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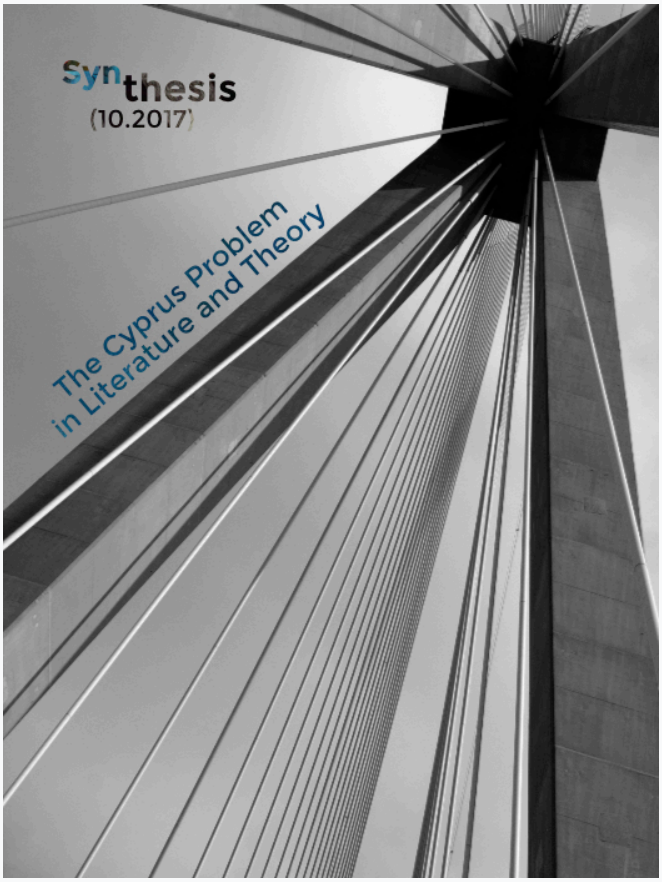

Daughters of Cyprus: Women, Contemporary Romance Fiction, and 1974

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Daughters of Cyprus:
Women, Contemporary Romance Fiction, and 1974

Jodie Matthews

Abstract
The article considers twenty-first-century Anglophone romance representations of women set during the events of 1974 in Cyprus. It highlights the creative and political opportunities and ethical challenges of representing the Cyprus Problem in this genre. In representing a gap between the "desires of the feminine" and the motivating forces of ethno-nationalism, the novels remap women's experience left out of the patriarchal assertions of war. While the novels reinscribe many of the discourses that normalise women's absences from processes of official reconciliation, they might be seen as drawing popular attention to the issues at stake when considering women and war in Cyprus.

When Turkish forces invade Cyprus in Christy Lefteri's 1974-set *A Watermelon, A Fish and a Bible* (2011), Maria and her husband Vasos flee their bucolic village home, with its gently chiming bells, lemon groves, men selling fresh produce, the daily unloading of the fish catch, and women embroidering silk. The novel takes its title from the only three items they are able to grab as they leave. Maria has worn black since the death of her brother at the hands of the British, against whom he was fighting for Cypriot independence in 1957. She took part in demonstrations against British colonialism herself "and was often the flag-bearer, holding in her large hands the Hellenic and Greek-Cypriot flags." In taking up her brother's nationalism "she had become part male" (147). "She could kill animals with her bare hands," the narration claims, "and not just chickens or rabbits, which was common amongst some of the older women, but rams and cows and pigs and even snakes. She owned a gun, for the most challenging animals" (147). There is even mention of the length of the hairs on her chin, a "superfluous" distribution of hair that, in social and literary contexts troubles categories of male/female but that also often culturally signifies ageing and post-sexual femininity (Lesnik-Oberstein 4). Maria's apparent armed masculinity (or a 'post-femininity' constructed through

age, grief, and ideological attachment) demonstrates the difficulty of including women in the political and martial discourses of Cyprus's troubled twentieth-century history. The only way, it seems, that Maria can epitomise the strength that the nationalist cause champions is by shedding her feminine characteristics.

This article considers the ways in which contemporary (twenty-first-century) British Anglophone popular/commercial romance fiction attempts to represent the part played by women in the events of 1974 in Cyprus, newly highlighting the creative and political opportunities and ethical challenges of representing the Cyprus Problem in this genre. As Lisa Fletcher notes, "there is a well-established scholarly tradition of highlighting the contradictoriness and indeterminacy of the romance genre in popular and literary contexts" (2). Most frequently, the genre is seen as "irresolvably both 'conservative' and 'progressive' in its form and function," and this article originally underlines and explores the nature of that tension in a distinct setting: novels about Cyprus in 1974 (Fletcher 2). The "progressive" elements of the novels point to an alternative discourse for exploring the effects of nationalist political conflict, while the conservatism constrains women's power and agency. For Deborah Philips, romance novels share "an articulation of anxieties about what it means to be a woman, the desires of the feminine, that are inadmissible elsewhere," and "uniformly articulate some form of desire," but not necessarily for an eternal heterosexual partner (5). In line with this definition, the desires of the sympathetic female characters in this study are not singular–they are sexual desires for men, the desire to protect children, the desire for home and for a safe future. They are resolutely *not* desires aligned with the chauvinist nationalisms in conflict in Cyprus in 1974. I suggest that in representing this gap between the "desires of the feminine" and the motivating forces of ethno-nationalism, the novels grapple with politics in a way that is not often scrutinised. These sorts of texts, whether set in London, the Cotswolds, Florence or Famagusta, have traditionally formed a "hidden history of women's reading," their popularity making them invisible to serious literary attention (Philips 1). My contention here is that it is precisely these novels' popularity and the articulation of desires inadmissable in other 'official' discourses (such as NGO reports, History, and journalism) that qualifies them for urgent reconsideration as part of a cultural response to 1974, a generation after the fact.

