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## DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Echoes of EOKA: A Literary Exploration of Simon Mawer's and  
Soulla Christodoulou's Cyprus

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Odevzdáním této diplomové práce na téma Ozvěny EOKA: literární průzkum Kypru v dílech Simona Mawera a Soully Christodoulou potvrzuji, že jsem ji vypracoval pod vedením vedoucí práce samostatně za použití v práci uvedených pramenů a literatury. Dále potvrzuji, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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## **Poděkování**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Cílem této práce je prozkoumat autenticitu a způsob vyobrazení období povstání EOKA na Kypru v dílech Simona Mawera *Swimming to Ithaca* (2006) a Soulla Christodoulou *The Summer Will Come* (2018). Teoretická část práce zkoumá události mezi lety 1878 a 1959, tedy kritické období poznamenané britskou správní kontrolou, zásadními politickými změnami a ozbrojenou konfrontací mezi Brity a kyperskými Řeky. Praktická část se zaměřuje na rozbor románů a zkoumá dopad kampaně EOKA na každodenní život, perspektivy a soužití kyperských Řeků a Britů. Práce se rovněž zabývá tématy souvisejícími s osobními vztahy kyperských Řeků a Britů a zkušenostmi kyperských Řeků s migrací a usazením v Anglii. V závěru jsou romány na základě stanovených cílů porovnány, což poskytuje komplexní analýzu literární interpretace daného období.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

postkoloniální literatura, novodobé dějiny Kypru, britská koloniální nadvláda, kampaň EOKA, Enosis, řecko-kyperská identita, současná britská historická beletrie, Simon Mawer, Soulla Christodoulou, migrace, sociálně-politické napětí, filhelenismus, koloniální dědictví, soužití komunit

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to examine the accuracy and the manner of depiction of the period of the EOKA struggle in Cyprus in Simon Mawer's *Swimming to Ithaca* (2006) and Soulla Christodoulou's *The Summer Will Come* (2018). The theoretical part of the thesis examines the events between 1878 and 1959, a critical period in Cypriot history marked by British administrative control, substantial political transformations, and armed confrontation between the Greek Cypriots and the British. The practical part focuses on the analysis of the novels, investigating the impact of the EOKA campaign on the daily life, perspectives and the coexistence of Greek Cypriot and British communities. The thesis also explores themes related to the Greek Cypriot and British personal relationships and the Greek Cypriot experience of migration and settling in England. In conclusion, the novels are compared and contrasted based on the objectives, providing a comprehensive analysis of the literary interpretation of the period.

## **KEY WORDS**

postcolonial literature, modern Cypriot history, British colonial rule, EOKA campaign, Enosis, Greek Cypriot identity, contemporary British historical fiction, Simon Mawer, Soulla Christodoulou, migration and settlement, socio-political tensions, philhellenism, colonial heritage, coexistence of communities

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## Introduction

The history of the island of Cyprus is a rich and multifaceted tapestry that spans millennia, characterized by a complex legacy of colonization and foreign domination that has significantly impacted its political, social, and cultural landscape. Cyprus, from 1191 AD, when it was conquered by King Richard the Lionheart of England, who took part in the Third Crusade to liberate the Holy Land, has been in continuous subjugation for almost eight centuries (1191-1960 AD). The Templars, the Lusignans, the Venetians, the Turks and the British were the rulers of the island, oppressing its people and exploiting its wealth (Varnavas 11). The period of British colonial rule in Cyprus was marked by prolonged political manoeuvring and social movements that sought to resist the oppressive regime and secure greater rights and freedoms for the Greek Cypriot people. All of this activity was interwoven with the Enosis<sup>1</sup> aspiration, which gained prominence in 1878, when Great Britain assumed the provisional administration of Cyprus, and culminated on 1 April 1955, when the armed struggle for liberation of British-occupied Cyprus began (Dodd 3-20).

Given my enduring fascination with history and the Mediterranean region, the suggestion by Dr. Tereza Topolovská to explore the history of Cyprus and its connection with colonial Britain immediately appealed to me. The impetus behind selecting this particular topic, however, stems not solely from my personal connection to Cyprus, being of partially Cypriot descent, but also from the fact that the events of those tumultuous times described in the theoretical part of this work and the geopolitical and sociocultural changes that followed continue to reverberate in the Cypriot consciousness to this day. Importantly, these events set in motion a chain of consequences that continue to impact negatively on the so-called Cyprus Problem.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Enosis is a Greek word that means *union* or *unification*. In the context of Cyprus, it refers to the movement and goal of unifying the island with Greece.

<sup>2</sup> The *Cyprus problem* or *Cyprus issue* is an ongoing conflict that began in 1974 when Turkey invaded and occupied the northern part of Cyprus. Despite numerous attempts to resolve the conflict, it remains unresolved and is marked by the ongoing occupation of 37% of the northern territory of the Republic of Cyprus by the Republic of Turkey (*The Cyprus Issue - Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs*). The issue is divisive, with different parties holding different views on how to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region.

As I delved deeper into the subject, I became increasingly intrigued by the complex political interplay and the culture contact between the British Empire and Cyprus and their lasting impact on the society and identity of both the British and the Cypriot people. It was this curiosity that motivated me to undertake a comprehensive study of the historical development of these issues and their representation in contemporary literature. Eager to understand the diverse perspectives that have shaped the narratives surrounding these events, I turned my attention to the works of prominent historical fiction writers. One of these authors is Simon Mawer, whose intriguing work often focuses on the peoples and histories of the Mediterranean. I was able to discover his work through the research and guidance of Dr. Tereza Topolovská. However, after reading Mawer's *Swimming to Ithaca*, I realized that it presents a somewhat limited account of the turbulent events of 1950s Cyprus, since it focuses mostly on the British perspective. Upon further suggestions of Dr. Topolovská, I decided to balance Mawer's viewpoint by incorporating the novel *The Summer Will Come* written by Soulla Christodoulou, a Greek Cypriot diaspora author. Through a close examination of their works, I aim to shed light on their treatment, their adaptation and their approach to the historical context and to offer a nuanced understanding of the challenges and triumphs of the people that inhabited the island in the past. The issue of colonial heritage and socio-political tensions in mid-century Cyprus, as well as the unique and powerful example of philhellenism, and its legacy, continue to hold relevance to this day. Through this analysis, this diploma thesis aims to delve into the historical development of these issues and examine their representation in contemporary British historical fiction, while also illuminating the ways in which literature can serve as a tool for exploring and understanding complex historical and social issues. Additionally, the aim is to contribute to ongoing discussions about the enduring legacies of colonialism and the struggle for independence, as well as the evolution of Cypriot identity. Ultimately, this thesis serves as an attempt to bridge the gap between the historical and contemporary perspectives, offering a deeper comprehension of the legacy of colonial Britain and its impact on Cyprus.

In order to comprehend and put into perspective the sociohistorical and geopolitical landscape that shaped Cypriot society in the latter half of the 19th century, it is crucial in the theoretical part of the thesis to examine the events that occurred between 1878 and 1960. This period begins with the onset of British administrative control over Cyprus in 1878 and continues until the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, which marked the end of British rule. The 19th century was a critical time in the history of Cyprus as the British occupation brought about substantial transformations in the political, economic, and social structure of the island, exerting



a lasting impact on its people. Additionally, according to Andreas Karyos, the 1950s were equally significant as this was the time “when the long-standing polarization between the British and the Greek Cypriots reached its peak, resulting in an armed confrontation” (*EOKA and Enosis in 1955-1959* 2).

This period is of great importance to the authors of the novels as it is the backdrop against which they set their narratives. Moreover, it is also the time when Mawer himself spent his childhood in Cyprus, giving him a first-hand experience of the political and social climate of the time (Crown). Similarly, Christodoulou draws on her Greek Cypriot heritage to infuse her work with a sense of authenticity and deep understanding of the cultural context, enabling her to craft a vivid and immersive portrayal of Cyprus during this significant era. By analysing the historical developments that took place from 1878 to 1960, with a focus on the period from 1955 to 1959, it is possible to gain a deeper knowledge of the factors that contributed to the conflict and the attitudes that shaped contemporary Cypriot society. This historical context helps to provide a thorough understanding of the novels’ themes and characters, highlighting the complexities of the conflict and its impact on the people of Cyprus. Naturally, lodged in between competing interpretations, claims and statements, the recent history of Cyprus continues to be a contentious and evolving political question. Numerous academic sources have been therefore utilized in this thesis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the aforementioned historical developments and to provide a balanced perspective. These sources have been thoroughly reviewed and are recognized for their expertise in this area. Key sources include, but are not limited to David French’ *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955-1959* (2015), Robert Holland’s *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959* (1998), Andreas Varnavas’ and Philippos Stylianou’s *A History of the Liberation Struggle of EOKA (1955-1959)* (2004), Andrew R. Novo’s *The EOKA Cause: Nationalism and the Failure of Cypriot Enosis* (2020) and *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23.3 (2012), Tabitha Morgan’s *Sweet and Bitter Island: A History of the British in Cyprus* (2010) and Nancy Crawshaw’s *The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece* (1978).

The theoretical part of this thesis will not only explore the historical events and political climate that serve as the backdrop for the novels but also aim to briefly outline the biographies and motivations of the authors. By understanding the personal experiences and perspectives of the authors, the thesis aims to clarify how their individual backgrounds influenced their writing. Furthermore, in analysing the novels by Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou, it is essential to acknowledge that they belong to the genre of contemporary historical fiction. The authors

draw on real historical contexts to create a vivid and engaging story, giving voice to marginalized groups, while also taking creative liberties to imagine the personal experiences of the characters. The description of the neo-historical genre and selected concepts from postcolonial theory will therefore serve as the theoretical backbone for the interpretation and analysis of the selected novels.

Available literature dealing with post-war history of Cyprus is mainly concerned with the outlook of historians, political scientists and economists who often tend to ignore the personal dimension of the Cypriot experience (both Greek and British) during the insurgency of EOKA<sup>3</sup> and in the years leading up to the 1974 Turkish invasion. The practical part of this thesis will therefore focus on the analysis of the two partly autobiographical novels of Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou, both of which share a common focus on the period of the EOKA campaign in Cyprus in terms of its impact on individual experiences and emotions. This period is significant not only from a literary perspective but also from the point of view of historical science, as it marked a turning point in the history of Cyprus, characterized by a struggle for independence and intense political conflict. The main aim of the practical part of the thesis is to study the coexistence of the Greek and British communities, how their lived experiences differed, and assess their equal portrayal and consideration in the depiction of this period in the novels. Simultaneously, the study investigates the role of fiction as a medium for understanding and interpreting the complex socio-political landscape during the EOKA campaign in Cyprus. This involves examining how the two works of contemporary British historical fiction capture the interdependence of the various aspects of the campaign, such as the social stereotypes, sectarian violence, political conflict, economic and cultural factors, and how they shaped the lives and experiences of people on the island in the latter part of the 1950s. By scrutinizing the authenticity of the depictions in these literary works, I seek to determine how authors balance historical accuracy with creative storytelling and examine the extent to which their own perspectives and modern sensibilities shape the representation of the past. Additionally, this thesis aims to evaluate the level of detail and objectivity of the presentation of the EOKA struggle and the Enosis sentiment, including a comprehensive analysis of the depiction of the EOKA organization, its tactics, and the perspectives and attitudes on the political situation of the different nationalities involved.

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<sup>3</sup> EOKA stands for *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*, which translates to the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters.

One of the central themes of *Swimming to Ithaca* are the various romantic and interpersonal relationships of the main protagonist. To that end, the thesis will examine whether these relationships are influenced by the political and cultural situation on the island and to which extent the extramarital relationship may be interpreted as a symbol of the culture contact between the British and the Greek Cypriots. Finally, the thesis will explore the themes and issues related to the Greek Cypriot experience of migration and settling in England, as depicted in Soulla Christodoulou's *The Summer Will Come*. In conclusion of this thesis, the novels will be compared and contrasted based on the previously stated objectives to provide a comprehensive analysis of the literary interpretation of the period with regard to the authors' personal experiences and backgrounds.

## THEORETICAL PART

### 1. Contemporary British Historical Fiction

In an era where understanding the complexities of the past is crucial for navigating the present, historical fiction, including novels like *Swimming to Ithaca* and *The Summer Will Come*, provides an engaging and thought-provoking platform for exploring the relationship between history, narrative fiction, and the human experience of both the past and the present. This chapter examines the origins of historical fiction, its growing popularity, contemporary themes, and its ability to highlight the significance of lesser-known histories and marginalized groups' experiences.

In Jerome de Groot's article, *The Power of the Past: How Historical Fiction Has Regained Its Gravitas* (2009), he contends that our fascination with history and its reflection in historical fiction has not been a recent phenomenon. Sir Walter Scott, intrigued by history, revolutionized the novel form with *Waverley* (1814) by incorporating psychological realism and character development. This transformation moved the genre away from sensationalist romance and emphasized the individual's connection to broader events and politics. Scott's work had a lasting impact on global literature, making historical fiction popular during the 19th and early 20th centuries (De Groot).

Nick Bentley, in his *Contemporary British Fiction* (2008), accentuates this recent resurgence of historical fiction in the late 20th century, which delved deeper into the relationship between history and narrative fiction. This revival, influenced by poststructuralist and postmodernist theories, led British authors to examine their nation's history nostalgically or critically. Paul Gilroy calls this introspection, driven by Britain's perceived global decline, "postcolonial melancholia" (92). The renewed interest encompassed social history, focused on untold stories of marginalized groups. Bentley further paraphrases Georg Lukács' *The Historical Novel* (1962) and points out that Lukács considers the ideal historical fiction to realistically portray the past while connecting it to the reader's present. Lukács argues that realist historical fiction has political and ethical purposes beyond individual experiences, emphasizing socio-economic conditions and the novel's context. He stresses the importance of

documenting the experiences of those absent from official histories, which is also supported by Walter Benjamin in *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940) (Bentley 92-93).

On this note, Bentley echoes Gayatri Spivak's ideas, asserting that working-class and "subaltern histories" (94) risk being lost due to limited opportunities for expression. Historians like E.P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart, Sheila Rowbotham, Stuart Hall, and Paul Gilroy have explored social history from different angles, such as British working-class culture, women's history, and black cultural history. Fiction has been an effective tool for revealing these lesser-known histories (93-94). This phenomenon is also evident in the works of Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou, who amplify the voices of marginalized groups in Cyprus during the waning years of British colonialism, including women and Greek Cypriots.

## 1.1. Selected Concepts of Postcolonial Theory

As the resurgence of historical fiction delves deeper into the relationship between history and narrative fiction, postcolonial theory emerges as its significant aspect. This connection calls for an examination of selected postcolonial concepts that influenced and shaped Mawer's and Christodoulou's novels and the genre of historical novel as a whole. Ato Quayson offers a definition of postcolonialism, stating that it "involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies and at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire" (Quayson).

The following section, which explores the core ideas of postcolonial theory, draws extensively on the work of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin and their book *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (2013). A fundamental aspect of postcolonial studies is the notion of hybridity, generally understood as the emergence of new transcultural forms within the contact zone created by colonization. It can involve various forms of blending, such as linguistic, cultural, political, and racial. Hybridity has been prominently associated with Homi K. Bhabha, who argues that all cultural statements and systems emerge in a contradictory and ambivalent space called the "Third Space of Enunciation" (108). This space challenges the hierarchical notion of cultural purity and colonial power structures and that way supports an empowering hybridity in which cultural differences can operate (108-109).

Ashcroft et al. further elaborate on the concept of duality, which frequently refers to the binary oppositions that establish a relationship of dominance, such as colonizer/colonized and white/black. Postcolonial theory strives to dismantle these binary systems, shedding light on the interstitial spaces and uncovering the contradictions within a system that can both debase and idealize its subjects (18-21). Closely linked to duality is the concept of liminality, an in-between or threshold space that enables cultural change and facilitates the development of personal or communal identities. Liminality plays a crucial role in postcolonial theory as it counters polarized identities and promotes continuous engagement, contestation, and appropriation (117-118). By positioning duality and liminality as interconnected concepts, the reader can better understand how they work together to challenge the simplistic binary oppositions and provide perspective on the complexities of cultural interactions and identity formation in postcolonial societies.

According to Ashcroft et al., the concept of Orientalism, which gained prominence through Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978), describes how the Orient (the Eastern world or Asia) is formulated within European thought. Orientalism serves as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the Orient. The Orient is not a natural phenomenon but rather a construct created by generations of intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, and politicians. It is built upon Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes. The relationship between the West and the Orient is one of power, domination, and complex hegemony. Orientalist discourse, rather than providing a truthful representation of the Orient itself, serves as a valuable indication of the power the West has exerted over the Orient (153-154). This idea is related to the concept of Eurocentrism, which is the conscious or unconscious process of prioritizing Europe and its cultural assumptions as superior to other cultures (84-85).

Furthermore, Ashcroft et al. state that this perpetuation of cultural bias is closely tied to the concept of Othering, which is a term coined by Gayatri Spivak to describe the process by which imperial discourse generates its *others*. Othering can be found in different forms of colonialist narrative, from travel writing to ethnographic writing, and can manifest itself in more material and violent forms as well. This process allows the empire to define itself against those it colonizes, excludes, and marginalizes, locating its others in pursuit of the power within which its own subjectivity is established. In general terms, the Other represents someone distinct from oneself, and this distinction is vital in defining what is considered normal and finding one's place in the world. In postcolonial theory, the Other is often used to describe the colonized subject, marginalized by imperial discourse, who are identified by their difference from the centre and become the focus of the imperial ego, which creates a binary separation between the colonizer and the colonized (154-158). These interconnected concepts collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the postcolonial themes present in contemporary historical fiction.

To conclude, modern historical fiction is a distinct literary genre that mixes aspects of history and fiction. It enables authors to construct stories that are deeply anchored in the past while reflecting contemporary perspectives. As previously stated, the genre enjoyed a renaissance in critical attention in the 20th century, when postmodern approaches to historical fiction evolved. This enabled authors to investigate the link between history and narrative, as well as the ability of narrative to build and reconstruct historical events, while also calling into question the legitimacy of authority and the ideologies that support traditional interpretations

of the past. Finally, historical fiction offers authors with a unique platform to explore the power of storytelling and to question conventional historical interpretations.



## 2. Authors and Their Works

Considering that both *The Summer Will Come* and *Swimming to Ithaca* are partly autobiographical novels, the following chapters aim to provide readers with insights into the lives and backgrounds of Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou. By situating the novels within the broader context of the authors' biographies, readers will gain a clearer perspective on the complexity and nuance of these literary contributions. This understanding will enable readers to better grasp the overarching themes and significance of the novels, ultimately supporting the realization of the aims of the thesis.

### 2.1. Simon Mawer

Simon Mawer was born in 1948 into a military family; his father served in the RAF until the 1970s, and his mother was a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force unit during World War II. Consequently, his childhood was in his own words nomadic, spent in England, Cyprus and Malta, moving from one air force base to another (*Simon Mawer - Biography*). These memories from the Mediterranean and from being a constant traveller have impacted Mawer and continue to inspire his writing, resulting in some of his narratives being set in Southern European and Eastern Mediterranean countries. This is evident in his historical fiction novels such as *The Bitter Cross* (1992), set in the Mediterranean in the 16th century, and *A Jealous God* (1996), set in England, Cyprus and Israel. In an interview with Marek Seckar, *letting in the Light* (2010), Mawer acknowledges the importance of the Mediterranean in English literature and recognizes its possible influence on his own work. However, he does not consider himself obsessed with the region or to be a part of that literary tradition. In the interview, he mentions authors such as John Fowles and Lawrence Durrell, who he used to read and who may have had an impact on him. Mawer recalls his fascination with the Mediterranean environment, including the smells, the heat, and the archaeology, when he first visited Cyprus at the age of 10 (Seckar). In another interview he further comments on the first military posting of the family in Cyprus and on its profound influence, "My first view of the place was thrilling: dust, hills, barbed wire, soldiers with rifles. I think that set the pattern for my adult life: the need to be away, the fascination with difference" (Mawer quoted in Crown).

