Portugal's "Garden of Eden" in Harlequin Mills and Boon Romances: Reading the Post-1976 British Touristic Imaginary of Madeira in Katrina Britt's The Silver Tree

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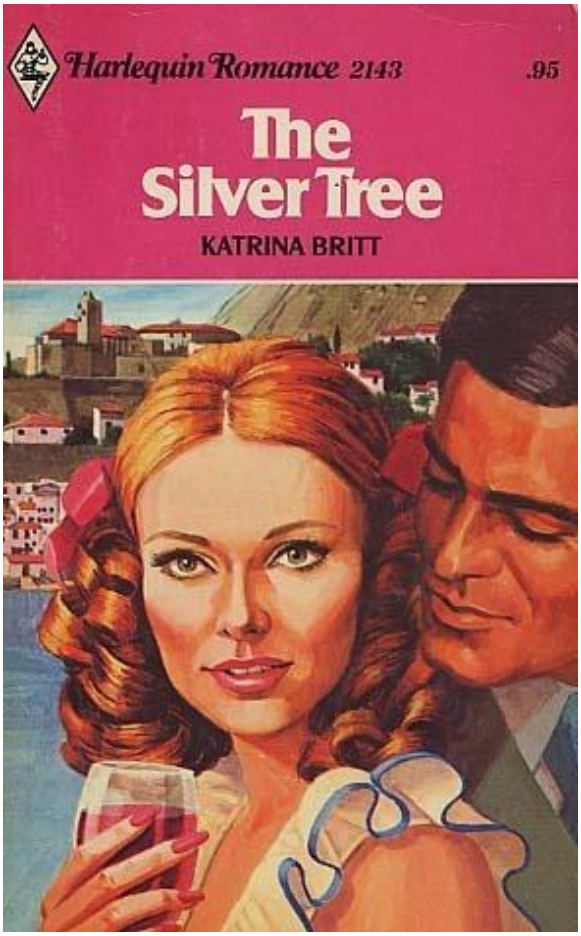

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Introduction

> "And everywhere there was beauty, the beauty of contentment on the brown faces, the beauty of green strips of land, the beauty of lush vegetation, the beauty of mountains emerging from scarves of mist in breathtaking colours, and the beauty of small villages" (Britt 44).

Representations of one of Portugal's first island conquests and one of the world's oldest tourist destinations (Almeida, "Modelling Tourism Demand" 146), the archipelago of Madeira, are dominated by idyllic descriptions of the island's natural "beauty" and the life of blissful "contentment" of those occupying it. As the opening quote suggests, this is certainly the case in Katrina Britt's *The Silver Tree* (1977), the first Harlequin Mills and Boon-published romance novel by a British author set in Madeira in the period following the island's autonomy from Portugal in 1976. As a result of this autonomy and other factors throughout the 20th century that will be explored in this thesis, 1976 marked a shift in the once powerful economic position of the British community in Madeira, which had operated as quasi-colonisers on the island since its Portuguese founding in 1419. The loss of this quasi-colonial power in Madeira post-1976 coincided with two seemingly unrelated events in British history; the unprecedented rise in British tourism to Madeira (Almeida, "Modelling Tourism Demand" 432) and the 1970s and '80s "boom" in the popularity of the romance genre amongst readers, which lead to the increased production of mass-market romance paperbacks like *The Silver Tree* (Regis 117).

Research Question and Aims

As I will demonstrate in this thesis, Britain's pre-1976 quasi-colonial control in Madeira is well documented in English-language literature. Other than occasional references to the decline in British economic monopoly and the rapid rise in British tourism to the island post-1976, however, the position and attitudes of the British in Madeira following autonomy are less comprehensively researched. Therefore, in attempting to begin the larger work of filling in this archival gap that cannot be fully explored within the scope of this project, this thesis aims to specifically focus on the following central research question: How does the dominant British literary imaginary of Madeira post-1976 utilise the affordances of the popular romance genre to demonstrate the position of the British in Madeira in the early years of the island's

autonomy? As the literature review will reveal, women's popular romances came to dominate this literary imaginary for the remainder of the 20th century following 1976. Katrina Britt's *The Silver Tree* is the first example of eight Harlequin Mills and Boon-published novels set on the island at this time. Therefore, given the genre's common trends, Britt's novel will be used as a template for my analysis of the British imaginary of Madeira during this period. In analysing *The Silver Tree* to answer the research question proposed, this thesis aims to follow the increasing notion in literary studies that popular romances should be considered "serious historical documents" (González Mínguez in Vera-Cazorla 3) that "can serve as a medium for historical examination" (Pérez-Gil, "Mass Tourism" 384).

Hypothesis

By examining history through *The Silver Tree,* this thesis will highlight how British authors like Britt utilised the affordances of the late 20th-century popular romance genre to perpetuate old colonial representations and stereotypes of Madeira and its people in the post-autonomy era. A reading of the novel will reveal how this perpetuation operated through the touristic gaze of the British Harlequin heroine and the reliance on various popular romance tropes and character archetypes. Therefore, the post-1976 British literary imaginary of Madeira in *The Silver Tree* reveals how the British position on the island at this time can be defined by post-colonial anxieties regarding Britain's loss of previous economic power. Britt's representations of Madeira demonstrate reactionary attempts at reasserting this lost national superiority through the exoticisation and "othering" of Madeira and its people using the British tourist's gaze. This touristic gaze in *The Silver Tree* also highlights Britain's attempts to remain involved in the island's affairs post-1976 through increased tourism, promoted through literary imaginaries of Madeira as an exotic tourist escape and accompanied by a glorification of Britain's bygone quasi-colonial era on the island in Harlequin Mills and Boon narratives specifically. This thesis will therefore demonstrate Perez-Gil's ("Britannia's Daughters" 25) conclusion that "Popular romance novels are narratives through which national hierarchies have been reaffirmed," applying this broad statement to the specific context of the British in Madeira post-1976.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

To explore how Harlequin Mills and Boon romances like *The Silver Tree* utilise the affordances of the popular romance genre to demonstrate the position of the British in Madeira post-1976, I will be conducting a close reading of Britt's 1977 novel. This close reading will examine Britt's use of the touristic gaze of her Harlequin heroine and other patterns specific to the popular romance genre to represent Madeira, its geography, its culture, and its people. These representations in *The Silver Tree* can only be understood in their entirety when read in the historical context of Britain's quasi-colonial history in Madeira and the colonial patterns of representation that have dominated literary accounts of this history. My close reading of *The Silver Tree* will be conducted considering not only the context of the British in Madeira pre-1976 and the limited resources that speak to the British in Madeira post-1976 but also the context of 1970s Harlequin Mills and Boon publications.

The historical lens I have chosen to take in my analysis of Britt's novel will be aided by theoretical concepts that have been discussed at the intersection between Postcolonial Studies and Critical Tourism Studies. This kind of theoretical analysis is relevant given the structures of the popular romance genre and its reliance on exoticisation and stereotyping. Firstly, I will be using Edward Said's "Orientalism", a core theory in postcolonial studies that can be defined as the Western discourse that creates and perpetuates the concept of "the Orient," "a category that encompasses the geography, peoples, and cultures of the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia" (Park and Wilkins 1). Orientalism is essential in understanding how the power dynamics of the colonial gaze are applied and operate in romance novels like *The Silver Tree*. Orientalism is useful not only because, as Said (24) writes, it reveals "the interrelations between society, history, and textuality" but also because, as Pierini (1) writes concerning stereotyping, exoticisation, and forms of othering in British-written island romances:

> The south of Europe as a reverse signifier to British civilization—a constellation of unique characteristics at the opposite spectrum of its values and ethos—can be characterized as a discursive formation running parallel to the European discourse on the Orient.

Therefore, while Britt's text is not concerned with "the Orient", her representations of Madeiran people operate similarly to Orientalism, formulating a British-controlled imaginary

of the Madeiran "Other" or what I refer to as *Madeiranness*. Constructions of *Madeiranness* in *The Silver Tree* allow for the perpetuation of an old conservative and imperialist discourse of British superiority. As Pérez-Gil ("Britannia's Daughters" 8, 11) discusses, this old discourse of Britain's "superior qualities" returned to Britain around the time of Margaret Thatcher's term as prime minister from 1979, the same decade in which Britt's novel was published.

The returning imperialist gaze in 1970s Britain also makes postcolonialism a useful lens through which to study these texts because, although Madeira has never been an official colony of Britain, scholars like Leuckert, Neumaie, and Yurchenko (9) have studied the presence of English as a language on the island, concluding that "The history of English in Madeira can be described as one of trade colonialism." Studies like these highlight how the quasi-colonial presence of the British in Madeira, while closely tied to the trade of goods, has always equally been tied to tourism. As Hall and Tucker (1,2) write, tourism "reinforces and is embedded in postcolonial relationships," given that "concerns over identity and representation, and the nature and implications of the cultural, political and economic encounters that are intrinsic to the tourist experience" are equally intrinsic to postcolonial discourse. These same concerns over representation are at the core of my close reading of the British literary imaginary in *The Silver Tree* through the touristic gaze of the novel's protagonist.

As a result, the lens of Critical Tourism Studies also becomes useful in my analysis. Key scholars in this field, Hall and Tucker (9), acknowledge how "the representation of otherness was, and still is, also inextricably linked to the popularisation of accounts of travels and exploration in the imperial lands … as well as through place promotion." Harlequin Mills and Boon novels like Brit's demonstrate Britain's place promotion of Madeira as a popular post-1976 tourist destination through their use of representations that operate according to Urry's (1990) concept of the "tourist gaze". This gaze in *The Silver Tree* works to "other" and commodify local bodies and culture for tourist escapism and entertainment, demonstrating a perpetuation of colonial othering to represent the previously quasi-colonised Madeiran subject as inferior to British visitors post-1976.

While the following concepts only serve my overall argument regarding this othering of Madeira and its people in *The Silver Tree* to reassert Britain's superiority, it is necessary to note that I will also be referring to patriarchy in my analysis, meaning the "system of male control over women's sexuality, fertility (reproduction) and labour (production and reproduction)"

(Omvedt 37). I will be analysing patriarchal representations in Harlequin Mills and Boon romances like *The Silver Tree* in Chapter Three, considering how these representations mostly work to perpetuate the idea of the "patriarchal stasis of Southern Europe" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 2). In unpacking how this idea is used as a tool for the perpetuation of colonial othering, I will also be referring to Britt's representations of "toxic masculinity", or an expression of masculinity that is defined by "violence, domination, aggression, misogyny, and homophobia" (Harrington 349).

"The Silver Tree" as a Harlequin Mills and Boon romance

As discussed, Katrina Britt's *The Silver Tree* offers a template for how Harlequin Mills and Boon romances operated as the core British literary imaginary of Madeira for the remainder of the 20th century post-1976. In the decade of Madeira's autonomy, the American-owned Harlequin Enterprises, "the largest publisher of romance fiction in the world" (McWilliam 139), purchased the British romance publisher Mills and Boon, established 1908, and began increasingly releasing novels set in Southern European tourist destinations, including islands like Madeira. Therefore, novels like Britt's exist within what I am labelling the Southern European/island sub-category of the late 20th-century popular romance genre that consists of category-specific literary techniques, themes, and tropes alongside more general tropes of the overarching genre.

The Silver Tree by Ethel Connell, written under the pseudonym Katrina Britt (Vivanco, *For Love and Money* 20), is a particularly informative case study of the British literary imaginary of Madeira through this sub-category given that most of Connell's forty romance novels are set in destinations across Italy, Spain, and Portugal. The tropes of the Southern European/island romance are imbedded in the formulaic plot of *The Silver Tree*, which follows the love story of Diane McNair, a 21-year-old British fabrics designer, and her Madeiran pen-pal Maria's eldest brother, Duque Alonso de Valmardi, the 28-year-old in charge of his family's estate in Funchal, the island's capital. The most obvious distinction between ordinary Harlequin romances and Southern European/island romances like Britt's is the use of a "Latin hero" (Dixon 68), often of Mediterranean descent. Alonso, half American, half Portuguese, exemplifies this trend not only because of his nationality but because he completes the British woman's fantasy of the

exotic hero, a "cultural hybrid" who "speaks perfect English, has studied in Britain, or travels often to it on business" (Teo in Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 8).

In *The Silver Tree,* Alonso poses as his younger sister to convince the British protagonist to come to Madeira. As a result, Diane travels to the island under false circumstances and finds herself, while in awe of her natural surroundings, trapped in a seemingly one-sided love affair with a cold-hearted and possessive man. Alonso blames Diane for negatively influencing his sister with her "English customs" (Britt 18), which has, in turn, led to his sister's refusal to marry a family friend. The novel's hero insists that Diane stay in Madeira to help change his sister's mind. While grappling with her partial entrapment on the island, Diane explores her surroundings, interacting with Madeiran locals and, through Britt's writing, exerting her British touristic gaze that comes to shape representations of Madeira and its people in the novel.

