Chapter 4

Homecoming as exile?

Experiences of rupture and belonging

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Abstract

This chapter draws on a life history approach to present a migrant life story of homecoming, as it grapples with the meaning of "home" for a member of the Cypriot diaspora, who has return migrated from the UK back to the ancestral island homeland. It draws from one of a number of migrant narratives collected in Cyprus a decade ago, and, focuses on issues of belonging and homing. The chapter narrates the experience of homecoming and return migration through dimensions of a Cypriot diasporic migrant life story in relation to gendering borders, affective exclusions and cultural homing. Concepts of "home", "borders" and "exile" are integral to research on diasporic communities, and, are even more elusive when it comes to the transnational lives of subsequent generations. In the case of the still divided island of Cyprus, the conceptual and affective complexities indeed surmount nation-state structural parameters, as more nuanced meanings are involved in how identities are articulated and expressed. The narrative analysis is grounded on a set of temporalities, spatialities and emotionalities: the timespaces of the historical experiences of Cyprus; mobilities and return experiences; historical and personal trauma and reconciliation;, as well as the affectivity of all these issues contextualised in the passing of a decade from collection to reflection to writing and publication. The paper juxtaposes the messiness of the lived experience, of migrant livelihoods and of researcher field-workings to draw some insights on emotional and ethical negotiations as elements in the migrant story-telling.

Narrative

Zoe left her ancestral homeland Cyprus at a young age and migrated to the United Kingdom where she resided for a quarter of century, marking 25 years of "absence-presence" when a lot of political turmoil was unfolding in the divided island of Cyprus. While the ongoing politics and history of division and bi-communal relations in Cyprus are complex and contested, the story of Zoe is one which is articulated with much elaboration. As a verbose account it reflects an educational, professional and socio-cultural journey from the "cosmopolitan" and "multicultural"' global city of London of the 1980s–1990s to a relocation to her ancestral homeland in 2002. The pseudonym "Zoe" for this participant, etymologically from the Greek meaning "life" is indeed appropriate, as Zoe is full of energy, in not only contemplating her life, but asserting her existence against all odds and obstacles.

Her account is lengthy, exasperated and emotional, almost narrated in one breath and upon completion many hours later, it seemed that the weight of the world had been lifted from her shoulders. She tackles many aspects of her fascinating life, from experiencing patriarchy and sexism as a girl and an adult, her struggles as a single-mother working full-time and trying to complete a doctoral degree, to her return to a conservative, xenophobic and claustrophobic divided island homeland. As I am interviewing Zoe at her holiday cottage in Cyprus in the summer of 2008, following a number of email exchanges, phone conversations and informal visits, I am finally able to record in person her life story, captivated, while immersed in her biographical narrative which is told almost in a single breath for several hours.

This chapter encapsulates most of the above themes and will focus on issues of gender and feminism, motherhood and mothering, family, and, as the title suggests: belonging and rupture. This is a story of homecoming and return migration but one which is saturated by intense emotions, negotiations and divisions, both personal and political. It is the story of "Zoe", a first-generation Cypriot-Greek (or is it "Greek"-Cypriot? The story will be the catalyst of narrating this!). Where does the story begin? What are the socio-aesthetics of Zoe's life as beginnings to a migrant life story? What are the gazes she has allowed for the researcher into that journey, to expose the link between individual experience and the social context of lived migrancy? Let's set the scene with a number of key timespaces that interject in the framing of the personal narrative. It will be through the voice of Zoe and her words, that we are led into the narrative storytelling of key phases of her diasporic experience, and those are italicized, so to be discussed in the methodological and theoretical analysis sections that follow the extracts below:

I am glad that I can participate in such an interesting project. I hope that your visit to Cyprus is really creative in all respects, and, I will try to describe briefly to you *a life of migration and diaspora*. I was born to a *diaspora family* because since 1932 my father's brother was the first who migrated to London and then followed all my mother's siblings, that is, three very young men who went to war. Thus, coming from *a colony of Britain*, my family started to gradually disperse. In general, *Europe is my country* since my family is dispersed there in many ways. Approximately at the age of four, I started to dream of Britain and specifically of Cambridge University where my cousin was. This cousin sent us a picture of him wearing the Cambridge gown at the University on commencement day. You could see the grass and those beautiful University buildings in the background. So, I started to *dream* of the day I would also end up, I thought, I hoped, there for studies. Of course, *my family was poor*, we were a *farming family* and the issue of studies was not something to be discussed. They had fields but they lacked cash. *They didn't have cash for daughters*. I was the second child and *unfortunately for my father I was a girl again. He awaited his sons to come. When his sons were born it was taken for granted that they would study whereas their daughters would get married*. What our father did for us as a big favour was to send us to high school. When I was eighteen, the rest of my classmates planned their studies abroad. I happened to be at the Pan Cypriot High School where all students came from *middle or upper*