Mawer's experience of attending boarding school in the United Kingdom, being separated from his family who were in Cyprus at the time, is reflected in his 2006 novel, *Swimming to Ithaca*. In the novel, the protagonist, Thomas, attends a preparatory boarding school in Oxford while his family remains in Cyprus. For a long time, *Swimming to Ithaca* was considered Mawer's most autobiographical work. However, this changed with the publication of *Ancestry* (2022), which delved even deeper into his personal experiences and background (Myerson). In the interview with Sarah Crown, Mawer remarks on his initially challenging experience of attending boarding school at a young age. This experience, however, led him to immerse himself in the world of literature and develop an introspective nature, which likely played a significant role in shaping his successful writing career.

I was a boarding school product from the age of eight [...] I do have a theory that boarding school is good training for writers because it's so desperately lacking in privacy: you make space for yourself by having an interior life. Plus, the library was run by sixth-formers [...] I spent a lot of time there, reading. (Crown)

After university, his initial career path led him to teach biology in the Channel Islands, Scotland, and Malta. Although he initially doubted his writing abilities, he eventually gained the confidence to embrace his talent and now identifies as a writer, though he describes himself as "not an intellectual writer" (Crown). It was during his time in Malta that he met his wife, became genuinely engaged in writing, and developed a fascination with the island's most famous residents, the Knights of St. John, a Catholic military order prominent during the medieval and early modern periods (Crown). Because teaching and family had taken up so much of his time, it was not until he became 39 that he published his first novel, *Chimera* (1989), which won the McKitterick prize (*Simon Mawer - Biography*).

As Rachel Cooke states in her article *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky by Simon Mawer—review*, Mawer was once considered a "mid-list author", who received good reviews but did not have best-selling success. However, in 2009, his eighth novel, *The Glass Room* (2009), was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. This recognition was not surprising as it is a remarkable work of art that combines thought-provoking ideas with an engaging plot. The novel tells the story of a young Jewish couple who built a modernist villa in pre-war Czechoslovakia (Cooke).

As Crown suggests, Mawer is a novelist known for his unique style marked by shifts between states and stark transitions. In his writing, Mawer twists history and infuses it with his own ideas. As Mawer states himself, he is not interested in telling the truth, but in manipulating and lying through his writing. This approach allows him to bring his own imagination and vision to life, creating unique and captivating works of fiction (Crown).

## 2.2. Soulla Christodoulou

In recent years, Soulla Christodoulou, a rising women's fiction author, has started making her mark in the literary world with her engaging works. Born and raised in London to Greek Cypriot parents, Christodoulou's work spans various fields, including education, supporting authors with their own writing, literature, and charity (*Soulla Christodoulou, Author of the Summer Will Come*).

Although writing had not always been her primary occupation, Christodoulou discovered her passion for it later in life. In 2014, while coping with her mother's cancer treatment and the challenges of her job, she sought an escape outside of work and found a local creative writing group. Joining the group as a New Year's resolution to do something for herself proved to be a transformative decision (Christodoulou in *Whispering Stories*). The encouragement and positive feedback she received for her writing inspired her to continue pursuing the craft. By 2017, she had written her first novel, *Broken Pieces of Tomorrow* (2017) (*The Writing Life of: Soulla Christodoulou*). The book is a coming-of-age novel, largely based on Christodoulou's own traumatic experiences suffered in marital breakdown and the process of building a new life (Christodoulou, *Soulla Author*).

*The Summer Will Come* (2018) is her second novel in which she draws on her Greek Cypriot background and her deep knowledge of the historical and cultural history of Cyprus in the 1950s. Christodoulou's writing focuses on the intersection of gender, race, tradition, colonialism and relationships. She is particularly interested in the ways in which colonialism and imperialism have affected the lives of women and marginalized groups in Cyprus and in the host country, England. She also focuses on the themes of displacement, alienation, homesickness and liminality. After being forced to leave Cyprus, her characters feel a sense of loss for the culture and community they have left behind, as well as a struggle to assimilate to their new surroundings.

She has also self-published a poetry book *Sunshine after Rain* on Amazon and a romantic contemporary novel *Alexander and Maria* (2020) through The Conrad Press. Currently, her upcoming fifth novel, *A Palette of Magpies*, is set to be published by Kingsley

Publishers after securing a three-book deal that builds on the success of her fourth novel, *A Village House* (2022) (Amazon).

### 3. Contextualizing the Past: A Historical Overview

The subsequent chapters explore the historical developments in Cyprus, starting with the advent of British administration and culminating in the EOKA armed uprising. Grasping this overarching historical context is crucial to fully comprehend the novels' backdrop. In this way, the readers can more effectively interpret the novels' themes, the characters' perspectives, motivations and challenges, and the intricate interplay between history and fiction. This context not only informs the narrative but also sheds light on the complexities of colonialism, resistance, and identity, ultimately enhancing the readers' understanding of the human experience during this pivotal period in Cypriot history.

#### 3.1. The Acquisition of Cyprus in the Context of British Imperial Strategy

The British Empire's acquisition of Cyprus significantly influenced the island's recent history and remains a contentious topic, involving debates over the political, economic, and social ramifications of British rule, colonialism's legitimacy, and the effects of British policies on Cypriot national identity and intercommunal relations. This chapter will analyse how Britain acquired Cyprus as a colony, examining the historical and geopolitical factors involved. Furthermore, this chapter aims to offer insights into the complex political, economic, and strategic factors that shaped the long-lasting British colonial policy towards Cyprus. Additionally, the chapter will discuss the impact of British rule on the Cypriot population, focusing on the emerging desire for Enosis and the challenges faced by the British administration in balancing local governance and imperial interests.

As Christopher Sutton puts it in *Britain's Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong* (2017), The Eastern Question<sup>4</sup> emerged as a central aspect of British foreign policy following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. In order to bolster the Ottoman Empire and protect British interests in the East, particularly in India, the British government sought to enhance its presence in the Mediterranean. Concerned about the potential ramifications of a weakened Ottoman Empire and Russia's ambitions in the region, Britain pursued alternative strategies to preserve its influence and maintain stability (18). As per Nicholas Van der Bijl's view in *The Cyprus Emergency: The Divided Island 1955–1974* (2014), the island's location would provide Britain with the position of power it desired in the Mediterranean to achieve its strategic objectives while creating a bulwark against possible Russian expansion. Additionally, the island was highly esteemed by the British Empire and its allure was further enhanced by the romanticism it evoked for the Victorians, with its association to Greek mythology, Roman history, Richard the Lionheart and its picturesque landscape and climate that echoed its rich past (19).

As such, Cyprus emerged as the optimal choice and the desired location for a military base.<sup>5</sup> Thus, British rule started in 1878 through a defensive alliance signed in Constantinople on June 4th, just 9 days prior to the Congress of Berlin (Novo, *The EOKA Cause* 11-12). According to George Greenwood's *The British Administration of Cyprus, 1926-60* (1962), in exchange, the Ottomans would receive annual tribute payment from the British government (Greenwood 16). David French posits in *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955-1959* (2015) that the peaceful acquisition of Cyprus by the British without a need for conquest had a profound impact on the future of the colony. In contrast to colonies acquired through conquest, such as Kenya and, in the case of France, Algeria, the small and largely powerless expatriate community and impartial British civil servants in Cyprus contributed to a more stable administration with less violence and repression (12-13). Subsequently, as Andrew Borowiec suggests, the completion of the Suez Canal altered the strategic significance of sovereignty in the Eastern Mediterranean, elevating the importance of

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<sup>4</sup> The Eastern Question refers to the ongoing political and diplomatic issues in the late 19th and early 20th centuries concerning the Ottoman Empire, which was then known as the "Sick Man of Europe" (80). The Eastern Question centred on the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent competition among European powers for control of its territories, particularly in the Balkans and the Middle East. This competition ultimately led to World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Papacosma 77-88).

<sup>5</sup> In *A Memorandum Concerning Cyprus* (1931) Dwight E. Lee states, that the decision to occupy Cyprus, instead of other locations in the Near East, has often been credited to Disraeli's initiative. However, there is evidence suggesting that Lord Salisbury and Colonel Home from the war office intelligence department played a significant role in this choice (235).

Cyprus to new levels, which, in the eyes of 20th century politicians, would ultimately earn the island the attribute of the “unsinkable aircraft carrier of the eastern Mediterranean” (*Cyprus: a troubled Island* 20-21).

As Novo contends, the first British administrator of Cyprus met with Bishop Kyprianos of Kitium in Larnaca, 10 days following his arrival on the island. Kyprianos declared that the Greek Cypriots embraced the shift of authority from the Ottoman Empire to Britain, trusting that Britain would eventually facilitate the unification of Cyprus with Greece, akin to the case of the Ionian Islands – a concept referred to as Enosis in Greek (*The EOKA Cause* 12). However, the early optimism of the Greek Cypriots towards British rule was not to last. As British rule became over time more entrenched on the island, it became clear that the British had no intention of granting Enosis.

David French maintains that the concept of Enosis became rooted in Cyprus through the Greek Cypriot education system and cultural institutions. As students pursued higher education in Athens, they were exposed to the *Megali Idea*<sup>6</sup> and later contributed to its spread in Cyprus. The Greek Orthodox Church also played a crucial role in fostering Hellenic identity among Greek Cypriots. By the mid-20th century, the Enosis movement had gained significant momentum and cultural importance, driven by both the church and various political factions (22-26). Corroborating French’ view, Antigone Heraclidou claims that in the initial period of British rule, financial constraints led to the delegation of education administration to individual communities. This hands-off approach, referred to as a “laissez-faire policy” (48), particularly benefited the Greek Orthodox Church which had maintained control over education during Ottoman rule (48).

In *Communism and Nationalism in Postwar Cyprus, 1945 -1955: Politics and Ideologies under British Rule* (2016) Alexios Alecou notes that in 1886 a mere 4 years after the British seized Cyprus from the Ottoman Empire, the island’s inaugural constitution was established. This document laid the groundwork for British influence and control, yet it was not the sole factor shaping the political landscape. Rather, the interplay of social, political, and ethnic forces greatly impacted the colony’s legal and administrative systems. The British aimed to retain authority over Cyprus while keeping their involvement in its day-to-day affairs to a minimum. The High Commissioner, who held executive power, governed in tandem with an

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<sup>6</sup> The *Megali Idea*, or Great Idea, shaped the independent Greek state in the 19th century with the goal of unifying all Greeks under one nation (French 22).



Executive Council comprising of high-level British officials. Cypriots had a voice in domestic matters via the Legislative Council and other local councils, with Greek and Turkish representatives elected according to their respective population sizes (57-58).

However, as David French points out, like many other British colonies, Cyprus' administration was vulnerable due to insufficient funds. The expensive nature of hiring British officials meant that their numbers were limited, and they were mainly found in senior positions within the administration and police force. Consequently, the bulk of daily administrative tasks fell to local officials who were appointed and paid by the British government. This precarious balance of power hinged on a blend of coercion and consent. In July 1954, the Cyprus government employed a total of 6,780 individuals, including civil servants, teachers, and police officers, with a mere 159 (or 2.3%) being British. Furthermore, the restricted presence of British officials on the island led to limited control over the administration, giving rise to a fragile state. This strategy of governing on a "somewhat parsimonious basis" (15) became the cornerstone of the British administration for the following 6 decades (14-15). Furthermore, the findings of Varnava and Clarke suggest that British Liberals and naval experts questioned the wisdom of occupying Cyprus, considering it insignificant and burdensome for taxpayers. This scepticism grew during the Liberal government from 1907, with senior ministers contemplating ceding Cyprus to Greece for other advantages. These attitudes and the temporary nature of British administration in Cyprus further hindered the island's development, as the uncertain occupation discouraged private and public investment due to concerns about recouping such investments if Britain were to withdraw (41).

On November 5th, 1914, the British government officially annexed Cyprus through an Order in Council, thereby ending Ottoman sovereignty over the island. This move, made on the same day the Ottoman Empire entered World War I as a member of the Central Powers, made it clear that the British had no intention of returning the island to Ottoman rule (Klapisis 128). The first and last word on the future of the island were therefore entirely in the hands of Great Britain. In April 1915, the possibility of the annexation of Cyprus to Greece emerged as the island was proffered to King Constantine's government, contingent upon Greece joining the war effort on the side of the Entente. However, the proposal was ultimately rejected by the Germanophile government (Clement 4). As Van der Bijl states, "By 1918, Great Britain acknowledged the strategic significance of Cyprus and quietly forgot its wartime offer to Greece" (20). Andreas Karyos notes that the British position on the status of Cyprus solidified following the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, in which Turkey acknowledged the annexation of 1914.

Subsequently, in 1925, the island was officially declared a British Crown Colony (*The Events in Colonial Cyprus in October 1931* 406).

In conclusion, the island's strategic location in the Eastern Mediterranean made it a desirable location for Britain to establish a military presence, especially after the completion of the Suez Canal. However, the Greek Cypriots, with aspirations for the unification of Cyprus with Greece deeply rooted in their national consciousness, hoped that British rule would eventually lead to the realization of this goal. Nevertheless, over time it became increasingly clear that the British had no intention of granting Enosis. As per Karyos, "From the Greek perspective the Cyprus Question remained unresolved, despite the peace treaties under consideration at the Paris Peace Conference, the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the doctrine of self-determination" (*The Events in Colonial Cyprus in October 1931* 406).

### 3.2. October Events and their Aftermath

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the October 1931 uprising in Cyprus, which represents a pivotal moment in Cypriot history. The chapter delves into the underlying factors that led to the uprising and also explores the immediate aftermath, drawing attention to the misjudgements of the British colonial authorities. The chapter also addresses the long-term consequences of the uprising, tracing its impact on the trajectory of Cypriot history in the subsequent years and the eventual emergence of the EOKA movement.

Over time the Enosis sentiment gathered momentum. According to *British attitudes to constitution-making in post-1931 Cyprus* (1995) by Diana Markides and Georgios S. Georghallides, the October 1931 uprising had complex causes. A key factor was the British government's disregard for popular representation and imposing taxes during a time of economic hardship. This reignited Greek Cypriots' aspiration for union with Greece (66). As per French, the government's attempt to increase the tax burden came at the worst possible time as the Great Depression caused a significant decline in Cyprus's exports and a surge in unemployment, coupled with a severe drought impacting agriculture. Cypriots blamed the government for their predicament and in April 1931 elected Greek and Turkish members of the

Legislative Council rejected a tax-increasing bill. Governor Sir Ronald Storrs bypassed the Council, raising funds through an Order in Council. Enosis supporters, who had been sceptical of the administration, felt validated in their belief that the Legislative Council was a farce. While the following events may not have been orchestrated by church leaders, they certainly encouraged them (28).

After the Bishop of Kition and other members of the Greek Orthodox Church resigned from the Legislative Council, protest meetings were held, featuring seditious speeches that fuelled further unrest (Greenwood 39). On 21 October, this ultimately culminated in a violent mob led by Enosis agitators surrounding the Government House, a symbol of British rule in Cyprus. The police were unable to control the crowd of over 5,000 that threw stones and set the building on fire (Karyos, *The Events in Colonial Cyprus in October 1931* 408). Reinforcements arrived, and in accordance with the Riot Suppression Act, started shooting to disperse the crowd. 7 protesters were killed, 28 injured, 10 exiled for life and 2,606 received various punishments for seditious activities (Novo, *The EOKA Cause* 13). This event sparked further rioting in other towns and villages and British forces were called in to restore order to the island by early November (Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus* 3-4).

In her *Sweet and Bitter Island* (2010), Tabitha Morgan suggests that the British community was shocked and caught off guard by the sudden outbreak of violence from their previously submissive and compliant Cypriot subjects. Largely unaware of the social, political, and economic tensions within Cypriot society, the British found this unexpected hostility bewildering. Many believed it was part of a larger, coordinated rebellion that would last for weeks (129-130) Andreas Karyos conveys the British Governors' explanation to the Secretary for the Colonies, which reveals why colonial authorities failed to predict the anti-colonial uprising and did not take precautionary measures. The Governor believed that the growing unrest resembled past disturbances, differing only in scale and intensity, and that Cypriots inherently respected law and order. Thus, the authorities did not anticipate any serious illegality (*The Events in Colonial Cyprus in October 1931* 408).

The riots of 1931 brought to light the inadequacies of the local security forces in dealing with such situations. Governor Storrs, concerned with the situation, ordered the transfer of a military unit from Mount Troodos to Nicosia and requested military reinforcements from the British army in Egypt and the Mediterranean fleet (Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus* 3-4). According to Karyos, by November 1931, calm returned to Cyprus, with authorities

regaining control over cities and countryside (*The Events in Colonial Cyprus in October 1931* 411-412).

Andre R. Novo notes that the response of the government to the 1931 events was characterized by unusually “draconian repression” (23), including the suspension of constitutional government, the abolishment of the Legislative Council and political parties, strict censorship of the press, and the deportation of bishops involved in the riots. The British also prevented the appointment of a new archbishop and the new Criminal Code declared agitation for Enosis as a criminal offense (Novo, *The EOKA Cause* 22-23). In the view of Varnavas, for the next nine years, the Cypriot people lived under a period of dictatorship as their basic constitutional freedoms were taken away and suppression of Greek education occurred (18). Kazamias et. al. note that the strict measures were solidified during the tenure of Governor Richmond Palmer. This period, known as *Palmerocracy* (1933-1939) in Greek Cypriot historiography, is considered the most oppressive phase of British occupation. However, despite efforts to restrict their influence, the Orthodox Church and Enosis movement managed to persist. By 1939, the colonial Government was criticized for its practices and the appointment of a liberal Governor brought new hope for improving local affairs. Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War II put an end to any potential liberalization of British rule in Cyprus (191-193).

David French argues that the British government’s policy of repression was rather mild compared to other colonies but harsh in comparison to their previous actions on Cyprus (28). Tabitha Morgan further states that “increased segregation following the Government House riots exacerbated the racist attitudes that many colonial administrators brought with them from other postings and contributed to alienating them still further from their Cypriot subjects” (138). As the first outbreak of violence against the regime the October 1931 uprising undoubtedly remained indelible in British memory. As argued by Robert Holland,

[...] the Cyprus rebellion of 1931 and the burning down of Government House, was the most humiliating blow sustained by the British in any of their Crown Colonies in the years between the two world wars, and in a profound sense their position in the island never entirely recovered from the blow. (*Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus* 4-5)

In summary, the 1931 uprising was a turning point in Cypriot history, reflecting both the desire for Enosis and frustration with British colonial rule. The British government's heavy-handed response, along with economic hardships and socio-political tensions, fuelled disillusionment and radical action among Cypriots. Consequently, despite repression and restrictions, the underground Enosis movement gained momentum, paving the way for the 1955-1959 EOKA uprising and the end of British colonial rule.

