

**Narrating the Greco-Turkish Population Exchange: Stories about
belonging and otherness in the nation**

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated those who helped me along the way.

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Introduction

Ethnic Conflict and Memories of Trauma

A few months into my stay in Turkey, I was confronted with a confusing image: stretching before me in the Cappadocian town of Mustafapaşa was a landscape littered with abandoned Greek homes. In this small town, deep in Anatolian Turkey, a number of what my guide called “Macedonians” populate the region. These people are recognizable by their lighter skin and eyes, and they are still differentiated from the Turks in the town, he said. What he did not explain was where these people came from, whose empty homes they occupied, and the suffering they and their families survived during their journeys and resettlement. My initial probes into a touchy subject brought forth the explanation that decades earlier a population exchange had been orchestrated between Greece and Turkey. The Greeks inhabiting this region were forced to return to Greece, and they were replaced by Muslim populations formerly residing in Greek territory. cursory research into the population exchange revealed that both the Turkish and Greek governments were complicit in the policies that mandated the population exchange. However, in the six months I lived in Istanbul, I was surprised by the number of occasions the Greek government and people were disparaged.

One of these instances during was Eurovision, a European music competition in which the Greek musicians lost to Russia in the final moments of the show. Their dramatic defeat drew more raucous cheers from the twenty-year-old Turks with whom I watched the show than the initial success of the Turkish band. These sentiments were later echoed in their grave attempts to persuade my American friends and me against visiting Greece, where we were sure to be raped like a Turkish woman they’d seen on the news. The negative feelings of young Turks toward Greeks, with whom they had never directly interacted, were mirrored by the Greeks we would

meet on our short visit. Employing what then was very rudimentary Turkish, I attempted to speak to the train operators conducting our trip to Greece. The men working on the train, which runs once a day from Greece to Turkey and back, scornfully informed me that they were not Turks, they did not speak Turkish, and furthermore they had no interest in being addressed in Turkish. These men, who come into contact with Turks daily, had little tolerance for their neighbors, or for American students struggling to be understood. Once in Greece, my friends and I quickly learned to leave out the location when explaining our study abroad travels. These experiences sparked my desire to further explore the relationship between Greeks and Turks, which remains so hostile decades after the exchange and among even the youth in the two countries. These hostilities are present in international politics, as evident by the more recent conflict in Cyprus and by some Greeks' opposition to Turkey's possible accession into the European Union. My memories of old Greek mansions deep in the Turkish interior that indicated centuries of coexistence contest the bitterness I encountered in casual conversation, and left me with many questions about the population exchange and its legacy. I attempt to explore these issues in this thesis.

The Unmixing of Peoples: An Introduction to the Population Exchange

On January 30, 1923, the signing of the Lausanne Convention on the Exchange of Populations would mark the world's first legally mandated population exchange¹. This document, and the de facto migrations occurring before the official orders, forever altered the landscape of Asia Minor and the makeup of its population. The exchange was an attempt by members of the Greek and Turkish governments and international officials to address war and

¹ Many terms have been used to describe this event, including 'population exchange', 'population transfer', 'population expulsion', and 'ethnic cleansing'. To employ the loaded term 'ethnic cleansing', coined in the 1990s, would constitute an assignation backwards in history. I prefer to follow the language of the Lausanne Convention and refer to the event as an exchange, though keeping in mind its homogenizing aims and the suffering and deaths it caused.

violence occurring between Greeks and Turks in Anatolia. In early 1919, the Greek army initiated an attack of these lands, hoping to reoccupy territory formerly part of the Byzantine Empire. The invasion hoped to finally realize the Megali Idea, an irredentist notion born alongside Greek nationalism in the early 1800s (Hirschon, 2004: 4). The Greek government, led by Eleftherios Venizelos, hoped to take advantage of the instability of the region post-World War I and regain vast territories lost to the Ottoman Empire centuries earlier. They justified their attacks by arguing that they were only occupying land that had been promised to them in return for their participation in World War I. In the end, Mustafa Kemal's forces soundly, and somewhat surprisingly, defeated the Greek army in 1922. The events would come to be known as the "Asia Minor Catastrophe" in Greece, and the "War of Independence" or simply "the Liberation" in Turkey.² The conflict called attention to ethnic, religious, and national divisions among the populations of Anatolia. Many Greeks, some of whose history in the territory of the Ottoman Empire (and now within Turkish borders) was centuries-long, were called upon to stake their support for the Greek army. Trends of nationalism in both Greece and Turkey called for the abandonment of Ottoman tolerance and for the division of intermixed populations along ethnic, religious, and new national designations.

The Lausanne Convention emerged from this atmosphere of nationalism and the redrawing of boundaries, both in terms of territory and of identity. People living upon contested lands were increasingly asked to identify themselves not with by their places of residence but of "origin". Many Greeks in Anatolia allied themselves with the Greek army, sometimes even providing direct support. When the Turks defeated the Greek forces, hundreds of thousands of Greek people fled with the retreating army. Those who had provided aid feared violent Turkish retribution, often rightly, and others were implicated merely because they were Greeks living in

² Interestingly, these are the same terms Palestinians and Israelis use to describe the events of 1948.

these areas. In any event, atrocities on both sides and increasingly bad relations between Greece and Turkey prompted (or forced) approximately 1 million Greek Orthodox people to flee from Turkey and around 100,000 Muslims from Greece. The retreating Greek army burned Turkish towns in its path, and the Turks followed suit by avenging themselves upon local Greek Orthodox civilians. These atrocities were cited in negotiations for the exchange as evidence of the inability of Muslims and Christians to coexist peacefully. This brings forth an important aspect of the terms of the Lausanne Convention documents: the division of populations on religious terms. Though the exchange fulfilled nationalist agendas of establishing ethnic homogeneity, the documents often referred to Greek Orthodox and Muslim populations, rather than Greeks or Turks. In the Turkish case, this is perhaps the result of an unstable political identity during the shift from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. Practically, it meant that not only the populations affected by conflict would be transferred, but all Muslims in Greece and Greek Orthodox people in Turkey, with only a few exceptions. This included approximately 350,000 Muslims and 200,000 Christians, in addition to the one million already fleeing. For the group whose communities had been largely unaffected by the conflict, the trauma of transfer was particularly painful. Despite the traumatic human consequences of the population exchange, it was celebrated as a political success because it established peace in the region. Moreover, the Lausanne Convention established a precedent for peaceful population exchange and the successful unmixing of peoples in nationalist movements.

The population exchange was closely connected to nationalist movements in both Greece and Turkey. Though Greece gained its independence in the early 1800s, World War I and its aftermath mark the development of the modern Greek state. In Turkey, the years following World War I were also central to the creation of the new Turkish republic. In the early 1920s,

the exchange of nearly two million people was explained as a peace-keeping measure, and a method making official and regulating population movements which were already occurring. Additionally, and perhaps primarily, the forced population exchange was a nationalist measure undertaken to ethnically homogenize the nascent Greek and Turkish states. As such, nationalist narratives emerged to describe and explain the exchange. These histories are often promoted through national education and enter into popular discourse. In regards to the particular case of Greece and Turkey, Keith Brown and Dimitrios Theodossopoulos explain, “This historical narrative, developed during the process of nation-building, is selective in nature and carefully organized to offer explanations about the position of the Self and the Other in the world” (2004: 10). In other words, nationalist narratives regarding the population exchange, whether put forth by the state or taken up by citizens, are important in the construction of national and self-identity. Furthermore, these narratives create a stigmatized ‘other’ often crucial to self-identity formation, solidarity, and belonging to a group or nation. Defining state identity entailed determining both what that identity was and what it wasn’t; for Greece and Turkey, each country emerged as the imagined national ‘other’ against which the ‘self’ was imagined.

Narrative National Trauma

Indeed, certain narratives are repeated and seem to describe a national, rather than personal, trauma. Though these discourses are somewhat different for Greeks and Turks, they share certain characteristics. Stories told by many people about the population exchange leave little room for nuance; for example, in many depictions I heard one population was represented as the “bad guy” and the other as the victim. There was little complexity in these tellings, and they were often common from one person to another. Veena Das’s work on trauma and language considers how the painful experiences of the self are sometimes masked when they become

scripted, collective narratives speaking for a community or nation (Das 1996, 68). While language can provide an outlet and a means for understanding, scripted storytelling buries personal pain. This process became evident to me when I found that certain stories were trans-continental (like the story of the Souli women in Chapter 3), but stories about personal pain told by descendants of the exchanged are not part of national understanding of the exchange. Some even expressed the hope that their family stories would remain exclusively personal because such unhappy stories do not benefit their compatriots, who are often exposed only to nationalist histories. Cathy Caruth argues that these collective *histories* of trauma emerge from standardized stories, and as such they are based upon the implication of others (Caruth 1996: 11, 18). Certain memories are included in national histories, especially stories characterized by blame, victimhood, and excuses, while others are left out.

Stories about the population exchange reflect the close ties between trauma, victimhood, and identity, national and individual, a topic Norman Izkowitz takes up when considering the psychology of ethnic conflict in the specific case of the Greeks and Turks. He outlines seven elements that attempt to explain the continuing animosity between Greeks and Turks, drawing upon the conflict during and after WWI. These elements include: the strong connection between self and nation and the violent lengths to which people will go in protection of the nation/self; the concept of the list of historical grievances, which grow for each side over time; the passing on of negative attitudes; stereotyping as a means of otherizing; the “ego of victimization” in which the trauma of only one side is significant; the therapy of action; and finally, an inability to mourn losses which prevents each side from moving forward (Izkowitz 1996: 36). Considering the population exchange within this framework of psychology in ethnic conflict brings to the fore some important trends. The union of national and self identity, assignation of outward blame,

the creation of stereotyped, “demon” Others, and claims of victimization were themes present in many conversations I had with Turks and Greeks. Through the retelling of certain stories and through national education, these attitudes are passed down through generations, continuing hostile feelings between Greeks and Turks. For example, Theodossopoulos explains how Turks live in the imaginations of Greeks and the way in which ignorance of the ‘other’ is preferable to personal knowledge that would threaten established demonizing stereotypes. Refugee stories that contain this kind of first-hand, personal knowledge of the ‘other’ (and often friendships with them) and express sadness or nostalgia are repressed during assimilation because they complicate national identity boundaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’.

The population exchange was negotiated and mandated by officials from Greece, Turkey, and the international community. The governments of both populations involved had a hand in the events leading to the population exchange as well as the exchange itself. However, as noted above, notions of victimhood and blame are central to stories of ethnic conflict, and in this case, to stories of the exchange as well. Michael Herzfeld examines the function of excuses and blame and documents how attributions of blame for past events serve as excuses, especially for past failures. The mass exodus of Greeks from Turkey after World War I was largely prompted by the defeat of the Greek army, what is largely recognized as a national failure. Herzfeld describes how assigning blame externally, whether ascribing it to Turkey or other Great Powers, functions as an excuse for this Greek failure. Nationalism enters into the dialogue when Herzfeld considers how “convenient explanations” like blame and excuses are “symbolic systems of cultural justification and as such they could be—and often are—closely structured on models promoted by nationalist myths and historical narratives” (Herzfeld, 1982: 645). In other words, assignments of blame and excuses that people make to account for certain failures or losses often

reflect larger nationalist discourses, in which the performance of blaming is standardized in history books, news media, etc.

These stories of victimhood and blame help to foster feelings of belonging within the nation because they unite the people of one nation against the common enemy of the national ‘other’. The population exchange occurred during a moment of nation-building in both Greece and Turkey, in which ethnic and religious homogeneity became important in defining the new nation state. Particularly in Turkey, where the failure of the Ottoman Empire was in part attributed to non-Muslims (largely Greeks and Armenians) controlling trade and the economy and the inability of the central power to effectively manage diverse populations, modernization and nation-building occurred alongside (often violent) minority repression. At the same time, World War I and the Greek army’s invasion of Anatolia provoked Greek subjects of the Ottoman Empire to align themselves with Greece. It called upon notions of shared religion, ethnicity, and imagined homeland, even if that homeland was left centuries before Greek independence. Thus, the population exchange was part of the process of creating an ethnically and religiously unified state. In the Greek and Turkish nations, Muslim and Greek Orthodox minorities were expelled alongside arguments of mythologized “inherent differences” between the two populations: “Cultural differences related to religion, language and the interpretation of history are put forward to justify the antagonism of the two nations” (Theodossopoulos, 2006: 8). Notions about the importance of national homogeneity and ethnonationalism combined with perceived differences between Turks and Greeks and wartime conflict led to clear ‘self’/‘other’ distinctions that facilitate assignation of self-victimhood and blame in conversations about the population exchange.

Collective Memory

In her studies of Turkish history and memory, Esra Özyürek mentions how often Turks encouraged her to continue her work because “lack of memory is one of the most important problems we have in this country” (Özyürek, 2007: 3). While Greeks have been documenting and analyzing the events of the “Asia Minor Catastrophe” for decades (see Doulis 1977), Turkish scholars are only beginning to explore these events. Very few works exist in English regarding memory in Turkey, and at times the dominant, state-sponsored trend in Turkey is to encourage forgetting. Less pleasant moments in Turkey’s history are not spoken about, and stereotypes exist without awareness of when or why they began. Many Turks explained that after the Greco-Turkish War, they were more interested in moving forward than of thinking about and mourning the immediate past, including the population exchange. Those issues which are not forgotten but are controversial, or “dirty” as some said, many Turks respond to with silences (in the case of the Armenian genocide, for example³). Both memory and forgetting are important in the establishment of collective understanding and historicization of events, determining which narratives will enter public memory and history textbooks and which will be left out. Still, Özyürek insists that “people challenge, reaffirm, or transform the concepts of history, nation, homeland, and republic through acts of memory” (2). Personal memory has agency because people are aware of where their own memories coincide, contest, or alter collective understandings of nationality and homeland. However, she argues that those memories which are publically shared are controlled by the state through education or national media in order to foster a sense of belonging. Unfortunately, these national historicizations often continue the

³ While the Turkish Republic still does not recognize the mass deportations and deaths of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in 1915 as a genocide, most scholars and historians consider it as such.

state of hostility and bitterness between Greeks and Turks, despite private memories of the exchanged, whose stories might foster understanding instead.

Some believe that memories of these events are best left in the past. In an article considering memories in post-war Sarajevo, Cornelia Sorabji quotes an author who wrote,

There is no good to be had from talking of horrific slaughter, of human fear and of the brutality of both sides. It should not be remembered or regretted or celebrated. The best thing is to forget, to let the human memory of all ugliness die, and for the children not to sing songs of revenge. (Sorabji 2006: 1)

This woman's protestations against memory indicate that they are indeed powerful, and that they have the capacity to promote hostility when they are passed down. Sorabji calls these types of memories "transmitted", and explains that they shape current political environments through younger generations, who find the memories of their grandparents meaningful despite not having suffered direct trauma. Another anthropologist, Bette Denich, turns to writings about Cyprus to explain the danger of memory in Yugoslavia (Denich 1994: 381). She quotes Vamik Volkan, who theorizes,

When the inability to mourn is chronic, grievances connected with it are passed on from the older to the younger generation...The third generation is often ready to erase the humiliation suffered by grandparents...At this point, the original trauma has been mythologized, and historical truth has been replaced by emotional narrative, which in a group is apt to be altogether one-sided. (Volkan 1988: 176)

Individual memories become "standardized narratives" shared by even those who did not experience trauma (See Das, 1996 and Caruth, 1996). Standardized, transmitted memories of trauma, particularly violent ethnic conflict, and nationalism combine to create narratives that are emotional, one-sided, and persistent. They enter into national education, public memory, and

eventually contemporary world politics, as demonstrated for example by continued struggle between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus.⁴

Private Memory

Because narratives of victimhood and blame serve the nation by fostering belonging against an outside ‘other’, alternative narratives that challenge these divisions are suppressed. In both countries, populations entering under the exchange were ostracized for perceived connections to the countries they left, despite the exchange being predicated upon their connection to the country to which they were moved. Rapid assimilation became important, and often required suppression of certain emotions and identities. In particular, expression of nostalgia for the lost homeland or stories of shared culture went against nationalist discourses that had mandated the exchange on the basis of irreconcilable difference. Sympathy for people of the other nation, who were undergoing similarly traumatic experiences, was equally unpatriotic, especially in the face of stereotypes and pervasive demonizing of the external ‘other’. Consequently, these stories are rarely expressed in Turkey, where any mention of the exchange is rare, and in Greece, where the nationalist narrative is still more common. Clark McCauley, in studying psychology and ethnic nationalism, points to the importance of group identification based upon shared social categories, shared stereotypes, and patriotism and nationalism (McCauley 2001: 349). He puts forth self-preservation as motivational in assuming a national identity through group identification. The pleasure of belonging that comes from subscribing to collective understanding and national history of an event or from aligning oneself

⁴ Today, Turkey occupies about one-third of the land in Northern Cyprus and Greece controls the rest of the island. Attempts to share power have failed, and the two areas continue to function separately. Occasional outbreaks of hostilities continue and the division of the island continues remains a main point of contention between Greeks and Turks.

with one's compatriots against the 'other' is compelling, while going against these discourses can be isolating.