The three novels under discussion here are: *A Watermelon, a Fish and a Bible*, published by Quercus, a division of Hodder & Stoughton with a particular focus on commercial fiction; Jo Bunt's *Daughter of the Winds*, self-published and printed by amazon.co.uk in 2014; and *The Sunrise* by the already-successful novelist Victoria Hislop, also published in 2014 by Headline. Exploring the Cyprus Problem via this genre sheds light on the political possibilities (and limitations) of popular romance, and on ways of representing the hidden women's history of the conflict. Some

historical contextualisation immediately follows for the reader unfamiliar with Cyprus, then a summary is given of common features across the three novels. The article moves on to explore ways in which the popular romance genre can 'remap' women's experience left out of the patriarchal assertions of war. As detailed examples from the novels are elaborated, the article points to the tensions between politics and romance, progressivism and conservatism. Two key areas that emerge are representations of rape and of motherhood. Finally, the article posits the novels as both narrativising *and* forging an important, popular, but not unproblematic link between our present and the past of 1974, a link that cannot be ignored in the context of ongoing peace talks.

The perennial problem in any attempt to summarise objectively and succinctly the events of 1974 is that all statements, omissions and simplifications are political. The perspective of the author also makes a difference: I am a British academic writer, uncomfortably representative of a former colonial power. I lament Britain's unwelcome historic authority over Cyprus, the barbaric treatment of those fighting for independence, its failure to act in 1974, and its maintenance of Sovereign Base Areas on the island. Taking further Lisa Dikomitis's assertion that "there are two official modern histories alive on the island: a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot version" (7), I suggest that there are always *at least* two official histories. While the plurality of accounts may be a frustration to the historian or lawyer, they more productively suggest to the literary critic an ethics of representation, one that might be uncovered by the interrogation of what is at stake in constructing the fictionalised past in Cyprus in particular ways.

Control over Cyprus was at issue long before any discourse of nationalism as we recognise it today had emerged, its geographical location marking it of political interest in the earliest records of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Hittites.[1] Visitors to the island need not look hard to find remnants of its Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Frankish periods. The Venetians established formal rule of Cyprus in 1489, and it is this period (to 1571) that English literature's most important Cypriot text, William Shakespeare's *Othello*, dramatises.[2] Following their conquest of the island in 1571, the Ottomans ruled Cyprus for over 300 years. The threat of Russian expansion and British desire for a base in the East to support its control of the Suez Canal (and sea route to India) led to Britain leasing Cyprus from the Ottomans in part exchange for protection against Russian seizure of Ottoman territory. Britain would officially control Cyprus, making it a crown colony after World War I, until its independence in 1960. During the Napoleonic Wars, Britain had acquired the Ionian Islands and later ceded them to Greece, seen as a precedent for *enosis*: uniting independent Greece with Cyprus. Independence from the British and *enosis* with Greece were two of the core aims of EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*; National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters), formed in 1955. *Enosis*

would be officially abandoned four years later as a compromise to achieve independence. EOKA fought an armed struggle against the British, with the loss of 238 civilian lives and 156 security forces personnel. EOKA attacks on Turkish Cypriots had the dangerous effect of legitimating (to the colonial forces at least) Britain's continued 'divide and rule' policy that would have devastating later consequences. Türk Mukavemet Teskilati (Turkish Defence Organisation, TMT) was formed in 1957. The constitution of an independent Cyprus, a Greco-Turkish state, was eventually signed in August 1960 by Archbishop Makarios, the new president (a figure who is hero-worshipped in *The Sunrise* by the devout Irini Georgiou, but some of whose decisions cause his portrait to be turned to the wall); by Hugh Foot, outgoing British governor of the island; and by Fazil Küçük, the new vice-president.[3]

That constitution guaranteed a bicommunal state, for instance the House of Representatives would be selected through separate Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot elections and the House would take decisions through double majorities. A census taken at the point of independence records that 77% of the population was "ethnically Greek", 18% "ethnically Turkish", and the rest Maronite, Armenian and "Latin" (Layoun 73). Such divisions are, even in a statistical sense, crude ones, given the diverse history of the island–demanding that one identify with one kind of Cypriotness rather than another says far more about the ideology of ethno-nationalism than it does about genetic and cultural heritage. The new state had come at a heavy cost and took enormous compromise. Drousiotis has cogently labelled this "circumscribed independence" (2008 11). EOKA disbanded on independence, but TMT, under Rauf Denktash, increased in men and arms. From its birth, the independent state of Cyprus had to overcome mutual cultural mistrust following decades of divide and rule, a complex system of government, and interference from Greece and Turkey (whose domestic politics governed their interest in Cyprus). At each turn, non-cooperation from Greek- or Turkish Cypriot factions could activate the Treaty of Guarantee and bring intervention from Athens or Ankara. By March 1962, challenges over constitutional rights and the fair running of the country meant that "the two communities were sliding towards violent confrontation" (Drousiotis 30), a situation that worsened as Makarios–in consultation, however covertly, with the British–attempted to revise the constitution to remove the Treaty of Guarantee. In late December 1963, tensions spilled over and fighting broke out across Nicosia. Ten people were killed on 23 December, nine of them Turkish Cypriot. American sources claim that most of the seventeen killed the next day were also Turkish Cypriot. There followed the complete blockade of Nicosia's Turkish Cypriot sector by Greek Cypriot paramilitaries, events that are particularly important to the backstory of Hislop's *The Sunrise*. As further blood was spilt and hostages taken, Turkey threatened

invasion to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority, and Greece refused to wade in on the other side with its own shift in government and pressure from the US to keep out. Eventually the guarantor powers agreed to provide a tripartite force, but events moved too fast and an urgent diplomatic solution was found: the partition of Nicosia. The drawing of the Green Line produced a widespread climate of enmity between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Küçük announced himself President of the 'Turkish Cypriot state' and Turkish Cypriot members left the House of Representatives. The dispersed Turkish Cypriot minority population moved to entirely Turkish enclaves. 25,000 people moved out of their homes through fear of Greek Cypriot reprisals but also fear of TMT (Drousiotis 130). Their homes were looted and destroyed. The prevention of any form of communication between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots was a tactical objective of both sides as politics trumped personal relationships across the island; the popular romance genre, whatever else it does, reverses that objective. Fighting, blockades and desperate diplomatic efforts continued, and the first United Nations Peacekeeping Force arrived in Cyprus in March 1964.