Literature Review

Before analysing representations of Madeira in *The Silver Tree* to answer my central research question, it is necessary to identify how this novel fits into the broader archive of British fiction, as well as how and within what contexts Britt's fictional work, similarly to other works within the Southern European/island romance category of Harlequin Mills and Boon romances, has already been analysed by literary scholars. It is also essential to outline the existing literature on the History of the British in Madeira as the various patterns and gaps in this literature have influenced the aims, theoretical lens, and hypothesis of my own research.

British tourists are said to have visited Madeira from as early as the 15th century (Leuckert, Neumaie, and Yurchenko 3). Outside of non-fiction travel guides (Lee, 1888), travel writings of early British explorers and settlers on the island (Cieszyńska et al., 2010), and the fictional work of Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre* (1847), which hints at British 18th-century involvement in the trade of Madeira wine (Valint, 2017), however, the first fictional tale written by a British author that significantly includes Madeira in the narrative is Sax Rohmer's 1927 novel *Moon of Madness.* This novel is not set on the island but rather on a German cruise liner bound for it and is categorised as a mystery and romance novel. The focus on Madeira as a tourist destination and the inclusion of both romance and mystery in Rohmer's narrative exemplifies how Madeira was imagined for the remainder of the 20th century in British fiction.

The most popular fictional novels set on the island and written by British authors in the 1900s can be grouped under either the category of mystery (*Skeleton Staff* by Elizabeth Ferrars, 1969; *The Malady in Madeira* by Ann Bridge, 1970; *Salute to Bazarada* by Sax Rohmer, 1971; *Breath of Suspicion* by Elizabeth Ferrars, 1972; *Witness Before the Fact* by Elizabeth Ferrars, 1979; *The Hanging Garden* by John Sherwood, 1994) or romance (*Bride of Zarco* by Margaret Rome, 1976; The *Silver Tree* by Katrina Britt, 1977; *Last April fair* by Betty Neels, 1980; *Capture a Stranger* by Lilian Peake, 1981; *To Trust Tomorrow* by Nancy John, 1981; *The Flower Garden* by Margaret Pemberton, 1981; *Living Dangerously* by Elizabeth Oldfield, 1987; *Hiding* by Barbara Cartland, 1991; *An Unfinished Affair* by Jenny Arden, 1991; *Illusions of Love* by Sally Wentworth, 1992; *The Dark Edge of Love* by Sara Wood, 1994), with some combining both genres (*The Dark Corridor* by Denise Robins, 1974). The only exception to this pattern is the Madeiran edition of Jean Estoril's children's series, *Drina Dances in Madeira* (1960). The heavy reliance on these two genres is telling of the long-lived "ethnocentric construction of Madeira as both an idyllic and "imperfect paradise", a site of lush beauty and otherness" (Calleja 233) in British writing. This kind of construction is found across colonial fiction and is perpetuated in post-colonial tourism fiction. Scholars like Bazenga ("Turismo e romance" 326) argue that particularly island destinations are historically and continually represented as garden paradises for colonial and tourist propaganda.

Bazenga draws this conclusion through an analysis of British characters' itineraries around Madeira in three mass-market romance novels, including *The Silver Tree,* in her paper titled "Turismo E Romance Na Literatura Popular Cor-De-Rosa Tendo Por Cenário A Ilha Da Madeira" (2019). It is important to note that the nine of the British romance novels set on the island named above are published under Harlequin Enterprises and its subsidiary brands, such as Mills and Boon and Silhouette Romances. Despite what this tells us about the dominance of Harlequin and the popularity of its mass-literary products throughout the 20th century, the category of women's popular romance fiction received little acknowledgment in literary studies at the beginning of the decade when companies like Harlequin were expanding their global reach. Research on the popularity and significance of these novels only began to grow in the late 1980s with critical studies such as Jan Cohn's *Romance and the erotics of property: Mass-market fiction for women* (1988), Jay Dixon's *The Romantic Fiction of Mills and Boon, 1905-1995* (1998), and Pamela Regis' 2003 book titled *A natural history of the romance novel*. These projects consider the history and development of what is now known as popular romance fiction as it emerged from previous literary traditions such as the Victorian romance. They also

discuss the reasoning behind the genre's exclusion from earlier research, given its female-centred authorship and readership, and highlight how the themes and concerns of women's popular romances in the 20th century can be read as a reflection of women's changing roles in society throughout the decade.

More recent research is, however, unlike these fundamental texts, more narrowly focused on various themes and patterns across popular romances. One frequent area of interest is the common use of a foreign or "exotic" setting in Harlequin narratives, particularly Southern European locations and islands (Pérez-Gil, 2022; Ramos-García and Vivanco, 2020). Some studies focus specifically on Harlequins set in Spain (González Cruz, 2015; González Cruz, 2017; Vera-Cazorla, 2018), Greece (Vivanco, 2017), and Portugal (Bazenga, 2019). A lot of this research is interested in the inclusion of the "dark, attractive" and often "condescending" male hero (Vera-Cazorla 10) that makes for a "hot-blooded" romance (Vivanco, "A Place "We All Dream About" 87) (González Cruz, 2015; Ramos-García and Vivanco, 2020; Vera-Cazorla, 2018; Vivanco, 2017). Some studies are more concerned with bilingual language use in these novels (Bazenga, 2019; González Cruz, 2017; Ramos-García and Vivanco, 2020; Vera-Cazorla, 2018) and others with the use of literary techniques to represent island locations as "paradise" (Bazenga, 2019; González Cruz, 2015; Ramos-García and Vivanco, 2020; Vera-Cazorla 2018). Few scholars also focus specifically on representations of Southern European masculinity in these romances (Pérez-Gil 2019; Ramos-García and Vivanco 2020). All of these studies refer to the connections between tourism and Harlequin island narratives, given the British protagonists' common positions as tourists.

Despite its relevance to these trends in research, there is little research available on *The Silver Tree* in particular. The novel appears in a total of three studies, including Bazenga's 2019 research, as previously discussed. Pérez-Gil's (2022) ecocritical analysis of Mills and Boon romances, "Mass Tourism, Ecocriticism, and Mills and Boon Romances (1970s-1980s)", uses *The Silver Tree* as one example of how in some Harlequins, "the local hero actively tries to preserve the environment and traditional lifestyle from the tourism invasion" (Pérez-Gil, "Mass Tourism" 391-392). Aline Bazenga's (2020) "Language Awareness in Four Novels Set on the Island of Madeira", also includes *The Silver Tree* in a broader discussion that concludes that English romance novels set in Madeira that include Portuguese words and phrases, despite demonstrating a level of bilingual knowledge, equally demonstrate that "general knowledge of the Other, in this case, the Portuguese inhabitants of Madeira, is superficial and often

inaccurate" (Bazenga, "Language Awareness" 33). Another of Britt's Southern European/island romances, *The Villa Faustino* (1977), appears in González Cruz's (2020) "Othering and Language," focusing on the use of bilingual language in mass-market romances set in the Canary Islands. Her novel *The Spanish Grandee* (1975) is also mentioned in Pérez-Gil's (2020) previously discussed study, "Britannia's Daughters," which focuses on representations of British superiority in Harlequin narratives, the same idea that underpins this thesis. Pérez-Gil's research, however, considers this idea specifically through Spanish location Harlequins and their use of stereotypical Spanish masculinity to justify differences between the female British protagonist and her love interest.

Because of an interest in researching Spanish location Southern European/island Harlequin romances, there are only four studies mentioned above that pay specific attention to these novels in Madeira (Bazenga, 2017; Bazenga, 2020; González Cruz, 2020; Pérez-Gil, 2022). Although I will be drawing from these existing studies in my analysis of the post-1976 British literary imaginary of Madeira in *The Silver Tree,* I would like to offer a more detailed analysis than this previous research that simply utilises *The Silver Tree* to study isolated trends in the popular romance genre. I aim to do so, firstly, by drawing from studies of other Southern European/island romances that consider issues not yet applied to the Madeiran context, such as Pérez-Gil's 2019 study that focuses on representations of masculinity and the idea that Harlequins are used as tools for the perpetuation of British superiority. Secondly, unlike previous studies, I aim to conduct my close reading of *The Silver Tree* considering Britain's quasi-colonial history on the island since the 15th century, as this assists in understanding Britt's perpetuation of old colonial patterns of representation and how these patterns work to reassert Britain's lost superiority post-1976.

Therefore, in my analysis, I will be drawing from studies on the British in Madeira pre-1976. The majority of these studies written in English focus on British involvement in the trade of Madeiran goods, especially wine (Câmara, Lopes and Fredona, 2024; Hancock, 1998; Mutch, 2016; Silva and Biscoito, 2009), early British health tourism to the island (Langum, 2022; Muir, 2021; Vieira, "History of Madeira" n.d.), and the British military occupations of Madeira during the Napoleonic wars (Newitt, 1999). Given these limited resources, I will be relying quite heavily on Desmond Gregory's *The Beneficent Usurpers* (1988) in the historical background provided in Chapter One, as this is the most comprehensive English-language account of Britain's quasi-colonial history in Madeira.

There are even fewer resources on the involvement of the British in Madeira post-1976, likely given the decline in their previous quasi-colonial power. As a result, I will largely be relying on studies on the overall changes on the island following its autonomy (Ackrén and Olausson, 2008; Olausson, 2002) and studies on the island's tourism industry post-1976 (Almeida and Correia, 2010; Almeida, 2015; Almeida, 2016; Gouveia and Eusébio, 2019; Leuckert, Neumaie and Yurchenko, 2023; Majdak and Almeida, 2023; Martins, 2021; Nunes, 2024; Oliveira and Pereira, 2008; Teixeira and Ribeiro, 2020; Teixeira, 2018). As a review of existing literature suggests, Harlequin Mills and Boon novels like Britts, while fictional, are the only existing English-language accounts of the sociocultural dynamics of British tourism on the island at this time, which is why, through my analysis of *The Silver Tree* as a "serious" historical document (González-Mínguez in Vera-Cazorla 3), I aim to begin adding to the limited archive of research on the post-1976 position and attitudes of the British in Madeira.

Paper Outline

Given the aims of this thesis, "Chapter One: The British in Madeira: From Quasi-Colonialism to Post-Autonomy Tourism" will focus on outlining the history of the British in Madeira up until the years surrounding the publication of Britt's novel. By doing so, this chapter will offer essential historical context on the shift from Britain's quasi-colonial monopoly to increased British tourism from 1976, which, intersecting with the rise in the Harlequin Mills and Boon narrative set on the island, explains a reading of *The Silver Tree* as demonstrating the British community's instability on the island at this time and subsequent attempts at reasserting power and superiority through the affordances of the popular romance genre. This historical context will be used in "Chapter Two: Madeira through the Harlequin Heroine's Touristic Gaze" to inform a close reading of Britt's use of Diane's gaze and movements around the island to present a romanticised and exoticised image of Madeira that reuses old colonial tropes in the new popular romance context to perpetuate an othering of the island and a glorification of Britain's quasi-colonial past. Finally, "Chapter Three: Representing and Engaging with the Madeiran "Other"", will focus more closely on how Diane's objectifying and exoticising touristic gaze is applied to representations of Madeiran people and culture as a continued tool for the reassertion of British superiority. In doing so, I will also be analysing Britt's use of popular romance genre tropes and archetypes to sustain a stereotyped image of Madeiran people.

Chapter One: The British in Madeira: From Quasi-Colonialism to Post-Autonomy Tourism

To understand how *The Silver Tree* utilises the popular romance genre and the touristic gaze of the British protagonist in Harlequin Mills and Boon Southern European/island romances to reassert Britain's wavering power and superiority in Madeira post-1976, it is essential to understand how British power on the island operated since Madeira's Portuguese founding. Therefore, this chapter will outline the history of the small British community in Madeira from the 14th century until the publication of Britt's novel in 1977. In doing so, I aim to demonstrate how the island's shift to a regional administration in 1976 marks a key moment of change in the role of the British on the island from previous centuries, a role now defined by tourism rather than by the quasi-colonial control through economic monopoly that British settlers had solidified in the 16th to 19th centuries.

Alongside discussions of the economic and sometimes political events that make the history of the British in Madeira a quasi-colonial one, I will also be highlighting how the social attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices of this British colony towards Madeirans have operated during various moments in history. This will assist in understanding how, in a period where the British colony on the island no longer had the level of control and power it enjoyed in the centuries before autonomy, authors like Britt utilise the affordances of the popular romance genre to perpetuate the long-held British belief that Madeira owes much of its development since its founding to the economic, scientific, and political activities of the small community of British settlers and visitors. This belief is justified in post-1976 Harlequin narratives through a reuse of old stereotypes and prejudices about local character that have long been used to justify Britain's superiority and, therefore, their quasi-colonial exploitation of the island.