It is only very recently in film and literature that alternative narratives are quietly beginning to be explored. In 2007 Aslı Iğsız published one of the first English studies of counter-narratives of the population exchange in literature. She examined two cultural institutions, a music production company and publishing company, which made the first steps in calling attention to narratives about the population exchange. Iğsız indicates a recent move in Turkish books, movies, and musical albums to address the Anatolian past and bring it to the public domain (Iğsız 2007: 165). In general, personal memories and cultural productions are the site for this exploration, rather than historical or political documents. Memory is not only a site that continues hostility, but also a possibility for peaceful (re)coexistence. Iğsız explains, "The representations in the 1990s of the 1923 Greek-Turkish population exchange opened a retrospective platform to contest homogenizing practices and air tensions between state-imposed identity and self-identification" (Özyürek 2007: 186). Memory provides a hopeful space where narratives counter to the nationalist histories exist, especially depicted in cultural productions, and have the possibility of confronting mythologized history and ending hostility. It opens the way for an Aegean identity that recognizes shared culture and unites rather than divides the people of Greece and Turkey.

Methods

My inter-disciplinary research included examining the actual policy documents mandating the exchange, reading historical, theoretical, and popular culture works about the exchange, and conducting interviews with Greeks and Turks. These interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, and through e-mail. The population exchange occurred 85 years ago,

and there are few survivors of the exchange living today. Some of the participants I interviewed were children during the exchange, living either in Turkey or in America, where their families immigrated due to instability in Greece after World War I. However, most interviewees are the grandchildren of those affected by the exchange, and they speak of the stories their family members passed down about the conflict and the population exchange. Others were not directly affected by the exchange, but grew up in Greek or Turkish communities where discussion of the exchange was common, rare, or nonexistent, but perceptions of the national ‘other’ were strong, and negative. These interviews often reveal the nationalist narratives that were transmitted to them through education. Because I contacted participants across the country and in Turkey, it was impossible to conduct all of these interviews in person. Some were held by telephone or e-mail, which often shortened the conversation. While I appreciate the personal character of face-to-face interviews, opening my communication to include e-mail and telephone allowed me to hear the stories of many participants outside of my immediate community. The diversity of my methods allowed me to access many viewpoints, but also complicates the analysis. Questions of legacy and transmission are important, as is distance from the event, both temporal and geographic.

The diversity of my interviewees can be linked to the exchange itself. The population exchange had profound effects upon both the Greek and Turkish nations and demographics, but these effects were not identical. For Greece, the consequences were largely demographic; the main concern was how to incorporate the 1.5 million people who returned with the defeated soldiers or as a result of the exchange. Resources, lands, and jobs were limited, and the influx prompted a large number of Greeks to leave Greece if they were able, many coming to the United States. In Turkey, a much larger population left than returned, and so the incoming

population did not cause such a strain on the resources of the country. However, many of the Greeks who left were educated, skilled professionals who were involved in trade or worked as doctors, craftsmen, dentists, and similar jobs. The incoming population, on the other hand, was largely made up of agrarian peasants. Thus, the Greeks left a gap in Turkey's economic and commercial structure which was not filled by the transferred Turks. Instead, many of those Turks entered rural communities already suffering as a result of poor economic conditions following the war. The demographic realities of the exchange had a profound effect upon the pre-existing populations in Greece and Turkey, which influenced the type of welcome they received upon arrival, the populations who left as a result of their arrival, and, ultimately, the make-up of my informants.

In the United States today, there are large communities of Greeks who have lived in America for a number of generations, many of whom left Greece in the early 1920s for those reasons previously mentioned. The US Census Bureau reports nearly 1.4 million Greek-Americans in 2007.⁵ Thus, finding a local population with Greek heritage with whom to work proved fairly simple. In contrast, the estimated population of Turkish-Americans numbers slightly over 150,000.⁶ Having left Turkey a few months before this project formally began, my interviews were limited to local Greeks and Turks, and a few of my Turkish contacts whom I could reach through e-mail. The Greeks I spoke with were all Greek-American, and all of their families had left Greece following World War I. The Turks, on the other hand, were all students who grew up in Turkey came to America recently to pursue higher education. I see this as closely linked to the exchange, which contributed to a large population of Greeks leaving the country for America. It also means that Greek perceptions and attitudes of Turks were defined

⁵ ["Total ancestry report". U.S. Census Bureau.](#) 2007.

⁶ American Community Survey, 2005.

more primarily by the events of the 1920s that caused them to leave. The Turks, on the other hand, were also familiar with more current events in the evolving Greek-Turkish relationship. These differences may have contributed to how each group conceptualized the exchange.

Chapter Outline

In this thesis, I will first examine through discourse analysis the language of the Lausanne Convention and other policy documents researching and finally mandating an exchange of populations in 1923. I will look at the ways in which the language of the documents sets up ideal national identities and divides populations into nationalities based on certain criteria. I will also examine early historiographies about the Greco-Turkish war and population exchange, which incorporated these same divisions. In the following chapter, I will explore the relationship between nationalism and ethnic conflict, particularly focusing on how nationalist historiographies and memory transmission foster the demonization of the ‘other’, claims of self-victimhood, and outward assignations of blame. I will argue that these kinds of conceptualizations serve to unify the nation and designate national identity but perpetuate hatred and violence between Greeks and Turks. My primary sources in this chapter will include conversations I had with Turks and Greeks and studies regarding national education in Greece and Turkey, memory of the burning of Smyrna, the war, and the exchange, and other related topics. In the fourth chapter, I turn to counter-narratives regarding the exchange, accessed through the stories of the descendents of exchanged people and other cultural products, including film, song, and literature. These stories reveal an alternative to the divisive national historiographies, instead emphasizing the shared traumatic experiences of Greek and Turkish exchanged peoples, the often uncomfortable fit of new national identities for many of the exchanged, nostalgia for the lost homeland, and cultural similarities and histories of coexistence

shared between Greeks and Turks. Whereas the boundaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’ are clearly delineated in the previous chapters, in this chapter I will take a relational approach to these two populations and explore how those boundaries are traversed, where they overlap, and when they fail to accurately describe self-identifications and the complex relationship between Greeks and Turks. This chapter will attempt to represent the stories which are often repressed because they counter the dominant, nationalist historiographies and question the assumptions of national identity. In the final chapter I will examine the relationship between Greece and Turkey today and look at other instances of population exchange in the world, for which the Greco-Turkish population exchange was often an example.

Chapter 2

Establishing Categories of Belonging and Otherness: National Identity in the Lausanne Convention

The Lausanne Convention outlined the specific terms of the population exchange. Finalized on January 30, 1923, it was signed by members of the Greek government and the emerging Turkish republic. The convention begins, “As from the 1st May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory.” Nineteen articles follow, setting out the details of transportation, resettlement, acquisition of nationality, and economic reprisals, and finally passing on responsibility to a Mixed Commission to oversee the exchange. Though the Convention addresses the practical details of the exchange, it fails to take into account human costs beyond economic and property losses. The sterility of the language masks the suffering and trauma which the resettled populations will face. Furthermore, because responsibility is passed to an unspecified “Mixed Commission” to undertake the actual exchange, there is a rupture between the political figures who signed the Convention and the enforcers who will handle the transfer. For those experiencing the exchange on the ground, anger and blame were often directed towards the army of the country forcing them to leave. The hostilities of the Greco-Turkish war had already poisoned the relationship between many Greeks and Turks. In this way, a decision made mutually by two nations, as indicated by the signers of the document, was transformed by both nations into a history defined by a perpetrator-victim relationship. The exchange promoted nationalism and homogeneity at the expense of the exchanged populations and the expense of a Greco-Turkish relationship that had been productive in the Ottoman Empire for centuries.

While the Lausanne Convention ultimately mandated the exchange, other political documents at the time also explored the question of minority populations in the former Ottoman Empire and made suggestions regarding the partition of the territory. A study was undertaken in 1919 by a group of Americans led by Henry Churchill King and Charles R. Crane, who then made their recommendations in the form of the King-Crane Commission. Their research included conversations with locals and political leaders, and their aim was to determine the feasibility of self-determination in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. Colonial rule by powers such as Great Britain or France and temporary occupation by Americans who would guide the populations to self-sufficiency and sovereignty were considered, and the latter ultimately favored. In regards to the possibility of a Turkish state, the Commission recommended its granting, “but under such conditions as may sacredly guard the rights of all minorities, whether racial or religious” (King-Crane Commission, 1919) The Commission goes on to describe how universal national education might unify and uplift all of the various populations within Turkey; each would be granted equal rights and representation in gradual self-government, resulting in “a cosmopolitan state in which various racial stocks were contained and in whose government all representatively shared” (King-Crane Commission, 1919). In regards to the particular “problem” of the Greeks in what would become Turkey, the Commission stated, “In spite of the antagonisms of recent years, [Dr. W.R.] Ramsay may well be right in saying: ‘The Turks and the Greeks will united make a happier country than either race could by itself.’ The two races supplement each other”. Unlike the Lausanne Convention, which assumes that separation is the most beneficial course of action for both nations, the King-Crane Commission favored a diverse Turkish mandate based on on-the-ground realities and accounts of people in the region. By the signing of the Lausanne Convention a few years later by the Greek

and Turkish nations, the agenda was homogeneity. The shift from the end of World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Greek defeat and establishment of a Turkish nation was punctuated by the desire of both nations for national unity manifested by the population exchange, in keeping with precedents set in Versailles in 1920 with the Treaty of Sèvres⁷. At the heart of this decision, then, is national identity formation and questions of belonging.

Categorizing National Identity

The language employed in the Lausanne Convention set up categories of identification that determined national identity based upon other markers, especially religion. As evident by the passage quoted above, the document initially refers to the two groups as “Greek Orthodox” and “Moslem” populations. These religious divisions determine belonging – “Moslems” are to fit into the Turkish nation and Christians into the Greek nation. However, hereafter the religious component is dropped in reference to the Greek population, while “Turk” is a term employed only twice. “Moslem” remains the primary identifier for the population in Greece to be resettled in Turkey. While this language indicates the longer period of Greek nationhood and existence of a population in Turkey which identifies itself this way, the “Greek”/“Greek Orthodox” population in Turkey was not homogenous in its self-identifications or affiliations with the Greek “homeland.” Language was also a complex identifier—many of the Greeks in Turkey spoke a dialect of Greek heavily influenced by Turkish, or spoke no Greek at all. The same was true of the Muslim populations residing in now Greek lands. Thus, the exchange made assumptions about identity that did not reflect the sentiments of the affected populations. When I asked one Turk the details regarding the populations who were exchanged, her response was complicated and situated in the context of Ottoman history:

⁷ This treaty was negotiated by the Ottoman Empire and the Allied Powers following World War I. In it, Greece was given control over certain areas along the Aegean coast including Smyrna and other parts of the empire were partitioned as well. As the Turkish nationals gained power, questions regarding the legitimacy of this treaty arose.

“The answer lies in the definition of who is Greek and who is Turk. The so-called Greek population in Turkey should not be called so as we always called them *Rums*. They have spoken Turkish written in a Greek alphabet, served in Ottoman armies, fought in Gelibolu [Gallipoli] together with other Muslims soldiers; but [are] Christians who belong to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Turks in Turkey can be defined as those who have contributed to the foundation of a new republic of Turkey regardless of their national and racial background, but [are] Islamic...The Turks in Greece spoke Greek and came mostly from Slavic origin but belonged to the religion Islam.”

The diversity of the Ottoman Empire complicated the division of its populations on the basis of religion, language, ethnicity, or nationality. While religion marked differences, many of these minority populations lived, worked, and even defended their homelands together with the majority populations. The convention was not interested in how religious minorities might identify themselves nationally. It assumed that their primary identification was religious and that belonging in the new nation would come from shared religion. Other ties the exchanged might feel with their current homeland were ignored.

The population exchange brought about more unified populations in Greece and Turkey. The removal of “enemy” populations whose threat had been revealed through the hostilities of the Greco-Turkish War was for many a relief, heightened by the pleasure of group identification in a homogenous new nation. In defining the idea of the ‘nation’, Benedict Anderson described, “It is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 2006: 7). The feeling of membership in these communities is often pleasurable, highly social, and marked by feelings of attachment (McCauley, 2001: 343). However, attachment to the nation and feelings of belonging differ from nationalism in an important way. McCauley draws on the work of Feshbach to make this distinction: “Patriotism is feeling love of country, which Feshbach sees as good; nationalism is feeling that one’s nation is superior to

others, which Feshbach sees as bad” (2001: 352). This distinction is important in regards to the Greco-Turkish War and the population exchange because nationalism and nationalist education played a large role in the historicization of the events. The Greco-Turkish War and population exchange were interpreted in ways that served the nation and highlighted its superiority over the ‘other’; these stories entered into collective public memory through national education. The earliest of these nationalist histories began to emerge just after the exchange, and used the religious categories that had indicated belonging to a certain nation to foster resentment between the nations. The Greco-Turkish War is understood as a clash not just between nations, but part of an epic and storied struggle between Islam and Christianity, a battle with far deeper roots. These conceptualizations deny the long history of peaceful coexistence between Greeks and Turks in the Ottoman Empire and reinforce the racial and religious homogeneity of each nation by otherizing the outsider and denying similarities. The ability to identify an enemy and highlight his differences became central to nationalist narratives adopted and transmitted through generations.

Nationalist Histories

In 1922, Dr. Lysimachos Œconomos published a work entitled *The Martyrdom of Smyrna and Eastern Christendom: a File of Overwhelming Evidence, Denouncing the Misdeeds of the Turks in Asia Minor and showing their Responsibility for the Horrors of Smyrna*. The title alone indicates the importance the author places on religion in his perceptions of the war, as well as his belief in the complete culpability of the Turks. The violence between Greeks and Turks in Smyrna was a prominent reason cited in justifying the exchange, and this work frames that violence in religious terms. Œconomos describes the Greco-Turkish conflict as “wholesale massacres and deportations of a martyred Christendom”, “the culmination of several other

crushing measures, adopted with a view to annihilating in Asia Minor whatever bore a Christian or Greek character” (9). Economos paints the Greco-Turkish War, a conflict between the established Greek and emerging Turkish nations, as an attack against Christians, who are clearly victim to the monstrous Turkish ‘other’. He uses the loaded term martyrdom to further heroicize the Greek suffering and demonize the Turk, ignoring Greek initiation of the war.

