antigone syndrome'. The three are not separate. Individuals pass through different stages and experience all three at times. I discuss the first two in turn. I leave the third for a later chapter.

The Closed Home.

In discussing Argentine mothers of *desaparecidos*, Robben noted that mothers dealt with the dilemma of not having a body to mourn in various ways: 'pathological grief, reconciliation and acceptance of the inevitable, even a refusal to accept the human remains of the disappeared, and political activism' (2000: 87). I am concerned here with what might be called 'pathological grief', although there may be difficulties in using such terms except in their etymological sense (*Pathos*: something which befalls one, that which one suffers, subject to suffering, a passive condition). One could therefore define 'pathological grief' as a passive grief. However, as I hope to show the nature and imagery of passive grief can be culturally specific and particularly powerful. An exploration of the metaphors employed may even be useful in devising therapies. Let us begin with Thalia's testimony (a mainland Greek woman). Of note here is her withdrawal from society, and the feeling that society could not understand her predicament.

For the first year (after the disappearances) I cried continuously. I couldn't bear to look at my children without thinking of my husband and all the plans we had made for when we got back to Greece. I lived there for a year with my mother and brother in the village where I had been born, as I could not have coped on my own. After one year I decided that I wanted to be on my own, to cry and be with my children. I bought a small house with the money that my brother gave me. It was very difficult to manage as I only received a small 'Hunger Pension'. It was really small because due to some legislation the amount we received was only equivalent to what women in the Second World War would have received. I could not even buy my poor little children some sweets. Even now, all these years later, things have not improved very much financially. I get about 350 Cyprus pounds a month to pay for everything, including my children's studies. It is very cold in northern Greece in the winter and I can't afford much heating. It was so difficult. I felt like a social outcast. I couldn't even go to weddings, as I couldn't afford to take a gift. I received no compensation and no extra money. Not only do I miss my husband, but I also have to suffer economically and socially. People did not really understand what I was experiencing but due to my moral standing, refusing to remarry, I gained some self respect as a woman alone. Inside myself I had stopped being a woman. I had to sacrifice everything: clothes, jewellery, and a social life for my family. It was a big drama for my children. I was always crying and sad although I loved them very much. My little boys' first sentence was 'Are you crying for papa?' The children realised that this was a big problem in our family. When I heard about the message my husband sent [see below, PSC], I told my sister in law. I didn't realise that my children had come back from school and they heard what the lorry driver had told me. After this they became very withdrawn and never expressed themselves. When they came home from school they would often lie on the sofa and cry. They only really found comfort in each other. Even now the children hope that their father will come back. I remember when my son was small and I took him to the house of my brother. He ran to him and called him *paterna*. I took him in my arms and explained that he wasn't his father. After that he would never go to my brother's house again.

In her short story on the Mother of the Missing Person, Angeliki Smyrli employs a metaphor that has particular resonance in Greek culture: that of an empty tunic. This has parallels to other art forms (including some powerful public sculptures) I discuss in Chapter 6. Their common feature is a void that needs to be filled- an absence (such a body) shaped by a presence (clothes to be filled). Smyrli talks about the mother's search for her missing son:

Whenever she heard that prisoners/hostages (*aehmaloti*), whatever hour of the day she rushed with a suit of Alexander, with the hope that she would find him and clothe him. However every time she returned with an empty tunic and a heart filled with despair (*koustumi adeiio kai tin kardia gemati apelpisia*) (1989: 15–16)

Let us begin by noting that her missing son is called Alexander. In Greek culture, the folktale of Alexander the Great is well known. Alexander's sister, metamorphosed into a mermaid, is condemned to roam the oceans in search of her brother. When she meets ships, she asks sailors for news of her missing brother. Sailors have to respond: 'O *Megaalexandros zii ke wasilevi*' (Alexander the Great lives and rules). They dare not inform her he is dead; otherwise, she would drown the ship. The name of the missing soldier thus could not be more poignant, and more bitter (*pikri*).

There is a hint in Smyrli's book that the mother's anxiety for her son is expressed and projected in her repetitive tending of his clothes: 'She kept his clothes clean and in lavender, airs them, and she re-irons the clothes of her son, dusts his books (ibid: 39). Clothes would thus be 'linking objects' in Volkan's terminology (1972): an attachment that could be called pathological to objects that stand for the lost person, a clinging to an object as a metonym, that relate them to the dead person (1981: 101–6). However, Smyrli then introduces a gnawing element of doubt through the theme of an empty tunic, a powerful one in ancient Greek literature: 'However every time she returned with an empty tunic and a heart filled with despair' (ibid: 40). This refers to a long tradition in Greek literature (dating from the sixth-century BC poet Stesichorus, taken up by Euripides) that the Gods deceived men during the Trojan War. The counter (subversive) tradition holds that Helen was never taken to Troy but was spirited to Egypt. The implication is that men fought, and died, for a phantom. A similar theme of deceit by politicians surfaces in Smyrli's book. Their identity is not revealed. They could be the Turks, the Greek Cypriot politicians, and even the superpowers. In colloquial Greek usage the U.S. president is known as *O Planetarchis*, the ruler of the planet. Many Greeks and Greek Cypriots emphasise that the coup was a deceit (*mas koroydevan*), engineered by the U.S. State Department (particularly Kissinger, a *persona non molto amata* in Cyprus), and the CIA in association with the Greek Junta, to precipitate the Turkish invasion and divide the island. If one were to follow this suggestion, there is a double deceit: an intended one on the Greek Cypriots and the whole series of unintended ones that individuals like

She brought her *sentouki*, her chest, with her from Yialousa when she moved to refugee housing. She refused to sell it for anything and said: For me that *sentouki* is all Yialousa. (ibid: 38)

The *sentouki* is a dowry chest, which traditionally doubled as a coffin. They were also used to contain the *leipsana* of saints. Let us recall Antigone's lament, 'So to my grave, My bridal-bower, my everlasting prison, I go, to dwell in the mansions of Persephone' (Sophocles 1974: 164). The open house becomes the tomb. The association of tomb and womb is also found in literature. As Segal reminds us 'Antigone's cave is a place of contact between the worlds: between life and death, between Olympian and chthonic divinity, between gods and men' (1981: 180). He also notes the mutual interchangeability of the mourner and the mourned: 'the deserted (*eremos*) quality of this cave parallels the remote and exposed place of Polynices' exposure' (1981: 167). Agni's room is also dark, unopened, like a cave. The theme reappears in Dorfman's *Maiden* where Paulina, whom I have suggested is a contemporary Antigone, is stuck in a dark house with no electricity and raging storm outside – clearly a metaphor for her own psychic and physical state, and echoing her previous incarceration by the Junta. The association of tomb and womb is clear here: she is entombed in her past and is (perhaps consequently) infertile.

Clearly these images are not just very powerful, but are anchored in culture. They are both symptoms and metaphorical manifestations of internal states. Individuals use them as cultural resources. There is an element of self-awareness. This is a politically sensitive culture. We are not seeing raw Freud. We are witnessing a crafting of metaphors and imagery out of people's experiences and their shaping in a language and symbolism drawn from both literary sources and everyday life.