### 3.3. The Post-War Landscape of British Colonialism in Cyprus

This chapter aims to clarify the intricate relationship between political, social, and military factors that led to the transition from peaceful advocacy to armed resistance. It will delve into the Enosis movement's significance amidst the mounting international pressures, changes in warfare, and the evolving role of Cyprus as a crucial asset for the British Empire. Through an examination of pivotal moments, such as the 1950 plebiscite and the rising tensions between Britain, Greece, and Turkey, the chapter will provide insight into the factors that paved the way for EOKA's emergence and the ensuing struggle for independence. Additionally, this chapter will underscore the Church's essential role as a champion of Enosis and the repercussions of various British policies on the Cypriot population.

As Andre R. Novo posits, "in spite of the 1931 revolt and the subsequent repressive policies imposed by the British colonial administration, the Enosis movement did not resort to violence during the Second World War" (*The EOKA Cause* 21). As per Greenwood, the Cypriot population faced various challenges during the war, which had a considerable impact on their lives. The onset of the war instilled a sense of responsibility and patriotism among the Cypriots, leading to the recruitment of an estimated thirty thousand troops for the Allied cause. However, the push for Enosis did not wane, with all the Greek political parties and associations on the island working towards a program of greater political rights and union with Greece (87-88). According to Alecou, "the end of World War II found the Cypriot people awaiting the fulfilment of British promises for self-determination, with the Enosis motto prevailing" (*Communism and Nationalism in Postwar Cyprus* 16).

Novo argues that during and after WWII, Greek Cypriot nationalists restrained themselves, focusing on negotiations and political pressure. The 1931 revolt hinted at potential radicalism, which escalated after the war, adopting a more forceful, even aggressive, push for

freedom. This led to the 1955–1959 armed uprising. However, violence against British colonialism was not inevitable in Cyprus but resulted from the unwavering stances of both Greek Cypriot nationalists pursuing Enosis and British authorities limiting self-government in the war's final years and its aftermath, steering Cyprus towards conflict (*The EOKA Cause* 21). In his *Cold War Pressures, Regional Strategies and Relative Decline: British Military and Strategic Planning for Cyprus* (2009) Evanthis Hatzivassiliou claims that

[...] in the early 1950s agitation both in Cyprus and in Greece was mounting. Facing growing problems in the wider region, the British opted for a tough policy in Cyprus, hoping that this would encourage the advent of moderate Cypriots who would support the continuation of British rule. Thus, London kept stating that there was no Cyprus question or that the issue was closed. (1150)

As per Varnavas, The Cyprus Church, a leading advocate for Enosis, organized a plebiscite to demonstrate Greek Cypriots' desire for union with Greece. Despite the governor's refusal to conduct the vote, it proceeded peacefully from January 1950, with 95.7% supporting the union. When Archbishop Makarios II informed the governor of the results, the British Government reiterated that the matter of Cyprus' union with Greece was considered closed (23). In *Political Violence and Legitimation: The Episode of Colonial Cyprus* (2007), Chares Demetriou views the 1950 plebiscite as a turning point which indicated overwhelming popular support for union, "Empowered by the 'will of the people', Church leaders thus became able to persuade a reluctant government of Greece first to raise the question of self-determination for Cyprus the UN General Assembly and then to acquiesce to a more dynamic course of action that would include violence in order to raise the demand's international profile" (175). It is noteworthy that two days before the referendum Governor Wright, in a request to the Secretary of the Colonial Department, called for certain reforms, together with substantial and controversial expansions of his executive powers, which would allow for stricter censorship of the press, suppression of seditious acts and effective action against rioters (Sutton 175-176). Robert Holland remarks that

Wright's dispatch to London was, in many ways, the true harbinger of the Emergency state in Cyprus during 1955-9, just as the calling of the plebiscite marked a new and more active stage in the Enosis movement. (*Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus* 18)

Wright's demands were described by the colonial office as extreme (Holland 20). Labour and Colonial Minister Griffiths was quite concerned as he felt that such an action would lead to a dead end. For Wright, however, a firm and decisive government was sufficient to intimidate both the Church and the Cypriot society as he argued that "Cypriots need, and for the most part seek, to be governed and if we fail to govern them we shall before much longer reap an untimely reward" (qtd. in Sutton 176). Contrary to Wright's wishes, the Cypriot people seemed to lack this sentiment.

According to Novo, despite the inflexibility of British policymakers regarding Greek Cypriot self-determination, the government sought to find a solution that would allow for British sovereignty while also granting a degree of self-government to the Cypriot people. However, the government faced significant challenges in achieving this goal, including differences between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, as well as with Athens and Ankara (*The EOKA Cause* 23). Indeed, as Robert Holland explains in *Never, never land: British colonial policy and the roots of violence in Cyprus, 1950–54*, "Cyprus was regarded as not a 'normal' colony because it cut across relations with Greece, thereby giving the Foreign Office an unaccustomed stake" (152).<sup>7</sup> Evanthis Hatzivassiliou asserts that despite these challenges related to Cyprus's ownership, various factors, such as advancements in warfare technology, regional political developments, and Britain's relative decline, increased the island's strategic value during the early post-war years (*Cold War Pressures* 1163).

It was in this context on 28 July 1954 that a highly controversial remark was made in the House of Commons by the Minister of State for the Colonies, Henry Hopkinson, "It has always been understood and agreed that there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent" (qtd.

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<sup>7</sup> Novo explains, that three unique challenges confronted the British government regarding Cyprus, shaping policy and complicating potential resolutions: the island's rhetoric focused on political union with Greece, involving another sovereign nation and its allies and rivals; London's perception of Cyprus shifted from a remote outpost to a vital possession, leading to the belief that British control could be maintained despite a shrinking empire; Cyprus had a divided population with Greece and Turkey as advocates and potential protectors, further complicated by these countries' relationships with Britain and each other as NATO members (*The EOKA Cause* 22).

in Hatzivassiliou 1152). The Hopkinson statement became a focal point in the Anglo-Greek war of propaganda over Cyprus (1152). In the words of Kazamias et. al., “Thus, at the moment when decolonization had started in other parts of the globe, in Cyprus the British were determined to resist it” (2).

### 3.4. The Emergence, Ideology and Tactics of EOKA

This chapter delves into the development and complexities of the EOKA organization, examining its origins under the leadership of prominent figures Archbishop Makarios and Colonel Georgios Grivas. The analysis investigates EOKA’s organizational structure, strategies, and transformations over time, while also scrutinizing members’ motivations and ideologies. This assessment sets the stage for the subsequent chapter, which provides a detailed account of the armed struggle, ultimately enhancing the reader’s understanding of how the EOKA organization is portrayed in the literary works of Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou.

As noted by David French, the course of events and the persistent refusal of the British to grant self-determination to Cyprus eventually led the Archbishop Makarios to think that the issue could not be resolved peacefully, and that other means should be used. The seed of the idea of an armed struggle and the creation of a secret organization was developed by Georgios Grivas, Greek Cypriot colonel from the regular Greek Army, and some Cypriot exiles in Athens in collaboration with political and retired military officials in Greece. Thus, on March 7, 1953, on the occasion of the Archbishop’s presence in Athens, this group, finally deciding to proceed with the organization of an armed movement, drafted and signed a declaration and a national-religious oath of allegiance with the aim to pursue the cause of Enosis (45-46). The struggle targeted British rule but did not harbour anti-British sentiment among the fighters. Grivas’ memoir emphasized that the campaign was fought for shared ideals from previous world wars. The struggle emerged out of necessity when the Greek and Cypriot people’s hopes and expectations went unfulfilled (Varnavas 54). In Nancy Crawshaw’s words,

The general aim of the plan was to show the world that the Cypriots were not willing to yield until their claims were met and that the British had not got the situation under



control. Grivas recognised the impossibility of imposing total defeat on the British. The object of the campaign would be the mobilisation of international opinion on the side of the Cypriots and the ultimate realisation of their claims through diplomatic pressure exercised by the United Nations. (95)

Alexios Alecou and Andreas Kapardis contend in their *British Security: Confronting the Communist and the Nationalist Threat in Cyprus, 1920–1955* (2014) that divergent approaches emerged between leaders Grivas and Makarios during the struggle's early stages. Makarios aimed for actions to pressure the British politically, while Grivas pursued a prolonged armed campaign despite Cyprus' unfavourable guerrilla warfare conditions (7130).

According to the findings of Varnavas, Makarios and Grivas convened multiple times in Athens in October 1954, planning the revolutionary movement in Cyprus. Grivas arrived to Cyprus in November 1954 and while in hiding, he dedicated himself to the EOKA cause. Despite the Governor and security forces' relentless efforts to apprehend or eliminate him, Grivas evaded capture during the entire four-year liberation struggle (41).

As for the ideology of EOKA, Demetriou posits that it was nationalist, conservative, right-wing, anti-communist, and deeply rooted in religion. The organization leveraged the connection between religion and nationalism, with members swearing loyalty oaths on the Bible and involving priests in their activities. This religious-nationalist bond enabled EOKA to justify violence against adversaries as essential for their larger cause. EOKA's supporters reconciled moral dilemmas by believing that any violence against their enemies was justified for the sake of union, and this unwavering commitment to their goal superseded any moral opposition to violence. Interestingly, EOKA's actions could also evoke sympathy from some left-leaning individuals who perceived their acts as heroic or as a justified reaction to British colonial rule. The valorisation of EOKA's fighters as freedom fighters further contributed to their support (186-189). Notably, as David French asserts, the devotion of Makarios and the Church to Enosis was more than mere rhetoric.<sup>8</sup> As a religious leader, he believed in the interdependence of

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<sup>8</sup> As French argues, Makarios built widespread support for Enosis by reorganizing the Ethnarchy, appointing loyalists to key positions, and establishing youth organizations. Consequently, Enosis evolved from an elite-backed aspiration to a mass movement with independent institutions. While maintaining a steadfast public stance, Makarios sought international support, aiming to persuade the Greek government to raise the Cyprus issue at the United Nations and using his influence to foster pro-Enosis sentiment (41).

politics and religion, seeing the church as emblematic of Greek Cypriots' right to self-determination (40-41).

Novo's perspective, which elaborates on the impact of EOKA's approach, illuminates the considerable rifts that formed within Cypriot society on multiple levels. EOKA's objectives and violent methods led to conflicts with various factions, including the British administration in Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot community rejecting Greek rule, Greek Cypriots who supported Enosis but opposed violence, and the majority of left-wing factions that regarded EOKA as a fascist group. These divisions extended throughout society, affecting police and civilian relationships as well (*Friend or Foe* 416-417).

In his work, David French focuses on the initial obstacles encountered by EOKA. The organization was confronted with two major difficulties: a shortage of weapons and a shortage of personnel with the necessary expertise to use them. Grivas, without skilled subordinates, had to manage arms distribution, train members in their use, and conduct personal reconnaissance missions to identify targets (52). Alexios Alecou quotes Grivas on the difficulty in forming armed groups from inexperienced youths, "The Cypriots were totally inexperienced in war, naturally calm and placid of character, foreigner to the idea of using armed force for any purpose [...] Cypriots never went to war and never knew the use of weapons" (qtd. in *Communism and Nationalism in Postwar Cyprus* 162). Nevertheless, as per Andrew R. Novo: "[EOKA's] initial attacks were damaging enough to create serious security concerns on the island" (*Friend or Foe* 417).

According to David French, EOKA's structure evolved during the insurgency, with Grivas dividing Cyprus into 19 districts, each led by a commander responsible for all EOKA activities. Members fell into two groups: active combatants and those engaged in supportive roles like intelligence, supplies, and communication. EOKA employed four strategies: sabotage, bomb-throwing, targeted sabotage, and assassination. Sabotage groups targeted government and military sites, while bomb-throwing groups, typically teenagers, attacked soft targets. Targeted sabotage operations were conducted by insiders with access to the site. Assassination and ambush became key tactics, with specialized groups formed to target military and police patrols. Experienced assassins, often in their early twenties, took out high-value targets, while younger members targeted softer targets in suburban areas. Assassins needed to be fast and stealthy, often attacking from behind. Young women participated in surveillance and weapon transportation, as they were less likely to be searched. Assassinations commonly occurred during off-hours or weekends, when attackers had time away from their day jobs, and

often took place on street corners for easy escape. The assassins operated in groups, wore raincoats to hide weapons, and fled to safe houses after attacks (54-55). Crawshaw asserts that sabotage was chosen as the primary strategy due to the difficulties and terrain constraints of conducting a full-scale guerrilla war (95). Andre R. Novo argues that EOKA primarily targeted the Cyprus Police Force (CPF), severely undermining its ability to maintain order. The attacks demoralized officers, leading to a decrease in Greek Cypriot personnel. Grivas' strategy of terrorizing the police disrupted security and complicated negotiations. The personal nature of violence in Cyprus, including intimidation and assassinations against perceived Greek Cypriot traitors and Turkish Cypriot security forces, made it particularly distressing (*Friend or Foe* 420-428).

According to David French, the number of individuals who joined EOKA is a matter of debate. At the beginning of the insurgency, the organization had approximately 80 armed activists, which increased over time. However, it is suggested that the number of hard-core members never exceeded 200-300 at any one time. Nonetheless, EOKA transformed from a small militant group into a mass movement with a large number of part-timers fulfilling various roles. Grivas' figures indicate that EOKA had around 270 hardcore members in mountain and town groups and about 750 members of village groups in early 1956. Enrolled members and unorganized supporters, including schoolchildren, were numbered in tens of thousands (*Fighting EOKA* 64).

Tabitha Morgan expands upon the involvement of schoolchildren in EOKA activities, including their participation in riots, demonstrations, and even the movement of arms, as one of the struggle's defining characteristics. This recruitment of young individuals to the cause was a strategic move by Grivas, allowing him to utilize the existing structure of Makarios's national youth organizations and to enlist fighters for his armed units. The participation of schoolchildren in acts of civil disobedience made it difficult for the British security services to respond without appearing overly aggressive, thus discrediting British rule in Cyprus and promoting a culture of martyrdom (213). Demetriou states that "Colonel Grivas [...] deemed students in urban areas a particularly important group that could take to the streets in demonstration, distribute leaflets, and even provide intelligence" (181). However, the findings of secondary schools inspectors survey in April 1955, as discussed by David French assert that "even if they wanted Enosis many parents did not want their children to become EOKA activists" (66). To further illustrate the role of youth in the EOKA rebellion, it is worth noting additional statistics regarding their involvement. The majority of EOKA members were young,

with 87% of those brought to trial for offenses such as possession of firearms, throwing bombs, or murder being under the age of 25. The most active members of EOKA were between 16 and 25 years old, and 32% of those brought to trial were high school students (Ibid.) In October 1958, a 14-year-old was found to be one of the assassins of a British expatriate in Larnaca (55).

As stated by Van der Bijl, Grivas maintained the operational security and confidentiality of EOKA by implementing various measures, such as the need-to-know principle, independent cells, codenames, an oath, and an extensive network of couriers with only a few trusted individuals knowing his location. Although as the campaign progressed, couriers were at increased risk of betrayal and interception. To minimize this risk, the couriers were generally kept unaware of the intended recipients, only knowing the next destination for the correspondence. The system of cut-outs made it difficult for military intelligence to penetrate EOKA (46-47). As per David French, Grivas utilized this network to disseminate hundreds of political leaflets in order to communicate with the Cypriot population, bypassing press restrictions on seditious content. Although mostly propaganda, some leaflets included operational directives for lower-ranking commanders. EOKA relied on couriers like bus drivers, women, and children, who were less likely to be searched or detained at checkpoints, to transport these materials (53).

### 3.5. The EOKA Struggle

In this chapter, the critical period of the EOKA struggle from 1955 to 1959 is scrutinized. The various stages of the struggle are discussed in detail, with a focus on the British response to the unfolding events. Additionally, contemporary international political developments and the culminating Greek and Turkish intercommunal violence are examined, providing a comprehensive understanding of the context in which the conflict unfolded. By examining these crucial years and events, the aim is to give a solid foundation for the interpretation of the socio-political landscape that frames the narratives of the novels under study.

David French gives an account of the beginning of the armed insurgency of the Greek Cypriot people on the night of March 31st to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1955. Two men were detained in Limassol for painting EOKA-related slogans. Previously unknown, EOKA soon gained

attention by detonating 16 bombs in four major cities, targeting, among others, the Cyprus Broadcasting Station, the army's Wolseley Barracks in Nicosia, and government, military, and police facilities in Limassol, Larnaca, and Famagusta (71). After the explosions and the beginning of the insurgency, the first proclamation of Grivas was released in a leaflet, through which he informed the Cypriot people about the aim of the struggle (Varnavas 57).<sup>9</sup>

According to Novo, after a brief pause in April 1955, EOKA reorganized and relaunched operations with new mandates in June, targeting the police and administration in order to paralyze them (*The EOKA Cause* 92). The escalating violence, which included the burning of the British Institute on 17 September 1955, convinced senior British policymakers that a change in their approach towards the crisis was imperative. Thus, Sir Robert Armitage was replaced by an accomplished senior officer Field Marshal Sir John Harding and military deployments on the island were increased to 13,000 soldiers and nearly 2000 police (*Friend or Foe* 417). According to Tabitha Morgan, Prime Minister Eden believed that "the field marshal's experience suppressing anticolonial insurrections in Malaya and Kenya could be usefully applied to the colony" (218). The governor's term of office was to last from 3 October 1955 until October 1957. His main tasks were to suppress the revolt militarily, while also engaging in negotiations with Archbishop Makarios to defuse the crisis politically (Asmussen 1). As Van der Bijl points out, his powers and financial resources were greater than those available to Sir Robert Armitage. During the Swearing-in Ceremony, the field marshal "stated that he had three missions: restoring law and order with strong policing and military power, implementing social and economic reforms and developing the constitution using strong civil administration" (80). David French notes that "Harding saw the counterinsurgency as primarily a military operation that could be won by war-fighting, and that he tried to defeat EOKA by bringing superior fire-power to bear against them. Charges laid against him have also included that he placed too much reliance on the police force, whose corruption and brutality only drove the Greek Cypriot population into the arms of EOKA" (90). In addition to the use of military means against EOKA, Harding also attempted to negotiate a settlement with Archbishop Makarios. Makarios demanded specific obligations for internal government and amnesty for EOKA fighters. Despite efforts to reach a compromise, negotiations ultimately failed, and Makarios was arrested and deported by the British on March 9, 1956 (Kazamias et. al. 17-18).

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 31 to 33 of the Theoretical part.

According to Varnavas, “Harding towed a hard line in order to break up EOKA and on 26 November he declared a state of emergency in Cyprus” (115). The regulations included strict penalties for a range of unlawful acts, such as discharging firearms, possessing bombs without legal authorization, and inducing others to participate in non-labour-related strikes. The regulations also allowed for the arrest of individuals suspected of acting against public security or order, the prohibition of gatherings of more than five persons, the prevention of the publication of material that could harm public security, the imposition of curfews and travel restrictions, and the dismissal of Municipal Councils. Additionally, the regulations permitted collective fines, the closure of shops and houses, and the confiscation of property as penalties for offenses that were deemed harmful to internal security, law and order and caused damage to property. The regulations were enforced immediately, and any violation of them carried severe penalties, including life imprisonment and flogging for those below the age of 18 (132-134). Consequently, as Andrekos Varnava posits, during the 1950s, the culminating struggle and the severe emergency measures prompted significant Cypriot immigration to Britain. In 1950, around 18,000 Cypriots lived in Britain, with 13,000 in London. By 1956, these numbers increased to 45,000 in Britain and 30,000 in London. The escalating violence during the mid-1950s further accelerated migration, peaking in 1955 with 5,359 net departures from Cyprus to Britain. In 1957, the net departures reached 3,681, and by 1959, this number rose to 4,384, reflecting the ongoing impact of the EOKA conflict on Cypriot migration (*Border Control and Monitoring* 8).