Four years later, George Horton published another history of the events, this one titled *The Blight of Asia* with the subheading: “*The true story of the burning of Smyrna with an account of the systematic extermination of Christian population by Mohammedans; and of the culpability of certain great powers*”. Again, indication of the author’s prejudices are clear in the title. Horton, an American who served as Consul-General and Consul in the Near East for thirty years, writes a text with the goals of presenting “the truth about the destruction of Smyrna and the massacre of a large part of its inhabitants by one who was present” (forward). He also introduces the fight as a conflict between Christians and Muslims, rather than two modern nations. The term “massacre” furthers this claim by indicating one-sided aggression associated with “primitive” tribal violence rather than modern warfare. Horton connects the conflict to religion often, writing,

These [Turks] had the air of hunters crouching and stalking their prey. But the thing that made an unforgettable impression was the expression on their faces. It was that of an ecstasy of hate and savagery. There was in it, too, a religious exaltation, but it was not beautiful, it was the religion of the Powers of Darkness (Horton 1926: 128).

This passage is problematic on a number of levels, employing Orientalist language to highlight the savagery of the Turkish forces and to compare them to animals. Furthermore, it links that savagery to religion, and in doing so implicitly draws a connection between Islam and a sick

enjoyment of violence. This connection is made explicit when Horton describes the warlike advancement of Islam and connects it to contemporary Turkish policy:

Mohammedanism has been propagated by the sword and by violence ever since it first appeared as the great enemy of Christianity...It has been left to the Turk, however, in more recent years, to carry on the ferocious traditions of his creed, and to distinguish himself by excesses of which have never been equaled (19).

Through comments like these, Horton describes the Greco-Turkish War as a fight between Christians and Muslims and reduces it to the kind of “age-old” conflict that is incapable of being remedied by modern techniques of negotiation and law-making. It is no surprise, therefore, that the resolution of this conflict was an almost universal unmixing of populations in which Christians and Muslims were forcibly separated.

Early Turkish histories follow a similar trajectory. Halide Edib Adivar’s work entitled *The Shirt of Flame/The Daughter of Smyrna* chronicles a semi-autobiographic tale of the burning of Smyrna and Turkish War of Independence. In this work the Turks/Muslims are portrayed as victims of Greek/Christian attacks. The conflict is not only understood in terms of religion, but religious categories continue to be taken up as markers of difference. For example, Adivar writes,

From every house a Greek soldier goes out at daytime with loot in his hand. The old lie with broken heads on the pavement, and packs of women in black fly to escape the barbarians. Innocent multitudes with hands tied at their back are dragged out before your ships, bayoneted, bitten, insulted, and spat in the face (49).

Here, the Greek soldiers are barbarians responsible for terrible violence wreaked upon helpless populations, taking up the same narratives expressed by Greek historians, but reversing the role of victim and perpetrator. Still, here it is the soldiers engaging in violence. Another part of the text describes the conflict between Muslim and Christian people, demonstrating how animosity

existed between the different religious populations as well as the armies. Adivar illustrates her experiences,

The Moslems were somber and extraordinarily quiet and native Christians all looked anxious, wondering whether it were wise to continue their daily attack and jeers at the Moslems. The uncleanest and deadliest poison flowed from the perfidious and insulting publications and deeds of the Native Christians who considered themselves the instrument chosen by the Allies to trample on the Turk (33).

Christian and Muslim populations who lived together on Ottoman lands are depicted as enemies, and it is the Muslims who are victims of Greek hostility. Thus, Greek and Turkish nationalist histories share a tendency to emphasize religious differences and claim the victimhood of their own people. The consequence of describing the war in these terms was the exchange, which mirrored the perception that coexistence was impossible and chose to forcibly separate the populations in question. This is evident in comments made by Lord Curzon, a participant in the talks:

The conference had only ceded to the demand that the exchange should be compulsory because all those who had studied the matter most closely seemed to agree that the suffering entailed, great as it must be, would be repaid by the advantages which would ultimately accrue to both countries from a greater homogeneity of population and from the removal of old and deep rooted causes of quarrel (quoted in Barutciski, 2004: 29).

The strife between Greeks and Turks was perceived as “old and deep-rooted”, language that reflects and is reflected in these early histories. With the wide acceptance of such notions, the exchange was perceived as the only solution to bring peace.

Religion and the Nation

The language of the Lausanne Convention and these histories written just after the Greek-Turkish war laid out distinctions that were taken up in nationalist projects and education, and in narratives of Turks and Greeks about the exchange and the events that led up to it. The terms

“Moslem” and “Greek Orthodox” became connected to nationality and important in defining the national enemy or national ‘other’. In Greece, part of belonging to the nation was being an Orthodox Christian. The Republic of Turkey’s foundation was based upon secularism, but for various political and economic reasons, the majority of its religious minorities were expelled.⁸ These expulsions, sometimes brutal, left an almost entirely Muslim population within Turkey’s borders. Thus, for both countries religion was important in defining national identity, and unity was perceived to be dependent upon homogenization. Furthermore, placing these two groups at odds was productive for the nationalist cause. In a study of stereotypes held among Greeks, Dimitrios Theodossopoulos commented on the unfavorable image of Turks:

The hostile and suspicious images they use to describe the Turks do not do justice to the long periods of peaceful co-existence... They do reveal, however, some culturally sensitive and intimate understandings of the Self and Other, and have something to tell about the unfolding of nationalist discourse at the local level (Theodossopoulos, 2004: 30).

Defining, and often demonizing, a stigmatized ‘other’ was important in defining the ‘self’, especially the national ‘self’. For Greeks, this ‘other’ became the barbarous Turk; for Turks, Greeks became the enemy. This hostility, alongside the population exchange, helped to solidify borders and contain distinct populations within national territories. Discourses of otherness promote solidarity and membership, and in the 1920s at the birth of modern Greece and Turkey, each of these countries provided the archetype for the other. Such divisions were made official through national education and textbooks, which, when describing the events of the Greek-Turkish War, identified the ‘self’ as the victim and emphasized the atrocities of the perpetrator ‘other’ (Theodossopoulos 2004, 36). Nationalist news and histories employed similar language

⁸ The leaders of the new republic felt that it was both dangerous and unfair that minority populations control such a large portion of the economy and trade. This was one reason for the expulsion of the Greeks and Armenians. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic was not an Islamic state in any official capacity; however, the decisions to expel the Greeks and Armenians left almost entirely Muslim population with Turkey.

and depictions, and victimhood and blame became central foci in narratives of the conflict and population exchange. These types of narratives, through repetition and transmission, become standardized and enter into collective memory. They are repeated through generations and are still visible in the stories people tell today about the relationship between Greeks and Turks, the Greco-Turkish War, and the population exchange.

Chapter 3

Accessing Dominant Narratives: The ‘Other’ in National Historiographies, Education, and Collective Memory

When I sat down with three generations of a Greek family in Washington, D.C., the women were gathered in the kitchen baking baklava, the men downstairs watching sports on television. Maria, affectionately called YiaYia⁹ by the family, her daughters Liz and Tia, their husbands Jim and Jimmy, and Jimmy, the son of Liz and Jim, were all gathered at the house for a family meal. As Liz reduced a pot of honey and water for the baklava on the stove, her mother reminded her to add lemon juice to the mixture. This concoction would eventually be poured over the layers of paper-thin phyllo dough, each swiped with melted butter, and a blend of chopped nuts and spices. The origin of the pastry is contested, claimed by both the Greeks and the Turks. I was surprised when Liz turned from her mother to explain to me that she uses honey rather than the traditional Greek version prepared with simple syrup (and lemons!). From my frequent visits to Ali Bey’s pastry shop, unfortunately located on the way home from my gym in Istanbul, I was well aware that most Turkish pastries, including baklava, are made with a simple syrup. Honey is never part of the equation. When I brought up this point to Liz, I could feel the conflicting sentiments – relief that her version is distinct from the Turkish, and uncomfortable surprise at learning that the traditional Greek and Turkish versions are in fact identical. This exchange set the tone for the interviews—in their eyes, my knowledge of Turkish cuisine and my stay in Turkey placed me on the side of the Turks. While some members of the family treated my stay in Turkey with outward polite interest, and likely responded more diplomatically to

⁹ A Greek term for Grandmother.

certain questions regarding their sentiments towards Turks, all seemed anxious to present the Greek side against my presumed sympathy for the Turks.¹⁰

The conversation turned to the events of the Greco-Turkish War when Maria showed me a tile she had decided to bring when she heard about my project. The tile showed Greek women throwing themselves off the edge of cliffs as a sinister Turkish army approached behind them. This image was a powerful one for herself and for her children, whose awareness of the ill feelings between Greeks and Turks had begun with questions about this tile. When I asked Maria what she taught her children about the events that prompted her family to immigrate to the United States, she responded,

“I didn’t go out of my way because it wasn’t a very happy situation. So why bother a child with something like that? But be aware.”

But her daughter Liz, describing her childhood memories, confessed,

“From the time of being young when the Turks showed up, you know, that feeling of ‘Damn Turks! There they are!’ You know, that kind of thing. You had that feeling, not because I ever knew any Turk to have that feeling, but just because from the time we were little, you know we heard those stories. My mother has told me the story of these women who would rather throw themselves off the cliff than be ravaged by the Turks since the time I was a little girl. It’s hard to admit that, but that’s the way it was.”

Maria’s assertion that she wasn’t interested in burdening a child with such stories is somewhat belied by her daughter’s memories of childhood stories and impressions. In fact, when Liz speaks about her knowledge and perceptions of the Turks, many of her stories mirror those of her mother, whether referring to Greek women who jumped off cliffs rather than face the Turkish army or the unjust treatment of the Hagia Sophia, “our cathedral,” and Greek Orthodox

¹⁰ I found this to be true in most of my interviews with Greeks. My stay in Turkey, which sparked my interest in this project, was taken to indicate my position on the “side” of the Turks. Certainly my experiences in Turkey shape my approach to this thesis, as does my short visit to Greece; but my primary hope with this research was to begin to understand the animosity between two peoples who share a long history, many elements of culture and lifestyle, and in particular the trauma of this event.

Christians in Istanbul. Each professes to be unsure of the details and not interested in clinging to these memories or passing them on. Still, it is clear that certain symbols and the stories that accompany them continue to live in the memory and imagination of this family.

When I asked Maria the specifics regarding her family's decision to move to America in the 1920s, she spoke of poverty and the "tyranny" of the Turks:

"The Greeks were under the tyranny of the Turks for over 400 years. And one thing they did, the livelihood of the Greeks was the olive trees, they'd cut them all down used them for firewood. Greeks hardly talked about the Turks because while they were there, they were tyrants. They didn't—they took everything. They didn't leave food for the Greeks. They also broke up the families...they burned down the churches. They raped. They were just mean."

In her household growing up, Maria informed me, 'Turk' was a swearword. When she speaks of the poverty of Greece following the war, poverty that led to her family's permanent departure from their homeland, she places the blame squarely on the Turks. Moreover, the Turks are not merely associated with World War I and its aftermath, but with hundreds of years of Ottoman rule over territory belonging to the Byzantine Empire centuries earlier. The boundaries of ancient Greece still hold validity in her imagination. In fact, Maria told me that she was surprised at discovering that all Greeks did not look like figures of Aphrodite when she finally travelled to Greece. Ancient and modern Greece are lumped together in her memory, as are the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. The complexity of the period of the Greco-Turkish War, in which both states were undergoing national transformations and fighting and occupation were occurring on all sides, as well as suffering, is lost in Maria's narration. When I moved downstairs to talk to the men, I heard similar stories.

Tia's husband, Jimmy, talked about his father, who left Greece when he was a child of eleven or twelve years. Jimmy remembers the vivid stories his father told about the Turks. Growing up, it was explicit in his household that Turks were the enemy and associating with

them was forbidden; Jimmy called it a “cardinal sin.” Later, when describing his father’s treatment of Turks in the United States, he explained,

“He used to tell me, ‘The worst Greek is better than the best Turk.’ He used to tell me it was forbidden to bring a Turk into our house, anywhere. And in those days when my dad had all the restaurants, he would flat-out refuse to serve people if they were Turkish. He would throw them out . . . He was really tough on it.”

Later, he would repeat, “I remember, that was the key thing, ‘The worst Greek is better than the best Turk.’” When asked why his father held these opinions, Jimmy could only vaguely identify a reason—he spoke of “the hardships that were created by all the events that took place”, but told me that his father never went into specifics, perhaps because it was painful for him to think about. Jimmy’s brother-in-law Jim, on the other hand, held stronger and more specific views about what led to animosity between the Turks and Greeks. He explained that his grandfather left a small island in what is now Turkey because the Turks “invaded his home.” He said,

“All I know, my father used to tell me they slaughtered millions, so he used to get a little upset, because they talk about the Holocaust being six million Jews; well, he said percentage-wise more Greeks got killed by the Turks...So he used to always say with the Turks, ‘This is nothing new,’ he says—history always repeated itself, and that the Jews took a monopoly on painful genocide, but there were all sorts of other genocides that happened.”

Jim was unsure of the details, but he was certain the Turks were at fault. Moreover, he compares the Greco-Turkish War to the Holocaust, linking the plight of the Greeks to the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis in World War II. Jimmy affirmed this comparison, and the two exchanged stories of their fathers, who believed the Greeks to have withstood a trauma like the Holocaust with dignity (as opposed to the Jewish “crybabies”).¹¹ This certainty that the Turks were to blame for the suffering of the Greeks, coupled with only very vague knowledge of the events of

¹¹ In recent years, there have been a number of attempts to recognize a Pontic or Greek genocide undertaken by the Ottomans/Turks in the years during and after World War I. While a number of groups, including the Greek Parliament, have passed resolutions recognizing the violence as such, it remains a hotly contested designation and is unrecognized by the UN or the European Parliament.

the war and the details of their families' experiences, was repeated in each of my conversations with this Greek family. Claims of victimhood and outward assignations of blame were present in most of my interviews with both Greeks and Turks, as were other elements expressed by this family, including national identity, the passing down of memories and stories, and negative perceptions of the 'other'. Many of the issues brought forth by my conversations with Maria's family fall under what Norman Itzkowitz calls "the psychology of ethnic conflict." In his study of the Ottoman legacy, Itzkowitz notes that the hostility between Greeks and Turks is particularly virulent and long-lived. He attributes its persistence to the seven elements of his "psychology of ethnic conflict." Those elements include nationalism, historical grievances, the intergenerational transmission of attitudes, ignorance of the other, the egoism of victimization, action as therapy, and the inability to mourn (Itzkowitz, 1996: 36).¹² I will use some of these elements as a framework for theorizing the stories told by Maria and her family and by other Greeks and Turks with whom I spoke, especially the connected relationships between nation, 'self', and 'other'.

The Nation and 'Self'/'Other' Divisions

Itzkowitz describes the first feature of ethnic conflict as "the increasingly strong connection between self and nation", a link which helps to explain the violence that marked the shift from the Ottoman Empire to independent states in the Balkans and other Ottoman territories (1996: 36). As self-identifications become national as well as religious and ethnic, defense of the nation is increasingly associated with the defense of the self, and Itzkowitz notes that clinical research demonstrates the great lengths to which people will go in defense of the self. Thus, he is not surprised at the willingness of Greeks and Turks to participate in violence, hostility, and

¹² Itzkowitz also believes these elements to describe the conflicts between Turks and Armenians, Turks and Kurds, Arabs and Israelis, etc.

sacrifice in defense of the state (see also McCauley, 2001). Additionally, Itzkowitz identifies the role of the ‘other’ in this connection between self and state as one marked by purposeful ignorance. He explains,

They have each created a demon that represents the ‘other’, and it is the demons that speak to each other. They do not know anything about each other—they do not wish to know anything about each other (1996: 36).