British Legends, Merchants, and Settlers

The argument that the British have historically acted as quasi-colonisers in Madeira is mostly reliant on British ships' use of the advantageously positioned port of Funchal from the 1600s for maritime activity, as well as the steadily growing involvement of a few wealthy British families in the trade and production of various Madeiran goods from the 17th century well into the 20th century. Despite this economic involvement becoming more prominent in the 1600s, a British colony on the island has existed since the 16th century, although a minority

group that never surpassed three hundred settlers (Gregory 18). While Madeira has always been a territory of Portugal since its Portuguese discovery in 1419, some believe the island's British connection can be traced back to as early as the 14th century with the legend of Robert Machin, an Englishman, credited by British historian Desmond Gregory (103) in *The Beneficent Usurpers* as "the first European to discover Madeira."

This legend of Edward the Third's subject, Machin, and his lover, Ana D'Arfet, eloping on a ship which, due to a storm, ended up stranded on the shores of Machico, a village on the island believed to be named in Machin's honour, is recounted in *The Silver Tree*. At the request of the British protagonist, her Madeiran love interest tells the story of Machin, including Ana's death and burial under a cedar tree soon after the couple's arrival in Machico. Alonso concludes, "A chapel was built on the spot where the cedar tree once stood" (Britt 100). While there is no historical evidence of the legend of Machin, a chapel in Machico is credited by British historians as a homage to this story of the island's original discovery (Gregory 103), with a cross inside the chapel made of the wood of the same cedar tree (Grabham 20). In Portuguese records, however, this same chapel is said to have been built to commemorate the spot of the first mass on the island on the day following its discovery (Viveiros 15). This suggests that the legend of Machin, while acknowledged by some Portuguese historians, is largely a British imperialist fabrication. *The Silver Tree's* inclusion of the story of Machin highlights how this narrative that credits the British with the island's discovery is perpetuated well into the late 20th-century British imaginary of the island, following the story's frequent inclusion in 18th and 19th-century British travel writing (Langum 54). By telling the story of Machin from the perspective of Alonso, a Madeiran character, Britt attempts to legitimise this long-circulated legend, adding to the narrative of British superiority over the island.

What is not a fabrication, however, is the significant involvement of the British in the island's economy from the 1600s. Gregory (21) explains how "the earliest British settlers in Madeira were merchants venturing on their own in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." These early merchants, finding Funchal a conveniently placed stop on their journeys to Asia, Africa, and Australia, especially before the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Gregory 110), became involved in the trade of Madeira sugar cane and wine, among other commodities and slowly came to dominate in the trade of these good (Mutch 1). Due to various circumstances such as crop diseases and Portuguese laws and policies surrounding trade, which the British were subject to, the products British merchants in Madeira relied on in their trade naturally fluctuated

throughout the 1600s to 1800s. However, the presence of the British on the island and their involvement in its economic affairs remained unwavering during these years, supported by the introduction of a British consul in Madeira in 1658 and the establishment of the English merchant factory in the same century that protected the interests of British traders in Madeiran goods (Gregory 28, 29). The British presence on the island at this time was heavily linked to British merchants, as the consul and vice-consul were members of the merchant factory well into the following centuries (Hancock 216).

Throughout the 1600s to 1800s, during which Gregory (18) claims "the whole economy of Madeira passed almost wholly under British control," various prominent British figures in Madeira's history, mainly traders, consuls, and religious figures, solidified a quasi-colonial expansion and power over the island. This power is highlighted through the increased purchase of property in Funchal from 1760 for the building of protestant churches and graveyards, English schools, and grand personal estates by these individuals who had now settled on the island with their families (Gregory 46, 103-104). The most well-known of these individuals include Madeira wine merchants Thomas Gordon, Francis Newton, and Thomas Murdoch, who operated a wine trading firm together (Silver and Biscoito 18), Henry Veitch, a British consul on the island in the 1800s who built five large personal properties in Funchal (Gregory 46), William Hinton, who established the first sugar can factory on the island, Fábrica do Torreão, which remained successful well into the 1900s (Gregory 41), John Blandy, a previous quartermaster of the British army, who's family went on to hold a "virtual monopoly of every Madeiran enterprise" by the early 1900s (Gregory 42), and the Scottish Dr. Robert Reid Kalley, a practicing doctor and preacher attempting to convert Madeirans to Calvinism since 1838 (Gregory 91) who also assisted in opening schools on the island along with philanthropists such as Robert Page, Joseph Phelps, and Mary Jane Wilson (Gregory 103-104).

The Napoleonic Wars and Tension in the Quasi-colony

As the extensive activities of these men and women demonstrate, the British colony in Madeira in the 19th century was made up of a small community of families who were heavily involved in activities across economic, political, and social lines. While Gregory highlights some instances of conflict between these individuals, the wealthy British community in Madeira in the 19th century was united in their desire to remain on the island and continue their

monopoly over various industries. This is demonstrated most effectively by Napoleon's threats to attack Portugal during the Napoleonic Wars, which led the British in Madeira, roughly a community of 100 at this time, to request troops to be sent to the island for their protection (Newitt 73). As a result, for three months in 1801 and seven years from 1807 to 1814, British troops occupied the island and operated in its defence from a potential French invasion (Newitt 70-71). While this brought great relief to the British community, these occupations led to increased tension between the Portuguese Madeiran community and the British, aided by various rumours that the British had drawn up plans to annex Madeira rather than work alongside Portuguese troops for the benefit of the island during the second occupation (Newitt 71). Despite Portuguese concerns, however, and evidence that a few members of the British community had been working on a plan of annexation (Hewitt 71), Gregory (64) writes, "As to whether British ministries ever, during the Napoleonic period, seriously considered annexing Madeira, one can only say that surviving documents provide no evidence of this."

Regardless of the British never annexing or formally colonising Madeira, the gradually increased minority monopoly of the British community over various industries on the island since its founding demonstrates a quasi-colonial involvement of the British in Madeira, one which scholars like Leuckert, Neumaie, and Yurchenko (2) claim has consequences in the present day, such as through the status of English as a "Lingua Franca", especially in the island's tourism industry. The colonial resemblance of the power of the British over Madeira from the 15th to 20th centuries is highlighted further by the comments of various British historians and travel writers. For example, Richard Burton (in Gregory 15) referred to the island as "cockneyfied" in the 1860s, and in 1909 William H. Koebel (in Gregory 15) wrote, "It (Madeira) is almost certainly anglicised to a greater degree than any other island that does not wear the British flag." In 1933 Peter Flemming (in Gregory 15) noted that Funchal had "a slightly colonial atmosphere." In the same way that historical accounts of the British in Madeira give great attention to the successes of the British colony on the island, the anglicisation of the island noted by those above, and the works of the British men and women who contributed to this anglicisation is glorified in Britt's post-1976 romance novel. For example, Britt chooses to include a speech in *The Silver Tree* by Alonso where he remarks, "Most of the industries which have made the island prosperous were started by the wonderful English," saying, "We owe much to the British for making the economic structure of the island sound" (Britt 92). He goes on to mention the introduction of butter, embroidery, and ropemaking to the island by British merchants and visitors, all of which have successful economic legacies. He also

mentions how "a horticulturalist introduced pears, apples and strawberries here," which is just one of many references in *The Silver Tree* to the botanical influence of the British in Madeira, including the title of the novel (Britt 93).

It is telling, however, that Alonso recounts this history in what Britt (92) writes as an "aggravating" and sardonic tone. While Alonso is represented as a sardonic figure throughout the novel, in this instance, his mocking tone highlights claims that local Madeiran attitudes towards the activities of the British colony have never been as enthusiastic as that of the British themselves, with Gregory (18, 35, 125, 129) often commenting on the "jealousy" of Madeiran locals and authorities over the economic dominance of the British on the island. In the 1850s in particular, an English visitor to the island, Lady Stuart-Wortley (251), wrote, "the aristocracy of the place entertain a feeling of jealousy against the British visitors, partly because they look on them as interlopers and as lovers of progress and promoters of innovation and partly from a mere dislike of foreigners." Stuart-Wortley's (251) framing of the British as "lovers of progress and promotors of innovation," which, as she later states is contradictory to Madeirans' "opposition to innovation or any improvement," is a clear example of the British imperialist othering of Southern Europeans as "lazy and corrupt" (Langum 67) and thus the assertion of British superiority. This prejudice against Madeirans dominates references to socio-cultural dynamics between the British and locals throughout British travel writing well into the late 1900s.

Despite his reliance on similar prejudices, Gregory acknowledges in *The Beneficent Usurpers* that Madeiran locals and authorities who opposed the British did not necessarily do so solely out of jealousy over their "progressive" and "innovative" ways but much more likely due to the belief that the British exploited the island and its resources to make large fortunes and in the process opposed any progress that did not suit their own agendas. In doing so, the needs of this British minority community were prioritised at the expense of the local community in true colonialist fashion. However, *The Beneficent Usurpers*, as its title suggests, demonstrates how even into the 1980s, when the book was published, the attitude of the British towards the history of their countrymen in Madeira has always relied, first and foremost, on a glorification of the "good works" of the British community in Madeira throughout the centuries (Gregory 129). This is evident most effectively in the ending of Gregory's book, as he writes, "doubtless the island would have been poorer, at any rate in a material sense, had the British never "exploited" it" (Gregory 129). This blatant justification of Britain's quasi-colonial

exploitation of Madeira and its people serves to solidify a narrative of Britain as a superior nation even after its control over the island had declined post-1976, a sentiment I will later demonstrate is also present in popular fictional imaginaries of the island at this time.

Social Attitudes and Early British Tourism

As this history of the British in Madeira reveals, the quasi-colonial power dynamics of the British over the island, while most explicitly displayed through the economic dominance of the small British community of settlers in Funchal from the 1600s and their subsequent involvement in the island's political affairs, has always been equally, although less explicitly, visible through the social attitudes of British settlers and visitors towards Madeiran people. These attitudes drive a narrative of the British as the colonial saviour, bringing progress and aid to the helpless and indolent locals, and thus justifying their ongoing presence and involvement in the island. British prejudice towards the Madeiran community is most evident in accounts of early British "health tourism" to the island, a phenomenon that began as early as 1775 (Gregory 110) and gained popularity in the 1800s, justified by a trend in "climate science" (Langum 58). British health tourists travelling to the island at this time were often suffering from consumption, now known as Tuberculosis (Langum 53).

Scientists in the 18th and 19th centuries believed that the cold and damp British climate was responsible for a rise in pulmonary infections and began prescribing medical travel to warmer climates as a cure, with Madeira seen as an "ideal" climate (Langum 55,56). Not only was this warm climate a perfect fit for these new medical beliefs, but the easy ship access and the presence of an already well-established and wealthy British community on the island undoubtedly made Madeira, particularly the capital of Funchal, appear as a safe and welcoming environment for early English health tourists. This "therapeutic" period of tourism in Madeira throughout the 19th century until the early 20th century saw the rise in British-owned hotels built mostly in Funchal, beginning with the first hotel built on the island in 1812 (Almeida, "A Few Notes" 6). As Gregory (126) points out, by 1890, all hoteliers on the island were British, highlighting the monopoly that the British had over tourism to Madeira in the 19th century. The oldest hotel that still operates on the island today is Reid's Palace, opened in 1891 by William Reid, a later addition to the list of well-known British men with influence over the island's affairs.

The same climate science that believed that climate and health were connected and thus led to the increase in health tourism to Madeira in the 1800s, increasing the need for accommodation, which the British community on the island capitalised on, also believed that climate had an impact on character (Langum 60). This belief, backed by hand-picked elements of science, was often used to justify discrimination against Southern Europeans, particularly discrimination towards the Portuguese by the British. This is demonstrated across British literature. For example, Guimarães (2) highlights how Victorian-era poetry relies on the British poet's simplification of multi-cultural encounters through the cultural trope of the "foreign", a trope that tourism scholars Hall and Tucker (9) highlight stems from colonial accounts. This trope saw foreigners as either threatening or liberated, which when applied to representations of Portugal in Victorian poetry "thematised Portugal as either backward or else as a terrestrial paradise" with "a markedly decadent and bigoted outlook" (1, 2, 3).

This two-fold representation of foreign places and people is particularly visible in the non-fiction travel writing of 19th-century health tourists in Madeira, as some worried that the "slovenliness," "indolence," "low order of courage," and "languorous " or "sedentary habits," of the local Portuguese on the island would rub off on British visitors seeking to cure their pulmonary diseases in the Madeiran air (Langum 61). This drives home Pierini's (1) point that British representations of Southern Europeans mimic representations of the Orient as "devoid of energy and initiative" (Said 38). These representations were often used to justify colonial administration in the same way that representations of Madeirans at this time were used to justify Britain's quasi-colonial power over the island. While Langum points out that some travel writing of British visitors highlighted the "good nature" and "humility" of Madeiran locals, many relied on these more disapproving stereotypes, using them to suggest British superiority of character and the subsequent "moral influence" and "improvements" brought to the island by British settlers and visitors (Langum 67), with some even attributing the cleanliness of Funchal's streets solely to the British community (Langum 61-62). In this way, British works of literature and writing emerging during this period of health tourism add to, as Langum (67) puts it, "the impression of separation and superiority of the British to the Madeirans," an impression that highlights how the quasi-colonialism of the British in Madeira operated on a sociocultural level during this period.