class families. Everyone knew that they would end up in Vienna, New York or London. The only thing I had as a *cultural asset* was my uncles in London, and, it seemed natural to ask my parents to let me go to my uncles who used to come on holidays. I hoped I would end up somewhere there. *My parents were adamant*. So, they didn't allow me to study abroad. They helped me become a teacher, but at the same time I *studied in secret* with the help of the librarian of the Pedagogic Academy in Cyprus, and, I sat an exam at the British Council. It was something I could hide from my parents. Thus, I got my BA at the same time as the other three-year degree. At that time, one had to study at the Pedagogic Academy for three years and the degree was equal to the English University degree of Education. So, with these two degrees I was accepted by the University of London to do a postgraduate course. Then, *my parents' dream was realised because right after I finished my studies, through matchmaking, they married me off and the first child was born*; I got engaged in '70. However, in '70 I took a *rebellious step*. On the occasion of my youngest sister going into labour, who was already in London, I went there. Since she was already there, and, she was going to give birth, she invited me to go because she wanted me to help her. Then, I enrolled at the University of London. I was given the chance, so I grabbed it. So, I went there for studies and I did so with a child. My little child, then, was two and turned three years old. I was *divorced which is another big chapter of my life*, a period when there was *lots of distress* and generally the *conditions were not conducive to studies*; nevertheless, I went to London, and, actually I didn't do classical studies as I thought at the beginning, but I did general sociology and psychology, and, then I specialized in the sociology of education. *They were difficult years and I had to work of course to pay the first fees*. My uncles did put me up and one of them gave me half of the university fees. For the other half I *had to sell all my jewellery, even my Christening cross, but I did that easily*. Now that I think about it, *I was not sorry at all about the jewellery I would miss*. I got some cash, and, I remember I was given the choice to pay all the fees, in which case they would be less, or pay in instalments every three months. I paid everything to avoid paying as much as I could.

So, I got on the bus and I followed its route. At dawn, I set off, after I had left my child at the Kindergarten, and I ended up at work. I had a full time job until three. Then I picked up my child from the Kindergarten, and, we went to a Greek school where I taught. *That was my second job*. Then, we went home; I tucked in my child, and, studied until early in the morning. This is how I spent my postgraduate year, and, then I registered directly for my PhD with a dissertation topic which I changed on the way, because I took another direction, which others considered a disadvantage for my academic development. *I am glad I chose this subject and I found answers to my serious queries*; the subject was the position of woman in Cypriot society, with specialization in the aftermath of the invasion; the people who were the research subjects were the wives of the missing, a subject no one dared to touch upon. It was considered a sacred subject. The missing had to be there alive and their wives had to await them like Penelope did. I asked the question: why they should wait, and which for this role, for society and church, they (the women) were in such pain and in this limbo. This is why my Dissertation subject was

attacked fiercely at the beginning, and, then they said, “ah, what a great research she did”. Until now, there are people who remember the lecture I gave at the Open University of Nicosia in ’84, after I had been invited by the municipality of Nicosia. One person of the organizing committee stood up and disputed the validity of my research subject, and *said it was not right for me to talk about Cypriot women, the wives of the missing*. He added, that even the Cypriot Democracy had answered positively to the question whether there were missing men, so there should be women who had to wait. “Why did Penelope wait for twenty years?” he asked. I answered that if we are humans, it is exactly for these Penelopes that we had to think why we had turned them into Penelopes, and, in English I used the term “an ancient myth”. “An ancient myth has a role but why make women pay for this”. So, that was my question, in a way. *It was a painful experience in many respects, but I did find it challenging*.