In ethnic conflict, identifying the national enemy or ‘other’ against which the ‘self’ is constructed is important in bringing about the suture of self and state. Fear of the ‘other’ promotes unity within the nation. The demonization of the ‘other’ requires ignorance about him, as personal knowledge might call into question assumptions about the nefarious nature of the other and consequently assumptions about the irreproachability of the nation/self.

The role of the ‘other’ in self-identification as a member of a state and the particular shape that ‘other’ takes is somewhat dependent upon the historical moment and particular nationalisms of Greece and Turkey after World War I. The Greek nation won its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 1820s, though the boundaries of the modern Greek state are largely the legacy of the Balkan Wars and World War I. Even though the Greek state declared its independence, many “Greeks” continued to live in Ottoman territories in the century that followed. The Greco-Turkish War in 1919 also marks the beginnings of the Turkish Republic as a national entity disparate from the Ottoman Empire. The occupation of Istanbul and Izmir/Smyrna sparked Turkish nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal to fight for independence from the Allied powers and from the Ottoman sultanate. Thus, the nationalisms in Greece and Turkey in the early 1920s are of a slightly different quality. As an already-established independent state, Greek nationalism during and after World War I was marked by irredentism. Greece’s participation in World War I and occupation/invasion of Turkey afterwards is often attributed to

Greece's hopes to acquire new territory or regain lands lost to the Ottoman Empire centuries earlier (Hirschon, 2004). Many of the Greeks living in the Aegean region of Turkey aided the Greek army in its attempts to recover lands on which Greek populations remained during Ottoman rule. When Maria and her family spoke about the violence of the Greco-Turkish War, they spoke of centuries of Ottoman dominance despite ancient Greek claims to the land, claims that led Greek nationalists to advance on Ottoman territory in the instability of the dismantled Ottoman Empire. The failure of the Greeks in this effort and the subsequent influx of hundreds of thousands of Greeks also created the need for a project of incorporation. One method of creating space for this population was to expel another population, and the Muslims were a natural choice given the recent war. As Greece received a massive influx of new people, establishing a strong sense of national identity and unity was important.

Turkey, on the other hand, was involved in the project of founding a nation. The end of World War I heralds the birth of the Turkish nation, one which was marked by ethnic homogenization. The multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual nature of the Ottoman Empire was seen as a weakness, as many factions formed distinct nations in the late 19th century, particularly in the Balkans. In the interest of national stability, and in response to what were seen as threatening actions of Greeks and other minority populations during World War I, Turkish nationalists worked to make the nation ethnically homogenous. This process included not just the exchange of Greek Orthodox Christians, but also the violent expulsion of Armenians. When Turks talk about this moment, they often note the lessons learned from the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the conclusion that the new nation needed to be ethnically unified. One explained,

“First Balkan countries, then Arabic countries separated and declared their independence from the Ottoman Empire. So the foundation of a new Turkish

republic would not be a national state with its non-Turkish or non-Muslim societies.”

Another also cited the problem of the recent violence:

“Both governments probably thought there was no way to repair the damage in the harmony of the society. The happy neighbors, friends, business partners of the past had turned into enemies. I think it was a huge risk not to do anything but just hope that people would repair the damage.”

The foundation of a harmonious Turkish state was popularly seen as dependent upon homogeneity. Thus, the nationalist goals of Greece and Turkey after World War I were somewhat different. Greece hoped to regain territory lost to the Ottoman Empire over five hundred years before the war, while Turkey was interested in creating a stable and unified national state. Fundamental to each of these goals was the Greco-Turkish War; for the Greeks, it represented the opportunity to invade Ottoman territories formerly part of the Byzantine Empire, often where Greeks still lived. Furthermore, various Allied powers had made a number of territorial promises regarding the partition of the Ottoman Empire upon its defeat in World War I, and Greece considered its occupation at least somewhat legitimate, though the new Turkish Republic had not been included in these decisions. For Turkey, the Greco-Turkish War was a war of independence, and the formation of the nation depended upon the successful defeat and expulsion of European imperial and regional occupying forces.

Nationalism in Greece and Turkey, and especially the Greco-Turkish War, called on Turks and Greeks to identify themselves in terms of national designations, rather religious or lingual categories that had defined them under the Ottoman Empire. National origins and notions of the “homeland” became important self-identifiers in a conflict that required populations living alongside one another to choose sides. Greeks who had been living in the Ottoman Empire, sometimes for centuries, often supported the Greek army as it moved eastward

from the Aegean coast. In that region, where ties with Greece were easier to maintain and trade often occurred across the Aegean Sea, identification with the Greek nationalist movement was common. However, in the regions farther removed from the violence and from Greece, identification with a “homeland” left centuries earlier often proved uncomfortable, especially when the Greeks had little or no contact with Greece, limited if any knowledge of the language, and few or no family members or contacts remaining in Greece. The same was true of many Muslims living in Greece, who often had the same limited experience of Turkey. However, the Turk and Greek nations called upon their populations to identify with an imagined “homeland” based upon their ethnicity, religion, and “origins” rather than their present situation. Nationalist histories focused on the formation of a ‘genealogical discourse’ in which the designator ‘Turk’ was applied backwards to Ottoman Muslims and ‘Greek’ to Ottoman Christians (Theodossopoulos 2006, 12). The diversity of the past Ottoman identity, which could be combined with both Muslim and Christian identifications, was rewritten in order to apply present national categories to past realities, inventing a link between the Greek nation and Christians in Turkey and the Turkish nation and Muslims in Greece.

Though national identifications sometimes fit poorly, ethnic and religious ones often proved to be more naturally unifying. The Ottoman Empire had used religious categories to manage the various populations within its borders, often granting a fair amount of autonomy to distinct religious communities in the *millet* system. However, there was “considerable social and cultural intercourse, even integration”, of these populations within the Ottoman Empire (Inalcık 1996, 24). The Greco-Turkish conflict and the actions of Greeks and other minorities during World War I convinced the new Turkish nation that such diversity was dangerous, regardless of the level of integration. Minority populations were viewed as a threat, and ethnic and religious

homogeneity became important in the foundation of the two nations. The population transfer was a way of achieving this homogeneity, and nationalist histories emphasized this benefit of the exchange, as did those I interviewed. Sabriye, a Turk, explained, “The education given about the exchange was with round words such as how the communities need consistency and accordance.” However, with the emphasis on the unity and consistency within the national identity came a heightened focus on the differences between the Turks and the Greeks.

Alongside perceived intimacy between the self and the state, the demonization of the national ‘other’ plays a role in the perpetuation of resentment between Greeks and Turks. Theodossopoulos argues that the creation of such an ‘other’ fosters nationalism and national self-identity:

The Turks for the Greeks—or more accurately, the Turks in the minds of those who call themselves Greeks—are indispensable ingredients of nation building in Greece and Cyprus. They comprise one of the most representative examples of a national other used as inspiration for imagining the national self. (2006: 2)

The imagining of the national ‘self’ is formed in opposition to the national ‘other’, who is often defined by negative qualities and historical aggression against the self. The two categories emerge as polarized opposites that exist in relation to one another, rather than alone; any positive evaluations of the ‘self’ rely upon the comparative negative understanding of the ‘other’. The ‘other’ is characterized in many ways, often ways which highlight its malevolence and its difference from the ‘self’. In their studies of Greece and Cyprus, respectively, Theodossopoulos and Spyrou found that primary school is a key site where the construction and reinforcement of the stigmatized ‘other’ is solidified, often supported by familial or popular attitudes, childhood games, etc. Spyrou provides the example of a history lesson to show how the dichotomy works. When the teacher described Turkish involvement in World War II, she explains that Turkish neutrality helped the Germans, Italians, and Japanese. Greece, unlike Turkey, had resisted the

evil Germans and won with the rest of the world (Spyrou, 2002: 260). Here, Greek involvement is described relationally with Turkish neutrality, and the teacher makes moral judgments in favor of the Greeks. Turkish neutrality is interpreted in such a way that it aides the evil side in opposition to Greece and the entire world; Turkey is thus not the enemy of Greece alone, but of the world. According to Spyrou, historical interpretations like this instill Greek children with negative impressions of the Turks; Theodossopoulos finds that these attitudes last into adulthood, even when Greeks are aware that their childhood education was colored by nationalism (2004: 41). Fostering the idea of the terrible national ‘other’ opens a space for comparisons to the ‘self’, and thus shapes the national identity of the ‘self’. The figure of the ‘other’ is often inhuman, aggressive, and faceless; the “tyrants” that Maria spoke of when she described Turks or, more simply, the “bad guys, period” that Dr. Caner noted as the typical Turkish perception of Greeks. National histories emphasize the malevolence of the ‘other’ in such a way that it poses a threat:

“The sense of emergency [the stereotype of the threatening ‘other’] communicates demarcates a territory of shared beliefs and values, as dangerous ‘outsiders’ help to shape a community of frightened insiders” (Brown and Theodossopoulos, 2004: 10)

Fear of the ‘other’ unites the nation, whose identity is already defined in part in relation to this evil and threatening figure. Descriptions of Turks and Greeks characterized in this way are common in literature, film, news media, etc, and were prevalent in many of the conversations that I had with Greeks and Turks (documented above with Maria’s family and below with various others). In these conversations, the ‘other’ was blamed for hostilities or misfortunes, while the ‘self’ claimed victimhood.

Stories of Victimhood and Blame

Maintaining a national sense of injury in ethnic conflict often relies upon claiming victimhood and focusing on one’s own suffering, ignoring any suffering of the ‘other’ and

blaming it for the conflict. Renée Hirschon refers to this trend as a ‘victim complex’, the belief that one’s own suffering is the greatest (2004, 11). This sense of victimhood is prolonged through focus on past instances of hostility; the formation of a long list of historical grievances precludes the possibility for anything but the continuation of violence and animosity in the present and future (Itzkowitz, 1996: 36). The present conflict becomes merely one in a string of past quarrels. Blame, self-victimization, and the linkage of past hostilities to the Greco-Turkish War are common elements in narrations of the events. Michael Herzfeld categorizes the Greeks as a fatalistic people, but argues that their tendency to attribute failure to powers outside of their control does not lead to inaction, but rather to the performative and rhetorical action of excuses and declarations of blame (1982: 657). According to Herzfeld, the “Asia Minor Catastrophe” is for many Greeks one of a number of national failures for which a variety of excuses are provided. These range from the desire of international powers to promote animosity between Greeks and Turks in order to ensure a mediator role, the refusal of outside powers to allow Greece to retaliate, or, in an assortment of ways, the Turks. Most of the stories I heard from Greeks and Turks turned the blame towards each other. Furthermore, especially in the Greek case, they included expressions of victimhood reaching back to the Ottoman conquest of Byzantine lands. Performances of blame in storytelling about the exchange reinforce the storytellers belonging within the nation because it allies him with his fellow citizens against the ‘other’.

Maria and her family members are very clear as to where they place blame in regards to Greek/Turkish hostilities – Maria spoke of the Turks as tyrants who raped Greeks, burned down churches, and destroyed the livelihood of the Greeks by destroying olive trees. When talking about the events of the Greco-Turkish War, she speaks of 400 years of Turkish domination of

Greece (in an interpretation that encompasses the former Byzantine Empire) rather than of Greek-initiated attacks in Anatolia. Similarly, her son-in-law Jim cited a Turkish invasion as the reason his family left Turkish lands, and spoke of “slaughter”, a decidedly one-sided term for the violence.¹³ Jill, whose grandfather grew up in Smyrna/Izmir and was part of the population exchange, explained,

“When Ataturk came west and pushed the Greeks into the sea, I really believe that my great-grandfather and a couple of my grandfather’s brothers were killed.”

Statements like these deny any Greek aggression and focus on the Turks as the initiators of the violence. Greeks are portrayed as the victims of Turkish hostility. On the other hand, stories by Turks mirror those of the Greeks, but reverse the positions of victim and perpetrator. Sevim, a friend from Turkey, works as a tour guide in Cappadocia (Kapadokya). This region of Turkey did not experience the fighting of the Greco-Turkish war but did suffer the results, namely the population exchange. Part of her job involves taking tourists, including Turks and Greeks, to towns where Greek populations once existed. This gives her and a number of her tour-guide friends in the area a unique perspective, as they hear the personal stories of families who experienced the exchange and witness the often emotional reunions of people with their former family homes, lands, and neighbors. However, tour guiding in Turkey requires official training and approval, so the guides I contacted are very familiar with the official Turkish standpoint regarding these events and proficient in relating that perspective. When Sevim described why the population exchange was mandated, she said,

¹³ The word “slaughter” is taken up by Greeks in many narratives regarding these events. A good example of this is the interviews documented in Alice James’s article entitled, “The Mirror of Their Past: Greek Refugee Photographs and Memories of Anatolia” (2000-2001). Spyros Spyrou also found that terms like “slaughter” and “massacre” were commonly used by teachers educating Cypriot children about Turkish history (2002: 259). These terms were also common in the nationalist historiographies presented in Chapter 2.

“Probably the idea was supported by both governments especially because of what happened after the WWI when the Greek army invaded the Western part of the country – following their dream of getting back what belonged to them.”

Another of her friends explained,

“After the collapse of Ottoman Empire, western Turkey was invaded by Greek troops, and some local opportunist, nationalist Christian groups including high officials like the Patriarch in Istanbul and Izmir have supported this unfair invasion hoping to unify Turkey with Greece, and found a new Christian state along black sea coasts of Turkey; in the name of reconstructing ancient Hellenism. This unfaithful action [was] considered high treason and caused a non-repairable animosity between the nations.”

Füsün, a Turk whose family was exchanged from Greece to Turkey, felt that her personal and family understanding of the events was different from most Turks because of their intimate experience with the event. Still, having grown up and been educated in Turkey, she had no trouble reciting the official line and popularly held viewpoint:

“The typical thing is like, Greeks and other countries occupied the whole country and the Turkish people tried to defend their soil. So that was the whole thing. And for the Greek side, once they lost the Independence War in Turkey, it’s like ‘Big Catastrophe’ and they define it like that. For the Greeks I think of course it’s like ‘their right’ to get the Aegean part. For the Turkish part, it’s a way of defending.”

These responses, like those of the Greeks above, talk about the ancient past and about invasion, but here it is the “unfair” and “unfaithful” invasion of the Greeks hoping to recapture the territories held by the Byzantine Empire centuries ago. The Greeks were the aggressors, and the Turks were merely trying to defend their lands. Sevim’s friend blamed the actions of the Greeks for the permanent animosity between Turkey and Greece.

The ways in which Greeks and Turks portray the Greco-Turkish War are strikingly similar, with the important difference of who suffered and who was responsible for that suffering. The Greeks I spoke with placed more emphasis on the violence of the Turks, something which few Turks noted in relation to the Greeks. While this could point to

disproportionate violence on one side or another, there is evidence of atrocities on all sides, including the killing of civilians, women, and children, the burning of towns, rapes, and massacres. Rather, I would attribute this difference to the fact that many of the Greeks I interviewed were from areas that witnessed violence directly, like Smyrna/Izmir, while the Turks I spoke with were largely from areas that did not see fighting, in Northern Greece or in Cappadocia. Moreover, as the victors, the Turks are able to focus on the positive results of the war and moving forward as a new nation, while the Greeks, as the losers, view it as a failure. As such, Herzfeld argues, narratives of blame and excuses are stronger, marked here by expressions about Turkish brutality.

