

**Sudan University of Science & Technology  
College of Graduate Studies  
College of Languages**

*Rebecca: A Genuine Romantic and  
Typical British Contemporary Novel  
Overlooked by Critics*

ريبيكا: رواية ذات طابع رومانسي أصيل  
ومثال للرواية البريطانية المعاصرة  
تغافل عنهما النقاد

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Ph.D. in English Literature

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**2017**

## Dedication

*To my parents and children*

*To Daphne du Maurier*

## Acknowledgements

All praise is due to Allah, the Almighty, for His guidance and assistance. I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed whose encouragement and support I do much appreciate. Sudan University of Science & Technology/College of Graduate Studies deserves special thanks for allowing me the opportunity to bring those long-borne ideas to light. I am indebted to my daughter Eiman and my son Mohammad for their considerable help in collecting the material of the study and for the strain they had to endure with me until I accomplished this hard task.

## Abstract

The prejudiced attitude of the English novelist Daphne du Maurier's contemporaries towards her novel *Rebecca*, 1938 and their inattentive reading of the novel established the motive for this research. Critics of the time thought it had no sufficient merit for systematic study and placed it among lowbrow popular literature. It was shunned by chief critical studies, and du Maurier was condemned as an idle dreamer. Their claim rested on shaky assumption that it was a romantic novel. The aim of the researcher is to conduct a critical analysis of the novel to refute their allegations and confirm it as a worthy piece of literary creation by clarifying the depth and mysteries it contains. To achieve that aim, the pluralistic or eclectic approach, which maintains that effective criticism requires the use of all methods, is employed. The researcher has questioned the conventional methods used in the assessment of literary works underlining their inadequacy to offer a concrete conceptual definition for this purpose. Accordingly, the two claims of the research title have been addressed. The discussion of the traditional definitions of romance has proved the non-romanticism of the novel in that sense. It is still confirmed as a romantic story as seen from its author's perspective and her perception of romance abstracted from her article on romantic love, hence the 'genuine romantic'. The second segment, 'typical British contemporary novel', is predicated on the researcher's argument against the aforementioned accusation that *Rebecca* is a stale piece of fiction. This has been disproved through testing the novel against the British literature in the 1930s. The study is hoped to be a beneficial contribution in the literary and academic provinces and to profit other researchers to carry out further related studies.

## The Abstract in Arabic Language

### مستخلص البحث

الدافع لهذا البحث هو الموقف المتحامل لمعاصري الروائية الانجليزية دافني ديو مورير تجاه روايتها ريبكا (١٩٣٨) وقراءتهم السطحية لهذه الرواية. اعتقد النقاد في ذلك الوقت أن الرواية تخلو من القيمة الكافية لكي تحظى بدراسة جادة وصنفوها ضمن الأدب الشعبي الضئيل كما عزفت الدراسات الأساسية النقدية عنها و أدينت دافني ديو مورير بأنها مجرد حاملة. تأسس هذا الزعم على افتراض مغلوط بأن ريبكا رواية رومانسية. هدفي من هذا البحث إجراء تحليل نقدي للرواية لدحض هذا الادعاء وإثبات قيمتها الأدبية بكشف العمق والاسرار الموجودة بها. المنهج المستخدم لتحقيق ذلك الهدف هو المنهج التعددي الذي يقتبس من مناهج شتى. ناقش الباحث المناهج التقليدية لتقييم الأعمال الأدبية مبيناً عجزها عن تقديم مفهوم ذو تعريف محدد يفيد بهذا الغرض. بناءً عليه تم تحليل الرواية لإثبات المفهومين اللذين يتضمنهما العنوان. بمناقشة التعريفات التقليدية لمفهوم الرومانسية والرومانتيكية ثبت عدم انطباقها على الرواية. ومع ذلك اثبت كاتب البحث رومانسية القصة من منظور كاتبها المستخلص من مقال لها بعنوان الحب الرومانسي يبين فهمها للرومانسية ومن هنا كان وصف ريبكا بأنها رواية ذات طابع رومانسي أصلي أو حقيقي. أما مضمون الجزء الثاني من العنوان وهو أن ريبكا مثال للرواية البريطانية المعاصرة فهو مبني على قناعة الباحث ببطلان الاتهام المذكور سابقاً والذي يفترض أنها عمل قصصي بالٍ مبتذل. وقد فند ذلك الزعم بدراسة الرواية بناءً على مقاييس الأدب البريطاني في ثلاثينيات القرن العشرين. يرجو الباحث أن تمثل الدراسة إسهاماً مفيداً في المجالين الأدبي والاكاديمي و أن يستفيد منه غيره من الباحثين في أجراء المزيد من الدراسات ذات الصلة.

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# *Chapter One*

## *Introduction*



## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1. Background

*Rebecca* (1938), an admirable novel written by the English novelist Daphne du Maurier (1907-1989), is a great work of literature. The novel, however, has been wronged by contemporary critics; it was ignored, underestimated, abused and underrated. The writer of this study believes that the novel must be re-read and viewed with new appreciation in order to take its position among the greatest canonical works of literature.

The novel tells the story of a young orphan girl (heroine and narrator) who was working as a hired companion for a Mrs Van Hopper, an old and terrible American woman. She was in France at the Hôtel Côte d'Azur in Monte Carlo with Mrs Van Hopper when she met Mr de Winter (the hero), a very rich man and the owner of Manderley. He was there immediately after the death of his first wife Rebecca. The heroine loved him, and they got married shortly after their encounter.

In her new home, Manderley, the heroine suffered from Rebecca's strong influence in the house. The favourable image which she drew about Rebecca constituted a source of restless worry, and constructed a strong barrier between her and her husband believing that he still loved Rebecca. Her youthful hopes that she could overcome this barrier were obstructed by Mrs Danvers, the arrogant housekeeper who brought up Rebecca, and who was desperate to keep Rebecca's influence in the house.

An explosion caused by the collision of a stranded ship with Rebecca's drowned boat disclosed the truth. Rebecca's body was found in the drowned boat. Only then did the heroine come close to her husband. He then told her

that he had killed Rebecca. It turned out that she is unlike the picture in the heroine's mind—quite the reverse.

As the barriers between them were removed by the unearthing of the truth and the burial of Rebecca's body, Mr and Mrs de Winter struggled together to acquit Mr de Winter from the murder of Rebecca. They succeeded; Rebecca was reported as having committed suicide, but Manderley was burnt up, most probably by Mrs Danvers, being already distressed by Rebecca's death and now displeased with the result of the inquest.

The novel is of a high technical scale. The characters are well defined. It also reflects a brilliant descriptive gift. It provides a profound critical study of literary trends influencing British fiction writing. Romantic spirit dominates the novel but with special significance and symbolism. A critical view of romanticism, mirrored in most aspects of the novel, is counteracted by du Maurier's own favourable perception of romance. Furthermore, the themes treated by the novel are diagnostic as well as prognostic of the conditions and problems of Britain at the time of the story just as they are constant and ever-demanding issues of universal concern.

When published in 1938, the novel was met by wide success; it was best seller and made successful film. Richardson (1969) wrote: "Then in 1938 came what is probably her most famous novel, *Rebecca*. This romantic novel . . . has all the ingredients of a best seller" (p. 179). Thus, du Maurier was established as one of the popular authors.

Other than romantic, best seller and popular, critics and literary theorists had nothing more to say in favour of the novel. This depreciation is unfair. Justice must take its course; a re-perusal is proposed by this study in order to change the verdict and vindicate the novel status.

## 1.2. Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study:

- Daphne du Maurier will be mentioned as the author, the novelist, the writer or du Maurier.
- *Rebecca* is the title of the novel. In this sense it will be used synonymously with the novel, the story, the work, etc.
- Rebecca is also the name of a character. Here it is a synonym of the villain, the antagonist, the first wife of Mr de Winter, the first Mrs de Winter, or the late Mrs de Winter.
- Mrs de Winter refers to another character too, the heroine. Therefore, the heroine, the narrator, the second wife of Mr de winter, the second Mrs de Winter will be used interchangeably.
- If ambiguity is secured, Mrs de Winter may be used for any of the above two characters.
- The hero, the protagonist, Maximilian de Winter, de Winter, Maxim, Max, are all references to the same character.
- Unless the context otherwise requires, the terms ‘romance/romantic’ will be used in the sense perceived by the author, while romance as known in the literary tradition will be referred to as traditional romance.
- The term contemporary means occurring at the time of the novel not the other usage of the term, which means the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 1.3. Statement of the Research Problem

The researcher believes *Rebecca* satisfies the criteria of great literature. After consulting numerous books and articles dealing with 20<sup>th</sup> literature in search of critical commentary on the novel, three points caught the researcher’s attention. First, critics have ignored this great work. It received

very little criticism in literary texts and critical studies. Neither, for instance, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (eighth edition) nor the *Short Oxford History of English literature* by Andrew Sanders (2004) mentions *Rebecca*. The novel is absented in G C Thornley and Gwyneth Roberts' *An Outline of English Literature* (1984). Writing about the women writers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in his *English Literature* (1974), Anthony Burgess does not refer to du Maurier. Worse of all is Gindin's avoidance of the novelist and her masterpiece in the introductory chapter of his book *British Fiction in the 1930s* (1992). Second, critics classify *Rebecca* as romantic story, which led to the rejection of the novel as obsolete as shown by this statement from the New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1993):

Twentieth century romantic fiction records few masterpieces. Writers like Daphne du Maurier, the author of *Jamaica Inn* (1936), *Rebecca* (1938), and many others, are dismissed as mere purveyors of easy dreams. It is no more possible in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to revive the original romantic élan in literature than it is to compose music in the style of Beethoven. (pp. 122–123)

According to the author's perception of romance, the judgment is grounded on a mistaken premise and the classification is abusive. Third, because of the massive success it received at publication, critics ranked du Maurier as popular author. In accordance with *their* standards, the rank places her novel among lowbrow literature, writings with no value or deep meaning. With the extreme celebration by the then audience, the elimination of the novel from the British literary history provides an incomplete picture of the readers' tastes and desires. To sum up, overlooking this valuable fictional achievement creates informational gap. Its dismissal is unjustified and does not reveal a true image of the cultural orientations of the age,

#### 1.4. Objectives of the Study

- To discuss the validity of the boundaries set between literary movements and the classification of literary works accordingly.
- To discuss the definitions of the term romance.
- To explain the author's perspective of romance, to analyse the novel accordingly, and to disprove the suitability of the traditional characterization of romantic writings for *Rebecca*.
- To lay out the distinctive qualities of British contemporary fiction and conduct a critical analysis of the novel to prove that it possesses these qualities.
- To analyze the novel to see how it addresses contemporary subjects and issues.
- To confirm the novel as a natural product of the period; to shed light on some conditions and events of the period and see to what extent they are reflected in the novel.