Public Ritual Activism

The second form for the expression of grief among Greek Cypriots is through public vigils. Vigils assume a highly expressive and cathartic significance for certain individuals, enabling their pain to be externalised and supported by public expressions of familial and national solidarity. In turn, demands for social recognition by the relatives are pursued through vigils.

The exteriorisation, management, and expression of emotions connected with the missing are critical for an understanding of the phenomenon. Relatives of the missing are a highly vocal and visible group on the national political stage. Vigils enable relatives to establish relations of solidarity. Agni said, 'Here, I meet people who have the same problem. Here I feel this is my place. I attend all the meetings. Here, I belong (*edho anigho*). I want to come here for Christmas'. (She spoke to me in early December 1996 having travelled from her home in Lefkada, Greece). Similar sentiments of solidarity and belonging were expressed by the mothers of

the *desaparecidos* of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires: '(F)or the Mothers the square signifies the best of our lives because the square is the place of our children ... On Thursdays at half past three this square belongs to us' (Guest 1990: 108). Demonstrations by relatives are very different from others connected with the Cyprus problem. They are small and discrete, involving just the close relatives of the missing (usually mothers, wives-widows), in contrast to the mass demonstrations of the refugees or political parties. They all know each other and call each other 'sister'. They have created a symbolic family. Whereas it is possible for any Cypriot, including a non-refugee, to join a refugee demonstration, it is much more difficult to participate in a demonstration by the relatives of the missing. It is too highly charged, and would be intrusive to participate. One can only be a bystander. Indeed, the potency of such demonstrations depends on the exteriorisation of private grief and the presence of an audience. Demonstrations resemble vigils, and employ religious symbolism: lighting candles, holding all-night vigils resembling wakes with the corpse at home, etc. They also employ what psychologists call worry-work, such as writing the names of the missing on yellow slips of cloth and tying them to trees (resembling *tamata* or votive offerings) (Figure 7). Finally, they suggest waiting, not movement. Other demonstrations emphasise movement usually to occupied/banned areas: Marches (e.g. *Poreia Makarios*, the journey of Makarios, *Poreia Agapis*, the journey of love), the return of the refugees to their homes, attempted crossings of the Green Line, etc. This is consistent with refugee status as *xenitia* (outsiders, away from home, but attempting to return home). As Seremetakis notes 'the road is one of the central signs of *xenitia* ... the road is the signifier of the non-sedentary, the unsettled, and the nomadic' (1991: 197). By contrast, relatives *wait*: at thresholds, at liminal places: embassies, the Green Line, etc. (see below), not just because they themselves appear to be liminal, but because their condition is non-reversible.

Psychologists who have studied bereavement have noted that in the early stages after loss 'the bereaved continue to act as if the person were still recoverable and to worry about the loss by going over it in their mind' (Parkes, 1991: 93). This has been called worry-work when 'bereaved people find themselves repeatedly reviewing events leading up to the death, as if by so doing they could undo or alter the events that had occurred' (ibid: 93). In the case of the missing this worry-work may have been more acute and pronounced than in more anticipatable deaths (e.g. of older people in times of peace). The majority of missing Cypriot persons were young, and in many cases their disappearances were literally a matter of chance – happening to be in the wrong place at the wrong time as a result of a series of actions and decisions. This was bound to intensify the feelings of anger and blame that inevitably accompany bereavement. A second activity, which becomes more important with the passage of time, is grief-work, based on memory. Eventually worry-work is (or should be) progressively replaced by grief-work. In the case of the missing, however, there has been less social pressure to encourage relatives to move from one stage to the other stage. Or more precisely,



Figure 7 'Worry Work'. Writing Names of The Missing to a Christmas Tree. An anxious mimesis of state bureaucratic Procedures of filing, naming, and representing, on which the relatives depend. These procedures were later shown to be inexact.

there has been an implicit political encouragement of worry-work. I explore this in more detail in Chapter 8. Vigils can be seen socially as worry-work: public demonstrations of concern for the fate of their relatives who have not yet been formally or ritually declared dead. On the other hand demonstrations are also grief-work – public statements of a grief that has not been allowed to terminate naturally. It is the combination of the two activities that has invested demonstrations with such over-determined potency (such as the apparent readiness of the women to break into tears after so many years), and helps explain why there seems to be such a natural readiness on the part of some relatives to demonstrate publicly.

Parkes has suggested that grief-work has three components: (i) preoccupation with the thoughts of the lost person; (ii) painful repetitious recollection of the loss experience, and (iii) attempts to make sense of the loss, to fit it into one's set of assumptions about the world, or to modify these assumptions if need be (ibid: 93). Demonstrations over the missing perform the last two functions. Public recounting of the last times their relatives were seen performs the second component of grief-work. Identification of Turkey as the culturally acceptable culprit performs the third component. Parkes also suggests that 'a major bereavement shakes confidence in (one's) sense of security. The tendency to go over the events leading up to the loss and to find someone to blame even if it means accepting blame oneself is a less disturbing alternative than accepting that life is uncertain. If we can find someone to blame or some explanation that will enable death to be evaded, then we have a chance of controlling things' (ibid: 103). Allocating blame and anger often go together, and Bowlby (1961) has identified anger as a normal component of grief. Perhaps nothing reflects the complex concatenation of these sentiments more economically than three words used as newspaper heading for a photograph of the mothers of the missing: *O Ponos, i Orgi, ke to Dakri* (The Pain, the Rage, and the Tears). Black-Michaud (1977) has also suggested that throughout the Mediterranean, women keep memories of wrongs alive in the context of feuding.

We still need to locate such expressions of grief socially. Many relatives who demonstrate come from marginal sectors and from modest families. They are bussed in from other towns by their association. The majority are women. Different classes seem to respond to the status of the missing in different ways. For the socially marginal, it is a sign of social recognition and a claim to a nationally elaborated and recognised identity, like the mothers of EOKA fighters, to be a relative of a missing person. The same applies to the widows of the Turkish Cypriot *shehitler*. Agni proudly told me 'there is a book about me', and wanted to present me with a copy.⁷ Their class and political marginality is compensated by their symbolic centrality on the national political stage. Their demands cannot be openly denied or trivialised by political parties and the elite. The persistence of the issue of the missing is thus a means by the socially marginal to claim some degree of influence and centrality in a system that gives them little power. The persistence of the relatives' demands, and the transformation of the demands from an insistence on the return of captured relatives to the symbolic return of their mortal remains, is also related to the degree of marginalization of the socio-economic groups from which the demonstrators are drawn. In the immediate post-1974 period Cypriot society was in a state of shock, and social differences were overshadowed. Over the past ten years, a booming economy has accentuated social differentiation. Relatives claim they hold demonstrations 'because unfortunately our society (meaning the political elite) has got used to the situation'. Demonstrations, and thus demonstrators, become politically central every time relations between the two communities enter a difficult phase. But demonstrat-

ing relatives are also much more dependent on the state and the pensions they receive.⁸