Responsibility for the population exchange itself is less clear cut, especially as some Greek and Turks consider it a suitable and mutually beneficial resolution to the violence that occurred after World War I. Additionally, the Greek and Turkish governments were not the only players involved; certain international powers also had a hand in negotiating the population exchange as a resolution to the conflict. Many blamed the decision on “the politicians”, but still believed that the exchange was orchestrated as a result of “problems inherited from the past and animosity” that came about because of the violence after World War I. Therefore, the question of responsibility for the exchange is intimately linked to responsibility for the post-war violence, which remains directed outward, either at the Greek or Turkish ‘other’. As discussed in the previous chapter, the language of the document itself helped to obfuscate the site of true power and allow the governments and populations involved to place blame wherever convenient or beneficial.

The narrow scope of stories told about the exchange, in which one population is victimized and the other demonized, indicates a dominant narrative which is rigid and static, and

leaves little room for nuance and evolution. This static narrative is bolstered by claims that such abuse has been carried out for a longer period of time than the scope of the particular conflict, further ossifying the perpetrator ‘other’/victim ‘self’ dichotomy. The historical nature of the conflict was highlighted in many of my conversations with Greeks, which often included lamentations regarding the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the coinciding conquest of the Hagia Sophia,¹⁴ in addition to discussions of events specific to the war and exchange. When I asked Maria why her family first came to the United States, she replied,

“Well, it was after the war in 1918 and things were very bad. People were poor. The olive trees still had to grow. The Greeks were under the tyranny of the Turks for 400 years.”

Poor conditions after the war were just once instance of Turkish ‘tyrannical’ rule spanning centuries. As evident from the repetition of it throughout her narrative, Maria’s understanding of the conflict that prompted her family to leave Greece reaches back centuries and focuses on Turkish culpability. Maria’s daughter Liz explained her attitude toward Turks and this conflict,

“I remember early on the stories were told to us that our church—first of all, it’s not called Constantinople, it’s called Istanbul—our church is no longer where we have worship, after things happened.”

These stories demonstrate how the Greco-Turkish War and the population exchange are read in the larger context of past grievances between Turks and Greeks, and even members of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, and how such stories are passed down from one generation to the next. Stories like these highlight what Lord Curzon called the “old and deep rooted causes of quarrel” that necessitated the population exchange (Barutciski, 2003: 29). They are the same kinds of claims made in the early histories of the war, which point to the historical nature of antagonism between Greeks and Turks.

¹⁴ In 1453, Mehmet the Conqueror captured Constantinople. One of the first actions he took was to declare the Hagia Sophia a mosque and hold prayer there, a symbol of the defeat of the Byzantines but also an action which likely saved the church from looting and defacement.

Understanding the relationship of Greeks and Turks as one of long-term antagonism justifies the drastic measure of permanent separation

Constructing Memory: Tracing the Story of the Souli Women

The repetition of certain stories regarding the Greco-Turkish War and the population exchange indicates the way in which certain narratives have been cemented into popular

collective memory. Education contributes to this process, as well as the passing down of certain stories in families and on a larger scale. This intergenerational transmission of attitudes and memories contributes to the continuation of hatred and animosity stemming from past conflict by bringing



younger generations into the fight (Itzkowitz, 1996; Sorabji, 2006). In order to examine this process, let us return to the story Maria told about Greek women who threw themselves from a cliff as the Turkish army advanced upon them. The image at the right is a picture of the tile she brought to our interview after I told her I was interested in talking to her about Greece and Turkey. The tile depicts the Souli women jumping from the cliffs while the Turkish army draws weapons behind them. The Turks are dark and menacing, and pose violently with their knives drawn on the simple peasant women, who are unarmed and in various stages of jumping from the cliffs to their deaths below. The tile visually depicts many of the negative qualities that Maria attributed to the Turks when she described them as tyrants who raped and murdered and were “just mean”.

This tile came to occupy a large place in her family's conception of Turks as the entry point into conversations Maria had with her children. Although she claimed that she was not interested in passing down unhappy stories, Maria said that the tile opened discussions with her children. "I showed you that tile that I bought," she explained, "They asked about it. So I told them." Her daughter Liz confirmed this when she said that her perceptions of Turks came from stories her mother told her since the time when she was a little girl, including the story "of these women who would rather throw themselves off the cliff than be ravaged by the Turks." The story of the Souli women is an important part of Maria's family's understanding of the conflict and of the Turks. Likely unknown to Maria is that it is also an important story in school textbooks in Greece. Dimitrios Theodossopoulos studied the inhabitants of Patras, Greece, to understand their childhood attitudes towards Turks in relation to their current perceptions. He found that stories his interviewees were exposed to as children in Greek schools often influenced their opinions long into their adult lives, even when they were able to speak critically about those histories. The story of the Souli women, in particular, was mentioned by the Greeks, who spoke of a childhood game they used to play imitating those women. Theodossopoulos explains,

The theme alludes to a group of women from Souli, an intrepid mountainous community in Iperos that resisted Ottoman rule in the late 18th century. Greek children are told at primary school that the women of Souli put an end to their lives by jumping off a cliff to avoid capture by the Turks (Theodossopoulos 2004: 34).

One woman he interviewed elucidated the details,

We used to hold each other by the hand, singing the well-known song about the women of Souli . . . Then, each girl was jumping off the three steps separating the classroom from the schoolyard, pretending that she has fallen from the cliff of Souli and making a dramatic sound: aaaaaaaa! (34)

The same story that occupied a large place in Maria's imagination also fascinates schoolchildren in Greece, who are taught the story as part of the history of their country. The history lesson

made its way into childhood play that was remembered into adulthood and helped to shape the Turks in the imagination of the Greeks of this town. It is the very same story is so central to Maria's family's understanding of the Turks, though her education was in America. She also told it to her children. The significance of this story is maintained across continents and generations, suggesting that it has become part of collective Greek memory about the events of the Greco-Turkish War. Cornelia Sorabji terms stories like these "transmitted memories", "the personally meaningful images and ideas of younger generations who did not experience the war but who have lived in intimate contact with elders who did" (Sorabji, 2006: 1) She argues that these memories are not identical from generation to generation, but that the younger generations listen to narratives of trauma and then interpret them in the context of their telling, embedding them with their own images, inferences, and emotions. In this way, memory can sustain hostility even within generations that did not experience the actual trauma. Maria and especially her children had no direct experience of the conflict between Greeks and Turks, but certain stories of the past that were passed down came to influence their own perceptions of the Turks in the present. The first step in this process is the standardization of certain narratives, like the Souli women, during which the traumatic experiences of individuals are told and retold until they are transformed into collective memory (Denich 1994: 381). The community around the Souli women, who witnessed the event itself, and in whose memory it first lived, is the first step in a process through which that memory becomes part of a much larger imagining of the war and of Turks. Through mythologization and standardization, eventually in the form of national education, it becomes a memory significant to many Greeks, even those far removed from the actual site of trauma.

The story of the Souli women is just one example of this process; Theodossopoulos's work in Patras uncovered a number of prominent narratives linked to general conceptions of the Turks, usually related to history lessons and games at school. These included expressions like "the four hundred years of slavery", which refers to Ottoman rule over now Greek lands, and others noting the barbarism and violence of Turks (Theodossopoulos 2004, 36). This language mimics the early nationalist histories of the Greco-Turkish war, and is present in the stories of Greek-Americans decades after the actual trauma (like Maria's comments regarding 400 years of tyranny). Greeks in Patras assumed that Turks were taught about the Greeks in the same way, a supposition confirmed by a number of Turks with whom I spoke. Dr. Caner stated simply, "As we were growing up the Greeks were bad guys period and the Greeks felt the same way." Füsün, another Turk a generation younger than Caner, corroborated his story:

"I mean, starting from history books, you have that literally, I think it is brainwashing by the way, by whomever. . . And once you are in Turkey there is this, in general, whole reaction to Greeks, right, so that's how you feel. A small thing becomes huge, actually. But I think it is even worse on the other side, Greek side."

While she is initially hesitant to name the party responsible for what she considers "brainwashing" against the Greeks, Füsün later attributes it to "a pumping of nationalism" in Turkish education. The example of the story of the Souli women demonstrates the process through which individual memory becomes collective memory; through its entry into history books in Greek schools, it also enters into national memory. Thus, memory is critical in understanding trauma from a national perspective by uniting the people of a nation through the repetition of certain standardized narratives, which are then transmitted from one generation to the next. As Esra Özyürek puts it, "Memories create identities and help members of the nation

come to terms with the past and with national traumas, by either highlighting or concealing them” (Özyürek, 2006: 7).

It is particularly this latter phenomenon, the concealment of memory, with which Özyürek is concerned in regards to Turkey, where she suggests that “administered forgetting” is a defining characteristic of politics in Turkey (Özyürek, 2006: 3). National memory and identity are constructed through particular instances of large-scale forgetting prompted by the founders of the Turkish Republic. Early Republican reformers were determined to build a new national identity; this project depended on distancing the new Turkish Republic from the former Ottoman Empire and facilitating a perceived rupture from the Ottoman past to the Turkish present. That rupture depending on forgetting, whether it was forgetting the nature of daily life and diversity in the Ottoman Empire, forgetting certain words during language reformation, forgetting one’s former Greek or Armenian neighbors, or forgetting the conditions under which they were removed. The new state emphasized homogeneity rather than the multiculturalism of the Ottoman Empire, which was seen as having contributed to its downfall, especially in the case of the Greeks. Thus, the population exchange can be seen as a project which served the goal of homogenizing the nation and denying past multiculturalism by eliminating the Greeks from Turkish territory. At the same time, efforts were made to quickly incorporate the Muslims brought to Turkey from certain regions in Greece by emphasizing their sameness and requiring them to forget connections with their recent homeland and its culture, people, language, etc. In the face of fervent nationalism, the acceptance of this population into the new Turkish state was not always without animosity, as they were often perceived as outsiders who did not easily fit into the nationalist project. The exchange itself, despite serving the nationalist project of ethnic homogeneity, is also largely forgotten in Turkish national and social memory. After the war,

emphasis was placed on moving forward and forgetting what some called the “dirty” moments in the foundation of the state, whether the population exchange, the burning of Smyrna/Izmir, the Armenian genocide, etc. One woman explained that

When she was growing up, what amounted to a conspiracy of silence existed about the fire in Izmir. In Turkish national history taught in schools, the emphasis was on building a new, Turkish Izmir and erasing the past (Neyzi, 2008: 118).

In regards to the Greco-Turkish war, that woman said that the miraculous victory of the Turks erased the horror and fear of the war and replaced it with a great joy; the events that led to their victory were forgotten (122). The Turkish nation was oriented towards the future rather than the past, and its darker moments were overshadowed by the victory over Greece. The exchange, having helped to accomplish the goal of national homogeneity, also faded into a history largely forgotten and in some instances actively ignored. For example, the first book written by a Turk that examined the exchange, published in 1998, was cited as “offensive” and insulting to Turkish national identity by state officials (İğsız, 2008: 452). Some of the Turks with whom I spoke noticed the dearth of materials about the exchange in Turkey, but most considered the lack to be beneficial. For example, Sevim argued,

“It was only 10 or 15 years ago that books were published about the life before, during, and after the exchange. Probably for a lot of Turkish people it is a subject that is—and should be—left in the past and unknown unless they are effected [sic] directly.”

Füsün, whose family was affected directly, also talks about how the memory of the exchange is less and less important among her generation in the family. She also attributes the loss of that memory to her parents and grandparents trying to fit into the new Turkish nation: “Maybe it was a way of adopting life in Turkey, just cutting it off, forget about it type of attitude,” she hypothesized. Memory and forgetting are both important to historicizing events like the Greco-Turkish War and the population exchange. Certain memories are collectivized and standardized

and related through storytelling, historical accounts, and education. As they become incorporated into these mediums, they are passed from one generation to the next, prolonging a cycle of animosity.

Nationalism plays a role in this process, though not in one singular sense. On the one hand, it promotes collective unity and fosters a sense of belonging, connecting a group of people to a political entity in such a compelling way that many feel a close link between the state entity and the self. However, the pleasure of homogeneity came at the costs of Greek-Turkish relations and the suffering of the exchanged. National identity is often built upon defining not only how the nation characterizes itself and who will be incorporated, but also upon defining who is outside, who is different, and who represents a threat to the nation. The “enemy” populations who were exchanged were perceived as all of these things, and so they were removed in order to pursue homogeneity within national borders. Furthermore, the proximity of these two nations and their historic and contemporary competition for land, materials, trade, etc, combined with military clashes, have led to understandings of one another as the national enemy, the ‘other’ whose differences (and negative qualities, real or imaged) serve to highlight what is shared within the nation and its relative goodness. The processes that cement these understandings, considered above, are tenacious: they persist throughout generations and across continents, so much so that Itzkowitz finally recommends,

“We cannot kill all the grandmothers, so we must start with the children and educate them at very early ages to forestall their being infected by the bitterness of ethnic conflict” (1996: 37)

Recognizing the power of memory transmission through generations, and the ethical questions involved in a top-down approach to eliminating the source of divisive stories, Itzkowitz settles upon the education of young children as a place where some success might be achieved. His

emphasis upon the necessity of reaching children at “very early ages” speaks to how rapidly youth are indoctrinated into the attitudes of their families, friends, neighbors, and teachers.

In the following chapter, I will argue that the kinds of stories that have the potential to change the attitudes of Greek and Turks, if they enter into the public realm and into national education, as Itkowitz suggests, are often those that are repressed and forgotten today. The nationalist narrative is one-sided and static, emphasizing a rigid dichotomy and long-term animosity between Greeks and Turks. Accounts which might pluralize such a narrative live within the memories and family stories of certain populations in Greece and Turkey, but have not entered into larger discourses. In particular, the memories of the populations who were exchanged and the stories of their descendents, to whom these memories were passed, offer an alternative to the combative nationalist tellings. For the exchanged, perceptions of the ‘other’ are based upon actual everyday interactions and experiences of them, rather than transmitted attitudes, stories or education. Some of these experiences parallel the national narrative, especially in instances where people witnessed violence or witnessed hostile interactions between Greeks and Turks. Others add another illustration of the relationship between Greeks and Turks, in which they are friends and neighbors who lived peacefully side by side for centuries. Others lament the population exchange as a drastic measure which brought about terrible suffering in order to promote homogeneity, a national condition they lament rather than celebrate. Still others express nostalgia for their lost homeland, now considered the land of the ‘other’. It is these stories which have the ability to undo the work of “the grandmothers”, if they are permitted to enter into public knowledge and complicate the assumptions of national identity, ‘self’/‘other’ divisions, and difference that led Greek and Turkish officials to propose a population exchange as a “solution” to the Greco-Turkish War.

Chapter 4

Pluralizing the Account: Alternative Representations of the ‘Other’ in Personal Memory and Cultural Productions

The nationalist historiography of the Greco-Turkish war and the population exchange, with its emphasis on ‘self’/‘other’ binaries in which the ‘other’ is demonized, largely excludes the personal experiences and memories of the exchanged. National collective memory takes precedence over personal memory, and stories which threaten nationalism or the fantasy of a homogenous national identity are suppressed. The preference for nationalist projects over personal experiences was clear from the conception of exchange, as demonstrated by policy-makers’ lack of consideration for those populations who would be affected and disregard for King-Crane Commission recommendations. The trauma of exchange did not end after the initial move, but continued during the assimilation of the exchanged into the new nation. Once settled, the experiences of the exchanged did not enter into public awareness and those elements of their identity which were different were often ridiculed. For some whom I spoke with, fitting into the new nation required denying or hiding certain sentiments and mannerisms and forming one’s identity in line with national expectations. In regards to this problem, Aslı Işgiz explains,

“Articulating dissidence with nationalist history, as well as promoting self-identification as other than the homogeneously conceptualized national identity, was also discouraged, both privately in the daily lives of many *mübadil*¹⁵ and publicly in the limited possibilities for making their stories known through such media as books or films” (2008, 457).