#### 1.5. Significance of the Study

The study is a modest contribution in the field of literature; it could be beneficial to all quarters involved in this discipline: critics, writers and readers, and academic circles. Critics, it is hoped, may reconsider the prejudices of their predecessors not only vis-à-vis *Rebecca* but also towards other good writings. More significant about the study is that it ensures freedom of expression. Writers will not be discouraged or scared out of articulating their opinions on certain themes and subjects even though they are not approved by some critics or the so-called social thinkers. Readers as well might be encouraged to read and appreciate the story. They should be given the opportunity to know that it is still worth reading. The researcher also intends to draw university teachers' attention to the literary merit of the novel so that it may be included in literature certification programmes. That being realized, students will be prompted to carry out similar studies on the

novel as well as on other works by the author. The study is an endeavour to enrich the literary theory by anthologizing and establishing *Rebecca* as serious literary work. It is a step towards incorporating the author in the English literary canon. Daphne du Maurier will be a credit to the canon.

#### 1.6. Research Questions and Hypotheses.

In order to support the researcher's thesis, the study will be guided by the following questions and hypothesis:

##### • Questions

**Question one:** Are there any discernible boundaries between literary movements; is it possible to define a literary work as romantic, classic, realistic, etc.?

**Question two:** Is there a clear-cut definition of the term romance?

**Question three:** Does the traditional characterization of romantic writings as medieval, chivalrous, idealistic, passionate, exotic, purely imaginative, subjective, irrational, etc. fit *Rebecca*? If not, does that mean it is a non-romantic novel?

**Question four:** Does *Rebecca* possess the distinctive qualities of British contemporary novels?

**Question five:** How does the novel address contemporary subjects and issues?

**Question six:** Is it a natural product of the period; to what extent does it reflect the conditions and events of the period?

##### • Hypotheses

**First hypothesis:** There are no discernible boundaries between literary movements; it is not possible to define a literary work as romantic, classic, realistic, etc.

**Second hypothesis:** There is no clear-cut definition of the term romance.

**Third hypothesis:** The traditional characterization of romantic writings as medieval, chivalrous, idealistic, passionate, exotic, purely imaginative, subjective, irrational, etc. does not fit *Rebecca*. It is romantic according to the author's own perception of romance.

**Fourth hypothesis:** *Rebecca* possesses the distinctive qualities of British contemporary novels.

**Fifth hypothesis:** The novel addresses contemporary subjects and issues from a perspective that is different from the majority of its author's contemporaries.

**Sixth hypothesis:** *Rebecca* is a natural product of the period; it largely reflects the conditions and events of the period.

*Chapter Two*  
*Literature Review*



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

In order to answer the fourth, fifth, and sixth questions pointed out in 1.5. and to support the corresponding hypotheses, the novel will be investigated in relation to the contemporary fiction. Therefore, the object of the literature review is to lay out in a concise manner the general and literary climate of Britain during the early twentieth century with special attention to the interwar period (1918-1939). The topics hereunder include the characteristics of British fiction in the 1930s, a summary of the free love movement, and a summary of modernity and modernism.

#### 2.1. British Fiction in the 1930s.

A decade between two great global wars, the thirties was a period of crises and decline. Wars were everywhere: the Spanish civil war and wars in Asia and Africa. Britain was receding from its position as the greatest power, lands cut away, struggles outside Britain, struggles inside Britain, the long-rooted problems of a class-structured society, religion striving to regain its role in the social life, economic crisis, incompetency of the government, imported philosophies, stagnate society. These were the conditions and events taking place and affecting public life in Britain during the 1930s as written by James Gindin in his book *British Fiction in the 1930s*.(1992). It was a time of “corruption and emptiness”, Gindin observes, a challenge to the intelligentsia. The literary figures of the decade responded to these conditions; some of them were directly involved in the events and their works mirrored the contradictions of the experience. The following is a summary of the main characteristics of the decade literary productions

described by Gindin in the introductory chapter titled *The Ambiguity of Commitment*.

The first characteristic is topicality. The conditions of the period compelled a general attitude within the writers to almost exclusively address and directly respond to the current events and situation of the British society as well as the global affairs. A wish for the identification of the accelerating problems was common among the principal writers. Fully aware that their present world had undergone an extreme alteration to the worse, any degree of content with the past was entirely lost in the writing of the decade. The decline of conditions was not the sole factor for the discontent with the past, the remnants and continuation of modernism from the previous decades was in the bargain. Any inclination that tends to connect the present with an earlier or coming period was altogether eroded.

The need for apocalyptic transformation is another trait. Also instigated by the miseries of the period, there was a general conviction that all the past experience should come to an end; it should be swept away for a completely different world. This can be seen in the embracement of communism and Roman Catholic by many. The quest for a sweeping reorganization of the social map of Britain was accompanied by an enthusiastic concern on the creature that would push the movement. In poetry, the concern was simple, the elevated larger-than-life hero such as the strange “Norse Gods” or “the figure of the airman”. The solution of the problems required an extraordinary hero enjoying panoramic vision and possessing the suitable tools for dealing with the circumstances and people of the time. In fiction, Gindin claims, such great characters did not suit the novel form, and some writers degraded their protagonists.

A reactionary stance against moral bankruptcy is also a conspicuous feature. The Auden generation (a group of poets and novelists who “has become the critically canonical formulation of the decade”) were aware of their didactic mission. They took a reactionary stance against the morality of the then British society. In order to undertake the didactic mission, they had to borrow the costume of the schoolmaster so that they would gain access to a wider public deprived of education and social status. Although the ethical tendency, as was perceived by them, might easily be seen, the combination between the writers’ concern and that of the targeted public was somewhat obscured. Moreover, they displayed an ambivalent perspective towards the education that produced them. While their stance towards school values seemed rebellious, the school bells still rang loudly from within their works. Added to the influence of their education, the psychological and economic theories of Freud and Marx had a profound impact in enhancing the didactic position they adopted in describing the stagnation of their community.

One more common feature in the thirties fiction is the condition-of-Britain novel. With very few exceptions, all writers reflected mixed feelings towards violence, both dreaded and needed. No script printed during the decade was capable of escaping some kind of a record of the horrible scenarios of the two great wars, the one already experienced and the second, which was frightfully expected. In a downright manner or implicitly “the language of battles” permeated the works. Expansion of the conception of home and the national feelings, a dread of the drastic effects of foreign attack, an equal dread of isolation and a standing-still state, visible in the majority of the decade writing,—with the advance of technology acting as a catalyst—procured an inclination for progress to farther lands and places. Out-of-Britain or out-of-London settings were not uncommon, hence the

keen interest in new technology. The works comprised several inventions of the period, means of transport and communication that were helpful in the sought progress.

Related to their panic from an approaching danger, joined with a constant dissatisfaction with the social injustices of the British society, betrayal—extending to all domains—is a constant presence. The disappointment was deeply felt on private as well as on public experience. The writers' discontent with the long-rooted meaningless segregation in the pyramidal structure of the British society was particularly significant in augmenting the awareness of the injustice befalling the lower class who lacked the means to articulate their miseries. Therefore, some middle class writers of fiction tended to present disguised characters that can assimilate themselves in these sufferings and perform on behalf of the disabled class. Also visible is a tendency to return to the eighteenth and nineteenth century novel. In their attempts to address the multi-sided problems of the decade and to assert the novel as an echo of the middle class, notable novelists preferred to resume the progression of the novel technique that had started two centuries earlier. To some extent, it would be inaccurate to say they were “conservatives” or entirely against the revolutionary change in the novel form brought up by the modernists, yet a large percentage of the writing in the thirties comprised suspicions about these changes especially in terms of coherence. Their option was for the old technique known at the time of Defoe, Fielding and Austen generations. They no longer believed in the impossibility of a conscious portrayal outside the character's self.

Lastly, the humanistic approach in tackling human body and sexual experience is a further significant attribute. D. H. Lawrence's theme of “physical response” penetrated almost all the writing. Each writer was

peculiar in his practice, though. Freud was another influence. Highbrow literature (Gindin points out later the lack of distinction between popular and serious fiction) displayed a growing concern on homosexuality, another consequence of the conditions brought by the First World War. Women were degraded by some considerable writers of fiction especially in the fiction of the Auden generation, which was monopolized by male writers.

These are the defining qualities according to Gindin's description. However, he cites a number of diversions from, and no little contrast to, these characteristics. He also maintains that some of the Auden generation demonstrated discrepancy between their social and political engagement and their theoretical representation, thus illustrating a wide range of literary treatment that would puzzle any scholar investigating the 1930s literature.

Anyhow, it may be concluded that the status quo of the decade, either inherited from the past or the immediate consequences of the events on the national and international arena was principally the focus of the literary performance. The poets and writers awareness of the "social strains and dilemmas" resulted in a literary production of "panic, fracture and despair", a literary production that was distinguished by "restlessness, lack of security, curiosity, sense of imminent change and fear of destruction." (pp. 1 – 22).

Apart from the literary perspective, Gindin provides another scene; he declares that a different favourable image was also found but not promoted by intellectuals. The imperial Britain was still appreciated by certain quarters inside and outside the kingdom. There were currents in America who were still cherishing the memory of an honourable system of an earlier Britain. Not only did these currents take pride in it, but also they recognized it as a model to be imitated. (pp.1 – 3)

## 2.2. Free Love

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, free love movement is a branch of anarchism. It is “a social movement that rejects marriage”. The movement is against any interference of authority from the familial norms to the Divine laws in the sexual experience of individuals. Absolute freedom from regulation is the demand of the movement proponents who claim that adults, women as well as men, are free to determine for themselves such matters as emotional and sexual relationship. The movement was provoked by the belief prevailing during the Victorian era that “the strongly defined gender roles” within family life was the right system that guaranteed people happiness. Obscenity laws too were targeted by free love movement advocates who called for “the right to publicly discuss sexuality”. Free love activists insist that the intrinsic sexual desire of a woman should be respected; a woman is free to satisfy it in the manner she chooses. Because sexual desire is to be sought for its own sake not for childbirth, the use of birth control materials was one of the movement struggles. Women, argue the movement activists, have the right to pursue occupations other than wives and mothers, thus they will be able to dispense with men socially and financially.