As Preston Jordan Lim claims in his *The Evolution of British Counter-Insurgency during the Cyprus Revolt, 1955–1959* (2018), “While certain individual emergency laws might have seemed unpopular, however, there is no doubt that Harding’s declaration of a state of emergency signalled to the Cypriot public a willingness to fight back against the EOKA. Furthermore, the Security Forces constantly refined the emergency laws as they discovered which laws worked and which laws did not” (23-24). Harding placed great importance on re-establishing public security, and his implementation of the above-mentioned emergency measures, as well as the rebuilding and reconstitution of the CPF, substantially improved the security situation. Although EOKA operatives still managed to kill off-duty soldiers and Greek traitors on the streets of Nicosia or Famagusta, they were no longer able to carry out bold and large-scale operations, such as the burning of the British Institute in September 1955 (36-37). As Novo contends, “With Cyprus as the British headquarters for their Middle East operations,

and already having confronted insurgency campaigns in Palestine, Malaya, and Kenya, British policymakers were prepared and determined to deal with the violence” (*Friend or Foe* 417).

Novo’s research focuses on the role played by the CPF and British military during the Greek Cypriot insurgency. He states that British policymakers responded to escalating violence in Cyprus by increasing the number of soldiers and attempting to grow the CPF, but the limited numbers and reliability of Greek Cypriots in the force led them to rely on Turkish Cypriot officers. This was problematic as they lacked language skills for intelligence gathering and police work and were mistrusted by the Greek Cypriot population. Additionally, using them in law-and-order operations often worsened the relationship between the two communities. “By January 1956, Grivas and his group leaders were convinced that Turkish Cypriot policemen represented too great a security threat to ignore” (423). EOKA’s intensification of attacks against Turkish Cypriot officers pushed events in a different direction, leading to intercommunal conflict (*Friend or Foe* 423). Cassia supports this view, stating that although Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots had maintained generally harmonious relations for decades, due to this decision their relationship significantly deteriorated (24-25).

As per Jordan Lim, British soldiers in Cyprus took on policing roles, such as guarding public installations and patrolling urban alleys, while the local police force, staffed by officers knowledgeable about local conditions, focused on intelligence gathering and building trust with civilians (25). Novo contends, that by the end of 1956, the police force remained understaffed despite a surge in EOKA-related violence. The British military stepped in to combat EOKA, making significant progress throughout 1956 (*Friend or Foe* 424). Especially after Makarios’s exile, the army-led security forces pursued EOKA relentlessly. Improved intelligence and numerous operations in urban, rural and mountainous areas allowed them to inflict setbacks on the organization. Operations like *Pepperpot* and *Lucky Alphonse* resulted in the capture of EOKA members and their supplies. Although they narrowly missed capturing Grivas, the security forces did recover his diary and correspondence with Makarios, shedding light on their broader activities (*The EOKA Cause* 100-101).

However, the temporary withdrawal of elite British units for the Suez operation provided EOKA with a brief reprieve, leading to increased violence. With the return of these units in early 1957, many EOKA leaders were captured or killed, causing the organization to

declare a ceasefire.<sup>10</sup> This allowed the British to strengthen and reorganize the police force, bringing in outside officers and encouraging Greek Cypriot enlistment. Although British forces believed they had quelled the insurgency, tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots persisted (*Friend or Foe* 424).

Following Preston Jordan Lim, after Grivas announced a ceasefire in March 1957, Cyprus experienced a period of relative peace for the rest of the year and the beginning of 1958, while Archbishop Makarios was allowed to return from exile. Despite this, the authorities continued their efforts to capture EOKA leaders and Grivas specifically, and security measures were still in place (45-46). As David French claims, “Following the March 1957 truce the security forces had scaled back the scope of their operations in the hope that doing so might improve relations with the civil population” (265). Furthermore, Hatzivassiliou observes that after 1957 British policy towards Cyprus became significantly more flexible, provided it did not upset Turkey by a decision over Cyprus. This meant that Britain was more likely to upset the Greeks, by putting aside the notion of majority rule and embracing concepts such as partition, tridominium, or “tripartite partnership” (1164). All these options entailed British withdrawal to some degree. However, military needs, such as maintaining strict control over the whole of the island, complicated efforts to grant liberal self-government to Cyprus, particularly due to the ongoing armed revolt in (1164).

Sir John Harding resigned as Governor of Cyprus in October 1957 and was replaced by Sir Hugh Foot, who had been Governor of Jamaica (Holland 207). As per Clement Dodd, “Harding resigned because he was convinced that only a political solution would, in the long term, end the violence. He was also aware that the measures he otherwise needed to end the violence could not be firmly supported by the British Government” (31). Despite using strict measures, Harding was unable to dissolve EOKA in two years and left the island without achieving his goal and facing severe criticism (Varnavas 263).<sup>11</sup> According to Novo, the British military and security forces were sceptical towards their new commander-in-chief, “Lacking Harding’s military background, Foot was exposed to the accusations that he failed to understand

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<sup>10</sup> As argued by Preston Jordan Lim, the military operations carried out successfully in 1957 mostly followed the cordon and search tactic, with troops forming an outer perimeter while others moved in to confront the enemy. These operations were also heavily reliant on intelligence gathered from previous cordon and search operations (31).

<sup>11</sup> In a statement before his departure, Harding said he did not believe his actions towards the Cypriot people were excessive and that upon his arrival “he found a brutal and inhuman Organisation, supported by an unscrupulous Church” and that “[he] [did] not believe that [his] work could be done in any other way” (qtd. in Varnavas 263).



the severity of the security situation and the intricacies of intelligence and tactical operations, and that he lacked the resolve to implement effective countermeasures against terrorism” (*The EOKA Cause* 132).

Foot had experience in Cyprus as its Colonial Secretary from 1943 to 1945 and had overseen the constitution-making process in the West Indies as governor of Jamaica in 1951. Due to his political outlook, he arrived in Cyprus with a reputation for supporting self-government (French 241-242). As Andrew R. Novo describes, in January 1958, Foot proposed the so-called *Foot’s plan*, which aimed to address the concerns of all parties involved in the Cyprus issue.<sup>12</sup> Echoing these developments, Mallinson states that “Britain had by now come to understand that hanging on to the whole island was just a colonial dream: keeping some bases while letting the rest go was becoming a more realistic proposition” (31).

However, as French notes, the plan failed as almost no one who mattered wanted it or thought it practicable. Serious rioting broke out in Nicosia and other towns which posed a major setback for Foot. The Turkish government was publicly committed to partition and regarded Foot with deep distrust. As a result, the Foot’s plan was in tatters, and the state of emergency was by no means closer to an end. The British government was left with no choice but to enforce their authority on the island and prepare for resurgence of EOKA activity (242-243). By 1958, EOKA had become stronger and more fanatical, with increased military power and extremist factions. Moreover, Grivas sought to adapt Gandhi’s methods of passive resistance to Cyprus’ needs during this intensified campaign (Crawshaw 279-282). The resumed sabotage campaign strived to undermine the British administration, targeting security forces, government offices, and expatriate-owned cars while avoiding casualties (French 247-248).

Building on the ideas presented earlier, French suggests that Governor Foot was concerned with the possibility of civil war in Cyprus due to the violent conflicts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, who were also killing people within their own communities. The security forces, which were now facing two insurgent threats, had prepared plans for special operations,

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<sup>12</sup> As per Novo, to satisfy British interests, a five- or seven-year period was suggested before any final decision about the island’s status would be made, allowing for a reshaping of British strategic posture in the Eastern Mediterranean. Britain would also retain full sovereignty over its base areas on Cyprus. To please the Greek Cypriots, Archbishop Makarios was allowed to return to the island, and the state of emergency was lifted. Negotiations to establish a system of self-government on the island with leaders of both communities were proposed to address the aspirations of the Turkish Cypriot minority. Finally, an assurance was given to both the Greek and Turkish governments that any final decision regarding the future of the island would need to be accepted by both sides (*The EOKA Cause* 131-132).

with a goal the mass arrests of EOKA and TMT<sup>13</sup> suspects. Holland asserts that “it was with great reluctance and with full realization of [the] grave consequences [...] that at noon on 21 July 1958 [Foot] finally yielded to the insistence of his military advisers to take the field against EOKA” (*Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959* 267). The government introduced specific limitations that would last for a month, starting on the evening of July 20. All major towns were subjected to a night curfew, and the security forces had the authority to impose daytime curfews when needed. During curfew hours, no traffic was permitted on the road and no movement was allowed outside villages without permission. In addition, telephone and telegraphic censorship was enforced, allowing the government to isolate the island. Although the operations disrupted EOKA, they still had the personnel and equipment to regroup and recover. However, by the beginning of August, both sides agreed to a truce, responding to appeals made by the British, Greek, and Turkish prime ministers. The cessation of violence occurred due to various reasons, such as EOKA’s recognition of difficulties in maintaining an indefinite battle with the Turkish Cypriots, ministers in Athens being worried about the extent of intercommunal violence, and TMT’s willingness to cease operations due to the proportionate number of casualties suffered by the Turkish community and pressure from Ankara to desist (*Fighting EOKA* 266-268). As Nancy Crawshaw states, “Communal strife did not break out again for the remainder of British rule. The Greeks had at last realised that the vicious circle of attack and reprisal, followed by the flight of the Greeks and the migration of the Turks to the north of the island, could only hasten the dreaded day of partition” (305).

According to Kazamias et. al., in 1958, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan devised the *Macmillan Plan*,<sup>14</sup> trying to reach a solution for the Cyprus question. The plan proposed that Cyprus would remain under British sovereignty for seven years, while a partnership of Greece and Turkey with the British administration would be established (228). Clement Dodd maintains that Greece did not accept the Macmillan Plan because they had

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<sup>13</sup> The Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) was a paramilitary group that promoted the Turkish-nationalist agenda of partition (Taksim) in Cyprus. They aimed to divide the island between the Greek and Turkish communities and worked to suppress Turkish-Cypriot dissidents. TMT’s actions were a response to the Greek Cypriot paramilitary group EOKA, which sought the annexation of Cyprus by Greece (Sofos 254-255).

<sup>14</sup> As Kazamias et. al. state, the solution included the creation of two Communal Chambers for Greek and Turkish Cypriots, but no common Assembly and dual nationality for the Cypriots. After seven years, the possibility of establishing a tridominium would be examined. The Macmillan Plan could be implemented partially, without the concurrence of Greece or Turkey, which meant that the Greek Cypriots, in order to block the plan which did not meet their aspirations for Enosis, needed to propose an alternative acceptable solution. The plan was announced as an ultimatum by Macmillan in the House of Commons and if it failed, a previous pledge of partition of the island between Greece and Turkey would be carried out (228).

concerns about the separate jurisdictions for each community. Moreover, the provisions meant that self-determination was no longer an option. Subsequently, the British increased their military presence to ensure the safety and stability on the island. Simultaneously, there was a decrease in Turkish Cypriot support for immediate partition, and less violence from the TMT. EOKA, however, became more violent against the British, which noticeably harmed their reputation abroad, especially after the murder of an Englishwoman and a bombing at the Nicosia airfield. Nevertheless, the British had more troops in Cyprus and were successful in their campaign against EOKA, despite many British casualties during *Black October* (35).<sup>15</sup>

Ultimately, according to the perspective of Morgan, the Turkish government sought accommodation with Greece over Cyprus due to their geopolitical concerns in the region, particularly with the potential threat of a Soviet-backed Iraq and Syria. Turkey's high-risk strategy in Cyprus became too dangerous to pursue, given their interests in the east were also potentially under threat. As all parties had reasons to compromise, the ministers arranged a series of meetings which resulted in the London-Zürich Agreements, a compromise solution for an independent and sovereign Cyprus (249-253). As per French, the three governments reached a consensus that Cyprus would achieve autonomy and be managed by a Greek and Turkish Cypriot federal partnership administration (289-290). Britain was marginalized at this critical stage in the decolonization process, retaining little control over the mechanics of the transition (Morgan 253). According to French, Grivas, in a leaflet issued on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1959, the day he left the island, announced his acceptance of the London agreement. However, rumours circulated on the island in early March that some factions within EOKA were considering rejecting the London-Zürich Agreements and continuing their fight. Therefore, Grivas still had the power to destabilize the delicate settlement until the last minute. After his departure from Cyprus, he received a hero's welcome in Athens, with the Greek Parliament passing a bill to promote him to the rank of lieutenant general. As regards the remnants of EOKA on the island, measures were taken to disarm the fighters and detainees were released and allowed to parade through Nicosia in celebration. All this was carefully managed to avoid giving the impression that the organization was surrendering (291).

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<sup>15</sup> During the month of October 1958, 45 people were killed and 370 injured (French 290).

## PRACTICAL PART

The practical part of the thesis analyses the impact of the EOKA campaign and the British counterinsurgency on daily life in Cyprus during the 1950s through the lens of Simon Mawer's *Swimming to Ithaca* (2006) and Soulla Christodoulou's *The Summer Will Come* (2018). This analysis will consider the influence of social stereotypes, sectarian violence, long-standing political conflict, economic and cultural factors on the lives of people in the British and Greek Cypriot communities. The novels emphasize the personal and emotional aspects of the conflict, showcasing the experiences of ordinary people amidst the turbulent events. Furthermore, due to its prominence in both novels, the portrayal of the EOKA struggle will be assessed in terms of its objectivity and depth, encompassing the depiction of the EOKA organization, its tactics, and the viewpoints and motivations of various nationalities involved in the conflict. This assessment will provide a comprehensive portrayal of the complexities and nuances surrounding the EOKA campaign, the desire for Enosis and the British counterinsurgency. It will also offer insights into the potential biases and limitations of the authors' perspectives.

Since this is one of the major themes in the novel, the thesis will also investigate the role of relationships in *Swimming to Ithaca*, examining how they reflect the culture contact between the British and Greek Cypriots and providing insights into the dynamics between these groups. Finally, the themes and issues associated with the Greek Cypriot experience of migration and settlement in England will be examined in Christodoulou's *The Summer Will Come*. The author's personal connection to the subject matter results in a substantial focus on these themes, providing an in-depth exploration of the challenges and adjustments encountered by Greek Cypriot migrants as they assimilated into British society. To help the reader navigate the narrative context, a brief synopsis of both books will be given. Finally, in the conclusion, the individual findings from both novels will be juxtaposed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the literary interpretation of the period with respect to the authors' personal experiences and backgrounds as well as the historical context.

#### 4. *Swimming to Ithaca*

*Swimming to Ithaca*, published in 2006, is a parallel timeline novel that follows the lives of Thomas Denham and his mother, Deirdre. Deirdre, an army wife, moves to Cyprus with her husband, an RAF pilot, in the 1950s. The story indicates that Deirdre seeks more in her life, drawn to the enigmatic allure of Cyprus, its culture and politics. She gets entangled in the independence movement and begins an affair with Nicos, a Cypriot taxi driver who is a member of EOKA. In contemporary England, her son Thomas slowly searches for answers and uncovers her late mother's past while he goes through her deceased estate, meets her old acquaintances and sifts through his own childhood memories. Parallel to this, he has a blossoming relationship with a young student from one of his classes, a relationship which slowly fills the gap left by his mother.

Identity, one of the most prominent themes in the book, encompasses both individual and national aspects. Deirdre is uncertain about her own identity and place as an officer's wife, while Thomas attempts to piece together the history of his family and learn more about his roots. Autobiographical elements, mentioned in the author's interviews with Sarah Crown (2009) and Marek Seckar (2010), lend a personal touch to the exploration of these themes. The Greek Cypriots are also on a quest for their national identity and independence. History plays a crucial role as a theme and motif throughout the novel, as it explicitly shapes the narrative. Furthermore, the novel delves into British colonialism and its effects. It examines the impact on the island's political and social landscape, as well as its resistance movement.

The book also explores the themes of memory and time, while also navigating the relationships between memory and imagination, as well as the distinctions and overlaps between facts and fiction. The themes of class and the expectations society places on an individual are also scrutinized. Additionally, it touches on the theme of illicit relationships, specifically the relationship of Thomas and the student, and Deirdre's affair.

## 4.1. Life in the Shadow of Conflict

As stated in the previous chapter, the novel is narrated from two perspectives, one is from the point of view of Deirdre *Dee* Denham and the other from her son's, Thomas. Since Thomas experiences Cyprus as a child and merely for a brief time while he is on a break from boarding school, this analysis will focus predominantly on Deirdre's perception. The author Simon Mawer spent part of his childhood in Cyprus, while his father was stationed there during his service in the RAF. It is this experience that Mawer draws on to infuse Deirdre's perception of the island with a sense of historic truth and relatability, while he also manages to project his own perspectives and emotions into the characters and the storyline.

Drawing from this context, this chapter seeks to examine the representation, experiences and sentiments of the communities living in Cyprus during the second half of the 1950s. This examination will delve into the complex interplay of sectarian violence and deep-rooted political conflict with economic, and cultural factors, and how they shaped their lives and experiences. Finally, the chapter will analyse whether the communities are represented and described with consistent depth and detail, and whether the experiences of all groups are given equal consideration in the representation of this period in Cyprus's history.

Deirdre's initial perceptions of Cyprus illustrate the British sense of discomfort, apprehension and detachment from the new environment. As the ship carrying the British to Cyprus enters the Mediterranean through Gibraltar, there is a perceivable rising heat and "oppression" (*STI* 57) pervading the characters' senses. The mounting anticipation is associated with "heading towards the Orient" (*STI* 57), which for the British means something "hot and exotic, full of rich scents and strange flavours" (*STI* 57). Deirdre's first impressions of the island are permeated by its ubiquitous heat and smells which arouse an unpleasant sense of the unknown, of the Other and of the Orient, "The smell of the land reached her, a whole complex of scents, mingled, grappling with each other, some of them identifiable – dung, sewage – others quite beyond her experience. What were they? What were they? The putrefaction of the Orient" (*STI* 68). These powerful sensory impressions not only emphasize Deirdre's disconnection and estrangement from the land and its people, but they also create a barrier that hinders her ability to adapt and integrate into the local culture. As she struggles to understand and appreciate her

new environment, Deirdre's feelings of isolation grow, causing her to retreat further into herself.

Cyprus, situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, is a part of the Levant,<sup>16</sup> where a diverse array of cultures has left its imprint on the island, resulting in a unique character that is revealed primarily through distinctive smells and architectural features, "There was a mosque over on the right, and another one just ahead, their minarets pointed at the hot sky..." (*STI* 73). Beyond mere observations, the recurring emphasis on the heat and the "exotic and strange" (*STI* 73) smells amplify the sensation of having traversed into a new, distinct realm — the Levant, Byzantium. Deirdre's perception of this transformation likely stems from the island's rich cultural history and its blend of European, Asian, and African influences, making her feel as though she has truly "sailed to Byzantium" (*STI* 73) and now finds herself immersed in its unique atmosphere. Thomas' arrival and the initial impression of Cyprus are similarly marked by the unclean, smelly, disorganized and overall shabby sense of the place. The heat feels like a "slap in the face" (*STI* 108) and the colour of the surrounding scenery is "dun, dust, dried turd" (*STI* 108). The first few pages offer a glimpse into the British attitudes towards the Orient,<sup>17</sup> reflecting the complex theme of imperialism. These attitudes are marked by equal measures of fascination and repulsion. On the one hand, the British perceive the Orient as an exotic, mysterious land brimming with rich cultural heritage, that beckons exploration. On the other hand, they also regard it as an inferior, decaying region in dire need of British guidance and governance. This dual perspective embodies the underlying imperialist mindset, revealing the power dynamics and inherent biases that influenced British interactions with Cyprus and its people.