The exchanged were encouraged to remain silent about their experiences, even repressing parts of their lives and lifestyles that had been important only months earlier. They had no outlets for expressing the traumas they had witnessed and experienced, which isolated them and their stories from the majority of the Turkish population. In Greece, the population of entering the country was so large that their experiences were more widely expressed in literature and other media

¹⁵ One of the Turkish identification terms for the exchanged and their family members.

(Doulis, 1977), but many of the exchanged still faced discrimination (Isğız, 2008). Thus, early life in the new nation was often as traumatic as the move, especially as incorporation depended upon the loss or repression of key elements of personal identity. Finally, suppression of the counter-narrative continues the trauma of the exchange in a larger sense in the form of violence between Turkey and Greece, visible most recently in Cyprus. The dominant national narrative supports this violence by continuing to emphasize difference, victimization, and past conflict in regards to the Greco-Turkish War, the exchange, and more generally, the relationship between Greece and Turkey/Greeks and Turks. The story of difference and hostility undermines a long history of peaceful coexistence and denies cultural similarities, at the same time denying a space/possibility for understanding and resolution. It promotes the notion of Greece and Turkey as national enemies.

A historiography of the exchange which instead examines those repressed stories which complicate and contest purely negative renderings of the ‘other’ in favor of commonality and shared experience might offer an alternative to Itzkowitz’s self-perpetuating “psychology of ethnic conflict.” Such an alternative does not consider the borders of Greece and Turkey as insurmountable national divisions, but rather articulates a narrative of relationality. This approach “operates at once within, between, and beyond the nation-state framework, calls attention to the conflictual, hybrid interplay of communities within and across borders” (Shohat, 2006: 207). In this conception, an exchanged Turk’s lingering connection with Greece, the home of his birth and childhood, can be understood beyond the threat it represents to a national identity formation in the early 1920s. A volume on the politics of popular culture in regards to the Israel/Palestine conflict uses just such an approach in order “to pluralize the story of interaction by considering the ways that gender, religion, ethnoracial identity and country of origin cut

across nations and nationalisms in ways that further destabilize the fiction of the Palestinian Arab/Jew divide” (Stein, 2005: 10). I hope to destabilize the Turk/Greek divide in a similar manner, by examining a variety of stories that pluralize the common narrative about Greek-Turkish relations. A relational approach questions the Muslim Turk/Christian Greek division put forth in the Lausanne Convention to relocate people to their “proper” nations by noticing the complexity of identities which fit comfortably into neither category.

Such an approach requires moving beyond nationalist historiographies of the war and population exchange, which are decidedly one-sided and overly simplistic. Instead, examination of personal family histories, memories of the exchanged, and recent cultural products reveals a diversity of stories which contest and complicate the nationalist rendering of the event. According to Iğsız, “This shift [to counter-narratives] might also be considered as making alternative histories public and thus bringing a plurality or polyphony to the more straightforward nationalist official historiography that contains homogenizing tendencies of the past and present peoples in Turkey” (2008: 453). A turn to the cultural realm pushes the confining limits of the nationalist characterization of the war and the exchange by including what was ignored starting with the writing of the Lausanne Convention: the diversity and complexity of human experience, emotion, and identity. The project of national homogenization forced people into rigid categories based on religion, just one part of their complex identities. The reduction of human identity to just this one element, which was often more dynamic and fluid in the religiously mixed communities of the populations who would be exchanged than such categorizations allow, is itself a kind of violence. The suppression of alternative stories about the exchange, especially by the population who was in fact exchanged, represents a similar kind of violence, first by continuing to oversimplify the identity of the exchanged in order to promote nationalism, and

also by promoting continued hostility between Turkey and Greece by focusing national historiographies around difference, victimization, and blame rather than relationality.

The personal memory of the exchanged and various cultural representations of that event reveal stories which consider the shared experience of the Greeks and Turks, rather than the ‘self’/‘other’ opposition of the two populations. These stories highlight the shared suffering of the populations who underwent the trauma of exchange, Greeks and Turks alike. Others express sentiments and emotions which threaten nationalism and thus have no place in the official historiography. These are stories of nostalgia for the lost (home)land, stories that complicate simplistic identifiers like religion or language, stories that express the difficulty of assimilating in the new nation despite Lausanne-dictated notions of belonging, and stories that lament the detriments of the exchange. Finally, within many of these narratives are realizations and affirmations of the historical and cultural similarities shared by Greeks and Turks, commonalities that cross the Aegean to unite populations often considered national enemies. The introduction of alternative narratives that include human experience into the historiography of the exchange, guided by a relational conception of Greeks and Turks, breaks down many of the elements of Itkowitz’s “psychology of ethnic conflict” and creates the possibility for an end to hostilities which does not require one to “kill all the grandmothers” (1996: 37).

Shared Trauma: The Suffering of the Exchanged

“Ayse’s wailing was infectious, and others among the onlookers began to moan as the Christians passed them by. Before long the men were choking back tears, and the women were giving free reign to them. Soon it was like the howling and ululation of those who became carried away by grief at a burial, multiplied beyond understanding by the sheer number of people. Up in the ancient tombs above the town, the Dog cocked his ears to listen, and down among the refugees, Sergeant Osman felt that he had never heard anything quite so disturbing in all his life, not even when men are dying between the lines after a battle.

So it was that, long after they had entered the serene and scented pine forest below the town, the fearful Christians began their odyssey into hardship and loss with the heart-rending lamentations of those who remained still echoed in their ears. In the trees they passed the Muslim dead, melding silently and obliviously into the earth in their tilting, white-washed graves. The people gazed at everything they saw with that special intensity brought about by the knowledge that only in precious memory would they ever behold the face of their homeland again.” (De Bernières, 2004: 478-479)

This passage in Louis De Bernières novel *Birds without Wings* describes the mourning of the members of a small town in Anatolia as they watch their Greek neighbors and friends depart for Greece after the population exchange. Such a depiction, which focuses on the suffering of the exchanged and of those remaining, counters nationalist renderings of the exchange in many ways; perhaps explaining the exclusion of stories of mourning from collective memory and histories of the event. Nationalist historiographies celebrate the success of the exchange, which effectively sorted populations into what were perceived to be their rightful homelands and provided national stability through ethnic and religious homogenization. The story of suffering caused by the exchange is absent. However, each of the descendents of exchanged peoples I spoke with told stories that centered around suffering. Often, the language they use is repeated, perhaps indicating an exclusive kind of collective memory at work among the exchanged populations, though not the nation.

Stories about the population exchange from the exchanged often include lamentations about the loss of possessions and relationships suffered by the exchanged, and the trauma of leaving what they considered to be their homeland. The idea of homeland assigned by the nation in terms of religious affiliation did not erase connections that the exchanged felt with the country of their birth, childhood, marriage, etc. Many felt that the land where they lived, and where generations of their family before them had lived, was their homeland. Thus, it was a great trauma to leave the familiar and often beloved for a country many had never visited, and where

they often did not have personal and economic ties. When I asked Füsün about her family's stories of her grandfather's experience of the exchange, she replied,

“They were not talking about it very much. But the only thing that the generation who moved, exactly, they were telling about how they suffered. I think the moving part was a bit torturous for them. The ship was packed with people, they couldn't take any belongings with them, many people died because they got sick at that period, especially after coming to Anatolia between the time that they were assigned homes, land, and stuff. While they were staying in the tent it was winter, for example, and my grandfather's mom died, for example, when he was two years old or something. So I mean, very sad times for them.”

Illness, death, loss of possessions, and descriptions of a disorganized and frightening move under poor conditions mark many stories of the exchanged about the actual experiences of moving.

Füsün's family came from a village close to Kavala, Greece, and were transferred to Samsun in Turkey. However, the experience of her family is not descriptive of only the Turkish experience; Greeks who were transferred from formerly Ottoman lands tell similar stories. Jill's family is from a town just outside of Smyrna/Izmir. Her ancestors did business in citrus and trading in Smyrna, and those who were wealthy enough to leave when the fighting started escaped to Paris. Others she spoke of did not leave, for a number of reasons. Jill told me,

“My great-grandfather and his brother stayed there basically to protect their money that they wouldn't leave. They couldn't imagine a world where they didn't have that kind of wealth, so they didn't – wouldn't leave, and they were all killed.”

These relatives thought of themselves as Smyrnan, she said, and this in addition to economic reasons motivated a number of them to stay rather than retreat with the army. Later, Jill spoke of other relatives who were exchanged to Athens, where “everybody...ended up on the streets or dead.” Her story highlights the economic hardships her family suffered as a result of the war and the exchange. For the wealthy, this was a common story, especially in Smyrna. The port city was a center of trade in the Ottoman Empire, and the Greeks who lived there and facilitated trade

between the Ottomans and Europeans were often very successful. Their lifestyle and prosperity centered around the city, all of which was destroyed by the fire and Turkish take-over of the city. Jill's great-grandfather could not even imagine such a trauma, and died as a result of his refusal to leave and lose his wealth. The trauma of economic loss was only one aspect of the exchange, however, and most families who were forced to leave their lands did not have the economic wealth of Jill's family or the experience of living in Smyrna, where direct connections with native Greeks and travel across the Aegean were more frequent. Serra's family lived in a region of Greece where exchange was not required. Her family decided to move to Turkey over 30 years after the exchange, but the experiences of her grandparents and mother closely followed that of many of the other exchanged. Speaking of her mother's experiences and the experiences of other exchanged people they got to know, she explained,

“It is already sad to leave your lands, leave your *everything*, leave your house, leave your cats, and come back to Turkey. Or at the same time, the Greek people leave their everything, their houses, their furniture, and take their suitcases and go back to Greece, even if Greece is their country, it doesn't matter, it's already set. . . I listen to the stories of my family and their friends. It is already sad and difficult for people to leave everything behind. If you move to another country, even if it is your 'home' country, you move from one place to another place, you need to find relationships, you need to find friends.”

Absent from this story is any trace of a 'victim complex'; instead, Serra equates the suffering of Greeks and Turks who were exchanged. Early in the interview I learned that she had spoken to her mother before we met; she had taken copious notes from that conversation, because her mother was anxious that her story be told. She felt it was important that her daughter accurately represent her experiences. When Serra spoke of these experiences, she returned more than once to the sadness her mother, a child at the time, felt upon leaving her beloved cat, and the terrible loss she felt upon leaving all of her friends behind. She found it extremely difficult to build new relationships in Turkey, which made her sadness even more acute. Serra, Füsün, Jill, and the

fictional characters in Louis De Bernières novel expose a narrative of suffering, a dimension not included in the national historiography. Suffering took many different forms – physical weakness, illness, and death; economic loss upon leaving possessions and businesses; the loss of family, friends, pets, and other relationships; and the sadness of those who remained, who suffered the loss of their friends and neighbors as well as their economic and political contributions to the towns.

An Uncomfortable Fit: National and Personal Identity

My friend Sevim, the tour guide in Cappadocia who is fluent in the national narrative but often witnesses emotional Greek reunions with their lost homeland, feels sympathy for the difficulties that the exchanged felt upon arriving in their new nations. Living close to abandoned Greek mansions and coming into contact with Greek tourists occasionally, she has been exposed to personal, often painful details about the exchange. She hears many stories, and when I asked her about the exchange, she noted that the suffering did not end with the trauma of moving and the poor conditions under which the move took place. She wrote,

“It was hard enough for the people to leave their ‘homes’, the land they thought they belonged to, the journey was not an easy one, and unfortunately when they arrived in their new but ‘own’ country where they were told they belonged, they were not welcomed by the locals. The only thing they had in common was the religion; apart from that, the language they spoke, their traditions, their way of living, shortly everything was different.”

The Lausanne Convention assumed that belonging to a homeland depended upon shared religion and a definition of ‘origins’ that went back centuries. In Turkey, the assumption was that the exchanged would “melt into the Turkish national identification pot, constructed and consolidated with official history” (İğsız, 2008: 456). However, many of the exchanged told stories about how hard it was to assimilate in a new country where, as Sevim said, “everything was different.” Even religion, the category that was supposed to unite the members of the Greek and Turkish

nations, was not always a rigid divider in the mixed communities where many of the exchanged had lived.

The Lausanne Convention used religion to identify the populations who would be affected by the exchanged – the Christians in most parts of Turkey and the Muslims in most parts of Greece. These designations reflect the old Ottoman method of dividing diverse populations, but also assume that religious differences account for differences in national and self-identification. However, accounts from the exchanged and representations in other works indicate that religious affiliations were often more fluid in the mixed communities where the exchanged had lived, and did not isolate or mark distinct populations. Religious boundaries were constantly traversed, and members of different religions interacted and formed communities and friendships that were not divided on the basis of religion. For example, Serra’s mother told many stories about the community she grew up in, where the Greek and Turkish neighbors shared food often, their children went to the same schools and summer camps, and the annual talent show featured renditions of each performance in Greek and Turkish. Serra explained that even the religious holidays were shared:

“My mom’s family is celebrating Easter and decorating eggs and exchanging them with each other. The Greek Easter, it is so important.”

The only difficulties that arose occurred when her Greek neighbors cooked pork dishes and she smelled the delicious food in the kitchen next door, but wasn’t allowed to eat it. Serra asserted that any belief in religious animosity was on the part of the politicians. After all, she explained,

“My grandfather went to the church quite a lot because their house was next to the church and they all heard the bells. So it is okay and they go to the church and do their own prayers and the Father didn’t say anything or push them away.”

Religion was not a divisive influence in Serra’s mother’s community, but the different religions shared their holidays and even their places of worship unproblematically. This account is

repeated in de Bernières novel, when Nermin asks her best friend, her Greek neighbor, to pray for her son fighting at Gallipoli:

“Thank you for the olives. But can you kiss the icon and ask your Panagia to watch over my Karatavuk?”

‘I’ll slip into the church on my way past,’ agreed Polyxeni. ‘Have courage.’

Nermin raised a hand and smiled weakly in return. She reminded herself to tell her husband to go and tie another rag to the red pine, and it occurred to her that she should go to the tomb of the saint and collect some olive oil that had run over the bones, in case her son came home wounded and needed a salve.” (2004: 272)

When Nermin’s son is sent to war, she seeks help in many spiritual forms, including town superstition, Muslim rituals, and Greek Orthodox prayers. As with Serra’s grandfather, religion is not a category that separates her from her Greek neighbors; instead, she values their beliefs in addition to her own and seeks the protection of their saints as well. Jill, a minister, learned not from her parents but from her own reading that the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Smyrna was not always as hostile as she expected:

“So I did not know this, but Islam reveres the Virgin Mary—they go to Greek churches—believing that they will gain fertility, they will ask her for help. But because it was porous and you had Christians respecting the shrines of Islam and Muslims respecting the churches of Christians, you had better relationships before. . . I was really helped by that.”

Recognizing that the boundaries between the religions were surprisingly fluid comforted Jill as she tried to make sense of the population exchange and relations between Greeks and Turks, and Christians and Muslims. These representations of religion before the exchange, defined by overlap and sharing, counter the Lausanne Convention and nationalist divisions of Greeks and Turks on the basis of religion. “Religious attributes, initially envisioned as sufficient to homogenize the nation-state by the Greek and Turkish state officials, were not necessarily experienced as such by the people themselves, either by the exchanged people or the “natives.”

As such, the rupture of identification and homeland marks the *mübadil* accounts” (İğsız, 2008: 465). In other words, religion was often not a category that isolated and defined the diverse communities of religious mixed populations in Turkey and Greece before the exchange. Being transferred on this basis did not return the exchanged to a homeland somehow more suited to them because of their religion, but in fact often opposed their self-identifications and conceptions of homeland. Upon exchange to a new “homeland”, many expressed that they did not feel the sense of belonging assumed by the national governments and writers of the Lausanne Convention.