The vision of free love was in fact known throughout history, but as an organized movement it started in the late eighteenth century. “The term free love was coined in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century”. Linked and overlapping with other movements and doctrines such as feminism, birth control movement, individualism, spiritualism and others, free love devotees launched a fierce campaign to spread their “message”. They issued a great deal of publication: periodicals, journals, books, pamphlets, literary works and works of arts. They conducted lecture tours and founded societies. A number of the free

thinkers and socialists who were leading the campaign went further in the act of disseminating their message by being real practitioners of free love “ideals”. By the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to the assiduous efforts of the free love promoters: men and women from America, France, Britain and other parts of the world, “the credibility of conventionalism” regarding women rights and sexuality was entirely “eroded”. Extra-marital relations, same sex relationship, multiple sexual partners, etc. were “popularized to the general public”, leading afterwards to “the freer ways of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (Wikipedia, 2013)

### **2.3. Modernity and Modernism**

In their account on the twentieth-century literature, Stallworthy and Ramazani (2006) define modernity as the transformation from the nineteenth-century “stabilities” that characterized the Victorian age to a wholly new different epoch. According to them, modernity defines an era that is marked by “radical” conceptual and experimental changes in all domains.

Scientific discoveries accompanied by a high leap in technology in addition to the theories of continental figures: Freud, Frazer, and Nietzsche were influential in replacing previously settled notions about the nature of humankind, human bonds, and the humans’ relationship with the Divinity and the universe by new revolutionary ideologies on both quotidian and spiritual levels.

Naturally, note Stallworthy and Ramazani, these changes were paralleled by a conscious shift in visions as regards fiction writing. Modernism is the term used by them to refer to the reflections of modernity in artistic expressions. In fact, state Stallworthy and Ramazani, modernism started in the last years of the late nineteenth century when the role of arts and artists

as known during the Victorian era was debated by some literary personalities. Mostly characteristic of modernism is the “reaction against Victorian attitudes”. Pessimistic skepticism is another notable feature of the literary production at the close of the nineteenth century. “By the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”, as worded by the authors, “modernity disrupted the old order, upended ethical and social codes, cast into doubt previously stable assumptions about self, community, the world and the divine.” (pp. 1827 – 1829).



*Chapter Three*  
*Research Methodology*

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### 3.1. Introduction

The researcher assumes that *Rebecca* is a genuine romantic and typical British cotemporary novel. The aim of the study is to illustrate the novel literary value, to defend it against the allegation that it is inappropriate for the twentieth century by conducting a critical analysis. In order to achieve that aim, the following techniques will be used.

Like a jewel, the novel can be seen from different facets. Two of these will form the study; it will be divided into two parts:

- *Rebecca* is a genuine romantic novel.
- *Rebecca* is a typical British contemporary novel.

The two facets however are not mutually exclusive. Some aspects of the analysis can work for both parts. Each part will analyze some elements of the novel: theme, characterization, form, etc. The first part will answer the first three questions in I.5. It will contain a discussion of the definitions of romance and other literary movements in theory and practice to determine whether they apply to the story. A special view of romance held by the author will be explained on the strength of which the analysis will rely. The second part is going to answer the fourth, fifth and sixth questions. It is going to investigate the work within the cultural and literary framework of the early twentieth-century Britain, particularly the 1930s. It will also comprise comparison between the novel and contemporary ones.

#### 3.2. The Critical Approach

The researcher will adhere to no specific method or doctrine of criticism. From Aristotle's mimesis and catharsis concepts to the post-structuralism

and deconstructionist theory and after—if any—no method will be excluded. The intention of the author (conscious or unconscious) is crucial here just as the reader-response. Equally central to the research is the historical and cultural context, which is inconceivable to sort out without a close reading of the text as a separate entity. I am pro nothing or anti nothing of the numerous theories used in the interpretation of literature. If it is imperative to adhere to one, then let it be the pluralistic criticism. I will adopt the eclectic approach “endorsed” by Oscar Cargill. I am in total agreement with Cargill’s opinion:

I have always held that any method which could produce the meaning of a work of literature was a legitimate method. . . . I came to the conclusion that . . . the critic’s task was . . . to procure a viable meaning appropriate to the critic’s time and place. Practically, this meant employing not any one method in interpreting a work of art but every method which might prove efficient. (Guerin, 2005, p. 16)

### 3.3. Symbolism

The symbols to be used in the analysis are chiefly contextual symbols. A contextual symbol as stated in MEYER LITERATURE is “a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings . . . they gain their symbolic meaning within the context of a specific story.” Conventional symbols will not be ruled out if they apply to any part of the story.

*Chapter Four*

*Theoretical Analysis and  
Discussion*

## Chapter Four

### Theoretical Analysis and Discussion

#### 4.1. Introduction

The pleasure to be derived from the act of reading is certainly the prime concern of fiction. In that respect the success of du Mauriers's *Rebecca* has been largely acknowledged. However, does it necessarily follow that the popularity of an artistic work is a symptom of its inferiority? For du Maurier's contemporary critics it appears to be so, hence the indictment for the unworthiness of the novel. It is not my intent to debate the mechanism of determining the position of literary works, or who is entitled to take the decision. Anyhow, certain notions used in evaluating literary works are to be tackled here in order to nullify the measures by virtue of which *Rebecca* has been denied the literary reputation bestowed upon a majority of contemporary far less superior works.

What distinguishes *Rebecca* from its peers in the researcher's opinion is its ability to provide incessant pleasure while being potential of intellectual richness and fertility, an achievement that many of du Maurier's contemporaries, thought to have sufficient merit for systematic study, have failed to realize. Virginia Woolf, for instance, is championed as one of the esteemed writers of fiction in the twentieth century. Of the "women novelists", she, according to Burgess, "is certainly the most important" (1974, p. 222). Burgess himself admits that "[t]o many readers her novels do not appear to be works of fiction at all: they seem too static, too lacking in action and human interest" (P. 221). In her turn, Woolf admires James Joyce for his innovative technique; in an essay titled *ALUMINOUS HALO*, she regards him as "the most notable" of many honest, courageous writers

(Kennedy, 1983, p. 389). Meanwhile, writing in her diary (quoted by Pawlowski) about her response to his *Ulysses*, held to be a precious novel, Woolf seems quite disgusted by its intolerability. “I have read 200 pages so far — not a third; & have been amused, stimulated, charmed interested by the first 2 or 3 chapters — to the end of the cemetery scene; & then puzzled, bored, irritated, & disillusioned as by a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples.” (2003, p. vi). *Ulysses* is not an exception of Joyce’s works, and here is a similar comment by Stallworthy and Ramazani: “*Finnegans Wake* taxes even its most dedicated readers and verges on unreadability for others.” (2006, p.1840). Also, through his novels George Orwell “conveys a sense of discomfort to the reader, who is drawn to resent that an author of such uncommon talents should care so little whether he conveys enjoyment to his readers.” (Introduction, 1970, p. x) In an article in the Free Dictionary, *The House in Paris*, the writer has this opinion about Elizabeth Bowen: “Though Bowen is generally acknowledged as ‘an important twentieth-century English (and Anglo-Irish) writer,’ she is not widely read.” (2014)

Therefore, by capturing the reader’s heart *Rebecca* has bettered so many works of the period fiction. It remains to reveal the deeper hidden message ignored by contemporary critics through a detailed analysis of the novel. The analysis runs on two separate tracks crossing however at some crucial junctions: *Rebecca* is a genuine romantic novel and *Rebecca* is a typical British contemporary novel.

#### 4.2. *Rebecca* is a Genuine Romantic Novel

If to be dealt with on categorical basis, the label may be refuted by simply declaring it a realistic novel. This is a supportable point of view. In fact that was my initial thesis, but I preferred the description ‘genuine romantic’ for reasons of impartiality; the novel had better be seen from the

author's own perspective. The whole study has been triggered by the statement from the New Encyclopaedia Britannica:

Twentieth century romantic fiction records few masterpieces. Writers like Daphne du Maurier, the author of *Jamaica Inn* (1936), *Rebecca* (1938), and many others, are dismissed as mere purveyors of easy dreams. It is no more possible in the 20th century to revive the original romantic élan in literature than it is to compose music in the style of Beethoven. (pp. 122–123)

The writer has grounded the dismissal on two assumptions. The first one is that *Rebecca* is a romantic novel. The second is that Romanticism is inappropriate to the twentieth century. This last argument, like the first, is open to doubt. Literature as a kind of human expression knows no chronological or spatial boundaries because human nature is unchanging. A testimony of this fact is provided by the same source of the former statement, the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

This is so because mankind is constant— men share a common physiology. Even social structures, after the development of cities, remain much alike. Whole civilizations have a life pattern that repeats itself through history. Jung's term "collective unconscious" really means that mankind is one species, with a common fund of general experience. Egyptian scribes, Soviet bureaucrats and junior executives in New York City live and respond to life in the same ways; the lives of farmers or minors or hunters vary only within narrow limits. Love is love and death is death, for a South African Bushman and a French surrealist alike. (P. 81)

The film versions of Epics like *Beowulf*, Shakespeare plays, and Austen novels, just to cite a few examples, indicate the timeless quality of people's tastes just as does the marvelous success of Jane Austen during the so-called

Romantic Age. Once more, the Encyclopaedia Britannica advocates: “The romantic age brought, paradoxically, the cool and classically shaped novels of Jane Austen (1775–1817), a major practitioner and still a model for apprentices in the craft” (p. 129). What justification might there be for the dismissal of the novel on the assumption that it belongs to a literary movement that is assumed to be inappropriate for the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**4.2.1. Verification of the First Hypothesis:** There are no discernible boundaries between literary movements; it is not possible to define a literary work as romantic, classic, realistic, etc.