The squalid atmosphere of the location is a direct reflection of the limited British investments in the colony, as it highlights the economic consequences of the EOKA struggle for independence and the British countermeasures implemented in response. Furthermore, since the onset of British administration in Cyprus, investments have been limited, spanning 70 years of colonial rule. This prolonged period of restrained financial support has resulted in underdeveloped infrastructure, inadequate public services, and stagnation in overall economic growth.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Based on Jan van der Crabben, "Levant is the name applied widely to the eastern Mediterranean coastal lands of Asia Minor and Phoenicia (modern-day Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon)" (Van Der Crabben).

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 1.1, page 14 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 3.1., page 24 and Chapter 3.5., page 37 of the Theoretical part.

It is a matter of fact that the British on the island enjoyed higher incomes and comfort of living than the Cypriots. Similarly to other British families who live in military enclaves or in imitations of English suburbs such as the Berengaria village (*STI* 88), when Deirdre and her family arrive to Cyprus they are accommodated in an upscale newly constructed neighbourhood, dedicated solely for the British. This modern suburb, beyond the Turkish Quarter, melds the Mediterranean landscape with English-style bungalows and apartment blocks. Their new home, located on 16th of June Street, offers a vision of English suburbia within a Mediterranean context (*STI* 74). Through an elaborate description, the author creates an image of a place which is well-cared for, has better amenities and is more advanced and more civilized than the surrounding environment. The British live in an area where they need not to come to contact with the different diseases, smells and architecture that they are not accustomed to. Living separately allows them to avoid contact with the local population, as well as to maintain their own standards of sanitation and cultural norms. Moreover, these suburbs provide a relatively secure environment for British families, as these areas are not as heavily impacted by EOKA activities, such as assassinations and bombings, when compared to Greek Cypriot neighbourhoods of Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Famagusta.<sup>19</sup>

Regardless of the opulence and having all the conveniences of modern life at her disposal, Deirdre initially can not seem to get accustomed to her new life and she feels as if she is suffocating and longs for the climate and landscape of England (*STI* 75). Mawer instils within Deirdre a mixture of feelings which might have been felt by other British as well when facing foreign cultures for the first time. There is a sense of curiosity and excitement at the opportunity to explore and learn about new peoples and places, but also anxiety and confusion stemming from the unknown. The British idealized the Orient as something romantic and exotic, perpetuated by literature, art, and their colonialist policies; as crossroads where the East and the West could come together in a harmonious blend of cultures.<sup>20</sup> Considering Deirdre's thoughts and comments, the reader may trace an undertone of cultural arrogance within them. She compares her experience to that of Robinson Crusoe, she feels marooned, "examining the jetsam on the beach" (*STI* 85).

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<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 35, 36 and 37 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>20</sup> On this note, when Geoffrey Crozier comments on the life of Lawrence Durrell, he says that "...he's really just one of those orientalists that the empire produces. He wants things to fit his own personal vision of the Greeks and the Mediterranean – a piece of folk art, really. All poetry and mythology and dreaming of Byzantium" (*STI* 116).



The first encounter with Greek Cypriot population takes shape through an interaction with the household maid. It is highly ironic and simultaneously symbolic that the maid's Greek name means *Friday* in translation, Deirdre finds it absurd (*STI* 85). The gypsies idling around in the distance are “exotic and oriental” (*STI* 85) and “repulsive” (*STI* 85), nothing like she has read about in D.H. Lawrence (*STI* 85). Deirdre's apprehension about leaving her house is a significant aspect of her experience in Cyprus, as the British population was targeted and assassinated by EOKA during this time.<sup>21</sup> This fear underscores the underlying tension and danger present for British residents on the island, even as they attempt to maintain their familiar lifestyle within the safety of their exclusive neighbourhoods.

In the description of Deirdre's first short trip outside of the house to a small grocery shop, Mawer provides a captivating account worthy of comparison with the records of the exploits of the first British explorers and their encounters with the indigenous peoples. The adventurous journey is concluded in a theatrical manner when there is a chair put up for the British woman and she and her daughter are pampered by the complaisant store owner and his young son (*STI* 86). Balancing between amusing and absurd, this scene provides a light-hearted yet insightful look at the colonial mentality and the relationships between colonizers and the colonized. The scene is correspondent with a chauvinistic quip uttered by Geoffrey Crozier later in the story, “The Cyps love to have someone be nice to them, that's the truth. They're not bad types really. Bit like the Irish – they want to be loved, but they do reserve the right to shot you in the back if necessary” (*STI* 88). This comment epitomizes the patronizing attitude some British characters in the story hold towards the local population, which highlights not only the power dynamics between the British and the Cypriots, but also the misconceptions and fallacies held by the British regarding the locals.<sup>22</sup>

The hyperbolically obliging behaviour of the Greek Cypriots towards the British in casual situations is seemingly paradoxical and difficult to reconcile with their long and fervent struggle for independence. Nonetheless, Mawer observes this phenomenon as a reflection of the British being treated with a certain deference in the colonies, owing to their status as representatives of the powerful British Empire. With the colonies seen as subordinate, there was a pervasive belief that British citizens held a higher social status and should be accorded respect. This was further reinforced by the fact that the small expatriate British community

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 33 and 34 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 3.3., page 30 of the Theoretical part.

primarily held senior positions in the island's administration and security forces.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, Deirdre experiences an air of reverence and admiration from the local population during her interactions, which demonstrates the complex dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized. To illustrate further, when meeting a taxi driver, he takes Deirdre's hand and bows "as though it were the hand of the Queen of the Hellenes, or perhaps Penelope's or even Aphrodite's. 'My lady, 'he breathe[s]. 'Please.'" (STI 91).

It is worth noting that on the small island, the three separate communities—British, Turkish, and Greek Cypriot—seldom engage with one another or partake in each other's daily routines. Deirdre stands out as an exception to this general pattern of limited interaction between these groups. Contrarily, there is a rising tension between the communities even though not all Cypriots support the EOKA insurgency<sup>24</sup> and not all British are in favour of the suppressive measures. Nevertheless, there is a clear and prevalent distrust and hostility of the British towards the civilian Greek Cypriots, which manifests itself in frequent comments and snipes uttered mainly by the officers, "...you want to be careful, talking to the natives. If it gets you upset.' 'Why must you talk about them like that? Why must you always put them down? They are people, just like us.' 'It was meant to be a joke..." (STI 226). Referring to Cypriots as the *natives* is a recurring element, "[...] Go to college, maybe. Join the police force, maybe. Be a bloody picnic compared with this. 'He glanced suspiciously at the driver. 'At least the natives will be on your side, know what I mean?'" (STI 120). The language used by the British officers reflects an animosity which can be traced back to the 1931 uprising. The events of 1931 and their repercussions marked a turning point in the relationship between the British colonial authorities and the Cypriot population, instigating a long-lasting mutual suspicion and resentment that would persist throughout the rest of the colonial period and influence future events, including the emergence of the EOKA movement and the struggle for independence.<sup>25</sup>

As the story progresses and the security situation on the island deteriorates the resentment and suspiciousness of the British towards the Greek Cypriots gets more severe, "'They took him in for questioning. Isn't it incredible?' Is it? Any Greek under the age of eighty seems a good enough suspect these days.'" (STI 228). The soldiers' comments and the attitudes of the larger British population towards the Greek Cypriots can also be seen as an example of *othering*, where the colonizing power creates a distinction between themselves and the

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 3.1., page 24 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 3.2., pages 26 and 27 of the Theoretical part.

colonized people, viewing them as inherently different, inferior and less human.<sup>26</sup> Mawer likely incorporates these elements in his portrayal of the relationship between the British and Cypriots for two reasons. First, he aims to provide historical accuracy to showcase the tensions and dynamics that existed between the two communities during this period. Second, the portrayal underscores the justifiable reasons behind the Cypriot struggle for independence, as they were subject to condescending and demeaning treatment from the British.

Notwithstanding the tumultuous political strife that is transpiring and the constant danger looming in the shadows, the British elite seek to preserve a veneer of normalcy and status of lords of the crumbling Empire by living costly and carefree lives, indulging in grandiose displays of opulence, such as staging lavish polo matches (*STI* 111) and attending other ostentatious social gatherings. These events serve as a means of distraction and a symbol of their continued prestige and power, even amidst the chaos and uncertainty of the ongoing conflict. Furthermore, the British attempt to project an image of control and stability and the necessity to uphold as much of the living standard as they enjoyed in back Britain is apparent. They are clinging to and maintaining a pretence of regular life by participating in social activities with other Brits, living in neighbourhoods which resemble those in Britain, celebrating holidays and putting on jubilant ceremonies and celebrations,

[...] beating retreat on the parade ground at the garrison at Dhekelia, in the East of the island [...] apparently it was a celebration of the Battle of Isandlwana in the Zulu War, when Bill's regiment had been cut down to a man. There were buglers and the regimental colours paraded and soldiers stamping their feet and marching and wheeling like machines. The band played 'Rule Britannia' and 'Land of Hope and Glory', and the Union Jack flew over the scene and made you feel quite emotional. General Kendrew took the salute as the battalion doubled past the podium to the sound of the 'Keel Row'. Anyone can celebrate a victory, 'Bill explained proudly. 'It takes real art to celebrate a defeat' (*STI* 163)

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<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 1.1., page 14 of the Theoretical part.

Apart from serving as a social occasion and honouring the men who died while serving in the British military, the parade serves as a grand display of the Empire's superior might and authority. The synchronized marching of soldiers, adorned in their polished uniforms and brandishing their powerful weapons, is a visual representation of the overwhelming power held by the British government. The parade serves as a reminder to the colony's inhabitants of the might and capability of the British military, instilling a sense of fear and respect in them. It also projects the British government's ability to maintain control and exert their dominance over the colony, both domestically and internationally.

Through the militant parade and the frequent allusions to military uniforms and operations, the author weaves an atmosphere fraught with tension and emergency. Deirdre arrives in Cyprus in 1957, during the governorship of Sir John Harding, which is marked by severe emergency measures to maintain public order, eliminate the EOKA insurgency and suppress any Enosis sentiment associated with it.<sup>27</sup> Some of the implemented measures include curfew, censorship, and the detention of suspected EOKA members or sympathizers.<sup>28</sup> Despite the decrease of military activity during 1957, following a truce declared by Grivas, the presence of troops maintaining order and carrying out security tasks remains visible throughout the book.<sup>29</sup> Heavily armed units are commonplace and mentioned as an unremarkable aspect of the surrounding scenery,

And then up through the hills, a monastery capping a conical mountain on the left, the road winding through dusty villages where people stand and stare [...] There are slogans daubed in blue paint on some of the walls – ENOSIS. A dusty military convoy passes by, Land-Rovers with great metal stanchions nosing forward above their bonnets and ten-tonners with a soldier standing up through a hatch in the roof of each cab. Minarets point admonishing fingers towards the sky [...] (*STI* 110)

The sense of danger and emergency present in everyday mundane tasks becomes pervasive, Deirdre is numerous times advised against being on her own, despite the fact that a truce has

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<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 36 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 37 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 38 and 39 of the Theoretical part.

been declared by EOKA (*STI* 91). Deidre's husband Edward is especially worried about her wife's gallivanting about the island, even when she has company, "It's bloody ridiculous, you going round on your own like that. [...] Well, I really think you ought to be more sensible about going into town these days" (*STI* 227-228). Most of the times, Deidre is accompanied by other people whenever she leaves the house, be it a military policemen, Edward, a group of friends or other military wives. Sometimes Deidre is accompanied by a Cypriot taxi driver Nicos, "Nowadays taking a taxi wasn't a luxury, it was a necessity, you were advised against taking the public transport and going out alone. A taxi was the only solution" (*STI* 214).

Despite the severe emergency measures, people on the island continue with their daily lives. Considering the Greek Cypriots and judging from the limited depictions of their lives, it seems they have managed to get used to the inauspicious circumstances. Unlike the British, most of them cannot easily leave the island or retreat to a safe and secure location. They are not protected by the military and do not have access to the same resources and support systems that the British do. As a result, they are forced to continue living their lives despite the dangerous and uncertain conditions. This means that they have to go about their daily routines, work to earn a living, and face the risks and challenges posed by the conflict head-on. There is no escape from the violence and instability that surrounds them. They have to navigate the dangerous streets and deal with the consequences of the conflict on a daily basis. This unequal distribution of safety and support systems is employed by Mawer to further reflect the duality present in societies, where the effects of colonialism and imperialism continue to shape the experiences and realities of those who were colonized. This inequality present during an emergency further exacerbates the tension between the communities.

The fact that they are able to carry on with their lives and continue to support their families in such an environment is a testament to the Greek Cypriot strength and resilience. This is exemplified by Nicos, who oftens finds himself driving through Turkish neighbourhoods or through neighbourhoods with high EOKA activity. At one point, the taxi transporting Deidre gets caught up in a rowdy Turkish demonstration.

The vehicle came to a halt. [...] Along the street shopkeepers were slamming down their shutters [...] Youths ran past [...] Some carried banners, crudely painted. There were

English words: *Foot no, Harding yes!*<sup>30</sup> And the single word *Taxim*.<sup>31</sup> People pressed around them. There was the sudden smash of breaking glass from the bus. One of the youths was throwing stones [...] People were all around the car now, a great scrum of people, dark faces staring in at the windows. A woman screamed, and then an amplified voice called over the hubbub in words that were Greek or Turkish [...]. (STI 214)

The scene is illustrative of how any ordinary situation can turn into a life-threatening one in a matter of seconds. There is a sense of ominous threat lurking in any present moment, the whole island feels like a dormant powder keg ready to explode, capturing the ever-present uncertainty and unease felt by both the British and the Greek Cypriots in the midst of political turmoil. While scenes of violence and open acts of defiance against the system are common, the reader is also given a glimpse into contrasting scenes of life of the Greek Cypriots, seemingly unaffected by the conflict. One of such cases takes place when Deirdre visits the home of a Greek Cypriot family and she is greeted with Cypriot hospitality (STI 125-126).

The sparse flashes of ordinary Greek Cypriots going on with their lives paint a picture of people who are mostly subdued. Considering the economic distress, the deterioration in conditions in the cities due to the curfews, frequent checks and arrests which circumscribed everyday life, the reader is forced to conclude that they are pacified. But this is very different from saying that their hearts and minds have been won, which becomes apparent in 1958 during the reignition of violent EOKA activity, which brings with it the tightening of emergency measures, including stockpiling food, preparing for a potential siege, and enforcing curfews. Deirdre's husband Edward resumes carrying a weapon as the belief was that off-duty men might be targeted by EOKA (STI 201).<sup>32</sup>

The portrayal of the “threadbare, squalid incidents” (STI 304) in the last chapters of the novel may serve as a metaphor, symbolizing the gradual decline of the British empire and its eventual withdrawal from its colonies. The increasing frequency and brutality of the killings with victims on all sides of the conflict, the closing of the canteen and the possibility of “shipping the families home” (STI 306) all illustrate the growing instability and loss of control

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 40 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 41 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 41 and 42 of the Theoretical part.

of the British.<sup>33</sup> The use of images such as the lifeless limbs in unnatural postures further underscores the violence and senselessness of the situation (*STI* 304). When Deirdre walks away from a meeting with Major Damien Braudel, she feels the “British Empire crumbling around her” (*STI* 312).

The book offers significant value by giving voice to marginalized perspectives within the context of colonial Cyprus, particularly by focusing on the experiences of women like Deirdre. Mawer effectively conveys the socio-political atmosphere of 1950s Cyprus, drawing inspiration from real-life events while arranging the surrounding circumstances to fit his creative vision. This focus brings attention to the power dynamics between the British and the colony and sheds light on often neglected viewpoints in historical accounts. Additionally, Mawer’s dedication to historical detail is evident in his nuanced descriptions of the British colonial presence, escalating tensions, and the impact of the EOKA resistance movement.

However, the narrative’s primary focus on Deirdre’s limited perspective may not fully explore the experiences of Greek Cypriot civilians. Although the portrayal of British expatriates’ attitudes towards Greek Cypriots and the British military’s interactions with locals adds authenticity, delving deeper into the Greek Cypriot community’s experiences during the EOKA resistance could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict. Despite this limitation, the book remains a valuable resource for studying colonial history. It offers an insightful account of the events shaping Cyprus’s future and emphasizes the importance of incorporating marginalized voices in historical narratives.

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 42 of the Theoretical part.

## 4.2. Depicting the EOKA Struggle

This chapter examines the portrayal of the EOKA struggle, the British counterinsurgency efforts, and the contemporary political landscape in Simon Mawer's *Swimming to Ithaca*. The analysis focuses on the depiction of the EOKA organization, its tactics, the evolution of the struggle, and the diverse perspectives of the characters and nationalities represented in the novel. The accuracy and objectivity of the portrayal will be assessed, and any potential biases or limitations in the narrative will be evaluated.

As the narrative unfolds, various characters give insight into the political landscape and the belligerents of the struggle. During a casual conversation with the other British housewives about the situation in Cyprus, Deidre is given a questionable introduction into the matters, an introduction lacking empathy or deeper understanding. She learns that the Cypriot leaders “[don’t] know what is good for them” (*STI* 93), the fighters are “hoodlums [...] quite happy to grab a pistol and shoot an innocent civilian in the back” (*STI* 93), and that the British governor is a “good chap” (*STI* 93) who deserves trust.<sup>34</sup> A noticeable thrill which is “almost sexual” (*STI* 93) is aroused when the leader of EOKA, Grivas,<sup>35</sup> is mentioned (*STI* 93). This casual regard to such a serious political matter reveals the British civilians’ initial lack of concern for the gravity of the situation but also potentially reflects a degree of sensationalism. Both the characters of Nicos, the taxi driver, and Colonel Grivas are romanticized, which contributes to a sensational, dramatic, and heroic depiction of the conflict and its representatives. Although this portrayal provides some understanding of the EOKA fighters, it also perpetuates a somewhat romanticized and stereotypical image of the conflict and its key figures, ultimately distorting the true nature of the conflict and limiting the narrative’s nuance and complexity.

In contrast to the subjective and romanticized perspectives of the conflict and its politics, the British soldiers’ outlook on the situation in Cyprus appears to be more grounded in reality. This distinction can be attributed to the close contact and interactions between the soldiers and the local population, which allows them to develop a deeper understanding of the political landscape, the key players, and the consequences of the ongoing struggle. A conversation with

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<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 39 and 40 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 3.1., page 31 of the Theoretical part.



Major Damien Braudel accurately encapsulates the final years of British colonialism in Cyprus, which were marked by a complex political manoeuvring by Britain, Greece and Turkey,<sup>36</sup>

[British] are on a bloody seesaw [...] We move one way – in favour of the Turks, say – and the Greeks are up in arms. We shift the other way and the Turks start complaining. One side demands partition<sup>37</sup> and the other side refuses to countenance it [...] I'm afraid Foot isn't the man to do it [...] Was Harding any better? [...] When [Harding] was in charge we were fighting a military battle,<sup>38</sup> but really this is a political issue [...] Britain doesn't really want to be fighting either the Greeks or the Turks. We damn well ought to be concentrating on the Soviet Union<sup>39</sup> [...] That's what we're here for. (*STI* 259)

Some of the civilian characters seem to approach the topic as if it were a movie or a distant spectacle, rather than a real-life political situation with far-reaching consequences. This serves as further reminder of the cultural and political duality discussed in the previous chapter. Later, during a dinner discussion among a more sophisticated company, the topic of EOKA, Grivas and the co-existence of Turks and Greeks is brought up. The remarks of Geoffrey Crozier labelling the struggle as terrorism are challenged and rebuffed by a Greek Cypriot lawyer (*STI* 102). The British under-secretary's thoughts about Cyprus being a "melting pot" (*STI* 102) and "show[ing] us the way to the future" (*STI* 102) reflect a colonial mentality, where the colonial authority believes to have the right to dictate the path for the colonized and project its own fallacious ideas and visions onto the colony without considering the opinions or autonomy of the local population. This type of thinking is a common characteristic of colonial regimes, where the colonizer sees themselves as the arbiter of progress and development, rather than acknowledging the complexities of the political, social, and cultural dynamics at play in the colony.