As Sevim described, the exchanged often experienced many trials upon arriving in the nation where they were supposed to “belong”. The exchanged often faced difficulties assimilating and building the relationships that they had in the lost homeland because of the differences Sevim noted, and because they were not welcomed. Language was often cited as the primary difficulty that the exchanged faced – many did not speak the language of the country to where they were exchanged, or they spoke a dialect of it. This was often a marker of difference. Jill, whose family left Smyrna for Greece, said,

“They [the Greeks] referred to my family as the Turks, because they spoke a Greek dialect that was influenced by Turkish.”

In some parts of Greece, Füsün explained, the exchanged were rejected because they were identified as not “*Greek* Greeks.” In Turkey, the story was similar. Serra talked about her family returning from the grocery store empty handed because they could not ask for what they needed in Turkish. Her mother was placed in middle school though she had been a high school student in Greece because her Turkish was limited, and she had no friends because of her bad accent. It took years for the Turkish government to grant her family ID cards, which also made their assimilation difficult. Serra’s grandmother still cannot write in Turkish. Her mother told

her stories about going to the Turkish Embassy in Greece to see the Turkish flag growing up because they were not permitted to hang one in their home, and how her family cried the first time they saw the flag hanging freely in Istanbul. Her grandfather was anxious to be called by his name, Yusuf, rather than Yoseph or Joseph as he had been called in Greece. Yet, the attitude they found in Turkey was “you’re not one of us”. The exchanged in both Greece and Turkey were called names that linked them to the malevolent national ‘other’; insults like “Turkish seed” or “Greek seed” were common (İğsız, 2008: 464). Language and religion were two factors that the Lausanne Convention believed separated the Greek and Turkish people, and it was believed that these factors would foster a sense of belonging in the exchanged by uniting them with the rest of the population in their new nation. However, language was instead a marker of ‘otherness’ which hindered the assimilation of the exchanged and marked them as outsiders in an increasingly homogenous national population. Recognizing that many of the exchanged did not speak the language of their new home and did not believe that their religious beliefs made them enemies of their former neighbors questions the assumptions about belonging and difference that justified the exchange. The status of the exchanged as ‘others’ within the nation also challenges the success of the exchange in homogenizing the nation.

Nostalgia for the Lost Homeland in the New “Homeland”

The rupture in identity and homeland that the exchange represented for much of the affected population often translated into nostalgia and longing for the lost homeland. The homeland left behind was associated with the pieces of the self that were repressed in the new nation, and many of the exchanged experienced an intense and lasting longing for both (İğsız, 2008: 464). This phenomenon is the subject of Yeşim Ustaoglu’s 2006 film entitled *Bulutları Beklerken*, or *Waiting for the Clouds*. The story centers around Ayşe, an elderly woman who

was left behind as a child when her family was exchanged to Greece. She was raised as a Turk by a woman in the village, abandoning her Greek identity and name (Eleni). Her caretaker's death alienates Ayşe from her connection Turkey and her community, and she becomes preoccupied with memories of her history and Greek identity. Ayşe finally confesses her background to her neighbors and makes the journey to Greece, where she finds her brother and begins to reclaim her lost identity. Though Ayşe and her brother grew up without knowledge of one another, their reunion begins to heal the breakages in family, identity, and nationality wrought by the exchange. Ayşe's story of the exchange is that of one left behind, one who is never fully comfortable in the category of 'Turk'. Her need to expose her story and reclaim her identity, even late in life and decades after the exchange, can be read as a metaphor for the need for public expression of the stories and experiences of the exchanged. Yeşim Ustaoglu's film is one important step in this project of inserting the experiences of the exchanged into public consciousness and incorporating.

Ayşe's longings were similar to those expressed during my interviews. Füsün said that despite the relative ease with which her family was incorporated into life in Turkey, some of her family members wanted to return:

"My great-grandfather wanted to go so much. Because he lived there, right, I mean he would want to go, it's understandable. But he never made it because he was pretty old."

Others of her relatives did return to the village, but it became less important in the younger generations who had no experience of Greece. Still, she was clear that even among her generation, they feel as though being descendents of the exchanged is part of their identity, though not the only part. Serra's family experienced a great deal of difficulty upon moving to Turkey, and her mother still expresses her connection to Greece in many ways—she sings the

Greek and Turkish national anthems, taught her children the Greek myths rather than reading Turkish storybooks, and still feels a personal relationship to certain figures in Greek politics.

Serra described the moment when her mother learned that she could apply for a double passport,

“My mother talks about it like, she couldn’t sleep, she was like ‘Oh my god! Oh my God!’ It’s still their country.”

When she told me this, Serra waved her arms excitedly in impersonation of her mother’s excitement even as she rolled her eyes at the silliness of it. The thought of official recognition for her multiple connections to nation and “homeland” thrilled Serra’s mother, a concept which was not tenable to the makers of the Lausanne Convention. The presence of such connections to and nostalgia for a country conceptualized as the national enemy undermines the myth of the demonized ‘other’. Additionally, it distances the exchanged from the unified national community which defined itself against the ‘other’, to whom the exchanged remained connected.

Success or Failure? Evaluations of the Population Exchange

The unique experiences of the exchanged sometimes further and more explicitly challenge the homogenizing project of the nation through outright condemnations of the exchange and the war. Many of the exchanged do not follow the nationalist trend of assigning full blame outwards towards the national ‘other’—many are just as quick to blame their own politicians. Others merely lament what they believe to have been a mistake for both countries. These criticisms are rarely made public, but were present in a number of my interviews. Additionally, they are more subtly expressed in films like *Bulutları Beklerken* and novels like *Birds without Wings*, and Panos Karnezis’s *The Maze*. This novel examines the Greco-Turkish War from the perspective of the retreating Greek army. In the long journey home, the officials of the Greek army become disillusioned with the tales of Byzantine splendor that had motivated their attack. The unit’s religious figure, Father Simeon, is the first to express his disappointment:

“He compared the permanence of his old church to the flimsiness of his makeshift chapel here in Anatolia, and for the first time since the landing he understood the impossibility of the task bestowed upon the Expeditionary Corps: they were invaders. Even he knew that one after another the empires dissipated, slowly but inexorably: the Dutch, the Hapsburgs, the Ottomans. . . The motherland had gone to war, looking back with desire to her own long gone but not forgotten imperial past” (2004: 83).

The irredentist claims to the lost Byzantine lands that first motivated the army fail to sustain them after defeat, and Father Simeon begins to understand that their role was not as reconquerors, but invaders. This role is more difficult to justify, and the army commanders and soldiers are increasingly uncomfortable with their actions. Their discomfort is heightened by the torment many feel when remembering the atrocities they committed – particularly the massacre of a Turkish village. One character describes his realization as the falling away of a “nationalist and religious blindfold”; upon his new vision, he finds the cruelty of the enemy to be little different from the cruel acts of his own side, concluding that the enemy was as “human – or as inhuman” as they were. Even the Ottoman Greeks in a town supposed to have been “liberated” by the Greek army merely put on a show of Greek nationalism when the army arrives – they are reminded by the mayor to burn their Greek flags when the army leaves and consider themselves proud members of the Turkish Republic. The same mayor wishes for the Ottoman ways of the past, when life was not divided by nationalisms. Karnezis’s novel is deeply sympathetic with the Greek army and the Turkish “enemy”, and his telling of the war departs sharply from the nationalist telling. He admits to the atrocities of the Greek army, the flimsiness of Greek claims to the land, and the emptiness of nationalist and religious fervor. The voicing of opinions like these is primarily limited to cultural productions and personal memories and stories because they so overtly challenge the nationalist rhetoric.

A popular rembetika song, *Mana Mou Ellas*, expresses similar regrets about the war and the dreams that prompted it. Rembetika music became very popular in Greece after the exchange. Evidence indicates that it had a tradition in Greece earlier, but that the refugees brought a particular influence that became very popular. Their role in the production, distribution, and consumption of rembetika music is widely recognized (Gauntlett, 2003: 250). A blend of Greek, Turkish, and other regional styles and instruments, with other influences, one musicologist said of rembetika, “the only thing that’s safe to say about rembetika music is that “it belongs to the Eastern Mediterranean”” (Holst, 1975: 64). While many of the songs talk about refugees and lost life in “Constantinople”, the popular song *Mana Mou Ellas* describes the Asia Minor Catastrophe:

I have neither a road nor a neighborhood
To stroll in May.
Lies, big empty words
You told me with the first milk you gave.
But now that snakes have awakened
You put on your old decorations
Do your eyes ever fill with tears?
Mother Greece!
For you sold your son like a slave.
Lies, big empty words
You told me with the first milk you gave.
As I was conversing with my bad fortune
You put on your old decorations,
And took me to the bazaar.
Gypsy monkey
Greece, Greece!
The worst mother of all.
Lies, big empty words
You told me from your first milk.
Even at this moment when flames are rising,
You are looking for you old charm
In the world’s spaces,
Mother Greece!
You are carrying the same lies.
At the age of sixteen,
I don’t have saints to worship

Nor do I have a candle in the empty sky.

In this mournful song, nationalist myths calling for the recapture of lost lands and splendor are found to be empty. The song describes betrayal, like that of a mother who sells her son into slavery. Its lasting popularity indicates continued presence of sorrow and regret for the war despite nationalist renderings that emphasize Greek victimization, not responsibility.

Underneath the video of the song and Turkish subtitles, one blogger writes, “imperialist dreams and certain governments were to blame for the asia minor catasrophe [sic] not the people.”

Others assert that Greeks and Turks are friends, and that the governments keep them apart. There are comments in Greek, Turkish, and English. This song seems to resonate with Greeks and Turks who are interested in the personal and human aspects of the exchange rather than the political and national. The song painfully expresses the same disillusionment in regards to Greece’s dreams to regain ancient Byzantine glory that the characters in Karnezis’s book came to feel. Its popularity might also indicate the desire of Greeks for a medium in which to mourn the trauma of the Asia Minor Catastrophe, absent in national histories but made available through these cultural works.

The stories of the exchanged were often similar to these cultural products in their skepticism of nationalist ideologies and regret for their consequences. Common in these stories were expressions of mourning for the population exchange, which they see as a detriment to both countries, and anger towards the politicians of both countries for instituting such a policy. Serra repeated expressions throughout her story like “The politicians are dirty” or “The politicians made it dirty.” She believed that the Greek and Turkish governments, as well as nationalist zealots, were responsible for the suffering endured by the exchanged. Jill’s family became

increasingly distant from the Greek community and church in America, largely because of her grandfather's attitude toward the Greek government:

“My grandfather had no use for the Greek government. He was as angry with the Greek government as he was with the Turks.”

Most of the Greeks and Turks with whom I spoke, especially the exchanged, identified the problems leading to the exchange as political and unrelated to actual relationships between Greeks and Turks. Thus, many felt the exchange was a mistake, and imagined what the nations might have been like with richer, more diverse populations. Sevim said that the Greeks took a very nice and colorful part of the culture with them when they left, and that “it feels as if the country could have been more cheerful if they had stayed.” Dr. Caner wrote,

“My thoughts are if the exchange would not have happened, there would have been Greeks in Turkey who would have their representatives in the Turkish congress and vice versa – Turks living in Greece would have had their representatives in the Greek parliament, and both sides would be more diverse democracies. And probably there would not have been a CYPRUS conflict.”

These feelings that the exchange represents a failure in national history, and that life would have been more diverse and “cheerful” without it question the both rosy nationalist renderings of the exchange and the benefit of homogeneity. The lack of diversity that was sought by the Greek and Turkish nations, and achieved through the exchange and other violent measures, is seen by many as a detriment to society, and the work of politicians rather than people. Furthermore, the poor treatment of many of the exchanged upon arrival, and their continued identification as outsiders, speaks to the failure of the exchange as a homogenizing project.

Many of the exchanged consider this identity to be primary, and one which unites them to other exchanged peoples, whether Turkish or Greek. The experience of having been exchanged, or having a family history of exchange, is more powerful than national ties to Turkey or Greece,

even generations after the exchange. Both Serra and Füsün told me stories to illustrate how national “enemies” become friends through the shared trauma of exchange. Serra told me,

“My brother, he is working for a company that sells curtains to Europe. And one of his customers is from Greece. And all of the sudden, his customer starts to speak in Turkish. And my brother starts speaking Greek. And they both go, ‘How do you know Greek?’, ‘How do you know Turkish?’ And they shared that once upon a time, his customer’s grandparents lived in Turkey, but they were forced to move back to Greece. And my brother said, ‘Hey, look, my family has the same history!’ So they became like friends rather than a customer relationship. They have something in common.”

Serra’s brother’s experience demonstrates how the common experience of the exchange, even generations later, can cross borders and establish relationship across the divide of national ‘self’ and ‘other’. Füsün’s experience of this phenomenon is even more personal – she is married to a Greek man whose family also experienced exchange. When she first told her grandmother, whose parents moved from Greece, that she was engaged to a Greek, her grandmother was disapproving. When Füsün explained that he had exchange in his family as well, her grandmother replied, “Yeah, okay, they suffered like us, we did too.” Füsün found that the exchange was something she and her husband, and their families, could relate to and share despite perceptions about Greeks and Turks. While her story is somewhat unique, the experiences of Serra and Füsün demonstrate that the community of exchanged is sometimes more powerful than other national identifications. While the Muslim part of their identity was emphasized during the exchange, the displaced often identified themselves by that experience, or by their lost homeland. In Greece, refugees often congregated in the same towns in an attempt to create a sense of unity and belonging through shared experience and traditions (Stelaku, 2003). Exchanged populations in both nations retained sentimental connections to the lost homeland, and the trauma of exchange often defined their identity rather than membership in the new nation. Thus, “the exchange of populations changed the critical feature of their ethnic identity

rather than leading to ethnic assimilation” (Koufopoulou, 2003: 217). This certainly undermines the aim of the exchange, which was to promote national homogeneity, not discordance.

Counter-narratives of Historical Coexistence and Shared Culture

Nationalist historiographies emphasize the categories of the demonized ‘other’ and victim ‘self’. In these conceptions, differences between Greeks and Turks necessitate their separation through homogenizing policies like the population exchange. Hostilities like the Greco-Turkish War and those in the more distant past are highlighted in regards to the relationship between Greeks and Turks, and long histories of peaceful coexistence under the Ottoman Empire are ignored. However, the stories of many of the exchanged emphasize a long history of friendship and commonalities shared between Greeks and Turks. The identities of these two populations are not oppositional merely because they are divided by national boundaries; rather, the experiences, stories, and memories of the exchange cross national borders to establish a harmonious relationship between Turkish and Greek identity. These stories complicate the nationalist positioning of Greece and Turkey in opposing ‘self’/‘other’ categories, and notions of bounded and inherently different identities.

While the central story of *Birds without Wings* is the young romance between the Greek Philothei and Muslim Ibrahim, the novel weaves together the momentous occasions and everyday doings of generations of Eskibahçe residents. Intermarriage and close friendships between Greeks and Turks are not extraordinary, but rather the norm, and the harmonious workings of the village rest on the cohesion of both populations. While the end of the novel focuses on the town as it is ripped apart by the population exchange, the majority of the work presents a peaceful town where Muslims and Christians live and work alongside one another as they have for generations before. This aspect of the Ottoman past is one forgotten by nationalist

historiographies, but not by the descendents of the exchanged. The shared history and especially shared culture of the Greeks and the Turks were emphasized in many conversations. Serra exclaimed, “Of course! We have so many common things, like the coffee, like the eggplant dishes, like the desserts, we have so many common things.” Sabriye repeated this sentiment with her own list, “The daily lives are very similar, such as rakı¹⁶, backgammon, rosary, food like baklava, dolma¹⁷, etc.” Cuisine was often mentioned as a similarity in culture between Turks and Greeks, contesting my experience of the baklava-making in Maria’s household. There, various family members expressed certainty in a Greek origin of the dessert, regardless of variations in the syrup that linked the recipes of the Greeks and the Turks. These similarities indicate a cross-Aegean culture shared by Greeks and Turks, rather than one so different as to be cause for the separation of these peoples. Füsün found the similarities in Greeks and Turks to extend to their mannerisms, a phenomenon which she began to notice as an international student in the United States. While she talked about the bonding she experienced with other international students because of their shared difficulties, she emphasized the compatibility of Greeks and Turks:

“But particularly Greeks and Turks actually can become very good friends very easily, because there’s so much common stuff. I mean the way we think, the way we behave. For example, I can tell if a Turkish person walks through the street, I can tell this is Turkish, but I could mistake it for a Greek person too. It’s like, so much similar, so it’s very easy to communicate and interact.”