Emotions and belief vary between socio-economic groups. It is hardly surprising that the women who demonstrate are highly vocal. They refuse to accept the disappearances. 'It is the only thing I can do for my son', a woman said. The number of women who demonstrate is small and their identities well known. The same women turn up for vigils. They often cry when recounting their experiences to a new person. Writing in about 1975 Peter Loizos noted the 'readiness with which (refugee) women wept when talking about their home' (1981: 176–7). At the time of my initial fieldwork in 1996, the demonstrating women of the missing were similarly emotionally expressive, some twenty-two years after the events. It soon became clear that notions of 'fabrication' or 'genuineness', although important (and even necessary) for the anthropologist to pose (if hubristic and impossible to answer), had to be replaced by other notions. Some women represented extreme cases. One woman had lost five members of her family. But it was clear that such emotion was not just an expression of loss, nor just a mourning that could not be assuaged. It was more than that. Loizos noted that for refugee women 'the process of mourning increasingly impressed itself on me *as a metaphor* for understanding what the refugees were feeling. They were like people bereaved but they could not obtain from custom or religion the conventional assistance to assuage their grief' (ibid: 131). He further noted that 'if the refugees were something like bereaved people, they nevertheless lacked crucial supports that the bereaved normally have expected' (ibid: 131). This is a very perceptive insight, but we need to do more with it. It is the refugees who have been forcibly displaced, and it is not so much loss of possessions but their previous selves in a previous time and different place that they are mourning, and therefore an image of wholeness that they have lost. Mourning is more than a metaphor to understand their predicament. The refugees were 'metaphorized' ('transported', from *metaphora*, to transport) from their previous self/place. They have had to adjust to the notion of themselves as 'the other', and mourn the loss of their previous selves embedded in a place they are prevented from returning to. Recovery of place is thus a metaphor for, and an actual means to, recovery of identity: the recovery of the lost self.

Various anthropologists have pointed to the homology between emigration and mourning. Caraveli has noted 'widowhood and emigration are regarded in the Greek folk tradition as metaphorical extensions of death' (1986: 181). Seremetakis has suggested that 'travel, journey, passage to a foreign land, and exile are central metaphors of death in rural Greece. They are perceived as *xenitia*, which encompasses the conditions of estrangement, the outside, the movement from the inside to the outside ... *Xenitia* is a basic cognitive structure within which life and death are thought. [It] is reversible and situationally contingent' (1991: 85, emphasis in original). Yet the notions contained within the word itself are interesting and provide further clues. *Xenitia* is not just being in a strange place,

away from home. It is to be a stranger, an other to oneself, estranged from oneself. This is the 'basic cognitive structure' of *xenitia* – an other to oneself (whereas oneself as the other is a completely different process, almost of possession). Non-reversible *xenitia*, forcible expulsion, as with the refugees, is tantamount to death, to being on the other side of the river Styx – itself a symbolic representation of the *nekri zoni* (dead zone).⁹ Hence the passion with which many of the first-generation refugees wish to return. And if lamentation is metaphorically similar to possession, it is a "possession" to repossess oneself not as the other, but as oneself (Crapanzano, 1977; Caraveli, *ibid*: 171–72). As Holst-Warhaft notes for *Antigone*, 'mourning and possession by the gods are linked' (1995: 164). One has to become the other, to be fully 'possessed', to finally recapture oneself.

I make the above points to highlight the contrast between refugees and the relatives of the missing. The situation of the relatives of the missing is almost an inverse to that of the refugees. Relatives of missing persons are, by contrast, not presented with an institutional framework to express their grief. But they appear to be mourning a bereavement that cannot be assuaged, partly because they have not participated in the customary mortuary rituals, and partly because they are faced with the existential uncertainty as to whether their missing relatives are alive or dead. The vigils of the relatives cannot thus be seen as a metaphor of mourning. They are performances of bereavement and experiences of unterminated mourning. As performances of bereavement they are gendered laments as national protest. Women are given the opportunity to express their loss in socially sanctioned ways. A demonstration against the Turks over the *agnoumeni* is a situation where emotions can be nationally directed by a body of customary expectations and experiences (about the 'barbarism of the Turks', etc.), and socially accepted. As performances of bereavement they are nationally ratified expressions of grief-work. As experiences of unterminated mourning, they are expressions of worry-work. Through these vigils four different processes occur. First, national suffering is authenticated through (and anchored in) individual pain. Second, the individual role of women as mourners is ratified. Third, individual pain is expressed through the performance of women as mourners, and finally, the representation of the nation is gendered through women. The state's subjects thus filially identify with the nation as a gendered representation of suffering. In the words of a social-psychological team 'paraphrasing' responses by interviewed refugees after the invasion: 'Cyprus is my country and I love her more after all she has suffered' (Evdokas, 1976: 49)

Caraveli has suggested that lamentation is a 'process defined not by its setting but instead symbolically demarcates space as mediating ground between the living and the dead, the ordinary and extraordinary experience' (*ibid*: 191). In some crucial respects lamentation is genderization. It is not just that women use laments to express their gender identities. It is also that lamentation is critically, constitutively, female. Paraphrasing Herzfeld, women have to be 'good at being women' through performances at vigils. Female relatives are known as *i manades*

tis Kyprou (the mothers of Cyprus/the Cypriot Mothers). Such expectations help explain the opprobrium attached to women of the missing who remarried. For some time the Church refused them the right to remarry. It was believed that they were betraying not just their husbands, but their role expected of them as grieving mothers/wives, and thus betraying Cyprus. Clearly, they signified Cyprus as sacrificial i.e., scapegoat or surrogate victim, within a context of geopolitics. Yet in another sense like Antigones these vigils can also be seen as a social protest by women against the social lack of provisions for mortuary rituals. Having become obliged to perform as the state's signifiers of the nation's pain, they have turned their suffering into a regenerative act in the absence of a body to mourn: 'I had only one son. Who shall I marry off to give me grandchildren (*pyon na pandrepso na mou kanei angonia*)? I cry all day (*kleo ulli mera*).'

Let us re-examine figure 5: *Dhen Ksehno* (I won't forget). As noted in Chapter 4, this painting displays a slippage from a wife searching for her husband, to one of a mother holding up a picture of her dead/missing son. Logically one cannot be both wife and mother (*except Jocasta, Oedipus' wife, and Antigone's mother*). Structurally, this image replicates Antigone's associations. As Segal notes 'Antigone herself doubles with the grieving figure of the Great Mother ... She projects an image of herself as the *mater dolorosa* as well as the maiden wedded to Hades. Logically, Antigone cannot be Kore and Demeter at the same time. Yet mythic imagery often operates with exactly this fruitfully illogical union of opposites. Here a mythic archetype is split into two contradictory and yet simultaneously coexisting aspects of self. The kore is also the mother at an earlier stage. So here Antigone, who takes on herself the task of burying and mourning the dead son, often the task of mother or wife, is the Earth Mother who grieves over her children. The maiden claimed by death, who ought to be resurrected with the new life of the year, will instead remain in the Underworld with her dead' (1981: 180). We will have a chance to further explore this connection in the concluding chapter.