Over the next decade, Cyprus became one of the unfortunate countries caught between NATO and the non-aligned countries, and the island's strife was infinitely complicated by Cold War power play. Any relationships Makarios forged with the Soviet Union were fiercely opposed by the ultra-right-wing Georgios Grivas, former leader of EOKA, who had been allowed back to the island but would be removed again at the insistence of Turkey–he would be back again once more to form the much more marginal and vengeful EOKA B in 1971/2. The fortunes of Greece and Turkey continued to have import on Cyprus, especially due to the number of troops they sent there. In 1967, a military coup in Greece had ushered in the junta, and the colonels were as unhappy as the US with Makarios's anti-NATO policy. Cyprus became a battleground not just between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, Greek and Turkish nationalisms, but between right- and left-wing.

Come 1973, Makarios was returned as president unopposed, but continued to be attacked by those on the right who held that his religious and political roles were incompatible. EOKA B increased its campaign of violence, and Grivas died of a heart attack in 1974, leaving the organisation in the hands of extreme hardliners. In Athens, an even more right-wing coup took place; Turkey, too, had a new government following elections. Inter-communal talks resumed in June 1974, but then in July Makarios made explicit his complaints that the Greek junta supported EOKA B, carried out political murders, and acted against him. The junta responded by ordering Greek commanders in Cyprus to stage a coup. Tanks surrounded the presidential palace and following heavy fighting the announcement came that Makarios was dead. To carry out the coup, the National Guard short-sightedly stripped Kyrenia of its defences and moved anti-tank, artillery and commando

units from the northern coast and Pentadactylos range to Nicosia (Drousiotis 400). Makarios had, in fact, escaped and was flown to London and on to the UN in New York. The Turkish Prime Minister argued that Britain as co-guarantor should take military action against the coup, but Harold Wilson insisted on a diplomatic solution. Both Greeks and Turks refused to negotiate with each other.

On 20 July 1974, Turkish troops came ashore west of Kyrenia and paratroopers were dropped in the Mesaoria plain. Fearing a massacre, the inhabitants of and tourist visitors to Varosha (the setting of *The Sunrise* and *Daughter of the Winds*) fled, never to return as the area is now within the Turkish-controlled 'Forbidden Zone.' Turkey had the largest NATO army in Europe at this time (Drousiotis 397), armed with American weapons. The coupists were not prepared for the invasion, but the national guard put up fierce resistance. In terms of radio communication, a lifeline to the characters trapped in Varosha in *The Sunrise*, CyBC continued to broadcast its scheduled programme 90 minutes after the bombing began in an attempt to portray 'business as usual,' while Bayrak Radio had been playing martial music from 2am, signalling that life on the island was to become anything but. CyBC would later call on all citizens to bear arms (Drousiotis 406). Both sides claimed atrocities against their communities, and a large number of people are still, in 2016, unaccounted for. Britain still did not take action, perhaps because Wilson believed such action would leave British families in Cyprus open to attack, resulting in the type of civilian incidents we see in *Daughter of the Winds*, perhaps because advisors thought that partition was the only answer to inter-communal strife–an answer the novels do not countenance (Boatswain 168), perhaps because the British feared another Suez Crisis if they took action without US support. On 22 July, the Greek junta collapsed. The first and second Geneva conferences were convened to bring Greece, Turkey and Britain as guarantor powers together. Turkish demands for control of the partitioned area were not met, and the Turkish occupation was forcibly expanded. In 1974, the population of Cyprus was around 575,000. Mid-July to mid-August of that year found 6000 dead, 1600 missing persons, and 200,000–nearly 35% of the population–refugees (Layoun 73).

According to Jan Asmussen, "the fate of refugees and other victims of war did not figure high on the agenda of the US State Department," whatever US involvement in the anti-Makarios coup had been (Asmussen 265). There is, he asserts, "conclusive evidence for a vast number of war crimes committed by both sides during the summer of 1974," including massacres of entire village populations, rapes, looting, and burning of houses and religious buildings (274). Asmussen refers to the investigations of journalist Sevgül Uludağ, who controversially published details of massacres against Greek Cypriots in the settlements of Palekythrea (Balıkesir), Kythrea (Degirmenlik), and Assia (Paşaköy). Amongst Greek Cypriot refugees, a recurrent phrase as they recount their

memories is that they left *me ta rouxa pou forousame*, with only the clothes they were wearing, not even a watermelon, a fish, or a Bible (Dikomatis 9-10).