In the meantime, I had to do some small projects in England, and, my supervisors were famous professors, a great linguist, as well as, one of his colleagues from the Department of Sociology of the University of London, the Institute of Education. He used to be the Director of the Social Research Unit then, and at the same time the Head of the Sociology Department. In the methodology courses I was asked to study the role of the Cypriot diaspora woman. *So, then I went from home to home*. At that time, in that area, there were many Cypriots and several first generation migrants – I had already interviewed second and third generation migrants – as well as several refugees. I have learned many things from these women, and, then my interest in a certain subject started to develop, rather, not started to develop, but was rekindled because it always existed due to my *family story*. The subject included the Hellenic diaspora, the study of problematic relations between Hellenic and Greek Cypriot community, specifically in London, as well as in general, the study of the phenomenon according to which Greek Cypriots, who I interviewed, talked fiercely against the English conquerors of Cyprus, of the English torturers, of all those heroes of EOKA[1] who were important figures to them. On the other hand, they lived amongst them, they worked for them, and, tried to come to terms with the situation mostly on an emotional level, that is, to admit that they still depended on English in Britain now. At the same time, I studied the subject of bilingualism *because I grew up as a bilingual child*. I was a teacher at schools, and, then I took over a European Union programme, I got appointed by the English Ministry of Education with the approval of Greece and Cyprus, as a Coordinator of a programme. That was a difficult task, but we were successful. We introduced Greek in English schools, and, it was then that *I realized that we had to embark on a process called “consciousness raising” of the communities*. …but, it was a good experience, as we tried to raise consciousness so that the *oral history of communities could be studied,* and mainly, so that the issue of the absence of cooperation between Hellenic and Greek Cypriot communities, in the whole of Britain, could be dealt with.

I apologize for being so talkative; I keep talking to my trees and my cat about these things, but they don’t answer back. *I have decided not to talk with the people a lot here*. Our conversations are limited

to greetings. If academics want us to talk a little bit more, they could come and we could talk, or they could invite me to their offices and talk. I don't have strength to do anything more until…It's soul-destroying. It is, a lot. It's a pity to admit this in your sixties, but I prefer to gather strength and fight for this cause in the right way, than be limited and flap like a bird in a cage. *The situation I experience is like a cage for me. I have to get out of this cage to be able to exist in the way I used to some creative years ago. Fortunately, they were twenty-five years. At least I have lived a quarter of a century as a human being*. I am positive that what is going to follow will be very creative and very dynamic. We'll see. *I have started being afraid*. I feel a little bit of *anger with God who made women so vulnerable to age and many responsibilities*. If I think of my personal story, I remember that *since I was twelve, I trembled to think that a man would get me pregnant*. They had talked to me so badly about what a man could do to me that I didn't go out here and there, in case someone said something, anything. Once I got married and the situation evolved the way it did, *my identity as a woman was always a disadvantage, it was torture; I wanted to love; it's so beautiful to give birth*. A woman can do the housework and at the same time make the house more beautiful due to the artistic characteristics she carries in her DNA, to a bigger extent than what a man does. I remember with delight this aunt of mine, her nice character, the fact I felt proud when I was near her; I was near her since I was very small and I remember her narrating fairy tales. Being close to her gave me confidence. *I felt beautiful I was a woman, I felt beautiful I was a Cypriot, I felt beautiful I listened to her*. Yes, but, I am feeling dizzy right now. Out of the blue. *My country is sweet and cruel*.

While Zoe continued with her lengthy life story and unpacked each chapter of her diasporic life and her return migration to her ancestral homeland, the italicized themes that emerged in the narration above, are those that will be further addressed in the methodological and theoretical reflections that follow. Zoe's performative stance mirrors that of many participants in the project: it is a breathless narrative performance, dense and intense, eager to share and to articulate the multi-dimensionality of a richly reflexive life. The culmination of the fragments of the life story reach the apex of the chapter: homecoming as a "sweet" and "cruel" encounter of two sets of extreme emotions when return to the homeland becomes a reality, but not a choice. These experiences of rupture and belonging render the return a perpetual state of migrancy for Zoe and many other returnees (Christou 2006, Christou and King 2006, Christou 2011, Christou and King 2011).

Methodological reflections

The narrative on which this chapter is based, is drawn from a large-scale multi-sited, multi-method comparative ethnographic research project funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK) and the research monograph "book of the project" (Christou and King 2015) provides a lengthy methodological chapter on the project. However, for the purpose of this chapter, I will only contextualise my positionality within the Cyprus based data collection stage of the project, and reflect

on the methodological underpinnings, as regards the researcher-participant interaction, especially given our varying Greek diaspora backgrounds and differing migrant life stories.[2] Also, the socio-cultural and politico-historical parameters of the conflict and civil war in Cyprus, is situated within the narrative and methodological reflections, so the reader can understand the wider context of the research. As mentioned earlier, this was one of many interviews with participants from a range of demographic, class and educational backgrounds, based on a biographical/life history approach, situated in Cyprus where this part of the fieldwork for the multi-sited comparative project took place. Following previous email correspondence, phone and personal discussions with Zoe about the context, aims and objectives of the research, the interview took place at Zoe's summer cottage, in English, it was recorded and transcribed verbatim, and subsequently, the transcript was returned to the participant for any corrections, omissions or additions.