The researcher, like Martin Seymour, believes that “literature is mysterious and anti-systematic and elusive of ownership.” (1985, p. xii) The strategies adopted by critics to catalogue and over-systemize literature can scarcely stand close examination. With many literary scholars, the traditionally held antithesis between different literary movements, together with the lines drawn between them, has fallen out of favour. Seymour argues:

First, realism is essentially a part of romanticism . . . romanticism at its best contains the essence of classicism . . . And it was essentially from neo- romanticism, a sort of romantic revival and confirmation of the original romantic recovery from the eighteenth-century rationalism, that modernism arose. (pp. xii–xiii)

Odd as it may seem, Seymour’s is a truly plausible declaration. The contrast between Classicism and Romanticism, for instance, is not as decisive as has long been thought. The former glorifies reason. Pope venerated Isaac Newton and his scientific innovation. The Age of Reason propagated the philosophy of religious toleration and a “rational



Christianity” (Andrew Sanders, 2004, p. 277). The latter celebrates instinct. Rousseau venerates the untaught savage, and Wordsworth venerates the child. (Burgess, 1974, p. 144) (See also *Ode on Intimation of Immortality*). The Romantic Age disdained science and trusted “a vernal wood” for moral guidance more “Than all the sages”. (See Wordsworth’s *The Tables Turned*). Those are the main aspects, among others, which firmly place the two movements on opposite grounds.

Looking a bit deeper, nevertheless, it might hardly be difficult to believe the opposite. Although Pope’s epitaph on Newton’s immortality and Wordsworth’s ode on the child’s were stemming from unrelated backgrounds, they were drawing to the same conclusion: the immortality of the mortal. The Augustan philosophy of rational Christianity and Wordsworth’s pantheism—a major influence in the Romantic Age—are two sides of the same coin: a belief that man can dispense with a supreme power to direct him. In other words, The Age of Reason as Burgess has it, “has the seeds of Romanticism in it: once reason is accepted as the prime faculty, man hardly needs external laws to tell him about right and wrong. Hence laws and religions become unnecessary, and anarchy—the essence of Romanticism—begins to appear.” (Burgess, 1974, p. 144) Anarchy is the essence of modernism too; this is a movement that assembled its resources to overthrow any form of authority or conventionally established codes of behavior for the individual be it religious, political, social, or familial especially in literature. Modernism, apart from the revolutionary technique marking a good deal of the movement writing, is a variety of realism in the view of some modernists, Dorothy Richardson, to name one. “For Richardson (1873–1957) the novel of the period merely reflected a move away from ‘Romance’ to what she saw as a distinctive kind of ‘Realism’

which had dispensed with the old constrictions of ‘plot’, ‘climax’, and ‘conclusion’.” (Sanders, 2004, p. 527) Naturalism, undisputedly, is an offshoot of realism, “a narrowing down of it.” (Seymour, 1985, p. xiii) Thus, we may now safely rest at Seymour’s view that “movements (or tendencies) provoke reactions to themselves; but these reactions also absorb the essences, the genuine discoveries of the movements that have engendered them.” (p. xiii) We may not feel reluctant either to take as granted his concluding sentence that “Literature is now broadly romantic;” (p. xiii).

To define a literary work, therefore, as romantic, classic, realistic, etc. is like trying to distinguish sugar or butter from the other ingredients in a piece of cake. Literary compositions as well do often consist of a mixture of different assimilated ingredients. As written in the article *The House in Paris* from the free dictionary, “In many of Bowen’s novels Modernism and Realism mix, and sometimes clash.” (2014). Significant poets such as those selected in *An Anthology of Longer Poems* express themselves in a way that mingles the extremely opposing literary schools. Moles comments, “in some of the poems there is a romantic richness of expression with a classical restraint in the treatment of character and setting.” (1959, p. 7). An article from Wikipedia imparts another instance of such a mixture between Romanticism and Realism. The article author argues that outwardly, Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* appears as a dreamer’s story designed for pure amusement, but when read thoughtfully a political theme will be recognizable by modern audience (July 23, 2014). Elements distinctive of antagonistic literary schools, by way of a Shakespearian skill “are capable of *fusion* so that in a Shakespeare speech or sonnet we seem to be listening to thought and feeling and physical passion at once and the same time.” (Burgess, 1974, p. 142) Shakespeare is not alone and, Burgess continues, “in John Donne, too, we

get this fusion: in a love-poem of his we find all the human faculties working hard together” (p. 142). Recent works of fiction also feature this fusion. According to Thornley and Roberts, “IRIS MURDOCH’s novel *The Bell* (1958) . . . is a mixture of the serious and the fanciful” (1984, p. 152).

There could be plenty examples to encompass all literary ages, genres and movements. Like its chief subject, indeed literature remains ‘mysterious and anti-systematic’, and indeed romanticism remains the most mysterious and problematic of all literary movements.

**4.2.2. Verification of the Second Hypothesis:** There is no clear-cut definition of the term romance.

Numerous attempts have been made to define the concept romance. The definitions and their associations call for comment, but first let us see some of them:

The vernacular language of France, as opposed to Latin . . . A tale in verse, embodying the adventures of some hero of chivalry, esp<sup>1</sup>. [[abbreviation of especially] of those of the great cycle of mediaeval legend . . . A fictitious narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of ordinary life; esp. one of the class prevalent in the 16th and 17th centuries, in which the story is often overlaid with long disquisitions and digressions . . . Romantic or imaginative character or quality; . . . idealistic character or quality in a love affair . . . An extravagant fiction, invention, or story; a wild or wanton exaggeration; a picturesque falsehood. (Simpson and Weiner, 1989, pp. 61–62)

Romantic character is “a fabulous or fictitious character; having no foundation in fact.” (Simpson and Weiner, 1989, P. 65)

The aim of romantic fiction is less to present a true picture of life than to arouse the emotions through a depiction of strong

passions, or to fire the imagination with exotic, terrifying or wonderful scenes and events. When it is condemned by critics, it is because it seems to falsify both life and language; . . . and humanity is seen in only one of its aspects—that of feeling untempered with reason. (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1993, P. 122)

Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization . . . a reaction against the Enlightenment and against – 18th century rationalism and physical materialism in general. Romanticism emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary and the transcendental. Among the characteristic attitudes of romanticism were the following: a deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature, a general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the sense over intellect (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1993, Volume 10, pp. 160–161).

A corresponding sense of strong feeling, but also of original, fresh and above all, authentic feeling was also important . . . The romantic hero is either a solitary dreamer, or an egocentric plagued by guilt and remorse but, in either case, a figure who has kicked the world away from beneath his feet. (Ian Ousby, 1993, p. 809)

We can easily notice that the definitions cover a wide range of meaning, and, in one way or another, reveal some contradiction within this range. Romance is an idealistic character or quality, whereas it rejects “idealization”. It rejects idealization and physical materialism at the same time. The exaltation of the sense and the appreciation of the beauties of

nature imply exaltation and appreciation of physical beauty. The focus, however, will be on two important problems therein: one, the definitions as related to the theory and practice of the romantics and opponents, the other, their identification with *Rebecca*.

If over categorical reading of literary movements proved debatable, the Romantic Movement remains particularly problematic. The romantics' divergent views and performances had rendered it difficult for contemporary scholars to bracket them together. The six principal figures selected by twentieth-century scholars to stand as representatives of the movement have in fact stood as representatives of its disparity. "The English romantic poets—BLAKE, Coleridge, Wordsworth, KEATS, SHELLEY and BYRON—divided into two distinct generations, came from disparate backgrounds, differed sharply in their theory and practice, held conflicting political views, and in some cases cordially disliked each other." (Ousby, 1993, p. 809). Stillingner and Lynch (2006) also write:

Even the two closest collaborators of the 1790s, Wordsworth and Coleridge, would fit no single definition; Byron despised both Coleridge's philosophical speculations and Wordsworth's poetry; Shelley and Keats were at opposite poles from each other stylistically and philosophically; Blake was not at all like any of the other five. (p. 1)

Wordsworth differs from his close friend Coleridge in his choice of supernatural agents and incidents; Wordsworth prefers to "choose incidents and situations from common life" as he declares in his famous preface to *lyrical Ballads*, and in spite of their friendship and collaboration Wordsworth announces, "our respective manner proved so widely different." (Sanders, 2004, p. 369). Byron targeted his fellow romantics, satirized

Wordsworth and Coleridge among other romantics (POETRY FOUNDATION, 2014). Byron's eccentric heroes who are proud of their defiance of laws and moral discipline are in contrast to Sir Walter Scott's, another major romantic, who are characterized by conventional natures and correct behavior. Scott's artificial archaic language and Wordsworth's simple language of ordinary men stand wide apart. No closer is the distance existing between Scott's courtly scenes and settings and those incidents of Wordsworth chosen from common life. In his *Alastor*, Shelley denounces Wordsworth egotism. Keats, a contrast to Shelley, "wrote poetry of rich detail and accused Shelley of using language which was too thin." (Thornley and Roberts, 1984, p. 99). Less significant romantics display more variation, but the scope of this brief account is not sufficient to cover so vast a literary canvas.

Although not without little exceptions, the romantics indeed share certain common bonds: appreciation of nature, an emphasis on the power of imagination, the prophetic role of the poet, the scorn of orthodoxy—of any external authority or power—with a revolutionary spirit and independent way of thought. Ironically, the disparity and disagreement are stemming from these bonds. Since every poet was a prophet granted vision by a self-perceived god with a totally independent mind guided by the sole power of imagination and nature being the source of knowledge, the outcome would naturally be endless dissimilar philosophical and literary revelations, "Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways", to borrow Keats. (See *From Sleep and Poetry*).

Furthermore, in their challenge of accepted religious and social rules, in their insistence on the independence and self-sufficiency of human mind, and in their attempts at transcendentalism, the romantics can be partly

attached to the twentieth-century modernists, the eighteenth-century rationalists, and the puritans respectively.