This, then, is a fairly standard account of events leading up to 1974. We hear of the male political actors, male soldiers, and occasionally of the female survivors of rape or victims of murder. Is this the only way to represent this period and its aftermath? What is at stake in doing so otherwise? Three twenty-first-century popular novels figure 1974 rather differently, but have some important features in common with each other in representing women's experience. *A Watermelon, A Fish and a Bible*, *The Sunrise* and *Daughter of the Winds* share remarkably similar cover art and palette, suggesting that they target a similar readership by using a visual short-hand for women's romance fiction set in the Mediterranean. The cover art that works to guarantee an audience is useful here in enabling the critic to gather a set of texts together, but also immediately locates the novels in a genre (romance) that points us towards thinking about exactly what those "desires of the feminine" that are not admissible in other discourses about the Cyprus Problem might be. I suggest that the novels can be seen, collectively, as epitomising a literary 'moment' in the representation of 1974. A washed-out blue sky of exactly the same hue is foregrounded on the cover of all three novels by the author's name in darker blue and the book title in red or cerise. Both the hardcover of *The Sunrise* and *Daughter of the Winds* show a view of Varosha in Famagusta from across the bay with a female figure spectrally inhabiting the beach, and the book title appearing in hand-chalked script, signifying authenticity and the personal. *The Sunrise* replaces the barbed wire of *Daughter of the Winds* with aloe plants, common in Cyprus (though not as ubiquitous as the prickly pear plants, described elsewhere as part of the floral takeover of Varosha in its post-human decay, see Dobraszczyk). *A Watermelon, A Fish and a Bible* shows a young, strawberry-blonde woman with a crumbling building, a goat and an aerial bomber in the background. The similarity of book covers by diverse authors about Africa (think orange sky and a silhouetted acacia tree) was a topic of online discussion in the year that *The Sunrise* and *Daughter of the Winds* was published (see Thor), and it seems that washed-out blue might be Cyprus's answer to African orange when it comes to the book trade. For instance, the genre connoted by the cover layout of *The Sunrise* is replicated almost exactly for the cover art of popular novels by Amanda Prowse (*Poppy Day*, *What Have I Done*, *Something Quite Beautiful*), but the different colour palette for *The Sunrise* marks the location setting out. It appears again on the hardcover of Sadie Jones's 2009 *Small Wars*, set during the heat of EOKA's battles with colonial forces. The immediate danger of such colour-coding is that a large reading audience becomes accustomed to the idea of one Cyprus, one story, and the complexities of what happened in Cyprus and the possibilities of representing them are lost to commercial demands signified

through an over-simplified semiotics of book design. The possibilities for romance and political content are limited in this gesture. Indeed, the books are aimed at (or concede to) those with little knowledge of the events of 1974 as exposition is regularly clumsily inserted. For instance, the somewhat inauthentic voice of Richard in *Daughter of the Winds* is used rather noticeably for this purpose. However, these romantic representations might form a turning point in popular approaches to the conflict, opening the way for more nuanced, transgressive and experimental Anglophone women's writing to find a wider audience in future.

The action of *A Watermelon, a Fish and a Bible* is largely contained in 1974, but with flashbacks to the events leading to Koki's (the main female protagonist) conception and her own relationship with a Turkish immigrant to Cyprus. *Daughter of the Winds* alternates between 1974 and the present, as Leni arrives in Cyprus as an Englishwoman attempting to claim a heritage to go with her Cypriot genealogy. Her biological mother was killed in Varosha by a Turkish shell during the invasion, and her father is one of the missing. She was unofficially adopted by Pru, wife of an English serviceman, and brought up with no knowledge of her parentage. In one of the 1974 chapters, after Eddie (Pru's husband) and a colleague have rescued a young man still alive under a pile of bodies of Greek Cypriots executed by Turkish or Turkish Cypriot soldiers, they take him to the nearest village, where women attend to his treatment: "there was a job to be done and no one questioned that the women would do it" (269). This conservative view of women's work and their part in a conflict is set up by the novel in order to be contrasted with the assertive behaviour of Leni a generation later. Despite this apparently progressive agenda, female characters seem to be narratively punished in the novels for excessive bravery (particularly if this involves setting out on a task unchaperoned), hubris, vanity, and sexual transgression. The challenge that these novels pose to hegemonic discourses does not extend to totally dismantling a framework of ideal womanhood. *The Sunrise*'s Aphroditi, for instance, (whose name, of course, invokes the goddess of love, born in the waves of the Cypriot sea) is considered "imperious and unfeminine" by her husband's right-hand-man, Markos. Markos is eventually revealed as greedy and immoral, but Aphroditi's pride and vanity are heavily critiqued by the novel.

As well as setting, subject, and publication dates, the novels share a similar tone and tropes. In addition to the important themes of rape and motherhood discussed in more detail later, these tropes include: a sympathetic view of British characters, if not British foreign policy–as one would expect given the place of publication; Cyprus as an island beholden to grief *before* the events of 1974 (such as little Mehmet Özkan in *The Sunrise*, named for his cousin who was hacked to death when he ventured out of a UN-protected Turkish Cypriot enclave in 1964); and, seemingly trivially, the use of food to evoke Cypriot life. This last is fairly standard

in Anglophone literature set in Cyprus, such as throughout Eve Makis's *Land of the Golden Apple* (2008). This, along with the descriptions of honeysuckle, citrus blossom and jasmine scents is designed not only to evoke the romantic island setting, but perhaps to spark remembrance amongst British readers who have consumed the smells and tastes of Cyprus as tourists. However, such a sensual strategy also reveals one of the ethical challenges of representing the Cyprus Problem in an Anglophone romance genre: the tragedies, pain and politics of 1974 are consumed as entertainment, even if that entertainment–as the romance genre typically does–invites empathy and identification. The distance from a setting that entertaining consumption implies can be seen in the paratextual lists of Cypriot names and places that acknowledge support, information and hospitality in the writing of the novels. In this case, these acknowledgements serve not only as genuinely-meant thanks to individuals, they establish an authorial right to be emotionally engaged in the Cyprus Problem, like the one Leni claims in *Daughter of the Winds* despite having been raised in Britain with little knowledge of the island.

Finally, in terms of shared tropes, all three novels–rather clumsily, but well-meant–emphasise the similarities between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and their cultures. In *A Watermelon, a Fish and a Bible*, for the sociopathic Commander Serkan Demir, olives dressed with lemon, coriander, and garlic smell "like home" (24). On a night-time troop transport from Turkey to Cyprus, Adem tells young Engin that "on the streets you can't even tell a Greek from a Turk. They drink from the same wells, milk the same cows, raise the same children" (29). On visiting the north of the island in *Daughter of the Winds*, Leni notes–with the racially objectifying gaze of the Western European tourist, despite her parentage–that "ostensibly the Turkish inhabitants of Famagusta were the same as their dark-skinned, thick-haired Greek counterparts in the south" (Bunt 300). These are, no doubt, romance novels. They are also interventions in the representation of Cyprus in 1974. One important way in which they do this is by remapping the spaces of the island during the conflict according to women's experience on the ground: by romancing the cartography.