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 40 to 42 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 39 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 36 and 37 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 3.1., page 22 and Chapter 3.3., pages 30 and 31 of the Theoretical part.

However, the fact that the struggle for independence from Britain is a matter fraught with contradiction and the attitudes of the Greek Cypriots towards the British are not clearly defined is hinted at by the taxi driver Nicos during a heated argument with Deirdre,

It's not against the British. We love the British, don't you see that? [...] The British fought with us when the Germans came. They were on our side. And they did the same when we were fighting for freedom from the Turks. The British are our friends. Here in Cyprus, we're not fighting against the British. [...] What we are fighting is the people who are occupying our land. (*STI* 220)

It appears as if the fight against the Turks is perennial and irreconcilable while the fight against the British, an otherwise allied culture, demands almost a sort of self-renunciation on the part of the Greek Cypriots.<sup>40</sup> Mawer befittingly comments on the conundrum faced by the Greek Cypriots, who are, in fact, facing two colonizing powers at the same time. While the conflict with the Turks is depicted as an unequivocal, ongoing and deeply ingrained struggle, the fight against the British is portrayed as more complex and multi-layered, requiring a greater political and ideological manoeuvring. As illustrated in the following passage, the British presence in Cyprus is seen by some as a hindrance that could be resolved if they were to withdraw, whereas the conflict with the Turks is portrayed as a deeper, more substantial issue. The idea is that killing would not occur if the British were to relinquish their control of Cyprus, while the fight with the Turks would persist,

It's a war, isn't it? Killing happens. But it needn't happen, not if the British get out and leave the island to its people. 'And the Turks?' 'The real war is with the Turks.' [...] We're not fighting the British, Dee. We are fighting the Turks. (*STI* 327)

This passage also hints at the resentment stemming from the fact that the British, rather than aiding the Greek Cypriots in their pursuit towards Enosis, exploited the circumstances,

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 31 of the Theoretical part.

colonized Cyprus and subdued its people.<sup>41</sup> By viewing the British as opportunistic colonizers, the Greek Cypriots emphasize the need to assert their own sovereignty and independence in order to address the deeper, more persistent conflict with the Turks. The animosity of the Greek Cypriots towards the Turks is rooted in the long-lasting Turkish colonial presence, the interference in Cypriot affairs<sup>42</sup> and the significant cultural differences between the Greek and Turkish communities. Furthermore, the British deliberately included a substantial number of Turks in the security forces, which only served to exacerbate the communal strife.<sup>43</sup> This is evident in Nicos' sarcastic response to Deidre's question about the location of the police, stating, "The Turks *are* the police" (*STI* 215).

Throughout the narrative, various, mainly British, characters provide insights into the progression of the conflict and the political situation through their anecdotal remarks. These events depicted in the story, while not necessarily described in detail, are loosely based on real historical events and figures. The necessity for the British to appease and strategically navigate between the aspirations and demands of the conflicting parties in Cyprus is highlighted by a British officers' remarks: "We have got to keep the Turks happy," (*STI* 260)<sup>44</sup> and later, "Greeks want union with Greece, Turks want independence and partition" (*STI* 204).<sup>45</sup> These statements underscore the complex political balancing act the British were engaged in while managing competing interests in Cyprus. The reader also learns about the British military hunting EOKA in the mountains of Troodos, where Afxentiou, one the leaders, is surrounded and dies a heroic death (*STI* 113);<sup>46</sup> the operations of MI5 in Cyprus and the gathering of intelligence (*STI* 192); the reoccurrence of violence, after the period of truce announced by Grivas has expired (*STI* 193)<sup>47</sup> and the eradication of EOKA presence in Troodos during the operation "Lucky Alphonse" (*STI* 209-210).<sup>48</sup>

While Mawer's *Swimming to Ithaca* demonstrates didactic tendencies, aiming to educate the reader about the conflict in Cyprus, the narrative's historical objectivity is limited. The story primarily presents the perspective of the British military and does not extensively explore the experiences and motivations of the Greek Cypriot fighters. Nevertheless, despite

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<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3.1. of the Theoretical part.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 3.3., page 30 and Chapter 3.5., pages 40 to 42 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 38 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 39 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 40 to 42 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 38 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 40 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 38 of the Theoretical part.

this bias and the information's intermittent appearance, the details provided function effectively as a backdrop for the story, offering a deeper understanding of the conflict and the forces that shaped it.

While there is limited information in the book regarding the methods of the EOKA organization and its structure, the reader is still able to gain a basic understanding about its actions and motives from the observations of the British. They notice slogans celebrating Enosis and EOKA on the walls (*STI* 110 and 258) and their lives are circumscribed by the frequent killings and bombings,<sup>49</sup> as also described in the previous chapter. The description of spring 1958 gives a picture of what the fighting entailed,

It was only small bombs, targeting things, not people, but you could never be sure. You'd hear the concussion sounding flatly across the city, like a door being slammed. [...] There would be a matter-of-fact report on the radio – a sewage plant damaged, a pump-house door blown open, a NAAFI warehouse on fire – and the engineers would set to work and put the damage right. (*STI* 201)

The necessity to maintain absolute secrecy and to adhere to measures which make the organisation difficult to track are demonstrated when Deidre is taken to meet Nicos in the EOKA compound (*STI* 324-325).<sup>50</sup> Apart from Nicos, the love-stricken taxi driver turned insurgent, the book does not contain any other characters associated with EOKA. Nevertheless, Nicos serves as a representative of the members of the EOKA organization as a whole and his character embodies the spirit of the EOKA fighters. His enthusiasm, nationalism, his opinions about the British, the Greeks, and the Turks, as well as his young age, all contribute to his personification of the EOKA fighter archetype.<sup>51</sup> Through Nicos, the reader gains a glimpse into the motivations and beliefs of EOKA members, as well as their commitment to the cause of Enosis and their unwavering dedication to the EOKA organization. His statement “The British can never understand EOKA” (*STI* 219), emphasizes the perceived cultural and ideological divide between the two groups. This statement implies that the British, as the

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<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 35 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 32, 34 and 35 of the Theoretical part.

colonial rulers, may lack the necessary perception or empathy to fully comprehend the motivations, struggles, and aspirations of the EOKA fighters and the Greek Cypriot community they represent. The remark could also reflect the belief that the British are inherently biased or unable to appreciate the complexities of the EOKA movement and the broader struggle for independence in Cyprus.

In conclusion, Mawer's narrative primarily emphasizes the British perspective, bringing to the fore the challenges they faced during the EOKA struggle period and their understanding of the broader political situation. Within this British viewpoint, Mawer presents two contrasting perspectives. He illustrates the romanticized, sensation-seeking outlook of British civilians, while concurrently offering a more grounded, realistic view from the British military. Moreover, through the inclusion of the character Nicos, Mawer effectively amplifies the voices of the often overlooked Greek Cypriot fighters, ensuring their narratives are not neglected. By weaving together these diverse and contrasting perspectives, Mawer attains a more nuanced understanding of the situation. This allows him to capture not only the British perspective on the EOKA movement and counterinsurgency efforts but also the Greek Cypriot determination and commitment to their cause.

### 4.3. Interpersonal Relationships as Sites of Cultural Encounter

As her life on the island unfolds, the protagonist of *Swimming to Ithaca*, Deirdre Denham, drifts away from her marriage as well as her prejudices and becomes involved with the Cypriot culture. This involvement ultimately culminates in an affair with a young Greek Cypriot man. The following chapter aims to scrutinize whether the course of the relationships Deirdre gets engaged in is influenced by the political and cultural situation on the island and whether the extramarital relationship reflects and symbolizes the culture contact between the British and the Greek Cypriots.

As the wife of a RAF pilot stationed in Cyprus, Deirdre struggles with getting accustomed to her new life, feeling constrained in her marriage to her controlling husband, whose world she visits “almost like a foreigner” (*STI* 87). In the words of a fellow military wife, the impression she gives off is one of a “dutiful wife following her husband around the world” (*STI* 164). However, this label belies the independence and unbridled curiosity that is within her, which the reader gets to discover as the narrative progresses.

After the initial discomfiture from her new environment subsides, the reader observes Deirdre adjusting to her new life in Cyprus, as she is engaging with other British citizens and adhering to the monotonous routines dictated by social norms and emergency measures. Her days consist of caring for her daughter, managing the household, attending church, and fulfilling her role as a wife. While her husband works at military headquarters, Deirdre embarks on solitary adventures, attends British-only dinner parties, and explores historical sites with new friends. Conversations with other British women centre on mundane topics, often veiled in competition for social standing. Seeking escape from the tedium of a housewife’s life, Deirdre takes an unconventional step by working at a local British canteen, defying traditional expectations placed on military wives. This decision signifies her desire for independence and personal fulfilment beyond her domestic role, subtly challenging the restrictive norms of her society.

Deirdre eventually befriends Geoffrey Crozier, a mysterious British banker, socialite and philhellene, deeply knowledgeable of Greek culture. It is through him, that Deirdre begins to discover and appreciate Greek literature, language, history and also the sentiments and

sensibilities felt by the Greeks. These are the subjects close to her heart, which, however, have been seemingly incompatible with the life of a military wife. Crozier is also the only one of the British that speaks Greek, “no one speaks the language here, none of the British. Except you. I’ve been here a few weeks and already I know as most people [...] why are you so different?” (*STI* 98). Conversations with him intrigue her and, moreover, bear a striking difference to those with the other British civilians or officers on the island, who are only concerned with politics and other practical matters. As stated in the previous chapter, their existence is one of detachment from the Greek Cypriots, not only due to their secluded housing but also the lack of genuine interest in the culture, their engagement with it only superficial. The British and Greek Cypriot cultures do not mix unless absolutely necessary. Crozier’s influence helps Deirdre see the island and its culture in a new, more positive light, and gives her a new perspective on the life she is leading. Importantly, Crozier has a “sympathy for the Greeks and yet a loyalty to his own kind. He combine[s] seriousness with reckless laughter” (*STI* 114). It appears that through her interactions with Geoffrey Crozier, Deirdre comes to understand that it is possible to appreciate and embrace both cultures, that there is no need to choose one over the other, they are not incongruous. Crozier’s ability to navigate and appreciate both cultures signifies a resistance to the traditional binary oppositions that often characterize colonial relationships, such as colonizer/colonized or oppressor/oppressed.<sup>52</sup> In this way, he represents the potential for transcultural understanding and dialogue. Furthermore, Crozier’s character can be seen as an example of the hybridity, the blending of cultural elements from both the colonizing and colonized societies, resulting in a new, unique identity that transcends the limitations of singular cultural affiliations. As a British character who embraces Greek Cypriot culture, Crozier embodies this hybridity, challenging the fixed cultural boundaries that underpin colonialism.

Despite there being no explicit indication for the reader regarding Deirdre’s attitude towards the conflict and whether her allegiance lies solely with the British, whilst her involvement towards outside events and politics is limited to pure observations, her sympathy for the Greek Cypriots is apparent. Nevertheless, she cannot overcome feeling uneasy when being around too many of them, “She could have taken the bus, of course, but that would have been difficult and embarrassing, crowded in among all those Greek women going in to market, the object of stares and comments in a language she didn’t understand” (*STI* 153). Moreover,

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<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 1.1., page 13 of the Theoretical part.

Deirdre still maintains a certain degree of distance and formality when interacting with Greek Cypriots, especially when dealing with characters who exhibit traits that are, in her view, untrustworthy or frowned upon. One such character is the flamboyant taxi driver, Stavros (*STI* 91). When faced with his ostentatious demeanour and appearance, Deirdre feels “a tremor of disgust” (*STI* 91), as his behaviour clashes with her preference for the more straightforward, unpretentious ways of her native Yorkshire. Consequently, she remains cautious and suspicious of anything that could be perceived as flattery, insincerity, or superficial charm (*STI* 91).

Deirdre’s behaviour exemplifies liminality, reflecting her intricate position as a British woman navigating the socio-political landscape of colonial Cyprus. Her liminal status is evident in her ambiguous identity, as she finds herself caught in an “in-between” state.<sup>53</sup> On one hand, influenced by Geoffrey Crozier, Deirdre cultivates an interest in Greek culture and exhibits sympathy towards Greek Cypriots, recognizing the hostility and distrust shown towards them by the British officers as unjust. On the other hand, she also experiences discomfort when surrounded by a large number of Greek Cypriots, indicating internalized prejudice. This exposes the complex and often contradictory nature of personal identity in the context of colonialism, as well as the lingering effects of colonialism on individuals and societies.

As Deirdre becomes increasingly drawn by the local environment and its new impulses and inspirations, she simultaneously grows apart from her husband, who approaches the unfamiliar culture with an air of suspicion and scepticism, ever vigilant and steadfast in his loyalty to his homeland. Edward dismisses Geoffrey Crozier with scornful, condescending amusement, considering him “a complete fraud” (*STI* 105). Edward’s lack of perception and dullness are evident in his inability to understand a platonic friendship between a man and a woman. He assumes Geoffrey “is starved of female company” (*STI* 160) and has set his sights on Deirdre. This misunderstanding further alienates Deirdre, making her feel as if she is “slowly drifting away from Edward, like flotsam carried by a slow, tidal drift in the stream” (*STI* 161). Deirdre’s growing estrangement from her husband serves as a symbolic representation of her detachment from Britain, as both Edward and Britain embody static, traditional, and conservative values that struggle to adapt to the rapidly evolving world. This drifting apart reflects a broader theme of the transformation of the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. Deirdre is captivated by the local environment and its novel influences, which enrich her understanding and appreciation of different cultures. In contrast, her husband is

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<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 1.1., page 13 of the Theoretical part.



apprehensive and sceptical of change, opting to remain anchored to the familiar values and norms of his homeland. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected and globalized, Deirdre's transformation serves as a call to challenge the rigid cultural boundaries and prejudices that have long defined colonial relationships.

The more Deidre and her husband grow apart, the more she is attracted to Nicos, the young Greek Cypriot taxi driver who escorts her around Limassol. Their first encounter is innocent, marked by Deidre's revealing her vulnerability when she gets overwhelmed watching her son leave for England. "Why aren't all Englishwomen like you?", says Nicos, "you feel, that's Greek" (*STI* 122). As they spend more time together, their connection grows stronger, and Deidre is reminded about her only true love back in Britain (*STI* 154). The fact that Nicos is shun and mocked by the British officers makes Deidre exasperated and appalled (*STI* 155). She becomes protective of him almost to a point of risking her own life as she gets entangled into the machinations of the EOKA struggle. This protectiveness extends beyond just Nicos as an individual, to symbolize her defence of the Greek Cypriot people as a whole. In the words of Deidre's friend, "She sort of adopted [Nicos]" (*STI* 194). Furthermore, the relationship reflects the complex interactions and relationships and the larger cultural dynamics between the British and Greek Cypriot communities on the island. On the one hand, the relationship between Deidre and Nicos is a symbol of the cultural exchange and understanding that can occur when people from different backgrounds come into contact with one another. On the other hand, the fact that the relationship is an affair and conducted in secret gives prominence to the underlying tensions and mistrust that exists between the two communities. This mistrust and sense of illicitness is further emphasized by the fact that their interactions are closely monitored by the British secret service. Moreover, Deidre's relationship with Nicos also serves as a commentary on the power dynamics present in the relationship between the British colonial authorities and the indigenous population of Cyprus. Deidre, as the wife of a British officer, holds a certain level of power and privilege over the taxi driver, who is a member of the colonized population. Coming from a subjugated nation, Nicos feels deeply self-conscious of his ethnic background and professes his assumption that he has no chance with someone like Deidre because he is a "Cyp" (*STI* 223) and he can not speak "posh" (*STI* 223) like her, he wishes he rather were a British officer (*STI* 223). The feeling of inadequacy Nicos experiences could be interpreted as a reflection of the wider feeling of low self-esteem among the Cypriots, who compare themselves to the perceived superiority of the British colonizers.

Deidre is torn apart between two worlds, between loyalty to her husband and her feelings to Nicos, loyalty to her home country and her sympathy with the Greek Cypriots and their struggle. She feels as if she is “walking on the edge of a precipice [...] thinking of flying” (*STI* 263). She feels a “curious affinity” (*STI* 264) to a chameleon changing colours and adapting to its environment. The chameleon symbolizes the need for the fluid identity, adaptability and the ability to change one’s appearance or beliefs in order to fit in with different cultural environments. In a colonial context, where individuals are caught between two distinct cultures and political ideologies, fluid identity is often a necessary survival strategy. Just as the chameleon changes its appearance to blend in with its surroundings, individuals in colonial contexts may also have to change their behaviours and beliefs in order to navigate the conflicting cultural norms and values they encounter, “One colour in Sheffield, another here; one for Edward, another for Tom and Paula, another for Nicos” (*STI* 264). Over the course of the protracted British presence in Cyprus, the colonizers found themselves needing to adapt to the local Cypriot environment and develop strategies to maintain control and influence over the island. The long-lasting British rule on the island led to an intricate blending of cultures, values, and political systems that shaped the lives of both the colonizers and the colonized.

Agency and identity are vital to Deirdre’s personal journey. Agency allows her to make independent decisions, like working at a British canteen, defying traditional expectations. Identity refers to Deirdre’s sense of self and how it is transformed by her experiences in Cyprus. Her involvement with local culture, politics, and her affair reflect her quest for agency and a unique, self-defined identity. When Deidre divulges classified information to Nicos about him being followed by the MI6, it symbolizes her growing disillusionment with the British colonial authorities and her growing empathy for the struggle of the Greek Cypriot people. By betraying the British and sharing the information with Nicos, Deidre is taking a stance against the oppressive nature and indifference of British colonialism. It also reflects a shifting of loyalty, as she begins to prioritize her connection with Nicos and the Cypriot community over her loyalty to the British and her husband. Furthermore, the theme of class comes into play as Deidre’s relationship with Nicos challenges the expectations and boundaries set by their respective social standings. The affair represents a defiance of the traditional class divisions that perpetuated the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized, and it emphasizes the potential for personal connections to overcome these social barriers. By including Thomas’ present-day relationship with one of his students, Mawer further develops the theme of defiance against societal norms and expectations. Both affairs, involving

characters from different cultural backgrounds and positions of power, symbolize the challenges of navigating love, loyalty, and identity in a world that is grappling with outdated stereotypes and prejudices.

## 5. *The Summer Will Come*

*The Summer Will Come*, Soulla Christodoulou's second novel, is a historical fiction set in 1950s Cyprus and London. The title of the novel is inspired by a poem written by Evagoras Pallikarides.<sup>54</sup> The research for this book has been compiled from gathering memories, notes, and personal information from families who were affected by the conflict, providing an authentic and heartfelt portrayal of the events as experienced during that period (*The Summer Will Come* 336).