Some confusion remains about the conceptual defect of the definitions—the discrepancy between the definitions and the theory and practice in the English literary history. Wordsworth's heroes are far from being typical of the "chivalrous medieval legend" or "the fabulous or fictitious character"; the poet "chooses the simple, unassuming people of his own dales and hills and reveals to us their hidden strength and beauty of character." (Moles and Moon, 1959, p. 272). It is untrue that his scenes and incidents are "remote from those of ordinary life". In the view of Moles and Moon he is "an interpreter of human life" (p. 272). The falsification of life and language is inconsistent with his theory of poetic diction pertaining the subject and language of poetry. In The preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, quoted by Moles and Moon, Wordsworth explains: "The principal object, then, proposed in these poems, was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men" (p. 273). In addition, in his pantheism there is a kind of physical materialism. Physical materialism can also be spotted in Shelley's pamphlet *The Necessity of Atheism* in which he grounded his denial of God on the view that "God's existence cannot be proved on empirical grounds" (Stillinger and Lynch, 2006, p. 741). Reason for Shelly is as essential as an inspiring nature or a poet's vision: "his later work suggests both a steady qualification of arguments based purely on 'reason'" (sanders, 2004, p. 386). Although the romantic revolutionary ideology is hailed by Shelley, it does not always assert itself in his works as shown by Burgess' observation on his *Adonais*, "and throughout his work we find a technical mastery of traditional verse- forms". (1974, p. 171). Sympathy

with traditional old forms is still more observable in Byron's poetry, "a leader of the era's poetic revolution, he named Alexander Pope as his master; a worshiper of the ideal, he never lost touch with reality" (POETRY FOUNDATION, 2014). He "lacks the finest poetic imagination. His words mean only what they say" (Thornley and Roberts, 1984, p. 94). While Byron "sympathized with neo-classicism, with its order, discipline and clarity" (POETRY FOUNDATION), Keats attachment to the classic is observed in his themes. One of the favourite themes of Keats is "the glamour of the classical past" (Burgess, 1974, p. 171). Even Coleridge can be trapped in the traditional ways, and his "*Biographia Literaria*" is "prophetic and profoundly indebted to tradition" (Sanders, 2004, p. 370).

The definition of the Romantic Movement as a unified distinctive category seems a definite perplexity that I applaud Sanders terming of the movement as "Romanticisms". It is worthwhile to read his view in this regard:

but the complex definition of 'romanticism', or of 'romanticisms', could be variously ignored, challenged, subsumed, debated, or simply questioned by writers who were not necessarily swimming against a contemporary tide. A variety of ways of writing, thinking about, criticizing, and defining literature co-exist in any given age, but in this particular period the varieties are especially diverse and the distinctions notably sharp.(2004, pp. 339–340)

Romantic influence is too strong it seems to be completely overlooked by writers who are known to have anti-romantic leanings. "The Movement poets were considered anti-romantic, but Larkin and Hughes featured romantic elements." (Wikipedia, July 1, 2014) In his famous *Arms and the Man* subtitled by him *an anti-romantic comedy*, Bernard Shaw represents a



reconciliation between romanticism and realism when he unites Raina, the romantic heroine, with Bluntschli, the realistic hero. Perhaps he intends to pronounce submission to realism by Raina's choice, yet, by the same token, he represents in an equal measure a submission to romanticism by Bluntschli's. *Sense and sensibility* by Jane Austen registers a similar compromise. The novel is meant to be a direct assault against the romantic enthusiasm typifying the period carried out through the story of two sisters embodying the opposing qualities of the title. Marianne's sensibility drags her into a severely painful experience. With all the rashness of a willfully untempered emotion, she falls in love with the undeserving Willoughby, who is equally rash but with none of her goodness. Eventually she is forced into a rational decision. Despite the fact that this rationality is explicitly recommended by the author throughout the story, a distinguished critic and novelist, Schorer, suggests:

Marianne . . . is a more engaging girl than her sister, Elinor, who speaks for Jane Austen in the preferred voice of prudence, rational deliberation, conventional conduct. Marianne, and the world of illusion to which she is devoted, are the subjects of the novel's irony; Elinor, and the world of Johnsonian common sense which is hers, is in general exempt from that irony although not, finally, quite entirely. At the end, when Marianne at last discovers the merits of the sober, older, and patiently waiting Colonel Brandon, Elinor has had a reversal of feelings about Willoughby, who has made his confession to her, and it is almost as if Jane Austen . . . suggests that as Sensibility can be too lax, Sense can be too rigid, and that Elinor, as she is joined with her sober lover, Edward Ferrars, has missed something, while Marianne, chastised as she is, has gained. (1959, P. 16)

Since the measures of categorizing literature proved so complicated, the researcher will evaluate the work according to the intention of its author. Du Maurier has a special view on the romantic portrayal in the English literary tradition and she has written her novel in accordance with this view. The object of the following section is to explore how she perceives romance.

#### 4.2.3. Du Maurier's Perception of Romance

Preference for higher levels of existence is unequivocally pronounced by du Maurier in a statement introducing three stanzas selected to conclude an article in *The Rebecca Notebook and Other memories*: “Three verses caught my attention in those days, over thirty years ago, not particularly for their language but for the attitude expressed, and they sum up for me now, as they did then, all that I have been trying to say in the foregoing pages.” (1993, p. 111) The article is one of “eleven prose pieces” that, according to du Maurier, “are not articles in the strict sense of the word” (p. 45). (I have used and will continue to use the term in its generic sense). The articles, she maintains, “were written at different times throughout my life because I felt strongly about the various subjects, and so was impelled to put my thoughts on paper.” (p. 45). This last information opens the first page of du Maurier's personality; it suggests that writing for her is a mission, a means to impart a message. The articles, added to the selected verses with the statement introducing them, cast some light on that message. Here are the opening lines of each of the stanzas in their respective order:

Continue! knowing as the pine-trees know ...

that, merely by climbing, the shadow is made less ...

that to plunge upwards is the way of the spark, ...

Three core meanings might be generated by the lines: They call for a persistent search of knowledge. They insist on advancing towards upper

elevated moral values. They ascertain the enlightening function of the experience, “the way of the spark”. In other words, it is through knowledge and the exercise of higher principles that we will be able to conquer “the shameless dark”. Since these thoughts are reflected in the novel, we must try to know more of du Maurier’s personality. The object of this section is to get inside the mind of the writer. The first part will enable us to have an access to her conscious self; I have borrowed the phrase “conscious self” from a statement identifying the articles: “The pieces in the present section have nothing to do with my imagination, but with the conscious self, the person who is Me [*sic*].” (p. 45). The second is a tour in her unconscious: “The fiction arose out of the unconscious, coupled with observation but above all with imagination.” (p. 45). About three of the articles, including *Romantic Love*, she comments, “the reader may sense a certain cynicism of outlook”, hence the subtitle below.

#### 4.2.3.1. Cynical View

This is a satirical insight delivered by an article in *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories*. The article, titled *Romantic Love*, highlights in a sarcastic tone the ignominious degradation befalling the concept in the English literary tradition due to improper submissiveness to the audience’s preference for so enthralling subjects.

The whole point of the survey is that traditional romantic love is a definite misnomer, a tag misapplied to depict an immoral affair in which one of the partners is already involved in another legitimate engagement. The defining epithet for these kinds of relationship, so resolutely believes du Maurier, is “illicit love”. It is illicit love or “forbidden passion” that is portrayed in the stock of literary heritage transmitted from the ancients in the form of a precious bequeathment, legendary exploits of high-ranked heroes,

kings, queens, princes, princesses, knights and their likes. To expose the desecration of romance, the article begins with a concise review of three well known tales of famous pairs of lovers from the Greek myth: Helen/Paris, Theseus/ Ariadne, Phaedra, the queen of Hades, and Zeus/Leda, followed by a succinct reference to three old famous British pairs: Guinever/Sir Lancelot, Tristan/Isolde, and Paolo/Francesca, so as to explain the profound stamp of the Greek myth on the succeeding prose fiction despite the cultural advance experienced by European communities. Within this context, we are also ushered into Dante's *Inferno* besides a critical commentary on some of Shakespeare plays, followed by another commentary on three novels: *Anna Karenina*, *Madame Bovary*, and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* which exemplify the continuity of the ancient legacy in modern fiction. The opposite side of the problematic perception of romantic love is manifested in the relationship between Heathcliffe and Cathy of *Wuthering Heights*. The article ends with a protest against the lexical definition of romance before the closure of the article by a reference to the subject matter of magazines running on the same path.

The first instance of traditional romance, Helen and Paris intrigue, is described by du Maurier, with apparent disdain for the label, as the most devastating of its kind. While married to Menelaus, Helen, with the fullness of intention, ran away with the Trojan prince, thus sparking off the Greek-Trojan War in consequence of which the two nations underwent a holocaust.

Of the second instance, du Maurier seems more disdainful despite the long established heroic renown of Theseus. To understand why, we should look at three amorous adventures of incest and inconsistency on account of which she declares him a "no romantic lover". The Athenian king embittered both Ariadne and her father, Theseus' Cretan counterpart, by having her

implicated in a secret marriage only to be dismissed and replaced by her “younger” sibling Phaedra. Later on, the younger princess got infatuated with her stepson Hippolytus. Although she drew no response from him, Hippolytus and Theseus filial–parental bond was completely uprooted because Phaedra, fuelled by her disappointed wishes, charged her stepson with sexual abuse. Theseus’ last adventure in “the underworld” was aborted by the Hadean god king Pluto who saved the Hadean queen spouse from her kidnapper. Theseus went back to Athens and thence to Skyros on the painful discovery that he was unlawfully dethroned.

From the underworld, we are flown to the kingdoms of heavens. There, should the ancient audiences’ appeal of the romances of their own race fade, much alluring effect could be offered by the deities’. Zeus and Hera (Roman equivalent Jupiter and Juno) were sovereigns in Olympus, the locus of the third instance of the old romances. His divine queen wife, it seems, was insufficient to satisfy Zeus’ lust, therefore he used to take great delight in appearing in diverse forms for fulfilling his desires to mate with humans, what he did with Leda while she was married to an earthly sovereign of Greek city, Sparta, in the shape of a large waterbird. The union produced two stars, Castor and Pollux, in addition to two illicit lovers, the previously mentioned Helen and plain but lustful Clytemnestra, the unfaithful wife of Agamemnon who indulged in a vicious liaison during his absence in the battles ignited by her sister. When he was back she “murdered him, only to be slaughtered in her turn by their son Orestes.”