Maps matter in any land grab: cartography ideologically represents the ambitions and losses of a state, group, or movement as potently as any speech or manifesto. Cartographic tools are used, for instance, in the service of and to resist empire and domination.[4] As Raymond Craib notes, "if a map reflects anything, it is the relationship between modes of representation and the material practices of power" (7). Intriguing, then, that two of the three novels under consideration here place maps as paratexts before the narrative in books, and I suggest that these can be read in just such terms of relationships between modes of representation and practices of power because of the novels' subject matter and target female audience.

In her discussion of Maria Abraamidou's short story 'Paralogismos' (1979), Mary Layoun suggests, with a metaphorical use of mapping, that the story attempts to "remap gendered national(ist) spaces within the narrative," but that this attempt is "impinged on and recontained by official national narrative" (96). Hislop's *The Sunrise* and Lefteri's *A Watermelon, A Fish and a Bible* begin with conventional maps as a nod to official international narratives of the events of and leading up to 1974; Hislop's map is of an undivided Cyprus in 1972, though as described above the Green Line had been in place for eight years; Lefteri's island is split between occupied and non-occupied territory. This "non-occupied territory" label elides the Greek occupation of the south and, deliberately or not, avoids the issue of Greek Cypriot nationalism. Both maps pinpoint the major settlements of Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Kyrenia, labelled with their anglicised spellings. Famagusta, for instance, could also be labelled as Αμμόχωστος, *Mağusa* and *Gazimağusa*, demonstrating the impossibility of a neutrally-drawn map. Both maps label the UK Sovereign Base Areas. While Lefteri's map shows Cyprus alone in the Mediterranean, Hislop's shows the island's proximity to Turkey. This inclusion is relevant to the narrative to follow, given how quickly planes and boats can arrive from the Turkish mainland, but it could also be included to fill a gap in geographical knowledge among British readers; many are unaware how close Cyprus is to Turkey and, in fact, assume that Cyprus is both proximal to, and part of, Greece (see, for instance, Guttridge).

More important than the inclusion of these maps is the fact that the narratives go on to move away from such officially-drawn representations of 1974, remapping the spaces of the island during the conflict according to female characters' experience of the land itself. Indeed, even the Varosha setting of two of the novels can be seen to "undermine capitalist/state manifestations of power" because of the pseudo-apocalyptic imagery it demands–capitalism and the state have failed here, and now a new kind of journey, a story with different priorities, must be mapped (Dobraszczyk 44). This remapping is seen most starkly in two interconnected unofficial maps in the one novel in my collection that does not open with a paratext like the others, Bunt's *Daughter of the Winds*. The first of these 'maps' is actually an authorial geographical error, but one that serves to demonstrate the differences between official maps and fictionalised personal experience; rather than see this as a straightforward mistake, it is an opportunity to think about the effects of romance fiction. Determined to visit Varosha, the 'ghost town' of Famagusta and the place of her birth, Leni sets off intrepidly by herself, guided by a plan of the streets as he knew them hand-drawn by her estranged father: "I know exactly where I'm going", she claims (Bunt 303). Leni is temporarily prevented from entering Varosha by Stephanos, the problematically stereotypical Greek Cypriot love interest of the novel, with his hypersexuality and "lazy smile" (181). He persuades her to defer the

sortie, and they walk for five minutes to "Ledra Street…packed full of shoppers, both locals and tourists alike" (304). Stephanos explains that he has only been able to walk all the way along the road since 2008, referring to the removal of the barricade across Ledra Street, when it became a crossing point between north and south. However, Ledra Street is in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, sixty or so kilometers from Famagusta where their walk apparently began five minutes earlier. At the moment at which Leni feels she has acquired the sketched cartographical tools to reconcile her English and Cypriot heritage with a return to the ghost town of Varosha, this narrative blip reveals how untrustworthy geography can be when representing the past; the official cartographical mode is in tension with a character's movements. In short, these three fictions remap Cyprus in 1974, but often imperfectly. A romanced cartography, the reintroduction of women's experience of Cyprus, can be seen as an important contribution of this genre to representing 1974.

Feminist scholars have pointed to the absence of women in mainstream, factual accounts of the island's twentieth-century history. As Sophia Papastavrou notes, "Cypriot women have been left out of the historical narrative based on the patriarchal assumptions of war" (96). By contrast, the protagonists of Cynthia Cockburn's *The Line*, for instance, "refute the legitimacy of both gender subordination and the Partition Line," seeing the two combining to form an obstacle to peace and reconciliation (3). Myria Vassiliadou suggests that "Cypriot women's voices were generally hidden under the patriarchal discourse of modernity" but that "through nationalism (for example in the 1950s and after the 1974 Turkish invasion)…women's voices began to emerge" (460). Many of the hardships of the aftermath of 1974 were particularly felt by women, she suggests, "especially refugee women of all socioeconomic backgrounds from both communities; they were left homeless, widows, raped, abused, harassed, single mothers and wives of missing husbands" (462). Rape is significant to the current discussion, as it is one form of violence that overwhelmingly targets women (though I note the reality of male rape as a weapon of war) and that generally also finds mention in male-authored or -centred accounts of 1974. However, that attention often fails to allow "women's voices to emerge," reinscribing them as passive victims of a bodily and nationalist invasion and, as Layoun notes, positing the island itself as raped (83). The romance genre has the potential to counter this equation of a pure, ethnicised island raped by a rival ethno-nationalist force and individual female experience of rape by prioritising knowledge of the woman's prior life and story and effects of the rape, so that rape is not the only and total story.