The Decline in British Monopoly and the Post-1976 Shift in Power

In the early 20th century British health tourism to the island saw a decline following further research on tuberculosis and thus the move away from climate as a cure (Langum 66). Regardless, the island had established itself as a popular tourist destination. As a result, the British community in Madeira was mostly involved and invested in its young tourism industry, especially since the opening of the Suez Canal and the shift to oil-powered trade ships that no longer needed to refuel in Funchal had led to the slow decline in Madeira's "maritime importance" (Gregory 21). The already declining British quasi-colonial monopoly over the island at this time experienced its first major challenge by German investors and hoteliers. While the Germans, similarly to the French, had also had a history in the trade of Madeiran goods and had made use of Funchal's port for centuries, German investors never posed a significant threat to the monopoly of the wealthy and well-established British community on the island. This changed in 1905, when, supported by the Portuguese administration, who reportedly resented British monopoly (Gregory 113), German investors built the Santa Anna Sanatorium, with plans to buy out property along the Funchal seafront, building more hotels and bringing in more tourists (Gregory 114). Around the same time, German investors were also becoming increasingly interested in the trade of Madeira wine and embroidery, and thus, as Gregory (115) writes, "exploiting the weakness of the British position."

This weakness showed itself as visitors in the late 19th century had begun complaining that British-owned and operated hotels on the island were "unmodernized" (Gregory 115), with many critiquing prominent British figures like Reid well into the early 20th century for being "hopelessly behind the times" and "selfishly barring the way to a rise in local standards of living" (Gregory 122). This critique in the early 1900s was aimed at the entire British minority on the island, not just hoteliers like Reid. For example, one individual wrote to a Portuguese newspaper, accusing "a small minority of British of always trying to obstruct improvements whenever they were proposed in Madeira" (Gregory 115). These critiques conflicted with the beliefs held by the British community, who seemed to believe that they had assisted the local Madeiran community in more ways than the Portuguese government. They felt this belief was justified not only because of the so-called "innovations" and "improvements" previously discussed but also by their charity efforts towards starving and impoverished locals throughout the 19th century (Gregory 108). Even in trying to defend themselves, the British community continued to rely on harmful stereotypes, with one British government official writing that the

British had done all they could to help a "half-civilized and very superstitious population" (Gregory 109). This reveals how even as the British were beginning to be critiqued by the Portuguese and other foreigners in the 20th century for their previously unchallenged economic monopoly on the island, thus resulting in the gradual decline in their quasi-colonial control, they held onto the prejudiced belief of British superiority over Madeira and its people to justify their historic exploitation on the island.

The German challenge to British quasi-colonial power continued until the First World War, during which German-owned property on the island was confiscated (Gregory 122). Regardless, the Portuguese were increasingly unhappy with "the English usurpers in Madeira" (Gregory 126), who they believed had held the island back from any progress needed to improve local lives. After World War One, the British were gradually stripped of their previous quasi-colonial control by the Portuguese government, as well as by an increase in American investors on the island, displayed in novels like *The Silver Tree* by the presence of American characters like Dwight Rogan and Alonso's American mother. Various events in the 20th century, including the 1928 revolution on the island, which led to the Portuguese government establishing a new administration for its islands in 1933, and the 1974 revolution, which led to Madeira being granted the status of an autonomous region of Portugal in 1976, effected the gradual decline of the British monopolists in most spheres of the island's economy (Vieira 1).

1976, however, marks a historically significant shift in the position of the British in Madeira, as "Madeira entered into a government system, elected by direct universal suffrage, which enabled to overcome the delay that islanders were convicted to" (Vieira 1). This meant that the needs of local Madeiran people were being taken care of on a local level for the first time in the island's history, leaving the British little excuse to intervene for their own benefit under the guise of assisting locals. The island's autonomy also led to a formalisation of the tourism industry, including the establishment of the Regional Department (Ministry) of Tourism (Almeida, "Modelling Tourism Demand" 150). This solidified the Portuguese administration's focus on what had been increasingly becoming Madeira's most fruitful industry in the 20th century, encouraging Portuguese investors to take full advantage of the increase in cruise tourism in the 1970s and '80s to the island (Gouveia and Eusebio 424). This led to the rapid building of new Portuguese-owned hotels to accommodate visitors (Vieira 149). The old British colony on the island was now no longer in control of the Madeiran economy, particularly its tourism industry, which they played a considerable role in establishing in the

1800s and reportedly had a monopoly over up until the Second World War (Bazenga, "Turismo e romance" 326). Regardless, British visitors to Madeira post-1976 rapidly increased from the years 1976 to 1980 (Almeida, "Modelling Tourism Demand" 434). This boom was also aided by new modes of transport between Britain and the island, such as the introduction of the seaplane, mentioned in *The Silver Tree* (Britt 19).

The rise in British tourism in Maderia, which followed the end of the British monopoly resulting from changes surrounding the island's autonomy, coincided with the rise in British fiction set on the island. As highlighted in the review of literature, novels published at this time were predominantly within the mystery or romance genres. The post-1976 moment was accompanied particularly by a boom in Harlequin Mills and Boon romances. These romance novels outnumbered the other two British-written novels set on the island for the remainder of the 20th century, which were both within the mystery genre. The Mills and Boon Southern European/island romance narrative of the British Harlequin heroine falling in love with a foreign man while on holiday offered the perfect medium for a modern adaption of the tourist imaginary of Madeira in earlier travel writing. As I will highlight through an analysis of *The Silver Tree* in the following chapters, the trends, tropes, and affordances of this genre allowed for the perpetuation of old stereotypes and prejudices of Madeira and its people, as discussed in this chapter. This perpetuation demonstrates a feeling of post-colonial anxiety and a desire to regain control and superiority over the island lost by the British throughout the 20th century, specifically following 1976.

Chapter Two: Madeira through the Harlequin Heroine's Touristic Gaze

Diane McNair, the British protagonist in Britt's 1977 novel, who reflects the independent heroines of 1970s and '80s Harlequins (Dixon 90), travels to Madeira as a tourist at the request of her local pen-pal, Maria de Valmardi. Britt's representations of Madeira in *The Silver Tree* are, therefore, filtered through the gaze of this typical British Southern European/island romance protagonist, one who comes to embody the British tourist to a foreign location. This foreign location in Britt's novel is Madeira during its early years of autonomy, which, as outlined in Chapter One, was a period categorised by instability regarding the position and authority of the British on the island as well as increased British tourism. Diane's positionality as a tourist within this historical context and her subsequent touristic gaze are therefore significant when analysing Britt's use of the affordances of the popular romance genre to demonstrate the British position in Madeira post-1976.

In this chapter, I will close read physical descriptions of the island, its landscapes, and towns through Diane's gaze, as well as analyse Diane's movements, interactions, and feelings within these spaces. Examining Diane's touristic gaze allows for a reflection on how tourism, which Mura and Bouchon (1265) refer to as a "privileged" practice, operates as a neocolonial structure used to reassert old colonial and imperialist power. As previously discussed, the assertion of imperialistic power has always been attached to representations of foreign places and people in written literature. Therefore, I aim to highlight in this chapter how the popular romance genre through the Harlequin heroine's position and gaze as a tourist allows for the perpetuation of old imperialistic narratives and representations of Madeira, working to exoticise the island and glorify its British quasi-colonial past. These kinds of representations, in turn, expose the anxieties of the British in Madeira at this time and British attempts at reasserting superiority over the island through Harlequin Mills and Boon touristic imaginaries that work to encourage British tourism.

Madeira as a Timeless "Garden of Eden"

As Vivanco (85) discusses concerning Mills and Boon romances set in Greece, utopian imaginaries of islands have long had "a special appeal for British authors and readers" through "literary, philosophical and filmic" projects. The growing sub-category of Southern

European/island romances in the British popular romance genre of the late 20th century is no exception. These novels perpetuate a utopian imaginary of islands through the frequent use of what González Cruz ("Love in Paradise" 2) refers to as the "paradise myth" or what Bazenga ("Turismo e romance" 325) calls "o mito de ilha-jardim," or the myth of the garden-island, closely connected to ideas of paradise through connotations and references to The Garden of Eden. For example, in *The Silver Tree,* Diane is immediately in awe of the beauty of her natural surroundings upon her arrival in Madeira, allowing for plentiful descriptions of the island's "magnificent views" (Britt 19, 91), the various flowers and trees growing on the "picturesque cultured mountains" (Britt 66) and the "sparkling" and "gentle" Atlantic ocean that surrounds the island (Britt 38, 26).

Because *The Silver Tree* is narrated by an omniscient third-person narrator, despite only hearing Diane's direct thoughts through her occasional conversations with other characters, descriptions of the island offered are always aligned with Diane's perspective and thus the dominant gaze of the British tourist. As a result, *The Silver Tree* highlights how the British touristic imaginary of Madeira as a place at this time was closely tied to an idealised and exoticised representation of Madeira as a natural paradise, with two references to the island as an "Eden" appearing in *The Silver Tree* (Britt 20, 109). These references appear, however, not from Diane's perspective but in the speech of Madeiran and American characters, suggesting that locals and other foreigners were also aware at this time of the historical narrative of the island as a garden paradise.

The garden paradise myth evoked through language and imagery in *The Silver Tree* has existed since classical antiquity (Bazenga, "Turismo e romance" 326). These idyllic descriptions of foreign lands were used in colonial accounts to encourage new colonial settlers (Hall and Tucker 9). Following the use of this myth for colonial expansion, travel writing emerging from 19th-century British health tourism to Madeira offers one of the earliest examples of the perpetuation of this myth for what Bazenga ("Turismo e romance" 326) refers to as tourist propaganda. The island paradise, imaged through early British tourist travel writing in Madeira (Langum 64), is a location represented as existing "outside the irreducible march of time" (Péron in Bazenga, "Turismo e romance" 325). In this way, Madeira has historically been promoted as an exotic escape for British tourists from the troubles of everyday life back home. In the post-1976 shift to increased British tourism to the island, the popular romance genre of the 20th century is a particularly effective literary genre for what Bazenga ("Language

Awareness" 33) refers to as "the diffusion of a stereotyped image of Madeira as a tourist paradise," existing outside of ordinary time. This is due to the genre's aim to serve an escapist function to readers (Pérez-Casal 61). In novels like Britt's, this function is achieved through the gaze of heroines like Diane, who physically escapes to another location for tourism and love.

The Silver Tree exemplifies this concept of the paradisiacal timeless escape, with Britt (75) describing the "timelessness" that "took complete hold" of Diane while exploring the island's capital of Funchal and, later, mentioning how Alonso's "immaculate appearance came from being in a place where time ceased to exist" (Britt 102). Britt (98, 99) also repeatedly compares the island's landscape to a "fairytale". At one point, Diane directly refers to the island as "another world" (Britt 50), a phrase repeated twice more in the novel (Britt 98, 99). This repetition of language and imagery, which work to represent the island and its people as timeless, establishes a distance between the British protagonist and her surroundings and suggests that the concept of 'time' on the island is vastly different from that in Britain. This is emphasised further by Britt's (153) reference to the island as an "unreality," one which Diane has escaped to and "intruded on" as a temporary guest. By imagining Madeira as otherworldly through these kinds of descriptions, *The Silver Tree* uses the Harlequin heroine's touristic gaze to perpetuate the long-held island paradise myth and mimic prejudiced colonial representations of foreign lands as immobile and therefore backward when compared to 'modern' Western states. This concept of modernity is "considered to be a product of the European Renaissance or the European Enlightenment" and was invented and sustained through colonial expansion (Maldonado-Torres 244). These representations were often used to justify the intervention in and exploitation of European colonies, with European powers claiming to be assisting in the modernisation of the colonised. This pattern is also visible in the attitudes of the British quasi-colony in Madeira, as discussed in Chapter One.

The reuse of old colonial representations in *The Silver Tree* to represent the island as an unmodernised timeless paradise works to reassert Britain's wavering superiority in the post-1976 moment. For example, these old representations are emphasised through descriptions of Diane's itineraries around the island as a tourist, with the narrator stating at one point in Diane's explorations, "To Diane it was a scene from another world where woodcutters still carried their bundles of wood home and people lived in fairytale surroundings untouched by modern civilization" (Britt 98). This idealisation of the island as "untouched by modern civilisation"

(Britt 98) is contradicted elsewhere in the novel, however, through descriptions of Funchal that suggest modern activities on the island, such as cafés and shops (Britt 11-12, 49), dentists (Britt 75) and the market where "There were cobblers, tinsmiths, joiners, wine stores, all small beehives of industry teeming with life and healthy vigour" (Britt 75). While descriptions like these suggest successful elements of "modern civilization" on the island through "healthy" and active local commerce, references to the "small" size of these "beehives of industry" still allude to a quaintness in these modern elements of Funchal from Diane's patronising British perspective.