Clearly, I am not suggesting that the mothers consciously model themselves on Antigone, although some may know the Sophoclean version. My interest here is to draw structural parallels as an aid towards understanding a complex situation. Whilst the political and ecclesiastical authorities and elites draw upon such parallels with ancient literature, this is hardly surprising. Indeed, as I show, they use them in sometimes perplexing ways. Many of the elite have been brought up on this staple cultural diet, and they have complex and sophisticated cultural and politico-ethnic agendas, not least being the continual drawing of cultural boundaries between themselves as Greeks and the Turks, as well to appeal to western public opinion. Classical literature may well be last strategy of the weak and powerless. But to see the drawings of such parallels purely as an ideological weapon, or even as a cynical political ploy, would be to evacuate the predicament of relatives of the missing of its content, as well as to empty classical literary themes of much of their force and their relevance to the world we live in. It would treat the predicament of the missing *sui generis*, and as unrelated to art and literature,

which it patently is. It would also be to see the play of Sophocles and its subsequent versions, including by Anouilh and Dorfman, both politically engaged writers, as irrelevant to the world we as anthropologists set ourselves to describe. Greek tragedy may be particularly fruitful as a distinct point of departure because, as Lacan pointed out, there is no ideal exaltation in any Greek tragedy, unlike European classical tragedies (1992: 98). As 'social scientists', we ought to be open to the role of literature and art because they too influence people's lives and self-perceptions and presentations in a literate world. What I hope to show is not that literature models life, or vice versa (for things are always more complex), but rather that the polyvalence of literary texts (and their re-working by various authors) provides us with a handle into understanding the situations people face. Correspondingly, the traumas people experience enable us to approach literature with new eyes.

On a political level, demonstrating mothers and wives represent tradition in two ways: first, they keep alive national traditions alive, such as sacrifice and loss, in spite of the pressures of modernity. In that respect they hark back to a pre-lapsarian, pre-1974 unity. Second, they implicitly represent gender traditions: the traditions of mourning and faithfulness that women embody. Demonstrating mothers thus re-enforce the associated notions of patriotism and sacrifice, even if there is always a tension between them and the authorities. However, as Caraveli (ibid: 70) and Sarris (1995: 24) have noted, younger, more educated and urbanised Greek and Cypriot women are much more reluctant to express their grief in such excessive modes of mourning. Men also criticise such expressions of emotion, sometimes for different reasons. However, it is extremely difficult for anyone to openly describe such displays of emotion as excessive because such criticism is viewed negatively as a betrayal of the national interest, and a lack of sensitivity to these women's sufferings. Most middle-class people thus try to bypass the issue and interpret such expressions of emotion as an indication of the *strength* of the women's feelings and the depth of their *ponos* (pain), and thus a *reflection* of the enormity of national suffering. With relatively few exceptions, the westernised middle classes do not demonstrate much, and having a missing son or father appears more as something not to be spoken about, rather than displayed. They also appear more resigned to their death, although it has to be said many found ways of escaping front-line duties. It is these people that the UN and other diplomats meet on the Nicosia cocktail circuit. It is easy for outsiders to conclude that the issue is a cynical political ploy and divest it of its internal political dynamics and cultural resonance. But for the ordinary and marginalised, as I have shown, things are different. In the concluding chapter I discuss how the inability to openly address such issues is not a by-product of the situation but a constitutive element of the public secret.

The emotional and social marginality of the relatives of the missing is reflected in the location of their vigils: at boundaries, or close to liminal spaces, such as outside the UN Headquarters at the Ledra Palace. Relatives suspect the UN of want-



Figure 8 'The Monstrous Double'. Greek Cypriot poster display at the Green Line, showing the 1996 Derynia killings by Turkish officials of Greek Cypriots when they staged a attempted walk across the 'Dead Zone' (*Nekri Zoni*) and haul down a Turkish flag. Note that there is no reference to Turkish Cypriots.



Figure 9 'The Monstrous Double'. Turkish Cypriot display on the other side of the Green Line, showing photographs of 1974 Mass Graves. The text says: NO MASSACRES, NO MASS GRAVES.

ing to close the issue. The philosopher Gillian Rose has suggested that in literature the state's power is most clearly questioned in such areas: 'just outside the boundary we find mourning women: Antigone, burying the body of her fratricidal brother in defiance of Creon's decree, witnessed by her reluctant sister Ismene, who urges her to desist; and the wife of Phocion, gathering the ashes of her disgraced husband, with her trusted woman companion ...' (1996: 35)

The boundaries of the city (or the political unit) are also where there is the greatest need for the rhetorical definition of the self and the other, where identities have to be the most rigidly expressed. This is the area where Polynices' body is displayed as carrion. This is the area where Greek and Turkish Cypriots put on poster displays highlighting the monstrosity of the other (Figures 8 and 9). Beyond, lies the monstrous double. On the other side of the Green Line everything is literally *entre parenthese*. The TRNC is a *pseudokratos* (pseudo-state) where nothing is true except that all official statements are lies (*psemata*). All references to the Other in written texts are signalled by inverted commas. As the neutral UN-speak Green Line, it is an interface of ritual transgressions such as women attempting to cross the line to return to their homes. Beyond that is the *Nekri Zoni* (Dead Zone). As I show in Chapter 6 the *Nekri Zoni* is a place of death, a place where transgressions are staged and managed for the means of representation. Here, order, lawlessness, and violence are choreographed by both sides and represented in photographs, posters, and the media.

Official Turkish Cypriot Perceptions of Missing Persons: a Dead Issue?

In 1997 when I conducted fieldwork in the TRNC there was resentment and suspicion among officials regarding discussion of the issue of missing people. They considered the Greek Cypriots had fabricated the issue as a propaganda issue and a 'political problem'. The Greek Cypriots considered it a 'humanitarian problem'. They could not talk about 'the-Missing-as-Missing' except as 'the Greek Cypriot-"Missing"' – clearly an uncomfortable acknowledgement to the effectiveness of the Greek Cypriot campaign. Nor was it just a question of differences between the Turkish Cypriot perception of the disappeared-as-dead-or-lost (forever) (*kayıpler*) and the Greek Cypriot perception of their disappeared as *agnoumeni* as missing, of-unknown-fate-but-potentially recoverable either materially or in terms of knowledge. It was also a difference about the degree of almost permitted politicisation. The head of the Turkish Cypriot CMP delegation, Rustem Tatar, claimed that 'if the Greek Cypriots had not politicised the issue so much we would have resolved it by now. They frightened the Turkish Cypriots because of their propaganda. They have not been consistent'. Clearly there is something in this. Ironically as I shall show, the attempt to separate the issue in terms of either 'realism'

(pragmatism) or ‘politics’ (expediency) is itself a subtly political act. Nor can the Turkish Cypriot position itself be considered ‘consistent’.

There were other reasons why Turkish Cypriots officials seemed uncomfortable with the issue. Many seemed initially frightened even to talk about the matter.¹⁰ Whilst on the Greek side I had been encouraged to view the Missing as metaphors of return and recovery, on the Turkish side I was expected to look at them as ‘the dead’, and therefore not even as a suitable problem, anthropological or otherwise, unless it was designed to embarrass them. Consequently, I became particularly interested in why the Turkish Cypriot authorities seemed so officially uninterested in their dead as objects of grief or mourning whilst being keen to appropriate their sacrifice. ‘They’re dead; that’s it’ many said, including ordinary people. It soon transpired that the officially-sponsored silence may have actually insulated the relatives from the rest of society, and they were thus not provided with a space to realise their grief and mourning. By contrast, the Greek authorities gave the relatives a central theatrical space to enact their suffering for the whole society. In both cases tensions arose, and I would argue that the officially-sponsored Greek Cypriot concern for the relatives and the appropriation of their suffering for nationalist-state agendas, is as distorting and as exploitative as the indifference generated by the ‘realism’ of the Turkish Cypriot authorities. As the Chorus in Sophocles’ *Antigone* notes:

*There is danger in unnatural silence
No less than in excess of lamentation*

The silence of Turkish Cypriot relatives may well be subversive of official presentation, just as the vocality of the relatives of Greek Cypriots whilst appearing to echo official positions, may be subversive of them.