In terms of further methodological reflections, concepts of "home", "borders" and "exile" are integral to research on diasporic communities, and, are even more elusive when it comes to the transnational lives of migrants. In the case of the still divided island of Cyprus, the conceptual and affective complexities indeed surmount structural parameters, as more nuanced meanings are involved in how identities are articulated and expressed. This contribution grapples with the meaning of "home" for a member of the Cypriot diaspora, who has return migrated from the UK back to their ancestral island homeland. It draws from a pool of migrant narratives collected in Cyprus more than a decade ago, and, focuses on issues of belonging and homing from the story of Zoe. The analysis is grounded on a set of temporalities, spatialities and emotionalities: the timespaces of the historical experiences of Cyprus; historical and personal trauma and reconciliation; mobilities and return experiences, as well as, the affectivity of all these issues, situated in the passing of more than a decade from collection, to reflection, to writing, and, publication. The paper juxtaposes the messiness of the lived experience, of migrant livelihoods and of researcher field-workings, to draw some insights on emotional and ethical negotiations, as elements in the migrant story-telling.

The core analytical focus of this chapter is to look at a highly structured narrative that is central to the return migrant experience, both as an individual life trajectory, and, also in the collective sense as a social experience. The migrant and collective narrative fuse together as scripts, which are crafted to make sense of the migrant story, to articulate rather strongly an agentic account, which should not disrupt the holistic framework that offers some kind of sense to the collective story. Hence, the interplay here is between the scripted migrant narrative, and, any continuities or ruptures that might emerge when this clashes with the wider ethnic group collective story. Here, the migrant voice offers, not only visibility to the personal pathway of the storied account of movement to and from the ancestral homeland, but also gives meaning to the wider and nuanced collective representations of mobile lives, during, and, in the midst of homeland crises.

Cyprus can be seen as a homeland in perpetual, or rather, protracted crisis, as a divided island with a history of war, displacement, social and personal suffering, and, ongoing trauma with efforts of reconciliation not materialising to a political solution. That is, conceptually, there is prominence focusing how the narration of the return migrant life is a performative instance, deeply reflecting on the methodological underpinnings of making links to wider structural issues. This is, a glimpse into the spatio-temporal revelations of the participant, in articulating historical and contemporary instances of how the nation shapes narration. Moreover, these instances highlight the affective impact of stories, which are integral to understanding social spheres, both public and private, in shedding light on the discursive and conceptual underpinnings of storied mobilities. Through the repertoire of storytelling of belonging and exclusion, with the cultural translations that bi-communal island histories entail, issues of the politics of border regimes come to the fore. The performative aspects of the narration include: the ruptures and silences developed as a methodology of "dwelling with stories", allowing for sustained and slow interrogation of the deep listening to the depth of analysis.

The life history approach, applied here, followed intersectional theoretical and methodological nuances, in contextualising subjectivities shaped by social categorisations, such as gender, class, ethnicity, as well as social experiences, such as education, trauma, exile, memory and imagination, to understand identities and the biographicity of everyday migrant lives (Christou 2009). As a feminist, anti-racist and activist working class academic and researcher, with diasporic (Hellenic) ancestral heritage experiences as a second-generation Greek-American having lived and worked in several European nation-states and currently in the shadows of Brexit and COVID-19, the journey of re-visiting this life story, and, the context of collecting similar data in the summer of 2008, exposes the layers of memory, trauma, divisions and loss. The two dimensions here are reflective of the author/researcher, but can potentially be understood within the divisions of bicommunal communities in relation to the participant. While there is frequently a tension between "insider" and "outsider" positionalities, there are also tensions in the author/researcher's positionality as "an insider-outsider within", that is, occupying simultaneously spaces with both an insider and an outsider lens, and, often negotiating within those spaces a middle ground, to develop rapport with participants, but also to absorb and analyse their stories. Shared experiences can have advantages, but they are certainly shaped by differing subjectivities and positionalities, intersectional and diverse backgrounds.