It follows the lives of two families as they navigate the rising tension and fear on the island during a time of curfews, repression, and violent reprisals by the British authorities. The island's communities are divided, with supporters of the nationalist group EOKA facing severe repercussions, including arrest, detention, questioning, and potentially worse from the British authorities, as they engage in activities such as smuggling coded messages and holding secret meetings. The story's exploration of the characters' experiences in the context of the EOKA struggle, displacement, and migration to multicultural England directly relates to the concept of identity. As Elena, Evangelia, Christaki, and Loizos confront the challenges of leaving their homeland and adapting to a new environment, they must redefine and negotiate their personal and cultural identities. They grapple with finding a sense of belonging while maintaining their connections to their homeland's traditions and culture. Additionally, the novel focuses on gender based issues and inequality that young girls and women face in a traditional society.

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<sup>54</sup> Evagoras Pallikarides was a revered Cypriot hero and poet. Born on February 27th, 1938, he met a tragic end on March 14th, 1957, at 19 years of age. The British authorities executed him by hanging due to his involvement with EOKA (*Soulla Author*).

## 5.1. Life in the Shadow of Conflict

While *Swimming to Ithaca* lacks in giving a thorough description of the Greek Cypriot perspective in the second half of the 1950s, during the height of EOKA activity, *The Summer Will Come* illustrates a vivid portrayal. This chapter aims to offer a thorough exploration of Cypriot lives, emotions, and experiences in the late 1950s, as depicted in Christodoulou's narrative. The primary focus will be on understanding the impact of the conflict on their everyday realities and the ways it moulded their perspectives. Additionally, the chapter will analyse the representation of the various communities living in Cyprus during the second half of the 1950s, and whether they are represented and described equally.

The reader is presented with two distinct perspectives, each revealing a subtly different reality and experience of those inhabiting the island. The first perspective is that of Evangelia and Elena, a mother and daughter residing in the mountain village of Kato Lefkara alongside Elena's grandmother and brother. In this setting, life unfolds at a slow pace, initially undisturbed by the tumultuous events transpiring in the bustling cities. The residents of Kato Lefkara maintain a profound connection to the land and uphold long-standing customs and traditional lifestyles. Living in close proximity, the villagers cultivate a strong sense of unity and shared purpose, which in turn reinforces their collective identity as members of a tightly woven community.<sup>55</sup>

Within the village, gender roles are rigidly delineated, with men serving as the primary breadwinners and women shouldering the responsibility of maintaining the household. Men engage in agricultural pursuits, while women dedicate their time to the intricate craft of lacemaking, a skill passed down through generations (*TSWC* 16). Despite the constraints imposed by their limited opportunities, women embrace their roles without dissent (*TSWC* 25).

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<sup>55</sup> The Greek Cypriot traditional society in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is centred around the family, with households reflecting the community's values and attachment to nationalism and the church. Social norms dictate strict gender roles, with men asserting authority in public and gathering at male-oriented spaces like coffee shops. Women find social interaction through church, work in the fields, and neighbourhood life. This society emphasizes family honour, privacy, and the importance of maintaining separate households for married couples, showcasing its traditional nature (Charalambous 92-95).

By concentrating on the lives of villagers, and especially women, the author brings to the forefront narratives that have often been marginalized or overlooked in favour of more dominant stories. This approach allows for a more inclusive and holistic understanding of the society and its dynamics during the period of the EOKA resistance struggle.

Christodoulou uses vivid imagery and eloquent language to convey the traditional Cypriot village's identity that is marked by a slow-paced lifestyle and rich cultural heritage. Meticulous descriptions of family meals, enriched with Greek words, showcase the cultural authenticity. Scenes of villagers partaking in feasts, abundant with homemade dishes and colorful fruits, emphasize the sense of community, contentment, and tranquillity. These sensory details transport the reader to a time and place seemingly unblemished by intricate political issues. The author further enhances the cultural representation by depicting religious ceremonies and celebrations, such as Easter customs, underscoring the significance of tradition within this society. The village priest, who serves as both a leader and facilitator, is viewed as an essential member of the community and actively partakes in these festivities (*TSWC* 18). By delving into the customs, traditions, and lifestyles of villagers in 1950s Cyprus, the author captures a moment in time that was altered and even severed by the passage of time and the brutal emergence of the EOKA struggle. This focus is especially crucial when considering the role of women, who frequently served as the primary guardians of cultural practices and traditions. The profound emotional bond that the people share with their customs and way of life becomes strikingly clear when Elena's grandmother ponders leaving Cyprus, highlighting the importance of preserving their Cypriot identity, "Dear Evangelia *mou*, our hearts are Cypriot, we have culture and traditions... do the British have?" (*TSWC* 107).

The author's introduction of Loizos and his family is intentionally designed to offer a different perspective on Cypriot life, shedding light on the island's social stratification and the varying experiences of its inhabitants. By portraying a family living near Limassol with a higher socioeconomic status compared to the villagers in Kato Lefkara, the author illustrates the diverse realities faced by Cypriots during this period. Operating a store and a shoe repair shop, along with the mother's seamstress work, the family enjoys financial stability that affords their son, Christakis, opportunities to attend high school and engage in hobbies. Their proximity to the city grants them better access to information compared to those in more remote areas.

In addition to economic opportunities, conveniences, and a fast-paced lifestyle, living near a big city also exposes residents to the swift arrival of the alarming consequences and manifestations associated with the EOKA struggle. Through skilful foreshadowing,

Christodoulou progressively builds suspense and conveys the pervasive sense of fear and instability that gripped Cypriot society and led people to feel unsafe in their own homeland. This sense of tension and insecurity is particularly significant considering the historical context of the peak battles between EOKA and the British forces in 1957 and 1958.<sup>56</sup>

Dialogues start to be concerned with how various people get involved in the struggle and what harm the rapidly escalating events might inflict upon the community. As a consequence, in the chapters dedicated to Loizos' family, the author places a little focus on the description of the daily lifestyle and traditional customs, but rather concentrates on how the family's fate is inevitably intertwined with the circumstances and developments set in motion by the struggle.

The walls of buildings in Limassol bear the EOKA initials, boldly emblazoned in thick, dull red paint. People are cautious about discussing anything related to EOKA with strangers, unsure if their words might be overheard by a Cypriot or a Brit. A "growing level of desolation amongst the people of Cyprus, and more recently, in Agios Tychonas" (*TSWC* 32) is palpable. Soon, the contentious issue infiltrates conversations between family members and close friends, which adds strain to the community as a whole. Christakis is taken aback when his friend Pantelis confronts him about his decision to join EOKA's ranks (*TSWC* 33). Christakis' disapproval of his friend's actions and his belief that maintaining the status quo might be the best course of action in the escalating fight for self-determination reflect the views of a portion of the Greek Cypriot population. The level of uncertainty and danger associated with the sectarian struggle against the British is simply too overwhelming for most villagers and the wider Greek Cypriot community to bear. The disagreements between the various characters also mirror the differing views of the leaders of the EOKA struggle, Grivas and Makarios, whether the ultimate goals should be met militarily or politically.<sup>57</sup>

By presenting multiple viewpoints, the author offers valuable insight into the tensions within the Greek Cypriot community and provides a balanced and more comprehensive perspective on the topic. Loizos is among those who "don't agree with the EOKA fight" (*TSWC* 38) but refuse to remain passive while their compatriots are being killed or arrested. In a display of solidarity, Loizos, despite his reluctance to actively participate in the fight, offers the fighters the use of a cave on his property as a hideout (*TSWC* 38). The insurgency against

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<sup>56</sup> See Chapter 3.5., pages 36 to 41 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 3.2., page 32 of the Theoretical part.

the British poses inherent dangers, yet there is also the precariousness of not knowing who to trust,

Some villagers have expressed their lack of support, as you have, my friend, and although we have lived here for years together, we must be careful who we speak to [...] ‘I can’t ignore my neighbours and friends. We’ve lived in harmony for all these years,’ said Loizos.’ [...] ‘I have cousins who are involved. They want Enosis, union with Greece. How can I not speak to them? We live in the same village, for God’s sake’.  
(*TSWC* 39)

The divergent stances create insurmountable rifts and turn friends into enemies. Those caught in the middle, like Loizos, face opposition from those who either openly support or are part of EOKA, unwilling to compromise their position. This discord makes it difficult for the two groups to find common ground and it ultimately leads to conflict and hostility.<sup>58</sup> By illustrating the impact of the EOKA fight on interpersonal relationships, the author emphasizes the broader ramifications of political turmoil on a micro level. The strained relationships between friends and family members, as well as the emergence of new divisions within the community, underscore the far-reaching effects of the struggle for self-determination and its capacity to disrupt previously harmonious social dynamics and the community’s identity. The author also delves into the moral and ethical challenges faced by individuals during this period, revealing the intricacies of personal convictions and the consequences of choosing a side in a divisive conflict. This exploration of the human experience amid political unrest provides readers with a poignant and valuable perspective on the emotional and psychological toll such tensions can exert on a community and individuals.

As the narrative unfolds, incidents connected to EOKA activity become increasingly violent and frequent. Christakis is witness to an ambush by Greek Cypriot schoolchildren, one of which is his sister Melani, on British military trucks. Some of the soldiers get hurt, the attack is accompanied by throwing leaflets, shouting “British out! British out [...] EOKA! [...] Unity with Greece! [...] Freedom or death!” and waving banners (*TSWC* 43). Greek flag is flapping

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<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 33 of the Theoretical part.



in the air with the word *Enosis* painted over it (*TSWC* 44). The author's depiction of schoolchildren participating in the struggle against the British is an illustration of how deeply the desire for independence permeated Cypriot society. This historically accurate detail lays emphasis on the resonance of EOKA's objectives across diverse age groups and further demonstrates the movement's far-reaching impact.<sup>59</sup>

When the repercussions of the EOKA struggle finally reach Kato Lefkara, arrests occur, and Cyprus feels unsafe. In Limassol, Evangelia witnesses a chaotic scene, where anti-British sentiments escalate and result in a gunshot and death (*TSWC* 60). This experience reveals the island's dangerous reality, previously hidden from her village life. In her next visit to Limassol, the increased police and military presence heightens her anxiety and emphasizes the feeling of a town under siege (*TSWC* 73).<sup>60</sup>

Compared to the first chapters, Christodoulou progressively uses faster pacing to create a sense of urgency and tension, the story now moves feverishly, incidents follow one another. The occasional descriptive passages provide historical context as momentum and support for EOKA grows as more and more Cypriots become disillusioned with being under British occupation and take action to support unity with Greece.<sup>61</sup> Men are on the front line, but women play a crucial role too with passing coded messages.<sup>62</sup> British soldiers are not killed through some random attacks, but strategically planned and executed assault (*TSWC* 76). The lives of the citizens of Cyprus are completely ensnared by the conflict, private lives are put on hold and disrupted. Former bonds between the villagers and compatriots are broken. There are economic repercussions too as "the co-op [has] been taking less and less income since the troubles, which affect[s] all those who [have] a stake in the business. For some it [means] no income at all especially now many of the men [are] spending money on the fighting efforts they believe[] would free them of the British" (*TSWC* 77).<sup>63</sup> The wives of the men in hiding find themselves in a dire situation. They have to secure the livelihood of the whole family while also supporting their husbands with payments for food supplies and ammunition (*TSWC* 85).

At night on their way from the store, after intercepting an EOKA message, Loizos and his son have a chilling encounter with two fellow villagers who have joined EOKA. They are

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<sup>59</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 34 and 35 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 38 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter 3.1., page 23 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 37 of the Theoretical part.

relieved when they are let to pass (*TSWC* 81). For Loizos, the safety of his family is his priority, he knows about other families torn apart by the politics of EOKA, more importantly, he is not prepared to risk the lives of his children and wife (*TSWC* 83). Loizos' position in the story aligns with the beliefs and attitudes the broader population adopted at that time. Although they did not lack conviction nor were they politically neutral, they found the risk of arrest, injury or death too big to withstand. This cautious approach is also influenced by the fact that they face not only the British response to their actions, but also potential retaliation from EOKA for being perceived as traitors to the cause.<sup>64</sup>

As the situation on the island becomes unbearable, with continuous atrocities, arrests, killings, and police brutality, the sense of community and traditional bonds in Cypriot society begin to disintegrate. This disintegration stands in stark contrast to the initial sunlit portrayals of communal meals and the close-knit relationships among villagers. Although the women are not the ones hiding in the mountain caves or involved in the planning and attacks on the British patrols, they feel the brunt of the conflict. British troops do not hesitate to beat women and children and the newspapers highlight the despicable treatment of civilians (*TSWC* 91). There are losses on both sides, retaliation spirals out of control as one party takes an aggressive or retaliatory action, which prompts the other party to respond in kind. Each retaliation further fuels the other party's desire for revenge. There are even rumours that prisoners in the Nicosia detention camp are tortured (*TSWC* 92). The events portrayed align with the historical realities of the EOKA struggle. As the conflict intensified, violence and atrocities became more prevalent, affecting both fighters and civilians alike. The brutal nature of the conflict and the accompanying human rights abuses are testament to the harsh reality the island's communities had to endure.

Both Loizos and Evangelia's families prepare to leave for Britain. Loizos seeks safety for his family, sympathizing with the EOKA cause but fearing the consequences. They discreetly arrange their departure (*TSWC* 96, 98). Similarly, as Evangelia desires safety and to reunite with her husband in England, she pursues a better future for their family (*TSWC* 47). As a single mother, she grapples with financial hardship and providing for her children. The author draws a parallel between the fictitious migration of the characters and the historical exodus of

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 34 and Chapter 3.5., page 37 of the Theoretical part.

Greek Cypriots to Britain and Australia which emerged as a result of the violence and political turmoil caused by the EOKA struggle.<sup>65</sup>

In conclusion, Soulla Christodoulou provides an extensive analysis of the Greek Cypriot experience, delving into the effects of the conflict on the characters' lives, emotions, and cultural identity. It captures the challenges faced by the Greek Cypriots under colonial rule, the strain that diverse viewpoints place on relationships within communities, as well as their aspirations for independence and nationhood. However, it does not offer an equally comprehensive exploration of the British perspective. The British characters are depicted solely as military personnel, their presence on the island portrayed as an oppressive force. While this portrayal might be accurate to some extent, the book could have benefitted from a deeper exploration of the British characters, their backgrounds, personal experiences, and the factors that shaped their attitudes towards the Greek Cypriots and the conflict.

It is worth noting that the author makes a substantial contribution by giving voice to the often-overlooked village communities and, importantly, to the women of Greek Cypriot society. By delving into the lives, customs, and aspirations of these marginalized groups during a turbulent period, the book offers a rare and in-depth exploration of the Greek Cypriot experience that goes beyond the scope of typical historical narratives.

## 5.2. Depicting the EOKA Struggle

This chapter will examine the representation of the EOKA struggle and the Enosis sentiment in Soulla Christodoulou's *The Summer Will Come*. The progress of the struggle and its depiction in the novel will be analysed in detail, paying particular attention to the extent to which the book accurately portrays the EOKA organization and its tactics, the British counterinsurgency efforts, as well as the perspectives and attitudes of the different nations featured in the book. It is important to note that Soulla Christodoulou's Greek Cypriot background may have resulted in a somewhat biased view in her representation of the events. However, this will be further studied in the following chapter.

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<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 39 of the Theoretical part.

From the beginning of the story, the fates of Loizos' family members become inextricably intertwined with the events of the escalating political struggle. Through their experiences and interactions with their compatriots, the reader learns more about the grassroots of the movement at the village level, as well as the sentiments of the younger generation. This is illustrated during Christakis' conversation with his friend, who has joined EOKA after taking a religious oath, a historically accurate detail that reflects the commitment and dedication of those who chose to participate in the fight for independence.

Yes. I had an interview, an initiation.<sup>66</sup> I'm seventeen next month. I want to play my part,' [...] 'Why do you have to? Why can't we carry on like before? We all live in the same town, the same village. Why get involved? And what about Katerina? What's she say?' [...] 'She supports my decision. She wants to do her bit.' 'What d'you mean?' 'She wants to do something.' 'Like what?' 'Leaflets, that sort of thing.' I can't ignore what's going on,' he said. [...] 'Things are getting worse. People are getting heated more and more, especially since the British have arrested people unfairly. Anyway, I've said too much. If anyone asks, you didn't see me'. (*TSWC* 33)

The use of cautionary language accentuates the fear and secrecy surrounding the movement and the need for members to maintain a low profile.<sup>67</sup> The fierce loyalty and determination felt by the youth to play a part in the movement, despite the potential dangers is apparent.<sup>68</sup> This theme is further given prominence by the widespread desire to support the EOKA campaign even among girls and women.<sup>69</sup> This is exemplified when Christakis' fourteen-year-old sister becomes involved in the struggle and participates with Katerina through leafleting and later by attacking the British convoy (*TSWC* 44) and when Evangelia's friend Koulla is arrested and beaten for distributing anti-British leaflets (*TSWC* 63). Later, Evangelia overhears a conversation about "schoolchildren in the Larnaca district who [have] petrol bombed two British military trucks causing injuries to three British troops. But they [have] not stopped there and caused continued disturbances by regularly striking from school outwardly demonstrating

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<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 32 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 35 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>68</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 34 and 35 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

their allegiance to EOKA” (*TSWC* 55). The accurate depiction of involvement of the younger generation and women in the EOKA struggle makes prominent the pervasiveness of the independence sentiment and the desire for self-governance throughout the strata of Cypriot society, including even its more vulnerable members. By this inclusive approach, the author enriches the historical narrative, underlining the diverse experiences of those who lived through this critical period. When the villagers discuss the ongoing struggle and its leaders, the prevailing conviction is that a surrender to the British would be a “grave dishonour” (*TSWC* 32).

As per the previous chapter, in which Christodoulou alludes to the reluctance of the majority of the Greek Cypriot population to be engaged actively, Loizos and Christakis attempt to stay neutral by not directly participating in the actions of the guerilla warfare.<sup>70</sup> However, in sympathy with his fellow villagers, Loizos offers the use of a cave on his property as a hideout (*TSWC* 39). During a confidential discussion with the village priest, Loizos learns that the village has a “growing number of EOKA members. There are fourteen, including two young boys who are joining when they turn seventeen [...] many of the villagers want to show the British, they are not to be messed with. They want *Enosis* with Greece and whether we agree or not we have to accept what most of our people want” (*TSWC* 38). The fact that Loizos discusses these matters with the village priest is not a mere artistic licence. Clergy played a significant role in the EOKA struggle with its support of the ultimate goal of union of Cyprus with Greece.<sup>71</sup> Christodoulou aptly depicts the priest as a figure that directly mobilizes and coordinates the Greek Cypriot community and provides a sense of moral and spiritual justification for the fight against the British.<sup>72</sup>

The author provides a believable and generally truthful representation of the strategies generally employed by EOKA to oppose the British and to sway public opinion in favour of the struggle. Throughout the book, there are accounts of leafletting;<sup>73</sup> marking the walls with EOKA and *Enosis* slogans (*TSWC* 32); the citation of the EOKA oath committing the members to utmost secrecy (*TSWC* 98);<sup>74</sup> the passing and intercepting of secret messages using the unwitting civilian population (*TSWC* 79);<sup>75</sup> the hiding of the EOKA members in the mountains

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<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 3.1., pages 23 and Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 32 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 35 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>74</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 32 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 35 of the Theoretical part.

of Troodos (*TSWC* 84);<sup>76</sup> ambushes, skirmishes and shootouts (*TSWC* 91) and the bombing of public places (*TSWC* 299).<sup>77</sup> To further firmly establish the story within its historical framework, Christodoulou mentions the execution of Evagoras Pallikarides.<sup>78</sup> This tragic event sparks outrage across the island and inspires many more men of all ages to join the ranks of the secret military organization that demands commitment to secrecy, privacy, and dependability from its members.<sup>79</sup> Pallikarides' death fuels the Greek Cypriot conviction to fight for unity with Greece and adds to the already growing momentum and support for EOKA (*TSWC* 76).