The Turkish Cypriot official position is that all missing persons, Greek and Turkish Cypriot, are dead. According to them, it is important that the people put the matter behind them to look to the future. Whereas the Greeks have turned the issue into a deeply political and symbolic one, politicising the symbol (the return of the bodies) in order to symbolise the political (the return home of the refugees, etc.), the Turkish Cypriots have attempted to pragmatise it, to literally turn into a thing, not a symbol. They accuse the Greek Cypriot authorities of prolonging the agony of the relatives, and suggest that the silence of the Turkish Cypriot relatives is a self-imposed one, rather than, as I suggest a state-discouragement of individual mourning-grief. Many officials told me ‘the relatives don’t like talking about their experiences’. This was partly true, but it was also perhaps to discourage the observer-investigator from getting behind the officially-encouraged silence about the past as ended and closed, and questioning the space between private emotions and their collective-statist representation. The Turkish Cypriot Association of Relatives of Missing Persons maintains a low profile, and the Greek Cypriot Association of Relatives claims that although they asked them

in 1982 through the offices of UN for a meeting, they replied they were not interested. Turkish Cypriot authorities were very reluctant to allow me and my assistants to interview relatives independently of the minders they provided. I discovered that many wanted to talk, suggesting that the 'natural reticence' of the relatives may have been encouraged by the authorities. By contrast, the Greek Cypriot authorities used the symbolism of marginality that the women-relatives represented to place them at the centre of the officially dressed political stage, perhaps to symbolise the marginality of Cyprus, as deserving more attention.

In explaining their differences to Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriot officials usually begin by drawing upon ethnic-cultural differences between Greeks and Turks: 'we are realistic; we are secular', meaning, we have accepted the deaths/disappearances of the missing, in contrast to the 'un-realism' and 'religiosity' of the Greek Cypriots. There is a double irony here. First, Greek Cypriots view Turkish Cypriots as more 'fatalistic', suggesting that the term is used to create a distinction between the modern self and the pre-modern, 'backward' other. Second, Turkish Cypriots also use religious symbolism, but in a distinctive way. The same official suggested that the Turkish Cypriots are more realistic because they are predisposed by religion to accept reality: 'the Turks being Muslims are great believers in fate. It is easier for a Turkish Cypriot to bow to the Grace of God and say it is fate. It is what is written on your forehead (*kader*)'. Here, 'fate' meant recognising 'facts', being realistic. By contrast, he suggested, the Greek Cypriots are predisposed to fight against reality because they are religious. There is an element of truth to this in the sense, as I shall show, that Greek Cypriots are more predisposed to employ religious symbolism to represent their missing, whose recovery could symbolise the recovery of the North. Yet what is meant by 'realism' may mean different things to the two sides. The 'realism' the Turkish Cypriots would like to encourage among Greek Cypriots is the acceptance of the division of the island and the establishment of the TRNC, something the Greek Cypriots do not accept.

We need to go beyond such explanations and examine the conditions under which Turkish Cypriots disappeared, and how their leadership dealt with the problem according to their own political agendas. This can help explain a central point I want to develop: that the Turkish Cypriot leadership may well have needed, according to their own agendas, to turn their missing persons into casualties; in short, to declare them dead to show that between Greek and Turk there could be no cohabitation. Yet in so doing they did not harness the phase of mourning collectively, nor addressed the complex feelings that were raised individually for families. Part of this is due to the circumstances of 1963–64. But there were other reasons.

Turkish Cypriot *kayıpler* almost became non-people from the start, first by the Greek Cypriot authorities and then by the Turkish Cypriot leadership. Briefly put, the *kayıpler* were scripted out of the stage, whilst the *agnoumeni* were scripted in. Officially, Greek Cypriot authorities did not accept in 1963 that there were missing persons in its territory and strenuously refused to admit this in interna-

tional fora. Until 1997 they did not even advance to the UN CMP the names of those Greeks who disappeared in 1963–64, as this would have indicated that they did not control the whole territory of the Republic of Cyprus, and would have recognised the existence of a Turkish Cypriot political entity limiting the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. To the Greek Cypriot leadership the problem of missing persons is still a problem imposed by the 1974 invasion and occupation of Cyprus by a foreign country (i.e. Turkey). In 1963–64 the Republic of Cyprus treated Turkish Cypriot government employees who had disappeared or did not report to work as if they had left their jobs and resigned. In a climate of Greek Cypriot-induced disappearances, and of intimidation by TMT, reporting for work was threatening, isolating, and demeaning. Some Turkish Cypriot relatives of disappeared public sector employees did however receive compensation. During this period (December 1963) the State could not control irregulars, many of whom attached themselves to armed groups of men (Loizos, 1975; Sant Cassia, 1983). The Greek Cypriot police under the ex-EOKA fighter and Minister of the Interior, P. Yorgadjis, were involved in some heavy fighting. Within a month some 20–25 Greek Cypriots and 200 Turkish Cypriots were reported as missing, and the Red Cross became involved. But because individuals were being abducted and then released, the unfolding reality always included the possibility that the missing were hostages. This led many to believe that their missing relatives would probably be released at some later stage when relations became more peaceful. There were few situations where bodies were dumped to be picked up. Missing people just disappeared.

For the relatives, things were very uncertain. The Republic of Cyprus officially refused to accept that there were disappearances, and treated this either as an insurrection or as a fabrication by Turkish Cypriot leaders. Turkish Cypriots did not report disappearances to the now completely Greek Cypriot-dominated police, the Turkish Cypriot police having ceased collaborating with their Greek colleagues. Turkish Cypriots began withdrawing into enclaves encouraged by their leaders and their paramilitary group, TMT who insisted they could not guarantee their safety unless they moved. Many relatives of the disappeared were poor villagers, of low social standing, not accustomed to the language of human or civil rights. This was then an unsophisticated society, and the language of human rights had little currency. So they turned inevitably to their local representatives, who had limited means of intervention: ‘in those days people weren’t taken seriously. The authorities were helpless. They didn’t do much’. The Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber began collecting lists of missing persons. Widows were given a salary for life or until remarriage. Initially they were given some relief in the form of food parcels. Some Turkish Cypriot leftists have claimed that the leadership then were not keen to pursue the matter with the Greek Cypriot authorities: ‘the leadership didn’t want to recognise the Greek administration. Perhaps they feared that if the Greek Cypriot government were to compensate the

relatives then that would imply recognition and dependency on the Greek Cypriot state' (CTP politician).