Other than this example, Britt mostly chooses to emphasise the "fairytale" and unmodernised nature of the island through descriptions of rural homes and the prevalence of nature in *The Silver Tree*. This choice demonstrates Pérez-Gil's argument that in modern-day tourism, representations of tourist destinations as "untouched by modern civilization" (Britt 98) are used not only to attract tourists by offering them an escape from the potential troubles of modern life but also work to conceal "the hidden, neocolonial desire for everything to remain in its current underdeveloped state, as the "rural paradise" that tourists have discovered will vanish when economic progress makes its appearance" (Pérez-Gil, "Britannia's Daughters" 9). When considering the history of the involvement of the British in Madeiran tourism, these hidden desires already existed to a certain extent during the quasi-colonial period pre-1976 through claims that, although the British community held an economic monopoly in many spheres on the island, the power that came with this monopoly was used "selfishly", with the British "barring the way to a rise in local standards of living" (Gregory 122). The rise in popular romances like Britt's that market Madeira as an unmodernised "fairytale" island to potential visitors expose British attempts at reasserting these hidden desires through increased British tourism to the island post-1976.

A continued desire to keep Madeira in an eternal state of underdevelopment for the benefit of the escapism of the post-1976 British tourist is justified in novels like *The Silver Tree* through representations of the character of local people. Again, while these representations were already evident in 19th-century British travel writing, they are repurposed in the construction of the touristic imaginary of Maderia post-1976 as a reaction to Britain's loss of power on the island. For example, when describing the sunset over Funchal, Britt (44) writes that the town reminds one "of a place indifferent to change," perpetuating the narrative that the island and its people are intrinsically averse to modernisation and thus reasserting an imaginary

of the island as inferior when compared to the progress and "political and moral supremacy" of Britain (Pérez-Gil, "Britannia's Daughters" 8).

Ignorance and Fear of the Foreign

Representations of Madeira in *The Silver Tree* through Diane's British touristic gaze perpetuates the myth of the garden paradise fit for the British tourist's escape and therefore uses old imperialistic ideologies to attract more British tourists to Madeira for a reassertion of lost British power on the island through increased British involvement in its rapidly growing tourism industry post-1976. I argue, by closely examining Britt's descriptions of the island as a place in *The Silver Tree,* that the popular Harlequin Mills and Boon narrative at this time is one shaped by the British protagonist's ignorance and fear of the foreign as much as by her romanticisation of it. This brings to mind Bazenga's ("Turismo e romance" 326) description of representations of Madeira in Mills and Boon narratives as demonstrating Foucault's concept of a "heterotopia". As Fornet-Ponse (168) discusses, heterotopias are idealised yet real places that can be visited, unlike utopias, which are simply imagined. Foucault (in Fornet-Ponse 164) describes heterotopias as "disturbing" given that they exist in reality but are vastly different spaces to what the individual occupying them is used to. This disturbance is visible in *The Silver Tree* through Diane's feeling that although the island is a fairytale-like "Garden of Eden" (Britt 20), there is equally an "element of danger in it" (Britt 75).

This danger is created not only through the use of language and imagery that exoticises and idealises the island as a place, thus representing it as vastly different from Britain but also through Britt's positioning of these descriptions of Madeira within the overall narrative. For example, while driving along the winding roads of Funchal, Alonso asks Diane probing questions regarding her thoughts on topics such as marriage. The questions Alonso asks, such as, "Do you think that money and position are essential in marriage, Miss McNair?" (Britt 37), are described as "mocking", which makes Diane uncomfortable, causing her to laugh at first, before stiffening as she defensively answers his questions (Britt 38). In the middle of their tense conversation, Britt (37-38) breaks up the direct speech by writing, "He twisted the car round a bend and Diane found herself gazing out on silvery green sugar cane and banana plantations with the terra-cotta roofs of white and yellow cottages a flicker of flame in the greenery." By including a description of Diane's "gazing out" at the greenery in this part of the text, Britt

offers a moment of relief for both Diane and the reader from this intense conversation with Alonso. This demonstrates how a romanticised imaginary of Madeira's natural landscape also serves to allow Diane, representing the British tourist, to escape from the discomfort of her position as an outsider on the island and in Alonso's family's lives.

This is captured once again when Britt (25-26) writes,

> Amid the glory of exotic blooms with the air sweet with the scent of eucalyptus and pine … The view took her breath away, the lovely bay of Funchal … the sweeping miles of beaches of warm pebbles washed by the frothy white breakers of a gentle sea. What a lovely place it was, she thought wistfully, knowing that she could have spent a wonderful holiday here under different circumstances.

Diane's exoticisation of the island is reflected in great detail through descriptions using various senses, such as the "sweet" scent of the island's "exotic blooms" and romanticised imagery of "frothy white breakers of a gentle sea." As the final line suggests, however, this idealisation is underpinned by a wistful longing to, like most other tourists or visitors, enjoy the island for this beauty alone, without the "circumstances" of being involved in the affairs of the local community. These "circumstances" detract from what would otherwise be a "wonderful holiday" for the British tourist, ignorant of local affairs and simply visiting in response to the allure of the garden paradise myth and the island's "idealized geography" (Pérez-Gil, "Britannia's Daughters" 12). In this way, Britt's novel highlights how tourism, like that of the British to Madeira post-1976, reveals what Crick (in Hall and Tucker 5) describes as "the hedonistic face of neocolonialism."

Other than highlighting how post-1976 tourism in Madeira operated as British neocolonial pleasure-seeking for the privileged and elite (Mura and Bouchon 1265), these two extracts from *The Silver Tree* also demonstrate Foucault's heterotopia and how descriptions of Madeira in Britt's novel, while representing the island in an idyllic light, are always underpinned by what Hogan (18) calls a "paranoia" towards the foreign. This paranoia appears in colonial accounts to assert a sense of superiority over the colonised (Hogan 18) and, as previously discussed, is also present in 19th-century accounts of British tourism to the island. The rise in British popular romances set on the island post-1976 demonstrates the reuse of this theme of "paranoia" (Hogan 18) through the Harlequin heroine's sceptical and sometimes outwardly fearful gaze

that works to represent the island as inferior to the familiarity of Britain. For example, in the scene in Alonso's car, the descriptions of his driving around the bending roads of Funchal suggest that the mountainous landscape of the island is dangerous to the British protagonist's safety. This idea is echoed elsewhere in the novel when Britt (50) describes the landscape of Madeira from Diane's perspective as a "wild rugged country of mountain gorges and high spiky crags" or later refers to the "the roar of mountain torrents" (Britt 130) and "the glittering jagged edges of the mountains piercing the blue skies" (Britt 167). These images of Madeira's natural landscape are constructed by combining words that are contradictory in tone, such as "glittering" next to "jagged" (Britt 167), the former suggesting light and beauty and the latter suggesting sharpness and danger. These words are further juxtaposed with abundant descriptions of the otherwise harmless and visually appealing elements of the island's landscape, such as trees and flowers. These juxtapositions create an unsettling tone in the text and work to highlight Diane's discomfort as an outsider on the island. At times, they even explicitly mirror her cultural isolation from those around her, such as when Britt once again describes Madeira as a "rugged country" and compares this to Alonso, stating that both are "just as difficult to know" (Britt 72) given their foreignness to Diane.

The extract quoted from the car scene also demonstrates how the island's natural beauty is not only represented in both a romanticised and dangerous light within itself but is also juxtaposed with signs of the local community, with Britt describing the houses of locals, "with the terra-cotta roofs of white and yellow cottages," as "a flicker of flame in the greenery" (Britt 38). By comparing the colour of the houses with a flame, connotating danger amidst what Diane perceives as the otherwise tranquil landscape, a danger that risks destroying the greenery and its beauty, similar to Diane's disdain towards how the "circumstances" she finds herself in with the de Valmardi family detracts from what she believes would otherwise be a "wonderful holiday" (Britt 26), Britt uses the heroine's touristic gaze to represent not only the island but also its people as threatening to the British tourist's idyllic escape. This threat is always at least subtly present in Britt's descriptions of the island through Diane's gaze, once again reflecting a perpetuation of colonial attitudes, which consisted of both "fetishism" and "paranoia" towards foreign lands and peoples (Hogan 18). As discussed in Chapter One, this two-fold representation has existed in British literature and accounts throughout history to represent Madeira as well as Portugal and Southern Europe as a whole, with examples of Victorian-era poetry and health tourists' accounts of travel once again offering examples of this in the Madeiran context. By relying again on this old quasi-colonial narrative of Madeira and its

people as dangerous and threatening to British settlers and tourists, the touristic imaginary of Madeira post-1976, as demonstrated by Diane's gaze in *The Silver Tree,* attempts to reassert Britain's superiority over the island and its people, working to warn to the British reader or tourist of the potential dangers of a visit to Madeira due to the unstable position of the British on the island at this time.

The Glorification of Britain's Quasi-Colonial Past

Not only does the Harlequin heroine's touristic gaze reveal how ignorance and fear of Madeira and its people contribute to the reassertion of British superiority over the island post-1976, but Diane's movements around the island and positionality within the various spaces on the island also reveal how the British touristic imaginary of Madeira at this time relied on a glorification of Briain's quasi-colonial past. For example, in the long extracts quoted above, Britt chooses to include very specific elements of the island's natural landscape in Diane's idealised descriptions of it, namely sugar cane, banana plantations (Britt 37), eucalyptus, and pine (Britt 25). Given the historical importance of sugar cane and bananas in British quasi-colonial trade in Madeira as well as the belief that eucalyptus and pine, in particular, were two of many plants brought to the island "as a result of the efforts of other English men and women" (Desmond 106), Britt's choice to use these plants as markers of the island's beauty amidst the dangers lurking alongside them, demonstrates how British tourism at this time to the island was encouraged by the knowledge and glorification of the fading legacy post-1976 of Britain's quasi-colonial history in Madeira.

This is demonstrated in *The Silver Tree* not only by frequent and more explicit references to this history, such as those discussed in the opening chapter, but also by Diane's movements around the island and comfort within specific spaces. These movements and Britt's deliberate selection of which locations are included or not included in the plot and in what light they are represented based on Diane's positionality within them add to a very specific representation of the island. I argue that this representation further perpetuates a glorification of Britain's quasi-colonial past in Madeira, thus utilising the touristic itineraries of the Harlequin heroine to reassert British superiority. For example, throughout the novel, Diane remains largely in Funchal, the island's capital and hub of tourist activity from early 19th-century tourism up until the present day, given its connection to the island's central port, thus making it the stop for

cruise ships, booming at the time of Britt's publication of *The Silver Tree* (Gouveia and Eusebio 424, and its high frequency of hotels (Vieira 149). For example, in the novel, Alonso remarks that Funchal is "the main target for holidaymakers," a statement that serves to justify Britt's lack of knowledge of the island's other towns (Britt 41). Therefore, even though Diane is invited and stays in the family home of a local friend, she remains largely in the tourist bubble of Funchal. Her limited insights into local living are through the wealthy De Valmardi family, half-American, half-Madeiran, living on a large estate in the mountains above the capital city, like the estates of the island's British quasi-colonisers. The Quinta de Valmardi is the most prominent location in the novel, with its garden filled with greenery brought over by British and other foreign settlers, further adding to a narrative of the historical superiority of the British on the island.

Britt's narrative and, therefore, her touristic imaginary of the island is largely confined to this multi-cultural upper-class perspective, one which certainly existed on the island at this time given the historical involvement and settlement of traders and business makers from countries across Europe as well as the United States in the centuries leading up to the island's autonomy in 1976. Despite this, Diane does visit a few other towns and locations, highlighting which areas were of the most interest to British tourists at this time. For example, on a day out with Dwight Rogan, Diane visits the Monte, still in Funchal but higher up in the mountains. In the Monte, she enjoys the "famous toboggan run over the cobbles," an activity that, although "loved" by Diane, is unsurprisingly described, given what has already been discussed, as "hazardous" (Britt 49). This tourist activity is attributed to a British wine trader who is said to have invented the wicker toboggan to assist the wealthy community of the Monte to efficiently descend into Funchal when needed (Britt 93). Diane then goes to the "charming village" of Santana, with Britt writing, "Diane was enchanted with Santana and loved the quaint thatched-roofed houses looking like something out of a Hans Andersen story" (Britt 50). Once again, Diane's experience of the island and thus Britt's representation of it is filtered through romanticised descriptions that represent it as something out of a "story" or fairytale.

Finally, Diane visits "the little fishing town of Machico" with Alonso, the same town believed to be named after the British legend of Machin, setting up Britt's retelling of the legend through the direct speech of Alonso at Diane's eager request. Similarly to the use of the word "quaint" to describe the houses of Santana, Machico is described in diminutive form, despite being the second largest town on the island, revealing Britt's subtle use of language to

represent Madeira as inferior and insignificant in the eyes of the British tourist. On their way to Machico, the area of Santo de Serra is mentioned. The only description given of this area is of the golf course that occupies it, which, designed by a British golf architect, is another marker of wealthy society and British tourist leisure (Britt 97). The only activity Diane engages in in Machico is having English tea with Alonso, who tells the protagonist, "In Machico it is possible to enjoy a cup of English tea. The tea rooms are always visited by English tourists who welcome a cup of their favourite brew after a long and dusty drive" (Britt 97).