The horrific death of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, being the typical end of almost all the aforementioned heroes, throws some light on a remarkable feature that is likewise a subject of du Maurier’s contemptuous abhorrence. She sums up the whole matter in the following words: “savage,

brutal, utterly amoral”. We had better read the exact phrases used by the writer with some of her remarks which fully convey her attitude:

Paris slain in battle . . . she [Helen] was . . . strangled by order of her one-time friend Polyxo. . . . Romantic love? If so, a bloody business, with unhappiness for all. . . . he [Hippolytus] fled to the seashore and was drowned in his own chariot by a great wave which Neptune, in answer to Theseus’ prayer, caused to rise up from the sea. On hearing of his death Phaedra hanged herself. A charming relationship. . . . lacking a family and a kingdom, he [Theseus] retired to Scyros, where he fell to his death from a precipice.

Via Rome the Greek tradition extended over the whole continent inflicting a detrimental impact on European arts. Polytheism died out, but the gods were survived by their performances that yielded the subjects of subsequent sagas.

At later periods when new ethical codes were introduced by the transformative power of heavenly religions, the Roman-Greek idol proved unbreakable in the artistic scene. Here is du Maurier’s explicit terms: “despite the Jewish tradition of devout and strict family life, which had a supreme influence on Christian morals, when it came to singing songs and telling tales the main theme was still illicit love.”

So it did go on, “Guinever who betrayed her husband King Arthur with the greatest knight of all the world, Sir Lancelot”. The new ones, however, were carried out with a little mitigation, with a few extenuating circumstances: the betrayed husband defectiveness, the couple’s immaturity, a non predetermined demeanour, or a predestined outcome. At the beginning of their journey from Greece, the tales, such as the French verse version of

the Tristan/Isolde plot, condemned by du Maurier as “true bawdy, and certainly not romance”, might have retained “all the robust humour inherited from some earlier source.”, but as they travelled on in space and time, the telling had to be less irreligious. In the Cornwall version, which is, du Maurier suggests, an edit of “the Theseus, Phaedra and Hyppolytus tale”, Tristan’s filial ingratitude and Isolde’s marital inconstancy had to be narrated in such a manner that could justify the illicit passion between them. They sank into mutual attraction when King Mark entrusted Tristan with the task of bringing his to-be stepmother and queen from Ireland. Instead, it ended in “bringing jealousy and despair to the father’s heart.”

At any rate, the new output developed into potent independent corruptors and not at all without the appalling consequences. Francesca and her brother-in-law Paolo were driven to sin immediately after “the innocent young people are sitting together reading the story of Lancelot and Guinever.” Here du Maurier quotes Francesca relating how they modelled themselves on Lancelot describing the sudden arousal of their feelings on learning of what he did when “love constrained him.” In no way, however, could the fact that theirs was never a predetermined occurrence acquit them of the incest and betrayal, or dissuade the injured “lame” husband and older brother from killing them.

By mentioning a reversal of the fate of Paolo and Francesca and the rest of their companions by Dante, du Maurier denotes a much truer instance of the change inspired by Christian morals suggesting in decisive and equally derisive terms that they were to be raised to an honorary status according to the Greek standards. Therefore, instead of watching them shining up there in the sky, we can see Paolo, Francesca, Helen, Tristan “and the other band of doomed sinners” in the extremely loyal poet’s inferno duly chastised.

Three hundred years in the fire dwelling ought to have burnt off every print of the wrong doers on sixteenth-century literary practice. In du Maurier's view they had not. The Shakespearean treatment of the issue was positively different, but "the jealous husband plays his customary role, and though Desdemona, unlike Isolde and Guinever, is innocent of adultery, her spouse Othello smothers her with a pillow." Cleopatra's suicide and "the drowning of mad Ophelia in *Hamlet*" are two other examples of the "grim death" maintained in Shakespeare's tragedies. That they were meant to be tragedies is seemingly clearing him of du Maurier's blame. Still, she finds in *Romeo and Juliet* a romantic drama haunted by the Greek theme; for the satisfaction of the then spectators, a flavor of betrayal mixed with illicit passion was indispensable. The first is contrived by the sudden shift of Romeo's deadly adoration away from Rosaline to Juliet the very moment he sees her, the second by the way "this mutual attraction between the two young people is whipped to a point of frenzied passion by the knowledge that any alliance would be forbidden by their shocked and horrified parents." Their untimely death is the third essential element, for if it were naturally concluded with the happy wedding, "the whole point would have gone." That Shakespeare had to end his comic plays happily also reiterates du Maurier's outlook regarding the authorial tendency to act according to the desires of the audience as these plays, she mentions, had been formed for special groups seeking pleasure.

As far as modern drama is concerned, du Maurier reminds the attackers of modern "pornography" that modern dramatists are merely resuming the doing of that competent league of ancient pioneers, pointing out Aristophanes as the top figure in the list. She observes that the veiling of modern pornography is a technical tactic to avoid the risk of putting the



audience off had the actors performed in the nude, emphatically accusing playwrights of having no sense of romance.

Still more stressed is the lack of romance in modern fiction. It is marital misery that is furnished by Hardy or, as framed by du Maurier, “Here is the essence of Greek tragedy, but in nineteenth-century England.” The ever-distressed Tess had to pay a high cost for being a rape victim. She was rejected by her bridegroom, Angel Clare, on confessing her past experience to him. Ruined by the instant failure of their marriage, she “stabbed to death, while he slept, the man who had first possessed her,” then headed back to her beloved Angel Clare, succeeded in undoing his anger, and they were about to restore the matrimonial pleasure when, alas, she was caught by the police. Likewise, it was marital treachery and female failings that was furnished by Tolstoy and Flaubert. The message is scarcely dissimilar from that of the ancient tales; the heroines were as desperate and as sinful, the death was as violent in the two fictional works written by “the great novelists”. Anna Karenina “deceived her husband for a pretty worthless lover, and when he went to the wars preferred to throw herself under a train rather than live without him.” Illicit motives powered Madame Bovary to soak herself in all kinds of disgrace, “and in the end, deserted by her lovers, her still-loving husband absent, she died a slow and painful death from self-administered arsenic. A fine romance.”

In contrast to the sensual intensity so far discussed, the article now moves to the reverse side of the problem through this very brief but telling appraisal of Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, the one that “has been acclaimed as a supreme romantic novel”. Although no adulterous affair is ascribed to Heathcliff, the chief character, du Maurier thinks the label is inapplicable because Heathcliff is none of the sort. Hateful of the whole world, he

oppressed and distressed every member of his family not excluding his own “son”; that was a misdirected retribution for being abandoned by Cathy before she passed away leaving a baby from the husband she had chosen instead of him. Sufficiently unnatural, Cathy was the sole creature whom he singled out for love, an affection that much signifies in this regard. This is the idea lucidly worded by du Maurier:

There is more savagery, more brutality, in the pages of *Wuthering Heights* than in any novel of the nineteenth century, and, for good measure, more beauty too, more poetry, and, what is more unusual, a complete lack of sexual emotion. Heathcliff's feeling for Cathy, Cathy's for Heathcliff, despite their force and passion, have a non-sexual quality; the emotion is elemental like the wind on Wuthering Heights.

In the last paragraph, the injustice of the common definition is rejected with expressive irony: “A romance, according to my dictionary, is a tale ‘with scenes and incidents remote from everyday life,’ and a romancer a ‘fantastic liar.’ Well, fair enough.” Finally, we are brought to the closure of the present survey in the summing up of the illicit love scenario as offered by magazines, again in the name of romantic love: “jealousy, treachery, deceit, passion, ending all too often in a violent death.” (pp. 91 – 99)

It is curious the way some critics are strayed by their attempts at positivism. They are insupportable, we have already seen, the attempts to confine writers in rigid frames, to categorize literature, to monopolize the management of the literary creation process, to leave no room for any other points of view. Having such scruples, by no means unjustifiable, it is no wonder that the author would not abide by the illogical commandments ordained by critics. Nothing could be more ordinary than using her right to

opt out of the set designs, than refusing to supply readers with the rotten remnants of those far-off days. What is most unordinary is that her choice should be disrespected, bearing in mind that their damaging capacity is a matter of concern for her; that is demonstrated by the parenthetical remark on Paolo and Francesca's behaviour: "(which proves that reading about illicit love can corrupt the reader.)" (p. 94). The implied meaning, that reading about romantic love can reform the reader (the character and conduct of the reader), appears to be the motive principle of the novel. Not only does the writer of this study honour du Maurier's taking up the challenge of writing a novel that is amazingly in accordance with her beliefs—neither intimidated by adversary criticisms nor succumbing to the business of readership—but also prizes the creative ingeniousness of the narrative, the author's skill in surveying the inner recesses and outer horizons of the human soul, in touching upon the heart of the problems facing people throughout their perpetual progress to their ultimate destiny. Those qualities, and more, unobserved by her contemporary critics, have been unlocked for me when I stepped nearer, the article being my key tool.

#### **4.2.3.2. Du Maurier's Perception as Inferred from *Rebecca***

The illicitness, the flagrant violation of good moral values set by the Greek example is rejected with no little amount of disgust. On the other hand, the ethereal romance represented by Heathcliffe is considered out of tune with healthy emotion and normal behaviour. That is what has been made clear by the article. That, too, through attentive reading with the article perspective in mind, is what has been inferable from the novel. With the issue of morality figuring prominently in the pages of *Rebecca*, du Maurier's romance is centered in an area in between.

‘The perfect symmetry’ coming in the beginning of the novel is the leading phrase in suspecting the theory of romance hidden in the narrative. It is used metaphorically though. It does not refer to the exact similarity and sameness between the two halves of an object in the literal sense of the word, much as it suggests the exact match in size and quantity between two opposing qualities in a thing or a person. ‘Symmetry’ suggests the balance between the opposing forces working on and within the human self; between material and spiritual needs, between emotional and sensational motives, between the curbs of reason and the urges of passion, between perception and intuition, between determinism and free will, between worldly and heavenly existence. The ebb and flow of these powers, the interplay between the conflicting forces lie behind the human frailty and weakness. To reach a compromise is the challenge to be faced; without reconciliation between these powers we cannot gain equilibrium. In analogy to ‘the perfect symmetry’ of Manderley and the symmetrical human body suggested by ‘the line between . . . brows’, romance is the equilibrium, a state of stability, peace and tranquility. Originally, the human faculties exist in harmony, but they are frequently disturbed by faulty, arbitrarily imposed laws. The ability to preserve or restore the harmonious equilibrium makes the difference between a romantic and unromantic entity.