The number of women and girls who were raped in 1974 is hard to quantify. Asmussen suggests that, "given the conservative structure of Cypriot societies at

that time, it is quite possible that in many cases woman simply tried to keep the fact that they were raped to themselves in order to protect their honour in the eyes of others." Some records were kept, however, and, in October 1974, 37 Greek Cypriot women and girls aged between 12 and 45 who had been raped were treated at Akrotiri Military Hospital. Those who required abortions were treated in accordance with a special Sovereign Base Area ordnance drawn to legalise the procedure (275-76). However, Layoun emphasises that "the narrative representation of rape is *not* simple repetition of the factual story of the violation of Cypriot women by the invading Turkish army" (121; emphasis added). To talk about women in 1974 is not necessarily and automatically to tell a story of rape. The foregrounding of rape "*is*, however, an unavoidable…consequence of the specific gendering of nationalism…, of the specific metaphorisation of the nation and national land in the pure and virtuous body of a woman" (121; original emphasis). How do the three contemporary romance novels here narratively represent rape, and do they do so in a way that reinforces or undermines the gendering of ethno-nationalism in Cyprus?

The threat of rape is ever-present in Lefteri and Hislop's descriptions of female characters' experience of 1974. Characters in *The Sunrise* learn of the Maratha massacre (of Turkish Cypriots) from a newspaper dropped by a Turkish soldier. Of the mutilated corpses, "mothers were still clutching babies, the youngest less than a month old, and there were signs that some of the women had been raped before they were slaughtered" (221). Narratively, the event is included to make clear the danger civilians face, but also to highlight that atrocities were committed against women and children on both sides. Very early in *A Watermelon, a Fish and a Bible*, the point of view shifts from the young girl, Maroulla, to one of the men "in green," Adem Berker (6). He takes a large drink of ouzo and the reader is unsure for what he is girding himself: killing or kindness. The suspense does not last long: he wants to protect her, but in pausing to consider this he brings to mind the potential threat from his comrades: capture, rape, death. Later, another female character, Yiola, appears with "satin hair matted, her eyes red, her skirt ripped" (19). The torn skirt is a standard literary device to indicate rape, but one that metaphorises the violation rather than be clear about what the woman has suffered. Here, the romance genre struggles to tell the full story without the explicitness that would defy its conventions. When a group of women and girls are imprisoned in a house together, they are taken out to be raped one by one, and when Elenitsa is raped the women sing together to mask the sound. They are protecting each other, protecting young Maroulla, demonstrating solidarity, but they also predictively echo the ways in which women's deeply traumatic experiences are repressed during and in the aftermath of a national emergency, "silenced in the name of the unity of the state" (Vassiliadou 465). The sounds of the rape do not make it on to the pages of a novel

which ostensibly offers to represent what women went through. To reiterate, such explicit descriptions would be extremely rare in a romantic popular novel like this, and the delicacy of the genre matches that of official narratives. Silencing or drowning out is dramatised and critiqued when the women finally escape to Pano Pyrgos, and the priest finds them somewhere to stay:

> 'You cannot imagine what it was like to---' starts Litsa, but once again, the priest interrupts her. 'Relax, my child,' he says with a smooth smile and skin pale from the shadows of the church. 'There will be time for this later. It will do you no good.' (386)

The priest, an enactor of both religious and nationalist power in Cyprus, silences Litsa. The violence of that silence enforced by a figure accustomed to hearing confession is typographically marked by a dash, and this is not a text given to formal unorthodoxy. The "shadow of the church" is an insidious one in this context. There would not be time for Litsa's testimony later, we suspect, her voice "silenced in the name of the unity" of Cyprus within a unified Hellenism, for her own "good" as a citizen in a nation divided from itself but moving on. The novel does not present this simply as an issue of gender, however, but of the separation in experience between those Greek Cypriots who were north of the green line and those who were 'safely' to the south of it on 20 July. The divide, the narrator suggests, was between those "with a tale and those who cannot hear it" (386). The villagers of Pano Pyrgos, some of those who could not hear their testimonies, describe the refugees as dirty, assume they have been raped and that their lives are ended as a result. The refugees thus "swallow their stories, as one would swallow one's tears" (386). For the novel, the quality of silence is important, for instance when it is described as "thick" (121). In Pano Pyrgos, the silence is indeed thick with swallowed stories in order that the defilement of the national land may be prioritised in discussion above the open acknowledgment of the rape of individual women. Straining at the limits of the romance genre, the novel cannot represent rape. It does, however, represent silence and silencing. It points to the torn skirt and asks the reader to imagine the damage underneath it. It tells us of the voices raised in song and demands that the reader consider the other sounds beneath.

The narrative discourse of *The Sunrise* asserts the importance of controlling emotion and suppressing desire in a surprisingly similar way to the priest of Pano Pyrgos. Aphroditi's mother, difficult and distant since her son Dimitris was killed in 1964, likely in retaliation for his murder of a Turkish Cypriot man, represents the dangers of uncontrolled grief, grief that takes away from the future and holds people back from action and love. Aphroditi's rape by Turkish soldiers when she returns to Varosha is briefly but starkly described: "pushing her against the rough concrete wall of The Sunrise, they raped her, brutally. Finally she was too weak even to scream" (260). The fact that the rape takes place, horribly ironically,

against the wall of the hotel she owns, is an indication of the way the narrative both understands the relationship between rape and power, and the way it punishes Aphroditi for her extra-marital desire, hubris and vanity. The rape causes her to miscarry the baby with which she was pregnant, and it is the shame of her pursuit of a man not her husband that causes the silence surrounding her illness and recovery, her "living death" (264), rather than the generalised shame and silence described in Pano Pyrgos. The novel does not shy away from describing her "coat covered in filth" (265), swollen eyes and fractured fingers, bruises on her back and shoulders, but more intimate cuts and bruises are not included. As with Yiola's, Aphroditi's dress "was torn and covered in blood". Her elderly neighbour, helping to bathe her, "did not allow herself to imagine what might have happened" and Aphroditi does not speak. When Kyria Loizou says that Aphroditi can tell her anything, she follows it with "whatever has happened has happened and nothing can change that," effectively echoing the priest's "it will do you no good," if in a less patrician manner. Like *A Watermelon, A Fish and a Bible*, the novel dramatises *and* enacts the silencing of women, a compromised form of representation. What these novels avoid in their inclusion of rape within personal stories, though, is the equation of the female body with the national land. Where the narratives Layoun describes map the nation onto these bodies, a romanced cartography plots experience through human time (albeit in a circumscribed way) to find the woman, not the deindividualised and violated body. The tension of this representation, between political expression and romance genre, nation and woman, is particularly taut in *The Sunrise*.