Another layer of varying degrees of struggle, interestingly, was the reconciliation with the somewhat unorthodox creativity of the template style that was to guide the writing of this chapter, which was a new experience, and, one overriding every previous one, in conceiving and articulating analytically empirical data. The prescriptive template style of three parts was indeed celebrated by the Editorial collective and the anonymous reviewers, as a unique and helpful device for the readership, teaching and

learning purposes. But it is unconventional in my experience, where the story as empirical data and evidence is in constant conversation with the academic literature, and in response to research questions and a robust theoretical framing. On the contrary, this chapter has been a freefall immersion in a diving experience of an affective abyss without a life jacket to keep me afloat from a paranoia of narcissistic indulgence. Not following the precedent of traditional structure in a book chapter, can be intimidating as much as it might be intriguing. Letting go from that safe space of confined structure to articulate an account that unpacks the data in this way, can be somewhat destabilising at first, but also liberating in telling the story, allowing the story to become a separate unit in itself, and, uncoupled by methodological and theoretical framings that follow separately. The next section thus focuses on the latter in concluding the chapter.

Analysis

This is a story of homecoming and return migration, but one which is saturated by intense emotions, negotiations and divisions, both personal and political. The analysis is underpinned by a feminist and narrative approach (Christou 2016). The narrative case study used here, is as a form of narrative inquiry based upon social constructionist, feminist ideas and practices. Viewed from this position, stories of lived experience as data are co-constructed and negotiated between the people involved, as a means of capturing complex, multi-layered and nuanced understandings of the life story, so that we can learn from this interplay, how wider issues of social lives unfold. This approach addresses issues of relationships, collaboration and ways of knowing. Narrative inquiry is a means by which we systematically gather, analyse, and represent people's stories as told by them, which challenges traditional and modernist views of social reality, knowledge and personhood.

Subjective meanings and a sense of self and identity are negotiated as the stories unfold, bearing in mind that stories are re/constructions of the person's experiences, remembered and told at a particular point in their lives, to a particular researcher and for a particular purpose. This all has a bearing on how the stories are told, which stories are told, and, how they are presented and subsequently interpreted. They do not represent "life as lived", but our re-presentations of those lives as told to us. Hence, stories can be viewed as socially situated knowledge constructions in their own right, that value messiness, ambivalences, differences, depth and texture of experienced life. In narrative analysis the emphasis is on co-construction of meaning between the researcher and participants. While being involved in/ listening to/reading the conversations, researchers take in what is being said and compare it with their personal understandings, without filling in any gaps in understanding with "grand narratives", but rather inquiring about how pieces of the stories make sense together. The process of "data gathering" and "analysis" therefore becomes a single harmonious and organic process.

There are two core components saturating the flow of the story, that of affect and power. I draw from

the conceptualisation of both, to link "affective habitus" (Christou and Janta 2019) with "narrative power" (Plummer 2019) in understanding the interactivity shaping stories, and, the complexity of interconnecting storied migrant worlds. As Plummer (2019, p.5) suggests, "behind every story there is a social – often political – story waiting to be unpacked", and herein lies narrative power in its threefold sense, as Zoe tells her personal narrative while unpacking the social and political entanglements of power shaping her life, and, how she exemplified agency in resisting some of those structures. The analysis is grounded on a set of temporalities, spatialities and emotionalities. These involve the particular timespaces of the historical experiences of Cyprus; historical and personal trauma and reconciliation; mobilities and return experiences, as well as the affectivity of all these issues situated in the passing of more than a decade from collection, to reflection, to writing, and, publication. The chapter unpacks the messiness of the lived experience, of migrant livelihoods and of researcher field-workings, to draw some insights on emotional and ethical negotiations, as elements in the migrant story-telling.

At the same time, an intersectional lens has been applied here "to consider how an array of socially constructed dimensions of difference intersect to shape each person's experiences and actions" (Misra *et al*. 2020, p.1). Some of the core tenets of this lens include the relational context, the complex dynamics and the comparative elements of "here and there" in shaping the understanding of the migrant life story journey. Zoe defines her experiences as clearly shaped by family dynamics and normative ethnocultural values (as structural obstacles), class and gendered parameters that have either constrained or enabled her achievements. All these social categories become clear from the application of an intersectional lens, and, they provide nuanced understandings of migrant gendered social relations, and, the inequalities that emerge. The socially constructed dimensions of difference that unfold in Zoe's story, such as gender, class, ethnicity, age and through the "coloniality of power" (Grosfoguel *et al*. 2015) in positioning herself as a Cypriot in the heart of the Empire (London) are not static, but fluid intersections also translated through the complexity of roles (woman, daughter, sister, single mother, divorced, student, academic worker, returnee).