There is evidence to suggest that the disappearance of many Turkish Cypriots was effected by small groups of men who knew their victims. Greek paramilitaries tended to pick on identifiable people, who generated suspicion because they were mobile and travelled, such as vegetable sellers, drivers, butchers, travelling salesmen, etc., whom they might have suspected of belonging to the TMT. These were men whose jobs also required them to carry large sums of money. Although difficult to prove, it seems that private banditry masquerading as bravado nationalism, and aiming at theft, was often the primary reason for the disappearances. Their victims were neither leaders, nor of a readily definable intellectual group (such as students in Argentina seen by paranoid policemen as threats to the public order). They were selected because they were weak, and their bodies hidden rather than displayed. In short, the situation bred general uncertainty even for the people who seemed to be dominating the situation themselves.

The Disappeared: from Missing Hostages to Disposed Missing to Honorary Martyrs

Disappeared Turkish Cypriots soon moved from being missing/returnable hostages to becoming the disposed missing and eventually honorary martyrs (*shehitler*). According to officials who naturally have an investment in a monitorable and controllable social reality, this emerges from a specific date (4 June 1968) when Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, asked Glavkos Clerides, then delegated to represent the Greek Cypriots, at their Beirut meeting for information on the fate of the Missing. They claim Clerides told Denktash to consider these missing as dead. Denktash then conveyed the bitter truth to the relatives. As a result Turkish Cypriots began accepting this fact.¹¹ Denktash at the time decided to formally declare the matter closed, and declare that the Greek Cypriot leadership had admitted that the disappeared Turks were dead. In pointing to this incident, which has to be treated as a Durkheimian social fact, we should be sensitive to the ironies of the situation. First, although the Turkish Cypriot leadership now claim that when they withdrew to the armed enclaves they had withdrawn recognition of the Republic of Cyprus, which according to them officially ceased to exist, Turkish Cypriot political leaders nevertheless in practice relied on the legitimising attribution of responsibility from the officialising statements issuing from a representative of the Republic (Clerides). According to the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Cypriots admit that they cold-bloodedly killed the missing, a point the Turks had long been making. Second, this admission helped orient the Turkish Cypriot leaderships' insistence that Greek and Turk could not live together peacefully, but needed to live separately. At that time, in the inter-communal talks, Denktash was insisting on the need for the two communities to establish separate

geographical zones for security reasons. Such disclosures certainly strengthened his position.

It is from this period that the Turkish Cypriot missing became officially classified as *kayıpler*, and also included within the general category of *shehitler*, the martyrs or witnesses who had given up their lives fighting for the nation. This further shut the door both on reconciliation, and on a possible compromise joint interpretation that could have turned both the Turkish missing and the much smaller number of Greeks, into national victims or symbols of a bitter, but lamented and transcendable feud. Instead they became *ethnic* victims, selected taxonomically, witnesses of a 'chronic inability' of Greek and Turk to live together. In short, by electing to render evident what probably many people feared ('they have *admitted* they killed our people in cold blood'), in the name of 'realism' and 'compassion' for the suffering of the relatives, the process of ethnic separation was enhanced further. There is no reason to question the sincerity of these sentiments, but they also had certain political and collective implications that require reflection. Finally, the continuous reference by Turkish Cypriot officials to Clerides' imputed admission not only officialized their losses and Greek Cypriot 'admitted culpability', but also has to be seen as a ritualised statement with important implications for Turkish Cypriot political dialogue. To question its veracity, or to impute that it may have been given a certain spin by Denktash, not only flies in the face of the 'evidence' ('but they must be dead'), but can also seem perversely 'cruel' to the relatives, by 'prolonging their suffering'. An imputed 'admission of ethnic culpability' turns into a compassionate 'cruel to be kind', in the workings of the ethnic leaders. By repeatedly evoking this incident, Government employees officialise their role as disseminators of 'realism', whilst further entrenching a definition of the state of affairs 'mediated' (but equally asserted) by political leaders, such as Denktash. Such assertions become rituals of support for political leaders. By appearing to harness politics to 'realism', defining what is 'realistic' and occupying it, the Turkish nationalist right wing monopolised the issue. The Turkish Cypriot left, that had strong contacts with their Greek counterparts and supported peaceful interethnic co-operation, was left with little ideological space to contest and offer alternative interpretations. Indeed the left was so frightened of Denktash's monopoly of rightist ethnic nationalism, that they steered clear of raising the issue of the *kayıpler*. A further reason for the reluctance to talk about the Turkish Cypriot Missing is the strong suspicion that some were actually killed by TMT, rather than Greek Cypriots.

Although the disappeared Turkish Cypriots were proclaimed to be dead by their political leadership in 1968, matters changed in 1974. When the Greek Cypriots raised the issue of their own missing persons in 1974 and internationalised it, the Turkish Cypriots countered, not unnaturally, by presenting their disappeared as missing. During fieldwork (in 1997), I discovered that in 1975 the original Turkish Cypriot records of lists of missing persons, collected in the post-1964 period had disappeared, and were untraceable. They thus had to restart col-

lecting information that was some 10 years old to present to the UN sponsored CMP. According to the Turkish Cypriot CMP representative, some watchmen had burned the records to keep warm! The irony of disappeared records for dead people, who are officially re-presented and re-processed as disappeared people, should not detain us here. But the official indifference to official records suggests that between 1968–74 the Turkish Cypriot leadership genuinely did consider the matter as closed and had no plans to make long-term political capital out of it. It is therefore ironic that in order to counter what they claim to be Greek Cypriot cynical propaganda they have been obliged to retie the Gordian knot that Denktash's 1968 disclosure had been designed to cut through.

The Relatives: Resistance Through Silence

The official line that whilst the Turkish leadership has been compassionate in not exploiting the issue, the Greeks have made cynical use of the relatives' grief and uncertainty is problematical. Denktash's sudden disclosure in 1968 did not address the grief of the relatives, nor their mourning. The *kayıpler* are grouped together with the *shēhitler*, the martyrs (literally witnesses) who had fallen defending the Turkish community against Greek aggression during what they call the wars of 1963 and 1974. Yet paradoxically, whilst there are many monuments to the *shēhitler* fighters, there is not one specifically dedicated to the missing persons as a generic group. Nor indeed has any public building or street been named after any missing or disappeared person. For a society that has a voracious need for symbols of suffering and resistance, this is puzzling especially, as one Turkish Cypriot leftist cynically noted, 'if even one of the fighters cut his little finger fighting for the nation, they build a monument'. Perhaps monuments to civilian missing persons goes against the militaristic nature of Turkish nationalism, and could also raise embarrassing questions in Turkey where mothers of disappeared persons regularly demonstrate in Istanbul. In contrast to Greek Cypriot monuments, the only identifiable figure in Turkish Cypriot nationalism is Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey. Monuments to the Turkish Cypriot fighters are represented by abstract or highly stylised sculptures (see Figure 10). Yet the *kayıpler* are important as photographic representations of suffering. These are the photographs that until recently greeted the visitor crossing the Green Line. I examine these in Chapter 6.