In the lead-up to the Turkish invasion, Savvas Papacosta, Aphroditi's husband, is obsessed with his business interests in Famagusta's early 1970s international tourism boom and Aphroditi is consumed first by the opening of The Sunrise hotel and then by Markos, with whom she begins a passionate affair. Savvas believes that "the more they invested, the faster would be their return" (76), sounding a grim note to readers in austerity Britain who have witnessed the effects of financial hubris. When the hotel opens, the Papacostas want an imported band, not *bouzouki*; they want French canapes, not Cypriot cuisine. This is presented as superficial, all other things beholden to the pursuit of capital, in contrast to the authentic relationship to the land exhibited by Markos's parents, or to the plumbers who installed the pipes in the new hotel and live simpler lives. The Papacostas, *The Sunrise* suggests, do not care enough about Cyprus. Cypriot culture exists in the hotel in pastiche form only: the Roman archaeological discoveries at Salamis recreated in the decor of the hotel's ballroom; cheap crockery brought in for the 'Cypriot night' for guests to smash (62). In a scene somewhat reminiscent of Maria's enchanting performance of the Austrian *Ländler* folk dance in *The Sound of Music* (dir. Robert Wise), Markos is "mesmerised" when

Aphroditi dances a traditional dance at one such 'Cypriot night,' as she is by him when he dances the "austerely masculine" *zeibekiko* (Karayanni, 2004). Markos's attraction to Aphroditi is more political than sexual, however, as he sees an opportunity to best his boss. Aphroditi's desire is represented as authentic, but she is shown as both naive and self-centred in her interest in him to the exclusion of all else. Even when her "sense of imminent danger was strong" as Famagusta is evacuated, "she used the time it took to descend to the hallway to reapply her lipstick" (163) and in a classic case of fashion victimhood, "the height of her heels did not allow her to hurry" (164). Savvas waits until the bombs smash the polished glass of luxury hotels before looking up from his development plans.

The Papacostas, in their avarice and lust, misplace their hopes for the future. *The Sunrise* suggests that their attention should have been towards a communal Cypriot, rather than personal, future. Their flagship hotel sells the *International Herald Tribune* and *The Times* but no Cypriot papers. It courts tourists whose "sunbeds had to be laid in rows, pointing towards the rising sun. These foreigners did not want to look inland" (57). This political undertone is unusual for a popular women's romance novel, and it is Aphroditi who bears the brunt of what the narrative might term the Papacostas' misguided attitude to life. She is the collateral damage, her body and mind almost broken, as the novel struggles to reconcile dangerous (yet exoticised and passionate) nationalism with personal romance narratives. A woman whose story we follow experiences 1974; we do not read the conflict mapped on to a generalised body *like* hers. However, she experiences too much to find the resolution and happiness a romance novel generally demands.

Two other female characters, Emine Özkan and Irini Georgiou, go some way to resolving this narrative tension through their investment in a cross-cultural friendship that appears polyvocally Cypriot rather than ethno-nationalist 'Turkish' or 'Greek.' They have commitments to land, to home, and to family, and try to talk sense and calm into idealistic young men who have fallen for the ideologies of EOKA B and TMT. The pastiched Cyprus of the Sunrise's 'Cypriot nights' is re-authenticated during the urban 'Swiss Family Robinson' section of the novel, when the Özkans and Georgious hole up in the luxury hotel, unable to evacuate with the rest of the population. They are frightened and besieged, but have clean bedding and facilities to last them for decades. Emine and Irini prepare food familiar to both families together. Layoun suggests that in the short story 'Paralogismos' "'home' and 'community' are…not self-evident and sustaining categories but problematic points of contention and possibility" (98). Hislop's location of a Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot family in a luxurious prison enables a popular romantic take on these points of contention, for "they blamed their own sides for creating such chaos, never each other" (155). The two women suffer anguish at the loss of their sons, but their shared desire to remain in Famagusta as long as

possible should the young men return proves to be a properly romantic attachment. Meanwhile, amidst the privations of the Papacostas' temporary refuge at the Dhekelia air base, Savvas's commercialism and hope for future prosperity look ridiculous, while Aphroditi's quiet care for Anna Frangos's children is practical and necessary. "It was the first time she had spent so many hours in the company of children, and they had been happy and rewarding times," we learn (207). Motherhood, in these novels, is both a promise of and for the future, and an essentialist reward for compliance with norms of female behaviour. What all three novels reveal, consciously or not, is that narratives of 1974 disrupt individual mother-child or mother-baby relationships (at times, horrifically), but reinforce the essentialist role of women as potential mothers before all else.

In order to introduce the allegorical connection between blood, roses, sacrifice and homeland at the opening of *A Watermelon, a Fish and a Bible*, two female characters are introduced simply as "the mother" and "her daughter" (1-2). The daughter hears a story from her mother, intended as both a warning and a comfort, with a propagandist lie about the invasion being broadcast on the radio in the background ("They did not manage to invade," 3). This opening demonstrates once more the tension in these novels between the official, nationalist accounts (or 'objective' international accounts) of 1974 and the narratives made possible by the romance novel. The main female protagonist of the novel, Koki, loses her half-Turkish, quarter Greek-Cypriot, quarter English son to a Turkish bullet. Koki's back story reveals that her body, as the bearer of this mixed-heritage boy, became a battleground for nationalist rhetoric–analogous to the raped bodies of her compatriot sisters. The narrative highlights this village discourse as problematic, giving Koki's story instead, another romanced cartography. The tragic coincidence of the plot is that it is Adem, the boy's father, who killed him (259). This narrative turn is one indication of the ways in which romantic representations of 1974 demonstrate the capacity of this series of events to twist the hopes and expectations of parentage–expectations in which ethno-nationalism is heavily invested as the next generation guarantees genetic and ideological continuity. Layoun describes the presence of the Turkish language in 'Paralogismos' solely as terms of endearment as a "textual recasting of the Turkish or Turkish Cypriot presence in Cyprus" (97). Koki's desire for her Turkish lover is in conflict with the Hellenic nationalist desires of her community, and the description of Adem *as* lover has the potential to enact a similar recasting. However, the unknowing murder of his own multi-ethnic son serves, horribly, to confirm her community's prejudice. Once the reality of her son's death is clear, Koki must take on another mothering role by looking after Maroulla; Koki's hair may be a different colour than Maroulla's mother's, but they both smell of jasmine, the novel bitter-sweetly reports. A woman is a mother is a woman.