To put it in substantial and more-to-the point language, romance is the process of standing in a middle position or taking a middle course. A romantic hero/heroine stands in the middle between the two extremes, between those who are after full realization of worldly desires—a zero realization of fine qualities, and those who deny any realization of physical demands adhering to illusions of utopian ideals on the other extreme. He/she is principled, has a benevolent heart but fallible and prone to the minor

defects. Romantic love is a relationship between a man and a woman in which all the factors involved are equally and duly fulfilled. Physical as well as emotional attraction must be maintained. The requirements of the clay and matter must go hand in hand with those of the fine and light elements. It is a reasonable mutual adoration, original human feeling consolidated by intellectual sympathy, rationality, prudence, maturity, and respect, nourished by candour, honesty, devotion, loyalty, and faithfulness. Marriage is a prerequisite for the maintenance of the sought balance. In the legitimate, permissible, eternal bond, the animal instinct, which is essential for producing the offspring and preserving species, is tempered by the spiritual canons necessary for the maintenance of ethical and moral values. Only in strict family life can men and women dwell in rest, security and tranquility. Societies will disintegrate if they are not composed of family units with romantic love to bind their members. Without the family units, the result is utter chaos. There are bound to be difficulties, hindrances, and pain. By a firm will to conquer them, precious and tangible sensation of pleasure and happiness will be scored. The archenemy of romantic love is ignorance, ignorance born out of fear.

Romance is not a specific-century trend. It is constant and universal. The real threat is in fact posed by the agents of evil. Illicit love advocates would never be contented by the degradation they inflicted upon themselves, but they would go on intimidating the seekers of romance out of their equilibrium. Therefore, struggle is usually inevitable. Passive submission on the part of romancers can be as harmful as the cruelty of their enemies.

Du Maurier has won the battle. She has put *Rebecca* in the service of her objectives and has succeeded to attract the readers. Have her protagonists won the battle too? Let us have a look in the following section.

#### 4.2.4. Verification of the Third Hypothesis:

The traditional characterization of romantic writings as medieval, chivalrous, idealistic, passionate, exotic, purely imaginative, subjective, irrational, etc. does not fit *Rebecca*. It is romantic according to the author's own perception of romance.

In the traditional sense of romance, the label must be a misnomer. *Rebecca* is a long way from being a traditionally romantic story. The events neither happen in a fabulous or quixotic medieval castle nor do they belong to the medieval legend. The love story and the theme are in marvelous harmony with du Maurier's perception of the term. The characters are in no way motivated by idealism. There is no matter of falsification of life and language and nothing of extravagance or long disquisitions. Elaboration of these claims will constitute the next section.

##### 4.2.4.1. The Romantic Portrayal in the Novel

In the '*Rebecca notebook and other memories*' du Maurier says: "I continue to receive letters from all over the world asking me . . . and why did I never give the heroine a Christian name?" Her answer, interestingly, is "I could not think of one, and it became a challenge in technique, the easier because I was writing in the first person." (p.3) Because of this explanation, I nearly have shied away from conducting this analysis, but her statement that the 'fiction arose out of the unconscious' powered me on. It is her unconscious that I am exploring herein. However, her unconscious surfacing in the narrative displays such astonishing harmony with her 'conscious self' articulated in the previous article as well as in other ones in the book that trying to deal with some passages in the latter, I find myself a bit confused. Technically, the quoted material from the story is distinguishable by the use of single quotation marks with only the number of page between

parentheses; the font of the block quotation will be one point smaller with less line spacing.

As a matter of fact, the entire narrative cries a loud ‘no’. It reflects fundamental antipathy to these characteristics in theory as in practice. Both extremes of the traditional concept are opposed with fine subtlety. Therefore, it is time we examined the projections of her attitude in the pages of *Rebecca*. The following detailed analysis revolves around two axes: one, the unsuitableness of the definitions, the other, du Maurier’s rejection of traditional romance and how it is counteracted by the ‘middleness’, that is, the balanced, symmetrically structured romance—or simply, romance—portrayed in the setting, theme, romantic love, characterization, and style.

#### 4.2.4.1.1. **Setting**

The setting features a solid incongruity with the label not only in the traditional sense but also in its extreme subgenre ‘Gothic romance’ or ‘Gothic fiction’, which has become a fixture in the critical definition of *Rebecca*. While a typical traditional romantic setting connotes with unknown worlds, medieval castles, enchanted forests, and remote islands in remoter ages, bygone or future centuries, *Rebecca* is set in the third decade of the twentieth century, the time of the novel, in the west country of England. Manderley is modelled after Menabilly in Cornwall, a real—not ‘imaginary’—house in which du Maurier and her family had lived for over twenty-five years (1943-1969). Allowing for the few differences related to the story, we might say Manderley is Menabilly, “because my Cornish house would be empty, neglected, its owner absent, more like —yes, very like — the Menabilly near Fowey,” (du Maurier, 1993, p. 4). In Menabilly the “drive twisted and turned in a way that I described many years afterwards” (p.123). By ‘afterwards’ she means when she began writing *Rebecca* (See

*The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories* p.4). The comparison is not restricted to the empty, deserted Manderley pictured in the narrator's famous dream, but the description of the beautiful house scattered throughout the novel is almost identical with Menabilly, "[r]ather a Menabilly-sh description." (du Maurier, 1993, p. 13).

That "the house had been first built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth," (p. 122) and she had it mended, renewed, electricity and plumbing fixtures installed before they had moved to it, witnesses to the entwinement of reality and her fictional world. The house did exist in the twentieth century not only as a cultural artifact but also as a truly inhabitable place (they had to move out because their lease had ended); are we to be deluded into thinking it 'impossible' in fiction? If the fact that it is built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth accounts for the adjective 'gothic' referring to the Gothic architecture attached to the stories happening in such or similar buildings, it cannot justify the sticker 'Gothic romance', which is also referred to as 'Gothic horror', because it involves, among others, legendary gloomy haunted castles where monsters, ghosts, vampires, supernatural beings are living, or rather undead, where weird creatures are imprisoned in dungeons or moving around. Nowhere in the grounds of Manderley does the reader find these things incorporated, whether in the house, the woods, or any of the other parts of the entire estate. Not even the viewers of the Hitchcock adaptation of the story can see any. Manderley with its perfect symmetry is seemingly a symbol of romance:

Manderley was before us, serene and peaceful in the hollow of the lawns . . . with its perfect symmetry and grace, its great simplicity. . . I wished we did not have to degrade the house with our modern jiggles, so out- of-place and unromantic. (141–2, 220)



Its gothic architecture signals the balance between the past and the present besides standing as a concrete evidence of the timeless quality of the concept: 'Time could not wreck the perfect symmetry of those walls, nor the site itself, a jewel in the hollow of a hand.' (6) The phrase 'nor the site itself' is a revealing expression in the creation of the metaphorical meaning. The stone structure may undergo decay or even destruction by negligence or by evil deliberate action (the burning of Manderley at the end of the story), but the 'site itself' is indestructible; it paints a fine image of the permanency of romance as an abstract value. The phrase is an afterthought coming as a relief for the narrator after being tortured by the deplorable condition of Manderley. The change that 'had come upon' the drive raising pre-existing fears of losing the precious values it represents seems to have shaken her trust in its ability to stand the threatening evil, hence the consolatory recollection:

Nature had come into her own again and, little by little, in her stealthy, insidious way had encroached upon the drive with long, tenacious fingers. The woods, always a menace even in the past, had triumphed in the end. They crowded, dark and uncontrolled, to the borders of the drive. . . . The trees had thrown out low branches, making an impediment to progress; . . . I came upon it [the house] suddenly; the approach masked by the unnatural growth of a vast shrub that spread in all directions, and I stood, my heart thumping in my breast, the strange prick of tears behind my eyes. (5, 6)

Quite noticeable in the description just above of Manderley is the lack of that distinctive feature of traditional romance, the "deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature". If left alone and neglected, even the best elements of nature can develop into dreadful entities:

Scattered here and again amongst this jungle growth I would recognize shrubs that had been landmarks in our time, things of culture and grace, hydrangeas whose blue heads had been famous. No

hand had checked their progress, and they had gone native now, rearing to monster height without a bloom, black and ugly as the nameless parasites that grew beside them. (5–6)

The minor setting, a hotel at Monte Carlo, where their first encounter, love, and marriage have taken place, embodies the unreal associations of romance. The Hôtel Côte d’Azur is in France—romance is originally the “vernacular language of France”. It has an artificial and showy atmosphere, ‘that vast dining-room, ornate and ostentatious, the Hôtel Côte d’Azur at Monte Carlo;’ (14) ‘and I said something obvious and idiotic about the place being artificial’(20). Besides, the physical context of the hotel restaurant has had a curious effect on refreshing the heroine’s memory on those false impressions of medieval chivalry. While the hero is sitting there for the first time, she contemplates:

He belonged to a walled city of the fifteenth century, a city of narrow, cobbled streets, and thin spires, where the inhabitants wore pointed shoes and worsted hose. His face was arresting, sensitive, medieval in some strange inexplicable way . . . Could one but rob him of his English tweeds, and put him in black, with lace at his throat and wrists, he would stare down at us in our new world from a long-distant past – a past where men walked cloaked at night, and stood in the shadow of old doorways, a past of narrow stairways and dim dungeons, a past of whispers in the dark, of shimmering rapier blades, of silent, exquisite courtesy. (18)

Du Maurier’s theory that the same Greek tradition has been absorbed, reorganized, reshaped, and renamed by modern writers, is also refracted in the setting portrayal. It seems to be the purport of the following passage.

I saw in a paper the other day that the Hôtel Côte d’Azur at Monte Carlo had gone to new management, and had a different name. The rooms have been redecorated, and the whole interior changed. Perhaps Mrs Van Hopper’s suite on the first floor exists no more. Perhaps there is no trace of the small bedroom that was mine. I knew I should

never go back, that day I knelt on the floor and fumbled with the awkward catch of her trunk. (49)

Compare it with the following excerpts from *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories*:

Therefore today, when we upbraid the modern playwright for pornography, let us remember that the tradition is long-standing, handed on by masters of the game, Aristophanes surely being the supreme example. They did it, however with more finesse. (Du Maurier , 1993, p. 97) . . .