The increased tensions and discontent with the British actions, as evidenced by the mention of the unfair arrests, further emphasize the unified resolve of the Greek Cypriot community to fight for their beliefs. Indeed, in 1957, the movement for EOKA sees an unprecedented swell of support from the Cypriot population, fed by the growing dissatisfaction among the people of the island against the British occupation. This sentiment is further fuelled by the numerous reports of injustice and brutality inflicted on the EOKA rebels captured by the British forces which prompted communities in Famagusta, Nicosia, Larnaca, Paphos, and Limassol to take a stand and join the fight for Enosis, unification with Greece. As the news of these events spread, the island is quickly engulfed in a wave of nationalistic fervour that pushed the EOKA movement to the forefront of Cypriot attention (*TSWC* 76).

Christodoulou's account primarily focuses on the Greek Cypriot perspective, which results in a noticeable absence of the British viewpoint on the conflict and political situation in Cyprus. A more nuanced understanding of the situation could have been achieved by including diverse voices and perspectives, especially considering that Cyprus was not only a British military base but also home to many British families affected by the conflict. However, given the ethnicity and social standing of the main characters, their limited access to the British servicemen's experiences is understandable.

The book lacks British characters and interactions between British and Greek Cypriot citizens, leading to an absence of insight into the British perspective on EOKA and the armed struggle. The exclusive focus on the Greek Cypriot perspective may reflect the author's sympathy towards the EOKA cause. While this lack of representation limits the

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<sup>76</sup> See Chapter 3.5., page 38 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter 3.4., page 33 of the Theoretical part.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 5., page 67 of the Practical part.

<sup>79</sup> See Chapter 3.4., pages 32 and 35 of the Theoretical part.

comprehensiveness of the account, it still emphasizes the prevailing emotions and experiences of the Greek Cypriot population during this time.

On the other hand, Christodoulou makes a significant contribution by giving voice to historically marginalized groups in the fight, such as children, villagers and women. Through their experiences and actions, the author stresses the diverse range of Cypriot society involved in the struggle for independence. By focusing on these disenfranchised communities, Christodoulou offers a more comprehensive understanding of the EOKA movement and its impact on the Greek Cypriot community.

### 5.3. The Challenges and Rewards of Migration

The move to a new country brings about significant changes in terms of language, culture, and identity, and is not without its challenges. As they strive to make their mark in the new country, the characters in *The Summer Will Come* have to navigate and assimilate a new cultural landscape, facing language barriers, discrimination, and homesickness, while also trying to maintain a connection to their cultural identity, heritage and traditions. At the same time, the experiences during this period of migration are portrayed as a journey of discovery, where the characters gain a deeper appreciation of their culture and a new appreciation for the opportunities given to them in their new home. The migration process is a complex and transformative experience for the characters and the novel provides a thorough and insightful exploration of the ways in which migration can shape one's identity and relationships.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, the aim of this chapter is to explore which issues and themes the author explores to communicate the Greek Cypriot experience of migration and settling in England.

The cold reception of the migrants by the fast-paced life in London with its gloomy weather and squalid housing conditions causes anxiousness among all the characters, young and old alike. The stark contrast between the sun-soaked homely island, and the harsh circumstances of their newly started life initially evoke a strong sense of exile and longing for their home country. Christakis' "tears of anguish and frustration soak his pillow every night", as he is overwhelmed by anxiety and hatred for a city, he is expected to call home, a city he

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<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 1.1., page 13 of the theoretical part.

struggles to love, a city where he does not fit in (*TSWC* 127). The characters' thoughts and feelings explicitly revolve around being alienated and lonely in their new environment (*TSWC* 149). The feeling of alienation from the mainstream culture is exacerbated by the hostile remarks the children have to face at school, "bloody foreigner!" (*TSWC* 168), and at the workplace, where Christakis has to face threats by a disgruntled and envious colleague, "...you turn up from some foreign country and take our jobs, our opportunities..." (*TSWC* 179).

The memories of Cyprus and their juxtaposition with the bleak reality of London are marked by a strong sense of place. Elena misses her uncomplicated life of Kato Lefkara, she misses "the scraping of the goats, the humming of the cicadas, the hushed tones of the old men walking home from the *kafeneion* as the sky turns from day to night" (*TSWC* 149). Similarly, when faced with difficulties, Christakis envisions "the white-washed villages of Cyprus, the carob trees with their red flesh and the smile of Pater Spyriton as he walk[s] around the village always with open arms and a listening ear" (*TSWC* 313). The weather in London is described as gloomy (*TSWC* 129), shrouded in grey, with barely visible buildings (*TSWC* 145). The descriptions of the house Elena and her family move into give the impression of a particularly repulsive and inhospitable environment. It is depicted as an unsanitary and cramped space, lacking in comfort and warmth, and exacerbating the feelings of dread, fear and homesickness experienced by the inhabitants (*TSWC* 148). The rooms are "bare, with nothing homely about them apart from the odd trinkets her mother had brought over from Cyprus" (*TSWC* 148). With its decrepit conditions, the housing situation serves as a constant reminder of the stark contrast between their former life in Cyprus and their current circumstances. The memories of Cyprus and the longing for their former home only increase and cause the inhabitants to constantly travel back to the island in their minds, seeking solace in the familiar and comforting memories of their past. This strong sense of place illuminates the emotional impact of physical environments on individuals and the importance of a sense of belonging and connection to one's surroundings, as well as the role they play in shaping a community and cultural identity. By exploring the connection between people and their environment, the author emphasizes how community and identity are intimately tied to the places we come from and the memories they evoke.

Some characters adjust more effectively to new circumstances than others. Loizos' family, characterized by integrity and entrepreneurship, successfully adapts to their new environment, mitigating feelings of displacement and focusing on thriving in England. Their steadfast morals, honesty, and diligence enable them to seize opportunities and achieve success,



with Loizos establishing a business near London (*TSWC* 188) and Christakis earning an electrician apprenticeship (*TSWC* 178). Ultimately, they exemplify the need for adaptation and resilience in postcolonial settings.

Upon overcoming initial challenges in London, characters confront cultural dilemmas. The younger generation adapts more easily to the mainstream culture, as their connection to Greek Cypriot identity is less ingrained. They adopt Anglicized names, English attire, and engage in social activities, integrating into English society. For parents with stronger cultural ties, acculturation is harder, and they struggle to balance tradition with their new environment. This liminality generates tension within the family, especially when children pursue romantic relationships without parental consent. While children view this as an act of freedom, parents perceive it as a betrayal of traditional values, resulting in clashes between generations. When Loizos suggests arranging a meeting between his son and a young girl he is met with strong opposition on the side of his daughter,

We live in London! You can't expect him to marry through *proxenia*, an introduction! That's not how things are done here! [...] It's the way we do things. The way our parents taught us things are done. We will not turn our back on our traditions because we now live in London, Melani. [...] I want to marry someone I fall in love with. Someone who knows me and understands me [...] You will do as I ask and when the time is right you, too, will be introduced to a suitable man. (*TSWC* 246)

While at odds and intransigent at first, the two sides eventually find common ground and the parents' concerns regarding the expectations of a traditional marital system are placated by the prospect of having a chaperoned meeting between the would-be partners. The parents' initial opposition to their children's relationships is rooted in their fear of losing control over their cultural identity and traditions. However, their eventual willingness to compromise and find common ground gives prominence to the dynamic and evolving nature of cultural identity, as well as the capacity for cultural hybridity to facilitate cultural exchange and mutual understanding, a theme which permeates the second half of the novel.

## Conclusion

Situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus holds a strategic position that has made it a significant hub for cultural exchange and conflict throughout history. In the latter half of the 20th century, the island became embroiled in the EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) insurgency, which aimed to achieve independence from British colonial rule and union with Greece. The historical developments leading up to the outbreak of the armed struggle, as well as the impact of this period on the future geopolitical development in the region, have been extensively debated and discussed. Yet, the personal aspects of the experiences during this tumultuous time have often been overshadowed by broader political and historical analyses, leaving individual perspectives underexplored in the literature. Therefore, my objective in this thesis was to provide a fresh perspective on this period by examining the works of Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou. By uncovering previously unexplored or underrepresented narratives, these authors showcase the power of historical fiction to amplify the voices of those on society's periphery, including women, individuals from rural communities, and younger generations. Through their writings, I delved into the intricate dynamics of the EOKA campaign and the British counterinsurgency efforts, as well as the multifaceted interplay of social stereotypes, sectarian violence, entrenched political conflict, and economic and cultural factors. By doing so, I aimed to offer a more comprehensive understanding of how these various elements converged to shape the lived experiences of the Greek Cypriots and the British during this tumultuous and transformative period in the island's history.

Initially, the British government appeared to understand the Greek Cypriot desire for unification with Greece, even offering the island to Greece in 1915 in exchange for their support during World War I. However, imperial interests prevailed and the Treaty of Lausanne ended the unionist demands and established Cyprus as a Crown Colony. This decision led to the radicalization of the Enosis movement, which included demonstrations, petitions, and the 1931 uprising. The oppressive Palmerocracy intensified anti-British sentiment among Cypriots. Despite challenges during World War II, the push for Enosis continued. British attempts to maintain control over Cyprus, coupled with their inflexibility and inability to adapt to the complex socio-political situation, escalated into violence and unrest. Cyprus's strategic location and regional political developments made it increasingly valuable for the British, serving as a stable base for military and intelligence operations in the Middle East. The conflicting goals of

the British and Greeks led to rising tensions and eventually the formation of the armed EOKA organization and the violent 1955-1959 uprising. The British government responded with emergency measures, including increased military presence, detentions, censorship, curfews, deportations, and a proposed partition through the 1958 Macmillan Plan. Eventually, the 1959 London Conference led to the creation of an independent, democratic nation that relinquished its claims to self-determination, ruling out both union and partition of the island.

The practical part of the thesis addresses the depiction of the period of the EOKA campaign and the experiences and sentiments of the communities living in Cyprus during the second half of the 1950s in the works of Simon Mawer and Soulla Christodoulou, respectively. Mawer's insightful examination of the British community's perspective is primarily conveyed through the lens of a military spouse, whose journey to Cyprus during the 1950s encapsulates the broader cultural tensions and conflicts on the island. This detailed glimpse provides an opportunity to understand the life of a privileged social class. Mawer's rich descriptions of the British community's daily life reveal their thoughts, opinions, experiences, and attitudes, characterized by a blend of fascination and imperialism. The British perceive the Orient as an exotic land with a rich cultural heritage, yet they also view it as inferior and in need of British guidance. Consequently, they avoid contact with the local population and adhere to their traditions and lifestyle, maintaining a sense of identity and connection to their home country. This aspect is crucial for both practical and symbolic reasons when residing in a colony for an extended period of time.

Despite representing a nation with official authority, the British exhibit growing tension and distrust toward Greek Cypriots. This unease is juxtaposed with the Greek Cypriots' accommodating attitude towards the British, even as they strive for independence. The deference and respect shown by Greek Cypriots can be attributed to their perception of the British as representatives of the formidable British Empire, coupled with their elevated social status. While the British maintain an illusion of normalcy through extravagant social events, a palpable undercurrent of danger and emergency permeates their daily lives. The precarious conditions impose constraints and present constant threats that shape their experiences and actions. Meanwhile, Greek Cypriots continue living under these conditions without the resources and support available to the British. The mounting violence and instability on the island display the diminishing control held by the British authorities, adding further complexity to the situation.

The book falls short in offering a comprehensive examination of the experiences of Greek Cypriot citizens from their own perspective. With limited focus on the private lives of the Greek Cypriot civilian population Mawer misses the opportunity to provide a deeper and more complex understanding of the historical period and its sensibilities. One possible explanation for this omission is that Mawer may have been hesitant to provide an insider's perspective, concerned that it would lack authenticity. Furthermore, he may have chosen to focus on the autobiographical aspects of the story, such as his mother's experiences and his own childhood memories. Nonetheless, the sensibility governing this period remains polarizing to this day, with no unified view on how to assess the historical and sociocultural developments in question, and opinions often divided even among Cypriots. Consequently, it is understandable that a contemporary author hailing from a nation considered the *oppressor* by parts of the population might choose to avoid delving too deeply into such issues. By focusing primarily on the British perspective, Mawer navigates the contentious subject matter while still offering an understanding of the broader context of the period.

Considering Mawer's portrayal of the struggle itself from a factual point of view, the narrative provides insights into the political landscape and the conflicting parties of the struggle for independence in Cyprus through the perspectives of various British characters. The initial indifference of British civilians and their unsympathetic comments about the situation reveal their detachment from the conflict and reflect a colonial mentality that prioritizes the views and interests of the colonizer over the colonized. The Greek Cypriots' justifications and motivations for the uprising are hinted to be complex and multi-layered, requiring reconciliation of the affinity with the British due to historical ties and alliances and the imperative right for self-determination. The political dilemma is exacerbated by the fact that the Greeks are facing two colonizing powers at the same time, with the struggle against the Turks portrayed as an existential battle while the struggle against the British is seen as temporary. The character of Nicos serves as a personification of the EOKA fighters and offers invaluable perspective on their motivations and beliefs for Enosis. Through the introduction of this character, Mawer manages to present a somewhat balanced view of the sentiments and events at play. Despite limited information about the EOKA organization and its tactics, the reader still gains basic understanding about the irregular nature of the warfare from the observations of the British. Although the information presented in the story serves as a backdrop, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the conflict and the forces shaping it. When the narrative is evaluated based on the historical facts provided in the theoretical part of the thesis, its accuracy is evident.

Contrastingly, Soulla Christodoulou, a member of the Greek Cypriot diaspora, intricately explores the internal dynamics of Cypriot families and gives prominence to various aspects of society, such as the village community, women's experiences, cultural traditions, and the plight of children and youths, all of which were profoundly impacted by the struggle. In doing so, Christodoulou contributes a valuable perspective to contemporary postcolonial narratives by directing attention to the complexities and nuances of marginalized groups during colonial conflicts. Her heritage and knowledge of history give depth to her story and through a sense of belonging allow her to create a vivid, believable setting and detail the hardships Greek Cypriots faced. The tension between those who support EOKA and those who do not leads to rifts and conflict, with private lives being put on hold and former bonds broken. This depiction of the division within the Greek Cypriot community during the contentious period is important as it sheds light on the complex and multi-faceted conflict and helps to further our understanding of the factional political strife and its impact on personal relationships. The author accentuates the Greek Cypriot experience and their migration to escape the violence but fails to provide a similar level of detail on the British perspective. This is a significant omission in the narrative.

As regards Christodoulou's detailed account of the EOKA struggle from the perspective of the Greek Cypriot community, the author emphasizes the pervasiveness of the independence sentiment and the involvement of the younger generation and women in the struggle. Similarly to Simon Mawer, the author implements historical facts as mere backdrop to the story, nevertheless, they are mostly accurate, give depth and complexity to the characters and the plotline and they help the reader situate the novel in a broader historical framework. However, the book lacks representation from the British perspective, leading to a one-sided view of the events and a limitation in the comprehensiveness of the account. Despite this, the exclusive focus on the Greek Cypriot perspective highlights the prevalent feelings and emotions of the population during the time of the conflict and provides an in-depth look into their motivations, beliefs, and actions.

Both authors, Soulla Christodoulou and Simon Mawer, enrich our understanding of the period by giving voice to previously underrepresented groups such as women and children, both British and Cypriot, Cypriot villagers, and EOKA fighters. Drawing on postcolonial theory and the contemporary historical novel's commitment to re-assess history from the contemporary perspective, their narratives challenge dominant historical accounts by foregrounding disenfranchised perspectives and experiences, thereby offering a more refined understanding of

the socio-political situation in Cyprus. However, their individual limitations in presenting a comprehensive view become apparent as they each focus primarily on one side of the conflict. This narrow scope might not provide a balanced view of the situation, leading to an incomplete understanding of the complex and multi-faceted conflict and the sensibilities of those times.

To overcome this limitation and gain a more complete understanding of the historical consciousness, it is crucial to compare and contrast both works. By doing so, readers can develop a thorough comprehension of the socio-political situation in Cyprus and gain insights into the contrasting perspectives of the communities involved. This comparison highlights the disparity between the attitudes of British and Greek Cypriot civilians towards the ongoing EOKA struggle, revealing the stark differences in their lived experiences. For the Greek Cypriots, the conflict represents a paramount and deeply personal effort for self-determination and independence, and they must navigate its dangers on a daily basis. In contrast, the British are more concerned with satisfying their imperial interests and maintaining strategic control in the Eastern Mediterranean, treating the situation as a practical issue rather than a personal one. Consequently, their lives are seemingly less significantly influenced by the conflict. This contrast underscores the unequal distribution of power and resources between the communities, which is further exacerbated by the colonial nature of their relationship. By examining both perspectives, readers can better understand the complexities of the Cypriot struggle and the broader implications of colonialism in the region.

Both Soulla Christodoulou and Simon Mawer focus on the culture contact between the British and Cypriot communities in Cyprus and England. Through the character of Deirdre Denham, Mawer explores the complex relationships that develop between the British and Cypriots living in the same community. Despite their differences, Deirdre is able to form deep connections with the Cypriots and learns to appreciate their unique culture, while simultaneously drifting away from British customs and prejudices, which are represented by her husband. As Deirdre becomes more attracted to Nicos, she becomes protective of him and the Greek Cypriot people as a whole, leading her to eventually betray the British. It could be argued that the relationship is a symbol of cultural interaction and understanding, but the fact that it is conducted in secret manifests underlying tensions and mistrust between the communities. The power dynamics between the British colonial authorities and the indigenous population of Cyprus are also explored, with Deirdre holding a certain level of power and privilege over Nicos. Deirdre is torn in between two worlds and experiences a need for hybrid identity and adaptability. Similarly, in Christodoulou's *The Summer Will Come*, the characters

who migrate to Britain face challenges in letting go of their prejudices and preconceptions and embracing a new culture. They feel a sense of loss for the culture and community they have left behind, as well as a struggle to assimilate to their new surroundings. Furthermore, the author reveals a division among generations and the conflict between staying true to their cultural heritage and adapting to the expectations of the new country. This tension involving cultural traditions and the expectations of the dominant culture represents a larger issue faced by postcolonial communities and serves as a commentary on themes of identity, cultural belonging, and the struggle for agency in a colonial world. Through their plight and eventual success in adapting to their new surroundings, the novel draws attention to the importance of cultural exchange and adaptability in postcolonial societies. By focusing on the cultural interactions between the two nations, both authors provide insights into the complexities of the relationships that developed between the British and Greek Cypriot communities.

In the 20th-century, English-written fiction often seemed to portray the Mediterranean, including Cyprus, as an exotic backdrop, serving mainly as a stage for the characters' adventures. However, Soulla Christodoulou and Simon Mawer's historical fiction novels delve deeper into the realities of the British and Cypriot populations, engaging with themes of community, identity, and cultural exchange. These works not only broaden the perspective on the conflict between the two communities, but also incorporate previously overlooked histories. By focusing on the experiences of the underprivileged and the tensions between cultural traditions and dominant expectations, Christodoulou and Mawer's novels showcase the significance and potential of historical fiction as a genre that can challenge existing narratives and encourage a more nuanced understanding of complex cultural interactions.

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