Many *kayıpler* relatives were not pleased with this grouping. They appear to be scripted into a public role that they have performed with such apparent compliance, silence, and submission that, in the apt words of Herzfeld (1985), may well have been subversive. Whilst it may have given the relatives of the *kayıpler* some prestige to be grouped with the *shēhitler*, they do not have such a strong claim to social prestige as the latter. The *shēhitler* families have a strong organisation, the *kayıpler* have no representation. They are names, not faces. Furthermore, the



Figure 10 Turkish Cypriot Monument to the *Shehitler* (Martyrs), Nicosia.

grouping of *kayıplı* with *shehitler* may have been useful politically but it did not address the key issues of mourning and graves: ‘It was very difficult for the families to accept their death. Many people could not accept the *mevlide* (mortuary recitation) for their death. Sometimes they got news of the relatives in Greece. So they kept on hoping’. In 1974 at the height of the invasion, all the male inhabitants of the mixed village of Tochni in the southern part of Cyprus were taken away in two buses by EOKA-VITA men and murdered. Their graves have never found (although in a small place like Cyprus it would be relatively easy to do so). A survivor from one of the buses managed to escape. Many relatives continued to hope that their loved ones may have been in the other bus and may still be hostages. After the population swap-over in 1976, the women and children from Tochni were resettled in the north, in a village named after the old one (Tashkent). In 1987 the authorities erected a monument to all the disappeared men from the village. Relatives objected because according to them this meant they were all considered officially dead and therefore the authorities would neither continue to try to find them, nor ask for their remains. Nor did they appear to get much advice or support from their authorities:

For years I could not pray even if he is dead. How can you imagine someone is dead if there is no trace? I don't even know if he is alive or dead. I do pray for him but not as if he were dead. He might sort of just come. My friends had dads, you have no home, no furniture, you have lost everything. If you had a grave, you could go there and talk to him. Take a bottle of water and pray for him.

This type of grief has been called unelaborated grief, or impaired mourning (Robben, 2000). Let us note the parallelism between the above quote and one provided by an Argentine mother of a *desaparecido*: 'For those who are religious or who have a place on earth where they have their dead to take flowers to, to say a prayer, whatever, this is denied to them' (Robben, 2000: 90).

For many years, stories abounded of hostages being forced into hard work on road-building, a classical imagery of the fear of a small group being used mercilessly by a larger oppressing group. This type of work was traditionally resorted to by the poorest members of Cypriot society. In some cases, the return of the loved ones is also linked to a solution: 'I believe he will come back when there is a solution', or, 'I cannot believe he is dead. At the end of the *mevlide* [a prayer said at the mortuary ritual-PSC] there is a section for the dead. I cannot bring myself to say that because I cannot believe he is dead. The Greeks told me that he will be released when there is a solution. I believe he will come back when there is a solution'. Such statements are also implicit criticisms of their leadership: negotiate for a solution and allow us to get our relatives back. There were also strong criticisms of how the Turkish Cypriot leadership used the *kayipler* for political purposes: 'We also find it very hard to accept that the shehitler were and are treated as heroes but the *kayipler* are not' (40-year-old teacher, son of a *kayip*). 'Many families of fighters got the best houses after 1974. The *kayipler* relatives got less. We don't even have a death certificate. We have nothing ... No-one took any notice of the relatives.' (42-year-old daughter of a *kayip*). 'The politicians used us for their own purposes. To show that they suffered, especially at elections, to cry, etc.' (33-year-old daughter of a *kayip*). These are quotations I obtained when interviewing independently of the minders provided by the authorities.

What the relatives are objecting to most is that their loved ones, and by implication they too, are erased by the official concentration on the missing as representations of death and as signs of an ineradicable past of ethnic intolerance. As a result the missing have no existentiality, no real identity, as beings, but rather become collapsed to the 'essence' of death as a nothingness. Turkish Cypriot missing/*kayipler* are held up as signifiers (of 'ethnic incompatibility') with no verifiable signified (because there are no bodies). Indeed it is paradoxical not just that the records of missing-persons-as-missing were lost (a supreme sign of official indifference to them after their death, indeed not even of them as deceased persons), but also that for many relatives the existential verifiability of their parents (many of whom they may not even remember) comes from documents that confirm an absence. For a number of individuals, the only documents that confirm an existence are paradoxically not even Turkish Cypriot records but foreign ones. To some, their fathers exist as 'photographs in an English book (*sic.*)' with a name and some biographical details: signifiers but no signified. For the son or daughter, a father's reality is constructed precisely through his disappearance as a missing character, as an absence.

This tension between signifier and signified is further reinforced and realised through the co-evalness of the lack of graves and their official status as dead people, an inversion of the normal demonstrability of death. As one man from Tashkent said 'the *shehitler* have the graves and can go there to pray. For us it is not like this. There is nowhere you can go and put flowers'. Visiting graves is important on the eve of Bayram. But relatives do not have graves to do this nor any meaningful symbolic focus. Lacking any organisation or official sponsorship except for the *shehitler* fighters (who have graves), they tend to mourn individually. The same Tashkent man said of his wife's father: 'We made a museum of her Father's photograph. Every family here enlarged the photos of their dead and hung them on their walls and kept everything they had as it was'. Here a formal difference should be noted with Greek Orthodox culture. According to Delaney, Turks attach less symbolism to the body as a post-death artefact. Death is a second birth, 'the second and higher-order birth' (1991: 319). This second birth is imagined as 'spiritual, not physical; the physical body is left behind' (ibid: 314), the dead body being the symbolic equivalent of 'seeds planted in the earth to be born in the other world' (ibid: 313). As a result the recovery of the body does not seem to have the same resonance in Turkish Cypriot culture as in Greek culture. This is also re-enforced by the Muslim idea that it is wrong to make a monument of the grave. The Shehitler cemetery in Nicosia is extremely sparse and undecorated. Paradoxically, although Turkish Cypriots claim that they are not very religious, they justify the lack of decoration of the graves by reference to religious imperatives. This reinforces the suggestion that for the state it is not the graves as such that are important but the *representation* of their death as martyrs through monuments. It is therefore much easier for the state to appropriate this domain of representation and elaboration, bypassing individual sentiments. Thus ideologically for the Turkish Cypriots it appears that the recovery of bodies may have less culturally embedded imperatives as amongst the Greeks.

Another reason why the Turkish Cypriot leadership appears officially uninterested in the return of the Turkish Cypriot bones may well be due to a fear that they would thus have to permit exhumation of Greek bodies which may prove Greek Cypriot claims about the latter's disappearances. The following transcript of an attempted interview by my research assistant, Kate Tripp, highlights the political nature of the issue:

On my first visit to Fatna, an informant living in a village near Kyrenia, the Turkish Cypriot member of the Committee of Missing Persons had arranged for his assistant to act as my translator. Initially he was helpful, relating the story of how my informant's husband, brother and four sons disappeared after being taken from the town of Tokhni by Greek Cypriot soldiers. However, when I wanted to ask her about her views on the fate of her family and on the issue of remains he refused to translate my questions. Instead he informed me, speaking on the behalf of all Turkish Cypriots, that they believe that persons reported missing are in fact dead and that the return of remains is

unnecessary. I discovered, just as Robben's (1995) discovered during his fieldwork in Argentina that like many ethnographers and journalists researching violent and political conflict I had become a victim of a bad attempt at 'political seduction'. Perceived by my 'translator' and the Turkish Cypriot leadership as someone who in the future might write something of relevance about their regime, they had designed a itinerary of interviews that they believed would convince me to adopt their interpretation of past events.