The English-invented toboggans in the Monte, "quaint" local houses surrounded once again by plants brought to the island by the English in Santana, a tourist golf course in Santo de Serra, and an English tearoom in Machico are the main sights and activities Diane engages with outside of Funchal. Therefore, Britt's novel suggests that the British tourist's imaginary of Madeira at this time is one almost completely devoid of local culture and history. The overall erasure of the local in *The Silver Tree* highlights the ignorance of British tourists at this time, revealing the selfish neocolonial aims of the increase in British tourism to the island post-1976. Even when Britt occasionally mentions aspects of local culture, like fado music, she writes that the fados are sung "eloquently and romantically, filling the air with old Portuguese magic that still persisted on the island" (Britt 132). Similarly to representations of the island's landscape, Britt relies here on a magical or otherworldly representation of Madeiran culture, one that banishes local traditions to the "old" and therefore suggests a backwardness that is amusing to the British tourist seeking escape from what is alluded to as the more modern cultural practices of Britain.

In the novel, Diane also visits a fountain with the carvings of what Alonso explains as the names of "sailors and adventurers" from the 18th century (Britt 98). This further suggests that Madeira only exists within the confines of its British history, thus glorifying this history. By describing Diane as tracing "the names cut into the stone around the fountain with loving fingers" (Britt 98), Britt highlights Diane's comfort in the presence of this memorial of British quasi-colonialism on the island. This comfort is emphasised as Diane says, "It does give me a warm feeling to know that some were British" (Britt 98). Through this moment in the novel, Britt solidifies that the British touristic imaginary of Madeira in the early post-autonomy years is one defined by nostalgia for what is believed to have been a glorious bygone era of British superiority on the island. This belief is perpetuated through continued assertions in *The Silver Tree* of the inferiority of local people and culture to that of the British quasi-colony, replaced

post-1976 by the British tourist. Through romanticised descriptions of the island's landscapes that perpetuate the long-held island paradise myth, often coupled with a tone of fear towards the foreignness of the island and its people and the threat this poses to the British tourist's escape, as well as through the influence of quasi-colonial British history on the island in British tourists' activities and interests, *The Silver Tree* serves as an example of the dominant fictional imaginary of the Madeira at this time in history, an imaginary created and sustained through the touristic gaze of the Harlequin heroine.

Chapter Three: Representing and Engaging with the Madeiran "Other"

In *The Silver Tree,* not only are Diane's itineraries, and thus Britt's descriptions of Madeira through Diane's touristic gaze, overly concerned with the island's historical British connection and exclusionary of local culture and history, but Diane's interactions with Madeiran characters also lack a complete and meaningful engagement with the lives of the island's local people. For example, Diane's involvement with the Madeiran community is often objectifying, with descriptions like those of her natural surroundings, as discussed in Chapter Two, working to exoticise and therefore other the island's lower- and working-class majority, banishing them to the periphery and turning them into a backdrop for the Harlequin heroine's adventures. While an analysis of descriptions of local people's physical appearance and personality through Diane's gaze is vital in unpacking the post-1976 literary imaginary of Madeira, what sets a Harlequin Mills and Boon romance like Britt's apart from pre-1976 British quasi-colonial imaginaries of the island lie in the genre's fictional nature as well as its various tropes and conventions. These new literary elements allow British romance authors like Britt to give voice to Madeiran people in their imaginaries while continuing to perpetuate a one-dimensional stereotyping of these people based on old beliefs regarding Portuguese or Southern European character. In doing so, through the use of the Harlequin Mills and Boon genre to imagine Madeira post-1976, a genre that appeals to potential tourists looking for an island escape, these authors, as Ashcroft (96) discusses concerning the power embedded in colonial narratives, seize the main "means of interpretation and communication," to regain a sense of authority and control lost following the decline of the British quasi-colony.

This assumption of British control through fictional imaginaries post-1976 is demonstrated in *The Silver Tree* through Britt's use of character archetypes that fans of the genre have come to rely on for its escapist value. In this chapter, I will therefore be analysing Britt's characterisation and representation of specific Madeiran characters, namely Sofia, who represents the island's lower- or working-class; Bella Vangroot, who represents the Madeiran upper class and the archetype of the "other woman"; and Maria and Alonso de Valmardi, who represent the island's multi-cultural upper class, with Alonso also encompassing the archetype of the foreign alpha male hero. In doing so, I aim to demonstrate how Harlequin Mills and Boon romances set in Madeira post-1976 relied on the genre's ability to couple old quasi-colonial trends in representation with new popular literary trends, working to imagine the island through cultural differences between the British Harlequin heroine/tourist and the Madeiran

Other. This chapter will also demonstrate how Harlequin authors like Britt, through their touristic heroine, cast judgement on what is represented as the failures of Madeiran culture, values, and beliefs when compared to that of the British, allowing for othering of local people that, alongside an exoticisation of the island as a place, facilitates a reassertion of British superiority amid post-colonial anxieties.

Local Bodies on the Periphery: Sofia and the "Country People"

In *The Silver Tree,* Diane stays with the wealthy, multi-cultural, educated, and multi-lingual de Valmardi family during her visit to Madeira, and, as a result, her interactions with Madeiran locals and, therefore, Britt's overall representation of Madeiran people, are mostly limited to this upper-class and/or anglicised sub-group of the local community. Britt's narrative is, therefore, largely ignorant of the island's local majority, who lived vastly different lives to those like the de Valmardi family and their wealthy friends. For example, scholar Valter Nuno Brito Martins (205) describes the realities of life on the island for the Madeiran majority until the 1980s as follows:

> The living and social conditions of most Madeirans were modest and precarious. Their houses were humble while access to education and health care was inadequate, as was nutrition, which led to a population that was illiterate, uneducated, and unhealthy.

Diane's limited engagement with these realities, given her accommodation in the de Valmardi's grand estate above the island's capital, can be read as a reflection of the sheltered experience of British tourists visiting Madeira in the late 1970s as they mostly stayed in grand hotels in Funchal, and, like Diane, were attracted to the island for its natural beauty and British history. Britt's descriptions of the island's "poorer" (Britt 98) or "country" people (Britt 38) from Diane's gaze further reveal how the poor social conditions of the island's majority are reduced to a romanticised part of the island's fairytale appeal in literary imaginaries of Madeira at this time. This is likely because, as Muir (70) writes about non-fiction accounts of the island's poverty throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, "The stark reality of these accounts would do little to attract tourists."

The tendency towards romanticisation of fiction set on the island is demonstrated in instances such as Diane's visit to the countryside, where she sees locals outside of the capital living in "thatched cabins with half-timbered walls instead of the colour-washed walls and shuttered windows of the rich" (Britt 98). While descriptions such as this highlight the clear wealth gap between Diane's friends and the local majority, instead of acknowledging the negative effects of such inequalities on local lives, Britt romanticises this description of inadequate living conditions in the rural areas of the island by describing how these "poorer people" "had their meals outdoors, against the colourful landscapes of begonias, geraniums, passion flowers, huge dahlias, bougainvillea and hydrangeas" (Britt 98). Britt, therefore, makes the impoverished lifestyle of locals appealing to the reader through the repeated use of the island's natural beauty as a tool for the exoticisation of not only the island itself but also the lives of its local people. This demonstrates a common trend in Harlequin Mills and Boon Southern European/island romances, in which Pérez-Gil ("Britannia's Daughters" 9) notes, "The pastoral descriptions of the landscape are sometimes linked with the social and economic underdevelopment of the people, who nevertheless seem to live content with their lot."

The romanticisation of local social and economic underdevelopment in *The Silver Tree*, which aids the escapist appeal of the Harlequin heroine's romantic adventure for the novel's British target audience, extends into Britt's descriptions of the behaviours of local people who Diane views from afar and rarely interacts with on her holiday. For example, when Diane is in Funchal, locals are described as "wending their way to and from the market with a leisurely gait" (Britt 38), suggesting ease in their daily lives. Britt also describes locals as displaying "contentment and happiness in the hard work that was so essential to their livelihood and wellbeing" (Britt 72). Assumptions like these about the local majority's "contentment" and even enjoyment despite the "hard work" they have to undertake for their survival echo Pérez-Gil's ("Britannia's Daughters" 9) point that idealised descriptions are often used in Southern European/island romances to conceal the need to sustain an imaginary of popular tourist locations like Madeira as a paradise that exists outside of ordinary time and economic and social development. This works to satisfy tourists' escapist desires, which, in the case of Madeira, was essential post-1976 as a tool for encouraging British tourists to visit the island and, therefore, allowing the British to continue trying to reclaim economic and social power through the tourism industry.

By examining Britt's descriptions of Madeiran people's physical features in *The Silver Tree,* we can also see how representations of the local majority in the novel not only romanticise the poor living conditions on the island and the strenuous lives of locals as tourist propaganda but also exoticise local bodies, placing Diane, as a stand-in for the British tourist, in a position of superiority over the Madeiran Other. For example, when Diane is in Funchal, Britt describes the local women she sees by writing:

> The women mostly wore black … But if the colour was drab and more like a uniform, the women's faces were not. They had a kind of gypsy look about them which reminded one of the passionate Moors. Something primitive, even fiery, seemed to lurk behind their black eloquent eyes ... All their movements were beautiful, sensuous and graceful (Britt 39).

This extract has a similar effect to descriptions of the island's landscape discussed in Chapter Two. For example, although deliberately noting a contrast between the "drab" look of local women's black garments and their "faces" as well as describing their movements as "beautiful, sensuous and graceful" suggests that Diane admires the physical appearance of the local women, a sentiment echoed elsewhere in the novel when Diane tells Alonso that the girls who sell flowers in the market are "like flowers themselves" (Britt 101), there is also an underlying unsettling tone in these descriptions.

This is aided by Britt's use of historically loaded imagery of the women's "gypsy look," comparing them to "passionate Moors," and describing a "fiery" unidentifiable "something" that lurks behind their eyes (Britt 39). These descriptions firstly allude to the women's darker features and complexions through the use of the word "gypsy", which is considered a derogatory slur towards the Romani community, a group originating in South Asia and now found mostly in Europe ("Gypsy") and reference to the "Moors", referring to North African Muslims with a history in Spain and Portugal and a very specific, often ignored, history on the island itself through sugar cane plantation slavery (Vieira 9). Words like "passionate" and "fiery" secondly also hold connotations of a dark, mysterious, and explosive character, which, when coupled with the word "primitive," suggesting backwardness, perpetuates a stereotyped image of the Portuguese seen in earlier travel writing and poetry as discussed in Chapter One. This ethnic and subtly racialised othering of Madeiran people in *The Silver Tree* is further aided

by frequent references to Madeiran characters' dark features or tanned skin, which is starkly contrasted to descriptions of Diane's own "delicate" and "pale" features (Britt 47).

When Diane does interact with the island's lower- or working-class community, these differences between Diane and the islanders are solidified through Britt's characterisation of those a part of this community and their narrative voice in the text. For example, Sofia, the de Valmardi's maid in charge of caring for Diane during her visit to their home, is one of the few exceptions to the overall silencing of the local majority in *The Silver Tree* that objectifies these individuals and reduces them to stereotyped props in the background of the heroine's tourist adventures. Diane's opinions and descriptions of Sofia, as well as Britt's writing of Sofia's dialogue, however, still serve to create a British imaginary of the Madeiran lower class as subservient to the British tourist, going out of their way, despite cultural and linguistic differences, to make the tourists' stay on the island pleasurable. Therefore, lower-class characters like Sofia do not threaten British tourists in any significant way, further encouraging the novel's readers to potentially visit the island. For example, Sofia is represented as putting Diane "instantly at her ease" because although her English is described as "limited," Britt writes that "smiles, nods of the head, and good manners worked wonders when the tongue failed to express" (Britt 22).

Britt continues to build Sofia as a polite and attentive character by giving her direct speech in the text, unlike any other lower-class characters. In doing so for the British reader, however, Britt contradicts the earlier statement that Sofia's English is limited. She writes full English sentences for Sofia's speech, therefore undermining the authenticity of Sofia's character and breaking the illusion of the narrative, reminding the reader that Sofia is a fabricated representation of lower-class Madeirans. She also reminds the reader that this fabrication is created by a British author, who, similarly to her British protagonist and therefore the British tourist, has likely had little meaningful engagement with the island's real local community. For example, in describing an interaction between Sofia and Diane, Britt writes:

> "The senhorita has beautiful hair,' murmured Sofia gently … brushing the gleaming curls. 'It is like the sun when it rises in the morning, and will become even more beautiful after washing regularly in our fresh spring water' … 'Your skin, I think, needs little adornment. It has the delicate bloom of a freshly opened rose. I see many Englishwomen

> visitors and most of them cover their faces up with too much make-up. You have a natural look'"

These lines demonstrate how Sofia speaks fluently and "sincerely" despite Britt's continued reference to how the linguistic differences between her and Diane make it difficult for them to communicate further than nods of understanding. Dialogue like this in the novel creates a false imaginary of all Madeirans as able to communicate in English, thus justifying British tourists like Diane in their lack of effort to adapt to the local language and placing English as a superior language over Portuguese. This interaction between Diane and Sofia also highlights the use of English as a lingua franca on the island, especially in the tourism industry (Leuckert, Neumaie, and Yurchenko 2), thus working to further emphasis the history of the British in Madeira and their influence both pre- and post-1976.