The politico-historical temporal context that situates some of the emotional signifiers that Zoe refers to, is one of a wider Cypriot history ridden with conflict and violence, that followed a near five-year, anti-colonial struggle, when Cyprus gained independence from Britain in 1960. While Greek Cypriots (circa 80% of the population) and Turkish Cypriots (circa 20% of the population) struggled for power and representation, a series of violent conflicts erupted on the island three years later, and, again in 1964 and 1967; in 1974, a nationalist coup d'etat supported by Greece was followed by an invasion by Turkey that displaced approximately 275,000 persons from both communities, and, led to the de facto division of the island (Agathangelou 2003). The "Cyprus Problem" has remained a central phenomenon in political debates with both sides quite intransigent on how to reconcile the differences, and, with the participation of women in "official" political life quite recent a phenomenon (Karayianni and Christou

2020). Zoe highlights in her narrative elements of "gendered violence" that women face with how ethnonational constructs situate them as vulnerable, second-class, victimised and denied freedom: [*my identity as a woman was always a disadvantage, it was torture; They didn't have cash for daughters; I was the second child and unfortunately for my father I was a girl again. He awaited his sons to come. When his sons were born, it was taken for granted that they would study, whereas their daughters would get married. My parents' dream was realised because right after I finished my studies, through matchmaking, they married me off and the first child was born; The situation I experience is like a cage for me. I remember that since I was twelve, I trembled to think that a man would get me pregnant.*]

The analysis also draws on the conceptualisation of "translocational positionalities" (Anthias 2006, p. 29) (i.e. that positionalities are complexly tied to situation, meaning and the interplay of our social locations) which includes not just the research setting as one of many locations or the diasporic settling, but also the in-betweenness of those public and private spaces where Zoe recalls instances of marginalisation. Those conditions are necessary to enable intersubjective reflexivity, in order to overcome normalising and dominant discourses that essentialise migrant positioning. Thus, in unsettling a rigid grounding to the nation, we can appreciate how mobilities unfold, not just beyond nation-state boundaries, but also the psychological borders that notions of class, colonial imaginary, gender norms etc. can assert onto the life narrative.

This leads into the final theme discussed here, linking "translocational positionalities" (Anthias 2006) to aspects of individual agency/identity and social norms, that mould roles where women engage with the affordances of their visibility and voice. This is the interconnected segment of Zoe's narrative, where her mothering, professional, research and activist's roles mould into a pathway for her to transcend the traditional normative identities that her family and ethnic group context would have associated with her, and, to construct a new mosaic of her choice. This translates into her choice of single motherhood while working two jobs and pursuing doctoral studies simultaneously, the topic of her thesis for which she received a lot of criticism, to her future activist research and work in the area of "consciousness raising", with issues of language and the politics over Cypriot women's voices and their position concerning the missing persons who disappeared during the periods of violence and war. Overall, Zoe gives an account which is wonderfully fluid, situative and complex, in outlining a narrative identity that weaves together a number of threads, notwithstanding a multitude of challenges to belonging and pathways to empowerment. These are also multiple facets of her own self-image and personality, as every narrative piece is but a component to the mosaic of selfhood.

This chapter has encapsulated themes and issues of gender and feminism, motherhood and mothering, family, and, as the title suggests: belonging and rupture. This ultimately points to the culminating threads that bind both Zoe's individual life history of "homecoming", "rupture" and the quest for

"belonging" with the larger political history of her homeland, Cyprus, where these issues are not only pronounced but also contested. These are new disruptive, and, equally transgressive layers of memory and reconciliation. Historical trauma is not simply transmissible through generations, but "rather, there seems to be much ambivalence in the workings of memories that under some circumstances may create openings for new identities", with "implications that focus on the notion of creating new solidarities without forgetting past traumas" (Zembylas and Bekerman 2008, p. 125). The fragments of the life story unfolding in this chapter have highlighted that remembering is an act of forgetting, and, forging new creative potentialities in bridging trauma with agency, and, by extension, in a sense, healing the self from loss and pain, marking the past, but not the future.

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[1] EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) was a clandestine group (established in the spring of 1955 and lasting about four years) with the initiative of the Church of Cyprus and the consent and sporadic limited assistance of the government of Greece, with a purpose to wage a guerrilla campaign against the British colonial administration of Cyprus. The colonial administration responded by issuing a state of emergency and increasing its armed forces on the island to combat EOKA (Demetriou 2007; Karayianni and Christou 2020).

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