Here, Füsün describes the embodiment of similarities in Greek and Turkish identity, visible even in their manner of walking, which she finds indistinguishable. As an international student in America, outside of the context of these fervent nationalisms, recognizing the similarities between Greeks and Turks is a relief. The demonized ‘other’ becomes the recognizable friend.

¹⁶ An anise-flavored liquor much like the Greek ouzo.

¹⁷ Any variety of stuffed grape leaves, found in both Turkish and Greek cuisine.

Policies like the population exchange combined with 'self/'other' nationalist historiographies create the impression of homogeneity within the nation, and difference outside of it. The memories and stories of the descendents of the exchanged, and cultural representations of the exchange, question this assumption by relating stories of harmonious coexistence, fluid and traversed boundaries, nostalgia, regret, and shared identity. These stories begin to reverse the traumatic reduction of a multitude of human experiences into one national historiography or collective memory of the population exchange and the relationship between Greeks and Turks. In doing so, they provide the possibility for an end to the perpetuation of violence and hostility that accompany ethnic conflicts conceptualized in terms of victimization, historical wrong-doing, and the culpability of the demonized 'other'.

Conclusion

Larger Implications: Greek-Turkish Relations and Population Exchange as an International Policy

The political relationship between Greece and Turkey has been very dynamic since the population exchange in 1923. Relations have been friendly at moments, while the two countries have been on the brink of military action against one another at others. Following the exchange, Atatürk and Venizelos enjoyed a fairly friendly political relationship. This lasted through World War II, when Turkey remained neutral but provided some aid to Greece in the way of food and other humanitarian aid. Tensions rose during the war when Turkey levied a tax to prevent profiteering that targeted Greek and Armenian minorities especially, but the end of the war also brought the end of this pressure. In the following decades, certain issues continued to cause antagonism, including the status of borders, the treatment of Greek minorities in Istanbul (particularly connected to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy) and Muslim minorities in Thrace, control over oil field in the Aegean, control of certain airspace, the militarization of certain Greek islands, the continued closure of the Greek Orthodox seminary in Halki, etc (Ker-Lindsay, 2007; Deridis and Triantaphyllou, 2001; Günlük-Şenesen and Kollias, 2003). In particular, though, the status of the Greek-Turkish relationship changed in response to conditions in Cyprus, the 1999 earthquakes, and Turkey's potential European Union accession. These issues have been central in defining the Greek-Turkish political relationship since the Greco-Turkish War.

Cyprus

The question of Cyprus has been a main source of contention between Greece and Turkey since the 1950s. Cyprus was obtained by Great Britain in the late 1890s during the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and the 1950s saw increasing demands for an end to British colonialism. The population of the island at that time was estimated to consist of slightly less than 80% Greeks

with the remainder mostly Turks. In 1955, Greece began bombings in Cyprus with the goal of ending British colonial control and uniting Cyprus with Greece. With outside encouragement from international powers, Turkey began to take a more direct interest in the status of Cyprus, claiming its right over the country as well. Agitations over failed security talks, attempts by Great Britain to foster antagonism, and the bombing of the Turkish consulate in Thessaloniki (the house where Atatürk was born) sparked riots in Istanbul. The then large Greek population in Istanbul was assaulted by mobs for days, prompting tens of thousands of Greeks to flee¹⁸. The organizers of the riot and others were prosecuted in Turkey and various organizations were disbanded, but the event marks a low point in Greek-Turkish relations.

In 1960, delegates from Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey participated in talks regarding the status of Cyprus, which was then granted independence. The constitution guaranteed the rights of the Turkish minorities and their role in the government and administration, and all three nations retained some control. However, this form of shared power began to unravel after just a few years and soon fighting erupted between the Greek and Turkish populations in Cyprus. In 1974, the Cypriot government was overthrown and replaced with a leader who declared the union of Greece and Cyprus. In protest to this action and Britain's refusal to intervene, Turkey invaded the island and occupied about one-third of the land in the north. Greeks in this area were expelled, as were Turks living on the now Greek-dominated land. Turkish Cypriots have declared independence, but are not recognized internationally as a separate political entity. The entire island is now recognized as the Republic of Cyprus and is part of the UN and European Union, but the northern part is not under the effective control of the central government and is largely dependent upon Turkish intervention. One recent attempt to settle disputes came in the

¹⁸ Certain Greek populations in Istanbul were not required by the Lausanne Convention to relocate during the exchange.

form of the Annan Plan, which proposed a kind of confederation of the two states with a central government and parliament made up of representatives from both states according to population and sometimes simply half of each. This plan went through a number of revisions before being rejected in 2004. The division of Cyprus continues to cause antagonism between Turkey and Greece, and is an important issue in regards to Turkey's EU candidacy.

1999: Earthquakes and Empathy

In early 1999, the Greek-Turkish relationship became once again very strained when a wanted PKK leader was captured leaving a Greek embassy in Kenya, his presence there seen to indicate Greek protection of Turkey's enemy. Within six months, however, a series of natural disasters brought together the two countries and transformed the status of their relationship. The first earthquake shook northwestern Turkey on August 17th. A 7.5 on the Richter scale, the earthquake caused much damage, especially to the major city of Izmit, and killed around 15,000 people. Upon news of the earthquake, the Greek embassy in Ankara corresponded with Athens officials, and within an hour the Greek government offered to help Turkey in any way it could. Over the following weeks, Greek aid organizations helped in many ways, from coordinating rescues and rebuilding to fund-raising, blood drives, and simply expressing sympathy. Even the Orthodox Church was involved in fundraising efforts, a surprise to many Turks. Most important was the overwhelming sympathy of the Greek people, who expressed unity with the Turkish people and compassion for their suffering. A few weeks later another earthquake struck, this time in Greece. The earthquake was smaller in scale (a 5.6 on the Richter scale), but still buildings collapsed and nearly 150 Greeks were killed. Turkey responded as Greece had earlier, offering aid and support almost immediately. Greek radio and other media received overwhelming numbers of goodwill messages from Turkey citizens, who also wanted to build a

warm relationship with the Greek people. The transformation of popular attitudes was mirrored on a governmental level, where even strong nationalists began to see the earthquakes as an opportunity to bring peace and a resolution to the Cyprus conflict.

European Union

1999 also represented an important year in Turkey's EU accession process. While Greece joined the EU in 1981, Turkish accession is an ongoing project and one which has at times positively and adversely affected relations between Greece and Turkey. In 1987 Turkey formally applied for membership, but an important step came at Helsinki in 1999 when the European Council recognized Turkey's equal footing with the other candidates. By the end of 2004, the EU entered into direct negotiations with Turkey. Turkey, meanwhile, worked towards meeting a number of requirements of the Copenhagen Criteria for membership. Resolving disputes with Greece is only one of the areas where improvement was required; Turkey also had to demonstrate the upholding of human rights, protection of minorities, resolve conflicts with the PKK in order to secure what would be an EU border, guarantee freedom of speech and press, and demonstrate democratic rule free of military interference (Nicolaidas, 2001 :270).

Many believed that Turkey's possible EU membership would improve relations between Greece and Turkey because the EU would reward, even require, resolution on key areas of difference, including Cyprus and the treatment of minorities. Turkey's membership would also mean that conflicts between Greece and Turkey would be treated in the wider realm of the EU rather than only between the two countries (Ker-Lindsey, 2007: 79). Greece continues to be supportive of Turkey's accession, but Cyprus continues to be an impediment. In 2004, the Republic of Cyprus entered the European Union still divided. Recent talks between leaders of the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have focused on

reunification, but continued disputes over control of ports and water boundaries have disrupted progress. As a member of the European Union already, Cyprus has the ability to veto Turkish accession.

Recent studies undertaken by the European Commission to gauge public opinion regarding issues important to citizens in countries in the EU gathered data about Turkey's possible accession. The most recent data, obtained through 1,000 interviews in each of the countries in mid-2008, is published in the Eurobarometer Standard. This report shows that only 31 percent of EU citizens are in favor of Turkey becoming part of the European Union, though 45 percent would be in favor if Turkey complies with EU conditions. This number has risen 6 percent over the past two years. However, the study reports that 78 percent of Greek citizens are against expansion of the EU to include Turkey, and 85 percent of Cypriots agree that Turkey should not be included. In Turkey, only 61 percent of citizens are in favor of Turkey's joining. This data does not reflect the government positions or the positions of the EU, but it does suggest public opinion. While the EU may be improving the political relationship between Greece and Turkey, Greek citizens still seem to have reservations about Turkey's accession.

In my own interviews, I found that opinions varied greatly. One Greek-American thought that it would be difficult for the Greeks, who are very religious, and the EU, which is largely Christian, to allow in a country with an almost entirely Muslim population. Another Greek-American who had recently visited both Turkey and Greece talked about how improved the Greek economy was since joining, but how badly tourists arriving in boats from Turkey were treated at the ports. Turks were equally ambivalent regarding Turkey's accession. One claimed that there was "no way" for Turkey to enter, both because the demands of the EU increased each time Turkey tried to meet them and because Turkey had too many economic, health care, and

education problems. She believed that Turkish politicians merely used the possibility of accession to obtain votes. Still, another Turk believed that “of course” it would be good, but that it will not happen soon. She mentioned that Greece and Turkey would benefit, as they could stop investing so much in their militaries, which they build up to defend against each other.

Turkey’s possible membership does not seem to have produced any overwhelming changes in the already dynamic relationship between Greece and Turkey. Like the earthquakes of 1999, it was viewed with optimism as a possible site for resolution. As an ongoing process, it still represents a possibility for some, while others are skeptical of its bringing any important changes to the attitudes Greeks and Turks hold towards one another. The many shifts in official and public opinion regarding the state of Greco-Turkish relations question the myth of the permanent opposition of the two countries and peoples since the Ottoman capture of Constantinople. Turks and Greeks do not only and always consider one another enemies, but certain events alter and transform their relationship in many ways, whether inspiring outrage, empathy, or hope. In response to the period of the 1999 earthquakes, two analysts explain, “Another important lesson to be taken from such an experience is that ‘national identity’ is not an unchangeable attribute. It is a process rather than a fact. In this respect, it should better be treated as a continuing exercise to define ‘who we are’, ‘who we are not’, and ‘who we would like to be’” (Sönmezoğlu and Ayman, 2003: 45).

In my interviews and in other texts, some identified the Greco-Turkish War and the population exchange in the early 1920s as the period when Greek-Turkish relations were poisoned. Others pointed to a much earlier date, centuries earlier. Many of the exchanged asserted that Greeks and Turks are not in opposition at all, but that politicians use this myth to promote nationalism by inspiring national unity against a common enemy. Thus, while national

historiographies and standardized, collective storytelling appear to indicate a single, static, nationally-shared conception of the war, exchange, and Greek-Turkish relationship, these representations are challenged by events like the 1999 earthquakes or stories like those of the exchanged. As different stories enter into public awareness, through films like *Bulutları Beklerken* and books describing the experiences of the exchanged, as Turks and Greeks come into contact with one another and empathize with each other's suffering as they did during the earthquakes, and as political developments in Cyprus and the European Union promote negotiations and resolution, reevaluations of the national 'other' and national 'self' identity can occur. Looking back at events like the Greco-Turkish War and the population exchange, which are often cited as events which ossified the status of Greeks and Turks as enemies, helps to elucidate the status of the Greek-Turkish relationship today. The historicization of these events, national education, and collective memory transmission influence contemporary attitudes Greeks and Turks hold about one another, as evidenced by examples like the story of the Souli women. However, a plurality of stories exist about even these events, and not all of them polarize Greeks and Turks. Alternative stories, like those descendents of exchanged people told about harmony and commonality between Greeks and Turks, even their shared traumas, bring hope for reconciliation like that brought about by the earthquakes, another instance of empathy during shared suffering.

Other Examples of Population Exchange

The forced transfer of populations did not begin with the Greco-Turkish example; there are many examples of it in earlier history, from the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from Spain in the 15th century to the deadly relocation of Native Americans in the United States. Many occurred after the 1920s, like the driving out of Jewish populations from Nazi territory,

deportations in the Soviet Union following World War II, and the flight of the majority of the Arab population from their homes in Palestine in 1948. Unique to the Greco-Turkish population exchange was that the transfer was legally mandated by the signing of a treaty after negotiations at which the international community was present. The Lausanne Convention legalized the ethnic cleansing of certain populations in Greece and Turkey as the result of a war and national desires for a homogenous state (Barutciski, 2004). The exchange was celebrated as a success, at once achieving homogeneity and bringing regional stability and an end to the violence.

Furthermore, supporters of the exchange professed that the “enemy” populations might have suffered worse consequences had they remained. The Greco-Turkish War set a precedent for similar situations; after the partition of India, massive population exchanges occurred as Muslims fled to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs crossed into India. Here too exchanges were seen as a way to protect citizens by returning them to areas where they were in the majority, again creating homogenous states. Evaluations of the exchange as a peaceful method for bringing peace to ethnic conflict focused on these positive outcomes, but many ignored the negative aspects of exchange.

In most cases, displacement from a homeland is painful and alienating. The compulsory and permanent nature of the exchange was particularly damaging; the majority of Muslims in Greece and Greek Orthodox populations in Turkey were forced to relocate and the Convention clearly states that they would not be permitted to return. For many, this represents a human rights violation: “The Lausanne Convention remains an example of perhaps the crudest expression of state power over the individual. It clearly involved the domination of state interests over individual human rights” (Barutciski, 2004: 27). The suffering of the exchanged, the impossibility of fair reparations and equal compensation, the attachment people felt to their

homelands, and the loss of identity experienced by the affected populations was overlooked in favor of national concerns. Since the Greco-Turkish population exchange, compulsory exchanges have been criticized by international bodies. The Bosnia-Herzegovina peace accords, for example, recognized rights of return, and the UN has granted this right to Palestinians for decades. However, these declarations and other prohibitions on forcible population transfer have not meant that return is possible in reality; furthermore, there is no process for determining the legality of some transfers and illegality of others (see Schechla, 1993). The Greco-Turkish population exchange remains relevant because the practice of forcing populations to leave their homelands has not disappeared; examples of it include India-Pakistan, in Israel-Palestine, in Cyprus, as well as for Albanians, Afghans, Eritreans, Iraqis, Kurds, Sri Lankans, Somalians, Sudanese, Tibetans, and other groups (Hirschon, 2004). Thus, it remains important to think critically about this exchange. Part of that project is understanding how national discourses worked to justify it and how they continue to historicize it in ways that overlook human consequences in favor of celebrating state benefits. Additionally, the stories of the exchanged must be heard in order to access the human consequences of such a policy, which include dislocation and alienation from homeland and identity. The exchanged are victims of state projects, human costs of homogenizing policies. This aspect of population exchange must be brought to the fore in order to end its legitimacy as a policy, especially in times of war when histories of coexistence and shared culture are apt to be forgotten with the recent memories of violence and hostility.

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