Sofia's only significant narrative role in the plot consists of her complimenting Diane's "beautiful hair" as well as her "delicate", fresh, and "natural" complexion, using imagery that compares her skin to "the delicate bloom of a freshly opened rose", which starkly contrasts later descriptions of Sofia as "dark, brown, and smiling" (Britt 44). In this way, through Diane's touristic gaze, Sofia, who comes to represent the voice of the island's working class, is used by Britt to reinforce the idea that Diane's physical appearance is not only different from those around her but is superior. Sofia therefore exemplifies the subservient lower-class local Madeiran, who, like those Diane observes in the countryside and at the market, "happily" does Diane's laundry, cares for her when she is ill, and helps her dress for fancy dinners (Britt 44). Even when Diane returns the favour by complimenting Sofia's hard work, Sofia is represented as "pleased that she had brought pleasure to the English Miss," with the use of her formal address towards Diane further highlighting her subservience to the superior "English Miss" (Britt 44). Her character, therefore, like exotic and romanticised descriptions of the island's natural landscape and the local majority, works to perpetuate a narrative of British superiority and thus operates as propaganda for British tourists.

"Othered" Women: Bella and Maria

Despite *The Silver Tree's* hints at a dark and threatening element to Diane's time on the island through descriptions of "jagged" mountains (Britt 167) and "fiery" locals (Britt 39), the

instability of the British position in Madeira post-1976 and attempts at reasserting superiority through the popular romance genre is more overtly visible in an analysis of Britt's representation and characterisation of the island's upper-class. As mentioned, the voice of Sofia as a lower-class Madeiran character in *The Silver Tree* is a rarity. The Madeiran characters who are represented the most through Britt's writing and use of narrative voice are instead those of the upper class. These characters are mostly anglicised, either through familial ties to England or the United States or through an English education, once again highlighting the historical influence of the British over the island. As a result, Britt's upper-class characters speak English "faultlessly" (Britt 45), making Britt's English-language text more accessible to the British reader. As discussed, the lower class, who are represented as completely removed from Diane's ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and lived experiences, do not threaten Diane as a British tourist to the island but only illuminate her difference from the local majority, which ultimately works to place Diane in a position of superiority over them. In contrast, the upper-class characters and their ability to dip into Diane's world through their linguistic abilities and knowledge of British culture and exploitative history on the island more obviously pose a threat to the British Harlequin heroine or tourist. In attempting to neutralise this threat that reflects the anxieties of the British in Madeira at this time, authors like Britt utilise various character tropes of the popular romance genre to represent these characters as morally inferior to the British protagonist.

Bella Vangroot, the Madeiran woman who is a distant cousin to the de Valmardi family and is interested in marrying Alonso, assumingly to retain her upper-class status following the death of her parents, perfectly encapsulates this threat. Bella exemplifies Vera-Cazorla's (17) statement that antagonistic characters in Southern European/island Harlequin Mills and Boon romances like *The Silver Tree* "are characterized more like a national stereotype than a real person." The female antagonist, "who competes with the protagonist for the love of the hero," is stereotyped as "dark, attractive, exotic, and arrogant … everything that the shy English rose is not" (Vera-Cazorla 17). Through Bella's direct cultural and physical opposition to Diane, as well as her equal interest in Alonso, Bella encapsulates what Dixon (93) discusses as the character of the "other woman" in Mills and Boon narratives. Given Bella's desire to marry Alonso for money and status, when compared to Diane's love for Alonso, that holds no ulterior motives, Bella more specifically fits the "other woman" figure of 1970s and '80s Harlequins. As Dixon (161) argues, these Harlequins "deliberately deny that good marriages are founded on an economic basis."

Dixon notes that, when present in these novels, the "other woman" is often represented as "a foil for the heroine" and "depicts aspects of femininity the heroine must incorporate in order to become fully female." Bella is a foil of Diane from the moment she first meets the British protagonist, as Britt (13) writes, "Diane's smile was in marked contrast to the stilted acknowledgement of Bella, who languidly offered a black-gloved hand. Her dark eyes hovered for some time in the bright copper hair as if caught in its gleam before she nodded graciously." Not only are Bella's "dark" features, mentioned repeatedly throughout the novel, and placed in stark contrast to Diane's gleaming "bright copper hair", setting the two apart physically, but their physical differences are accompanied by their differences in character. Diane is described as warm and open through her smile and Bella as "stilted", the languid movement of her "black-gloved hand" alluding to her hesitation towards Diane's presence and her hovering eyes suggesting her jealousy of Diane's markedly English looks. Their contrasting personalities, which distinguishes a character like Bella from a character like Sofia, are emphasised through the comments of other characters, such as when Maria says to Diane, "You are so lovely and she (Bella) is so hard and calculating." Therefore, in *The Silver Tree,* Diane, a stand-in for the British tourist, comes to represent goodness, while Bella, the upper-class Madeiran woman, encompasses a metaphorically dark alternative.

As discussed, this metaphorical darkness that lurks behind surface-level descriptions of local beauty and grace, such as that of Bella's nod of acknowledgment mentioned above, reappears throughout the novel in descriptions of the island and its people from Diane's British touristic gaze. In using this same colonial trope of darkness to characterise Bella, Britt makes Bella the "other woman" in two interconnected senses of the term. She is not only othered from Diane in her competition for Alonso as per the romance genre archetype she fits, but she is also othered by her *Madeiranness*. The construction of *Madeiranness* in literary imaginaries of the island works to reassert British superiority through the dissemination of a carefully constructed and stereotyped narrative of the Madeiran Other. As explained thus far, *Madeiranness* in *The Silver Tree* describes consists of references to local's dark features and romanticised hard-working and humble personalities. Representations of upper-class characters like Bella, however, demonstrate the "questionable" (Britt 152) moral character that ultimately comes to define *Madeiranness* in Britt's narrative.

This brings my argument back to Dixon's (93) statement that the character of the "other woman" in popular romances is not only a "foil" of the British protagonist but also "depicts aspects of femininity the heroine must incorporate in order to become fully female." The aspects of femininity that Bella possesses over Diane in *The Silver Tree* are aspects of an extremely patriarchal construction of femininity. This patriarchal femininity is appealing to Madeiran men like Alonso, making Diane believe that he and Bella are better suited than he and herself. Diane is against this kind of restrictive femininity, given the historical context of the novel and the rise in the second wave of feminism in the West, which "was forcing British men to rethink their masculinity and adjust to women's demands for equality and liberation" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 2). For example, in a heated conversation with Diane, Bella states "ominously," "Your insolence is only what I can expect. I know of your free and easy ways in England, but we do not tolerate them here" (Britt 152). Through Diane's defiant and argumentative response, as she states, "There is nothing wrong in being free and easy providing one does nothing wrong … Incidentally, I much prefer my own free and easy way to your rather questionable ones," Britt makes a moral statement against what is represented as the island's restrictive patriarchal order. Diane's defiance demonstrates how 1970s Southern European/island Harlequin Mills and Boon romances often portray "exotic" foreign locations like Maderia as "inferior in terms of gender roles and social conventions" (Pérez-Gil, "Britannia's Daughters" 9), with the "traditionalism" of the foreign culture as directly contrasting to "the modernity of England" (Pérez-Gil, "Britannia's Daughters" 9). This modernity is emphasised through Britt's repetition of words like "free" and "easy," which are used to allude to the growing support of women's "freedom to choose" in Western feminist circles of the 1970s (Baxandall and Gordan 14), and thus works, in the context of the British in Madeira, to perpetuate an imaginary of the island as backward, thus reasserting British social superiority over it.

The Silver Tree, therefore, suggests conflict between Portuguese Madeiran and British values regarding gender roles, which works to encourage British tourism to the island by suggesting that the British female reader can assist as a moral guide to the old-fashioned and backward local population should she choose to visit. This narrative of the British tourist as a saviour to local people is common in the Southern European/island Mills and Boon narrative and is emphasised in *The Silver Tree* through Diane's relationship with Alonso, which will be discussed in greater detail later. For now, however, it is essential to highlight the other ways in which Britt uses trends in the popular romance genre to build the narrative of Diane's "superior

qualities" (Pérez-Gil, "Britannia's Daughters" 11) over the island's local community through her interactions with and Britt's characterisation of Madeiran women. For example, Diane repeatedly chooses to react with magnanimity to Bella's "almost tangible hostility" (Britt 14), such as when she approves, although reluctantly, of Bella's potential marriage to Alonso if it "would make him happy" (Britt 87) or when she admits "I'm as jealous of Bella as she is of me" (Britt 91), while Bella denies being jealous of Diane. Diane's choice to speak defiantly and honestly against the "odious" (Britt 25, 45, 63), "hard" (Britt 65), spiteful, and jealous (Britt 90) "other woman" when challenged by her, such as when Diane openly questions Bella as to her "uncalled-for" "remarks" (Britt 90) and her "offensive" behaviour (Britt 151), further demonstrates how the British protagonist is represented as morally superior to the Madeiran Other.

Maria, Alonso's younger sister, although vastly different from Bella, is another upper-class Madeiran woman used by Britt to assert the British protagonist's superiority. Representations of Maria in *The Silver Tree* suggest that she admires the same "free and easy ways in England" that Bella disapproves of. For example, when Maria talks to Diane about marriage, she says:

> Because you are English and free to do as you please, even to choosing a husband for yourself' … 'And that is what I want, to be free to accept or not. Do you not see? I want to be like you' (Britt 67).

Maria's desire to be like Diane, the epitome of the "free" English woman, forms a main point of conflict in the novel, with Alonso accusing Diane's correspondence with Maria over the years as influencing her to reject the Madeiran Portuguese patriarchal order in which Alonso is at liberty to choose a suitable husband for his younger sister. Instead of accepting this patriarchal order, Maria says things like, "I am going to teach my brother that he cannot order me around and have things all his own way" (Britt 65). Her defiance is used by Britt to highlight "the status of women" in Madeira, which alludes to, when compared to this status in Britain, "the patriarchal stasis of southern Europe" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 2).

Alonso discredits Maria's defiance of his patriarchal control by referring to her refusal to follow his orders as a consequence of "her sheltered life" that has led her to be "young at heart and a little naïve" (Britt 30). This belittling of Maria's ability to think critically is perpetuated through Diane's treatment of her friend as Diane addresses Maria throughout the novel in a

pitiful and belittling tone, often using the word "little" to describe Maria's physical features (Britt 67, 77, 118) and at one point calling Maria her "little friend" (Britt 118). Diane encourages Maria to marry the man she feels she is being forced to and agrees with Alonso's remark about his sister's "naivete" (Britt 29, 111). Therefore, Diane's caution in convincing Maria to challenge the patriarchal order, when coupled with her references to Maria in this belittling tone, highlights that despite their friendship and Maria's closeness to Diane in comparison to Bella, a friendship aided by Maria's half-American genetics and her admiration of Diane's British ways, Diane does no regard Maria with the same level of respect as fully anglicised characters in the novel. Instead, Diane still treats Maria as holding an element of *Madeiranness* through her naivety, allowing Britt to represent Diane as morally superior to her "little friend" (Britt 118) and thus further solidifying a continual othering of Madeiran people in *The Silver Tree.*

Madeiran Masculinity and the Harlequin Alpha Hero: Alonso

Similarly to representations of Bella as the "other woman" in *The Silver Tree,* Britt utilises the popular romance trope of the foreign hero, made popular in 1960s to '80s Harlequins (Dixon 63), through the character of Alonso de Valmardi, Diane's Madeiran love interest. This foreign hero is used as a tool for the perpetuation of old colonial stereotypes that further other Madeiran people and culture, continuing a narrative of British superiority. In *The Silver Tree,* Alonso represents the Madeiran version of popular 1960s and '70s Spanish heroes in Harlequin Mills and Boon Southern European/island romances, who "present a typically stereotyped image of exotically dark, virile masculinity" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 2). This is achieved through "frequent references to his dark hair, black eyes, and olive skin" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 7), as well as through the narrative voice given to his character. Firstly, Alonso is exoticised in the novel through comments about his sometimes "disturbing" "dark" physical features (Britt 177). This exoticisation is heightened by Diane's comparison between Alonso and the island itself when Britt (72) writes:

> This was Madeira, an island thirty-eight miles long and fifteen miles wide with a craggy backbone of mountains running from east to west. From these, glens cleaved their way down to the shores. A rugged country sufficient unto itself, like Alonso, and just as difficult to know.