For Pru, the spoilt army wife of *Daughter of the Winds*, the moment of Helene's daughter's birth, in which she is reluctantly involved, proves that "anything [is] possible" (Bunt 164). The novel focuses on women taking up replacement mothering roles when a mother or child has been lost, and these roles are delivering on a promise to the future, healing wounds and making the women whole again. Pru initially resents her own pregnancy and the effect it has on her independence, and she is presented as obstinate, selfish and politically naive before her trauma. Her grief at the loss of her unborn son when bullets hit her Varosha apartment proves her femininity (at the very moment she is deprived of her biological ability to become pregnant again) and redeems her character. Confused and unwell, she associates the delivery of Helene's child with her own and returns to the apartment block. When faced with the truth, she wishes to be enveloped by the dark waters of the Mediterranean but returns to life when she realises Helene's baby is in danger after a shell hits the building. Out of urgent necessity, Pru breastfeeds the other woman's baby and eventually escapes Cyprus, raising the child as her own. Her hair may be a different colour to Helene's, but they both smell of breast milk to a baby. A woman is a mother is a mother: the romance genre confirms a woman's place in conflict.

Another child of the conflict is not so lucky: Anemone (a name which means, literally, daughter of the wind) is murdered during the invasion. She makes a spectral return a generation later, tempting Leni to make a dangerous visit to Varosha behind barbed wire. Just as mother replaces mother, daughter replaces daughter: the child Leni bears to complete the 'happy ending' of essential womanhood is named after the dead girl, and motherhood in this generation delivers on the promise of a future stolen from the murdered Anemone. These intergenerational connections do more than just confirm the expected role of women, however. The daughters of 1974 (including the baby born to Markos's sister just as Turkish boots are heard marching through Famagusta) would have been, in the contemporary 'now' of the books' setting and publication, the same age as the mothers facing the hardships of war. This perhaps explains the cluster of novelistic interest in Cyprus of 1974 in the second decade of the new millennium, particularly in a genre aimed at women. The silences and ruptures of family circumstances of 2011-2014 can be considered in the light of urgent actions taken in an emergency (selfishness, selflessness, betrayals, flight, adoption, abortion, silencing) that had unforeseen impacts on the children of 1974. They might be seen as the personal analogue of the "circumscribed independence" negotiated prior to invasion.

"An important aspect of the 'Cyprus problem'," asserts Myria Vassiliadou, "is how women, as well as 'other' defined 'subgroups' are oppressed, marginalized, or at best, ignored" (463). Nationalism legitimises "patriarchal structures over

women: asking women to wait until after the national cause has been achieved is a strategic tactic that silences their needs" (465). One of the quirks of the novels discussed here in countering the marginalisation of women in representations of the 'Cyprus problem' is that they relocate the protagonists away from Cyprus in the 'now' of the novel, ending either 'at home' in Britain or adopting Britain as home as part of the Cypriot diaspora. The national cause is at a distance, both temporally and geographically. This does not solve the problem to which Vassiliadou calls attention, however; it simply circumvents it. The "needs" of women in 1974, what I earlier referred to as the "desires of the feminine" are certainly prioritised in these popular romance novels, but they are largely framed in conservatively gendered ways: women desire to have and protect a child; the freedom they crave is to love and nurture. Their desires are thwarted or complicated by political events, but these barriers enable them to prove the resilience of their love. Political desire and allegiance to any group larger or more complex than the family is not part of the story. Despite the promise they seem to hold, because of their 'non-official' mode, of exploring women's experience of 1974, the novels fail to deliver on that promise in any nuanced way. They serve to reinscribe the discourses that normalise women's absence from processes of official reconciliation. As Janice Radway pointed out in a critical work published closer in time to 1974 than today, they deal with the consequences of patriarchy without "challenging the hierarchy of control upon which it is based" (216). Neither are they, to use Linda Hutcheon's terms "historiographical metafiction"; they are not self-conscious about the ways in which they rewrite history. So if these romance novels achieve neither a rigorous challenge to patriarchal nationalism, nor to the form in which a history of that nationalism is narrativised, what do they do? Unlike the historical romance narratives read by Lisa Fletcher, the expressions of desire found in *A Watermelon, A Fish and A Bible; The Sunrise; and Daughters of the Wind* do not "exceed history": they are very much products of living in Cyprus in 1974 (15). However, the love, connections, and desire they describe are "crucial to the link which they strive to draw between the present and the past" (Fletcher 15), a link which demands we take these narratives seriously, however much their romanced cartography presents a familiarly conservative feminine landscape. The romance genre, with books that are predictable by their covers, guarantees an audience for a reconsideration of the daughters of 1974. They are, though, a staging post on a route towards more disruptive and emancipatory narratives, representations that ultimately bring more women to the table in peace talks.

[1] This summary draws primarily on Drousiotis, and for a more general overview, on Boatswain, a text that accompanied me on my first trip to the island and thus partly locates my critical perspective.

[2] For a detailed exploration of *Othello*'s Cypriot setting and its connections with the island's more recent politics, see Christofides.

[3] For a detailed account of British imperialism in Cyprus until the First World War, see Varnava.

[4] For an example of cartographic resistance, see the case of Mamiya Rinzō in nineteenth-century Japan, described by Brett L. Walker.

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