I asked if she wanted the remains of her family returned to her? But she was not given the opportunity to answer as the assistant continued to speak on her behalf. Without even translating the question, he said that she is very happy with what the Turkish Cypriot government has provided her with. He says that she doesn't want the remains because she knows that they are dead.

My sudden realization did little to resolve the situation and I found it impossible to obtain any information from my informant's perspective. Frustrated, I felt I had gained very little insight into the opinions and problems experienced by the Turkish Cypriot wives of Missing Persons. Although discussions with English-speaking Turkish Cypriots revealed similar sentiments to Greek Cypriots, the formal view is that the issue of the Missing is tragic but irrelevant.

Just as we were about to leave Fatna's house, her grandson who had been studying in England returned home. He spoke English well and I took the opportunity to ask him to translate my questions to his grandmother, despite the presence of my translator. Once again, I asked her whether she was concerned with the issue of remains?

'I am not satisfied at all. I believe they have been killed, but I would like to have the remains returned to me. Like all women I want to be able to mourn them properly. I want information about what has happened. We were never formally told what had happened, it is as if everybody wanted to forget about our tragedy, and us.'

I asked if she wants officials to actively search for the bodies?

'Yes, I do. I want to be able to bury them.'

At this point the assistant wants us to leave. He is evidently displeased that the woman has been able to communicate effectively through her grandson. Before we leave, the grandson tells us that he believes that one day he hopes that Greek and Turk will be able to live together [this is also somewhat subversive of the official line – PSC].

The Greek Cypriot insistence on the return of the bodies may have strengthened the hand of the Turkish Cypriot relatives *vis-a-vis* their own representatives. In 1996 Denktash secretly asked the Republic of Cyprus for his mother's bones in Paphos to be transferred to the North. This was interpreted as a sign of further separation between the two communities. But as a leftist politician observed, until very recently to request from the Turkish Cypriot authorities that they ask for the bones of the missing, or to ascertain their exact fate, was tantamount to questioning the authorities: 'It didn't even enter their minds to question both what the authorities said or to want to take things further. That was really it. They couldn't think otherwise' (CTP leader). Recently, however, relatives have been insisting more openly that they wanted the bones returned, 'so that we can also bury them according to our rites', even though as honorary *shehitler* the *kayipler*

are all considered to have gone to Heaven, and *not* to have required the traditional cleansing of the body prior to burial.

In short, it was not so much a matter that the Turkish Cypriots were more 'realist' and their authorities more 'compassionate' than the Greeks. The picture is more complex. Indeed the greatest expressions of pain, or at least the ones that affected me particularly deeply, were Turkish Cypriot ones because they have been told that their relatives are dead but have no tomb, no grave, nor even symbolic graves. 'I have never spoke to anyone like I have spoken to you', a man confided. The openness of that statement is humbling to anyone practising anthropology, and certainly creates a sense of responsibility. C. S. Lewis observed 'sorrow ... turns out to be not a state but a process. It needs not a map but a history' (1966: 10). Turkish Cypriot authorities gave it a topography, just as they were busily changing every name of every village, Turkifying them in order to create a new state, but they left no space for process, for a history, for individuals. As in *The Suppliants* the State has attempted to take the funerary laments away from the women: 'praise, not lament, is what the young must learn if they are to emulate the champions in glory' (Holst 1992: 168). By contrast, the Greek Cypriots appear to have transformed sorrow into an unending process but whose map is elsewhere. Certainly the *kayıpler* are martyrs, *shehitler*, but they are martyrs because they provided a whole victimology for the authorities in their project of constructing a state. It is as if the new state had to consume its own subjects to project the sacrifices the nation, like Medea, had to experience to symbolise its suffering.

Conclusion

Here, some of the reflections of Richard Werbner might be useful. Talking about the tensions over the past in Zimbabwe he notes: 'Increasingly, new moral uncertainties confront people in what might be called postwars of the dead- the intense peacetime struggles over the appropriation of the heroism, martyrdom or even last remains of the dead' (1998:7). He employs the metaphors of buried and unburied memory. 'Buried memory' he takes to include the use of monuments to the dead and heroes and the tensions that it raises: 'If buried memory attempts to contain and even silence popular commemoration ... it does so at very real, lingering cost. Buried memory produces what ... I call unfinished narratives: popular history in which the past is perceived to be unfinished, festering in the present-these are narratives which motivate people to call again and again for a public resolution to their predicament' (ibid: 9). Such observations could certainly be applied to Turkish Cypriots. As Werbner noted: 'Subjected to buried memory, people do not so much forget as recognise – and ever more forcefully – that they have not been allowed to remember' (ibid: 9). By contrast the Greek Cypriots appear to have followed the metaphor of unburied memory. Where I differ with Werbner is over what he believes to be the contemporary nature of the post wars

of the dead. As I have suggested, such moral uncertainties are far from new. They are also found in ancient Greek tragedy and doubtless in other areas, and they can provide us with a model to understand contemporary predicaments. As anthropologists we ought to be open to the possibilities contained in history, classics, drama, and literature, because they too deal with human and social predicaments.

NOTES

1. Sarris (1995); Abbot (1969).
2. Danforth (ibid: 53); see also Stewart (1991).
3. What is one to make of such story, almost designed for an anthropologist? Its significance only emerges out of its banality, because it was presented apologetically, prefaced by her hesitant statement 'I am a believer (like the woman I am going to talk about). I believe in God'. In other words, I will only tell you such fantastic stories if you can accept (and expect) such fantastic stories from me as a believer – a secular perspective. In indicating that she did not expect people to give them credulity, least of all an *epistemonas* (scientist) from abroad, she indicated that such beliefs operate on the margin of modern consciousness, and therefore are worthy of scrutiny.
4. Cf. Freud's thesis on mourning and melancholia (1959).
5. In the book *Agni* (which means Pure) is given the name *Avgi* (Dawn).
6. *Helen*, Seferis (1973: 353–4).
7. Angeliki Smyrli (1989).
8. For example, the Council of Ministers gave some £900,000 Cypriot to the families of the 162 Greek nationals who either died or are missing since the Turkish invasion (*Cyprus Weekly*, 5–11 July 1996, p.14.)
9. Especially in children's art where this unbridgeable gap between the Greek/free area and the land of the underworld is separated from the living by the river.
10. Soon after I arrived, a friend whom I was visiting, received a call from the Kyrenia Police Chief asking what I was doing asking questions about The Missing. Somebody had reported me. He then asked my friend: 'I suppose he will want to speak to all these leftists', and reeled off a list of names not enamoured of, and by, the Denktash regime – precisely the people I had just mentioned to my friend that I wanted to interview! The prescience was ominously amusing and also an indication how transparent and naïve my questioning was. I am happy to state however that I received the greatest courtesy from Turkish Cypriot officials and immense kindness and generosity from the Turkish Cypriots.
- 11 Not surprisingly there is no mention of this in Clerides's memoirs and I have found no reference to it in the Greek Cypriot press. Perhaps this may have been a confidential acknowledgement by Clerides, which was then used by Denktash to genuinely address the relatives' grief and concerns, and embarrass the Greek Cypriots.