By linking Diane's touristic gaze over the island to her gaze over Alonso, he becomes likened to an unknown land waiting for the tourist's exploration, with words like "rugged" adding to potentially erotic connotations that appear frequently in Southern European/island Harlequins (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 7). Through the eroticisation and exoticisation of Alonso, these descriptions and comparisons also work to "accentuate the cultural and ethnic differences that separate him from the heroine, whose English rose complexion and clear eyes are a national marker or metonymy of her Englishness" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 7). This can be seen elsewhere in *The Silver Tree* through frequent references to Diane's paleness and copper-coloured hair, which, as discussed, set her apart from the island's local women.

Diane's physical features are often mentioned in relation to Alonso's own eroticising gaze towards her, attributing the "virile masculinity" of the Latin hero to his character (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 2). His "dark gaze" (Britt 61, 69) in the novel is described as making Diane feel "very conscious of herself as a woman" (Britt 13). This reveals how, alongside the allure of his exotic looks, his exoticisation, like that of Madeiran characters discussed, also poses a threat to Diane's comfort. Despite his multi-cultural identity, given his American mother and English schooling, which makes him a typical Harlequin Southern European/island romance hero who completes the British woman's "fantasy" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 8), Britt represents the threat Alonso poses to Diane as directly linked to his *Madeiranness*, displayed through his patriarchal beliefs. These beliefs manifest in Britt's representations of his toxic masculinity, which, once again, demonstrates *The Silver Tre's* alignment with popular romance trends, such as that of the "alpha male" heroes in 1690s to 1980s Harlequins (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 2).

The alpha male archetype is not only "dark and attractive" but "condescending" to the British female visitor (Vera-Cazorla 10) or "cruel" and "sexually aggressive" (Dixon 63). Alonso is never sexually aggressive towards Diane but does occasionally display physical aggression towards her, such as when he grabs her wrist and refuses to let go despite her pleas (Britt 33). While moments like this are few in the novel, Alonso's condescension towards Diane abounds in *The Silver Tree,* with Britt repeatedly referring to his gestures and tone as sardonic, the cruelty of which is offensive to Diane, who refers to him as a "sardonic brute!" (Britt 113) and tries, often failing, to fight back with sarcasm of her own. Not only does Britt represent

Alonso as mocking toward Diane but also towards all British tourists, suggesting that the upper-class community is averse to the increased tourism to the island at this time, thus perpetuating the colonial narrative of the local community as opposed to the island's economic improvement. As a result of this representation, Diane and the British tourists she encompasses can feel vindicated in their assistance towards the island's economy through their tourism, thus reasserting their superiority in the post-1976 era.

The character of Alonso not only demonstrates the reuse of old colonial stereotypes through trends in 1970s popular romances as a method for the reassertion of British superiority over the island, but his character also highlights the changing ideas and critiques of masculinity in the West at this time. As Pérez-Gil ("Representations of Nation" 6) discusses, in many 1970s Southern European/island romances, the foreign heroes exaggerated "manly alpha male" attributes were often contrasted with "the new and traditional masculinity embodied in the kind and supportive English suitor." In *The Silver Tree,* this "English suitor" (Pérez-Gil, "Representations of Nation" 6) is replaced with the American English-speaking Dwight Rogan, who represents the male antagonist in Southern European/island romances, a man "who is romantically interested in the protagonist," and champions the virtues of the West "against the backwardness of the islands" (Vera-Cazorla 17). Although Dwight only appears briefly in the novel, he is described by Diane as "the kind of man one can't help liking" (Britt 37), which puts him in opposition to Alonso, the "sardonic brute" (Britt 113).

Not only does Britt's representation of these two male characters demonstrate *The Silver Tree's* emphasis on the differences between Portuguese Madeiran and Western masculinity, but the characterisation of Alonso and his narrative voice in the novel are also used by Britt to solidify a difference in beliefs surrounding gender roles. For example, Alonso echoes Bella's ideas regarding the "ways" of English women when compared to those of Madeiran women when he says to Diane, "Your English customs and ours are very different" (Britt 31), or when he accuses Diane of seducing another man by having, "the look of the English girl, eager, untrammelled, free of the inhibitions of the Portuguese woman" (Britt 128). This causes conflict between Diane and Alonso, demonstrating how *The Silver Tree,* like other Harlequin Southern European/island romances, relies on conflict based on cultural distance to drive the romantic plot forward. It is obvious that Diane and Alonso clash as Diane replies "hotly" and "indignantly" to one of Alonso's remarks regarding this difference between British and Madeiran women, saying, "We have more freedom because our educational system perhaps

has tended to become more enlightened than yours" (Britt 32). Her reply once again demonstrates attempts at representing the British as superior and "more enlightened" than the Madeiran Other.

Through this focus on the conflicting ideas surrounding gender roles, *The Silver Tree* also highlights the novel's demonstration of Western society's conflict between old and new ideas regarding gender dynamics and masculinity in the 1970s. This conflict manifests in Diane's conflicting behaviours towards some of Alonso's authoritarian patriarchal beliefs. For example, while she is adamant in defending the "feminine" and "demure" (Britt 146) traits of British women involved in what Alonso disapprovingly refers to as "The English Women's Lib" (Britt 145), Diane is also enchanted by the story Alonso tells of one of his ancestors trapping a woman against her will to make her fall in love with him. While one would assume this kind of story would horrify Diane, given her belief that women should have the right to choose for themselves, she instead notes, "I would like to bet that the maiden your ancestor took there really enjoyed every moment of her captivity" (Britt 30). This reply suggests that, like Western society at this time, Diane is still in conflict with herself as to her beliefs regarding gendered power dynamics.

However, despite Diane's occasional surrender to Alonso's authoritative ways, she ultimately encompasses the 1970s Harlequin heroine, who fights against the hero's toxic masculinity (Dixon 90). In the case of Britt's Southern European/island narrative set in Madeira specifically, the hero's toxic masculinity is represented as a part of his stereotypical *Madeiranness*, once again demonstrating how the popular romance genre worked to offer British authors in the early years of the island's autonomy the perfect medium through which to reassert British superiority over the Madeiran Other. 1970s and '80s Harlequin heroines fight against the hero's ways both so that he will see her "as an autonomous human being in the public sphere," and so that she can bring "him into the private sphere through encouraging him to express his emotions" (Dixon 170). As Dixon (171) writes, "Mills & Boon romances are about making the hero "emotional", breaking down his barriers and bringing him into the female world of love." When applied to the context of Southern European/island romance, these overarching trends in popular romance narratives work to turn Harlequin heroines into anglicised saviours of the backward foreign alpha hero. These heroines, like Diane, soften the otherwise harsh Latin alpha male hero, like Alonso, as he eventually admits his love for the

woman he has fought against throughout the novel, thus making him ultimately surrender to the British protagonist's ways, leaving her triumphant and superior.

For example, in the final chapter of *The Silver Tree,* Alonso confesses that he has been in love with Diane from the moment he first saw her, saying, "I had to hurt you with words, and accusations that were not important, as an armour covering my love for you" (Britt 187). At first, Diane is reluctant to believe his almost sudden change of character as he now openly expresses his emotions towards her, emphasised by his repeated use of the Portuguese term of endearment, "*pequena"* (Britt 187)*,* but soon after, Britt writes, "she knew that the miracle of Alonso loving her was real" (Britt 188). Diane, who encompasses the British tourist to Madeira, has finally convinced Alonso to admit his love, an outcome that is described as a "miracle" due to Britt's representations of his coldness and harshness throughout the novel. In this way, *The Silver Tree* paints an imaginary of Madeira to the British woman reader that suggests they too can "tame" (Regis 122) the island's morally inferior, backward, and exotic locals, all while enjoying an escape to the island's beautiful and romantic scenery. This emphasises Pierini's (2) point that "popular romances "contribute to the dissemination of a stereotyped image of Madeira" (276) … awaiting to be conquered by Anglo-American heroines." This stereotypical imaginary of foreign locations like Madeira as waiting to be conquered and saved by the British protagonist in Harlequin Mills and Moon Southern European/island romances demonstrates how this genre offers British writers like Britt and those of the remaining romances set in Madeira following its autonomy a new medium through which to reassert old (quasi)colonial power, both socially and potentially economically through tourism.

Conclusion

Research Aims and Findings

Through a historically contextual analysis of Britt's use of the various affordances of the Harlequin Mills and Boon romance in *The Silver Tree,* including the touristic gaze of her central protagonist, Diane, and the perpetuation of various patterns and character archetypes of the genre to represent the Madeiran Other, this thesis set out to explore how popular romances like *The Silver Tree* demonstrate the position of the British in Madeira in the early years of the island's autonomy. Given that scholars have argued that Harlequin Mills and Boon romances "can serve as a medium for historical examination" (Pérez-Gil, "Mass Tourism" 384), through my analysis of *The Silver Tree,* I aimed to begin filling in gaps in research regarding the post-1976 period on the island that saw the loss of Britain's previous quasi-colonial power and a shift to an unprecedented increase in British tourism to the island as well as a rapid rise in Harlequin Mills and Boon novels as the dominant genre in the British literary imaginary of Madeira.

By close reading *The Silver Tree* as the earliest example of this dominance, I have revealed how the British tourist protagonist of Southern European/island Harlequin narratives, her gaze on and itineraries around the novel's foreign setting, her interactions with local people and culture, and the British author's characterisation of the local community demonstrates the perpetuation of old colonial and imperialistic ideologies in an era of British postcolonial anxiety, specifically in Madeira given its quasi-colonial past. The popular romance novel set in Madeira post-1976 offered British authors a new medium through which these perpetuations could be used to regain a sense of British superiority by taking control of a specific stereotyped literary imaginary of Madeira and *Madeiranness* based on the affordances of the genre. In attempting to regain control through this literary imaginary, these novels also allowed authors to creatively promote Madeira as a romanticised tourist destination to the wide female readership of Harlequin Mills and Boon publications. This promotion, in turn, demonstrates attempts at reasserting lost British economic power in Madeira through British interest and investment in the island's booming tourism industry post-autonomy.

Research Significance

In concluding my research in this way, I have demonstrated an application of broader research on Southern European/island Harlequins to the specific Madeiran context. In doing so, I have highlighted how Madeira's known yet often forgotten British quasi-colonial past makes a reading of these novels increasingly set on the island post-1976 a unique and clear representation of Pérez-Gil's ("Britannia's Daughters" 12) argument that "Popular romance novels are narratives through which national hierarchies have been reaffirmed." As a result, this thesis contributes to the small yet growing interest in Literary Studies in this genre. This is important given the wide readership and, therefore, the influence of Harlequin Mills and Boon publications throughout the 20th century and continuing into the 21st century on readers worldwide (McWilliam 139). This thesis has also demonstrated how Harlequin Mills and Boon novels can offer a new perspective on historical events and phenomena, given their historical and context-specific generic patterns that "reflect shifting social values" (González Mínguez in Vera-Cazorla 3). More specifically, this thesis has therefore contributed to research on British post-quasi-colonial anxieties in Madeira and subsequent intercultural dynamics in the often-forgotten period following the island's autonomy that also saw the rapid increase in British tourists to Madeira. Thus, this thesis begins the larger work of filling in any archival gaps on this topic.

Limitations and Recommendations

The scope of this study has been limited by a focus on only one of the eight Harlequin Mills and Boon novels set in Madeira post-1976. A larger research project could benefit from a comparison of all eight novels as, although all follow the same general patterns and tropes, a comparison could potentially offer new insights on any shifts in the use of the genre to achieve a reassertion of British superiority over the island at this time as a result of minor adjustments to the affordances of the genre itself per broader societal changes in the 1980s and 1990s. This study is also limited by its reliance largely on English-language sources, as although most previous research surrounding this topic and its various components are available in English, further research may find it useful to expand into Portuguese-language literature concerning both the history of the British in Madeira and the post-1976 moment in particular, allowing for comparisons between the attitudes of British authors and Portuguese ones. Further research

could also consider the two mystery novels by British authors written at this time and the effects of the affordances of the mystery genre on the post-1976 British imagination of Madeira and its people. While it was touched on in the final chapter of this thesis to demonstrate Britt's representation of cultural differences in *The Silver Tree,* a closer examination of the gendered aspects of Britt's novel and others set in Madeira post-1976 could also be explored further in another research project as the plot of all Harlequin Mills and Boon romances rely on an exploration of gender dynamics. In this way, further research could apply Pérez-Gil's analysis of representations of Spanish masculinity in this genre to Portuguese and, more specifically, Madeiran masculinity.

Concluding Remarks

Katrina Britt's 1977 Harlequin-published romance novel set on the island of Madeira captures the changing power dynamics of the British position on the island from quasi-colonisers to post-1976 tourists. *The Silver Tree* particularly demonstrates how the decline in British economic and social power in Madeira following the island's autonomy from Portugal led to the use of popular romance narratives like Britt's to perpetuate an imaginary of Madeira while a worthy background setting for the British tourist's escape, as culturally inferior to Britain, thus attempting to combat post-colonial anxieties. Given that this perspective and general research into the British position in Madeira post-1976 is lacking in historical archives, this thesis has therefore demonstrated how Harlequin Mills and Boon romances and their growing popularity in the late 20th century are not only escapist fantasies but tools for reinforcing national hierarchies and texts through which we can critically engage with history.

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