The great dramatists were never romantic, any more than the great novelists. . . . Here [Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*] is the essence of Greek tragedy, but in nineteenth-century England. (pp. 97–98)

A close observer may behold more of du Maurier's metaphors. One, that the heroine is destined for an irrevocable change out of her idealized state in the Hôtel Côte d'Azur: 'I knew I should never go back'. The other, the analogy with her conscious treatment of the proportions between the two extremes of traditional romance in *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories*; the illicit love takes seven and a half pages, the idealized form only a half page. This is indicated here by the heroine's 'small bedroom' as contrasted with the vast hotel. The probability of a complete annihilation of her room is a symbolic reference to the obliteration of ideals in the modern age: 'Perhaps there is no trace of the small bedroom that was mine.'

I cannot quit the setting before stating the significance of its readerly effect. The heroine's subjective response to each of the settings is such that it can be eligible to direct the reader's reaction to the entire romantic theme. The narrator shows a strong dislike of the Hôtel Côte d'Azur. Her discomfort there is strongly described. Meanwhile, she demonstrates a

wonderful fascination of Manderley. To wish, therefore, the ephemerality of the former, and to share in the narrator's relief for the potential permanency of the latter would be the reader's most natural response.

#### 4.2.4.1.2. Theme

Definitely, the novel is much more valuable than just producing a mere relief; a morally edifying message is hidden in its thematic exploration. The theme in general presents a call for embracing the romantic ideology of the novel. The story teaches us how to conquer our weakness and fears within ourselves and unite with others to overcome the external hindrances. It follows two main trajectories: the disturbance of romance on individual level represented by the heroine and the disturbance of romance on universal level symbolized by Manderley .

On the personal level, the heroine has succeeded in regaining her equilibrium and developing a romantic character after a painful experience and suffering. Her experience, adroitly devised in a romantic sort of plot, offers a valuable contribution in the production of mimetic art. Du Maurier draws up two contrasting patterns of the heroine's character making it easier for a keen reader to conceive, appreciate and possibly be stimulated by the positive transformation. At the beginning of the story, the heroine, in the restaurant of the Hôtel Côte d'Azur, 'that vast dining-room, ornate and ostentatious,'(14) appears 'all alone'(25), immersed in that disorganized and idealized world of hers, 'dressed in an ill-fitting coat and skirt and a jumper of my own creation,'(13) as she says. She is weakened by exhausting notions and afflicted by the extremity of her inclination: 'too sensitive, too raw . . . prim, silent, and subdued . . . hot-handed and self-conscious . . . tortured by shyness'. (14, 27, 28, 31)

At the end of the story, in a ‘little restaurant’, we see quite a different heroine who, now united with her husband, is capable of attending to him, confidently and prudently arguing, discussing, giving advice, enjoyably ‘planning the future idly in a hazy pleasant way.’ (389 – 393) She is quite free from that exacting sensitivity: ‘It was pleasant and comfortable sitting there and nothing mattered very much. . . . It was quiet and happy and friendly in the restaurant. Maxim and I were together.’ (390) She is ‘better and stronger.’ (392)

The contrast between the elementary picture, the heroine sitting in the ‘vast’ room of the Hôtel Côte d’Azur with its ‘ornate and ostentatious’ atmosphere and the ultimate one, the heroine lying ‘in the bare little hotel bedroom, comforting in its very lack of atmosphere’(8) is more explicitly defined:

I lay many hundred miles away in an alien land . . . The day would lie before us both, long no doubt, and uneventful, but fraught with a certain stillness, a dear tranquillity we had not known before. . . . I believe there is a theory that men and women emerge finer and stronger after suffering, and that to advance in this or any world we must endure ordeal by fire. This we have done in full measure, ironic though it seems. . . . [I] would willingly give my five senses if they could ensure us our present peace and security. . . . I have developed a genius for reading aloud. (8, 9)

(A full picture of the heroine’s transformation is dispersed among this analysis particularly ‘romantic love’ and ‘characterization’)

Collectively, on the universal level, romance is so tragically lost that romantic people find themselves strangers in the unromantic world. That explains why they now live ‘many hundred miles away in an alien land’. *Rebecca* explores the societal disintegration and the prevalence of chaos, which is attributed to the break-up of family ties: ‘I saw that the garden had

obeyed the jungle law' (6). Du Maurier deplores the loss of security and consolidation of which we deprived ourselves by sacrificing the extended family. 'Not an attractive house' is the phrase used to describe the separate house of the grandmother. 'I could tell in a glance it was the sort of a house that was aggressively well kept by a big staff. And all for one old lady who was nearly blind.' (188) Rather than being propped up with her children and surrounded by her grandchildren, the grandmother is 'propped up with pillows and surrounded by shawls.' (188) The dullness caused by the absence of kindred as confessed by the grandmother at the arrival of her granddaughter is contrastingly intensified by 'a drawing-room crowded with furniture' (188). It may be bright and easy-to-go road that is leading to the house. That is what may be understood from the 'pair of white gates and a smooth gravel drive' (188), but in the long run it is conducive to a drastic state of complete severing of family ties. That is denoted as well by the grandmother complaining that Roger, the great grandson, 'doesn't come and see' her and that she would not 'know him' if he does (189).

Du Maurier's anxiety about the strong effect of literature in moulding readers' moral, psychological and mental constitution and consequently controlling their behaviour vigorously reverberates in the novel. The cupid scene undoubtedly conveys the subtle purport of freeing and purifying arts from the hegemony of illicit love inherited from the deities of the Greek myth, of having it supplanted by romantic love. The heroine breaking the cupid 'that stands on the writing-table' (148) while she is piling the volumes of books on arts helps explicate du Maurier's desire to break the Greek idol and cut off its monopoly on the artistic scene. The books on *Arts* 'upset a little china cupid who had hitherto stood alone on the desk except for the candlesticks. He fell to the ground, hitting the waste-paper basket as he did

so, and broke into fragments.’(146) (As though to draw attention to the idea, the word ‘art’ is capitalized in this context while referring to them elsewhere it is written in small letters.) The china cupid was a wedding-present to Rebecca. The volumes are a wedding-present to the heroine: ‘He is thinking about Rebecca, I said to myself. He is thinking how strange it was that a wedding present to me should have been the cause of destroying a wedding-present to Rebecca.’ (155)

The ‘tiny statue of a naked faun’ outside the morning room, substantiates the idea of the Roman-Greek influential artistic and literary tradition with a not-veiled intent to entirely eradicate it. The faun or satyr is a hybrid legendary creature in the Roman and Greek mythologies; satyr is the term used in “Greek Mythology”. It is “[o]ne of a class of lustful, drunken woodland gods. In Greek art they were represented as a man with a horse’s ears and tail” (Oxford Dictionaries). For the Romans it was faun. “One of a class of lustful rural gods, represented as a man with a goat’s horns, ears, legs, and tail.” (Du Maurier has chosen the syncretized concept, referring to them as one). In the following passage, du Maurier charts the rooted presence of the Greek drama in the British literary and artistic scene:

There was a little clearing too, between the bushes, like a miniature lawn, the grass a smooth carpet of moss, and in the centre of this, the tiny statue of a naked faun, his pipes to his lips.

The crimson rhododendrons made his background, and the clearing itself was like a little stage, where he would dance, and play his part. . . . And I noticed then that the rhododendrons, not content with forming their theatre on the little lawn outside the window, had been permitted to the room itself. . . . they stood, lean and graceful, on the writing-desk beside the golden candlesticks. (89)

In this morning room which ‘looked out upon the rhododendrons. . . . blood-red and luscious,’ (88) there are ‘writing-paper, and pens, and ink,’ (87) and

Rebecca used to sit at her 'writing-desk', 'run her pencil' and write 'her letters . . . all written in that same curious, slanting hand . . . using the papers extravagantly' (92).

Then a forthright deprecation of the statue is declared later and a decision to discard it is made as part of a corrective plan: 'That little square lawn outside the morning-room with the statue of the satyr. I did not like it. We would give the satyr away.' (392)

An interrelated critical insight of the Greek-theme syndrome manifests itself in the narrative. The china cupid 'hitting the waste-paper basket' as it falls reveals not only the author's intent to dispose of the illicit theme but also her decided aversion to the depravity of the Greek deities as portrayed in the literary tradition. Their pornographic dramatization prompted by the authorial servility to the audience's tastes is satirized in a rather comically euphemistic language. The heroine hides her 'chemise and nightgowns' from the 'housemaid Alice [who] had been so superior' and she would not let her 'mend' them. (143) Catching sight of Alice's displeasure while holding one of the heroine's underclothes 'examining the plain material with its small edging of lace', the latter 'wrote quickly to a shop in London and asked for a catalogue of under-linen.' She is about to substitute her 'clean and neat' underclothes with models selected from the catalogue, but, no longer under the influence of Alice for having Clarice instead, she withdraws from such ridiculously submissive scheme thinking 'it seemed such a waste buying new underclothes for Clarice.' (143) The narrator then broods over the matter, 'I often wondered whether Alice told the others, and if my underclothes became a topic of conversation in the servants' hall, something rather dreadful, to be discussed in low tones'. (143) There is another interesting profile showing how the appeal of the illicit theme is



preserved by the ongoing influence of the ancient audience and the vulnerability of the succeeding generations to follow suit. This is gestured by the disappointment displayed by the *old* dog at seeing the heroine and discovering that she is not the Mrs de Winter she is looking for and how unthinkingly *its* behaviour is imitated by Jasper—the little one.

The old one lifted her muzzle at my approach, and gazed in my direction with her blind eyes, but when she had sniffed the air a moment, and found I was not the one she sought, she turned her head away with a grunt, and looked steadily into the fire again. Then Jasper left me, too, and settled himself by the side of his companion, licking his side. This was their routine. They knew, even as Frith had known, that the library fire was not lit until the afternoon. They came to the morning-room from long custom. (88)

The reader, I believe, will find no difficulty to see how the text does make it clear their practice, coming to the morning room (Rebecca's chosen one for writing and related purposes) instead of going to the library, is dictated by no reason other than 'routine' and 'long custom'. The old dog *gazing* with *blind eyes*' and identifying the heroine by *sniffing* the air suggest that its behaviour, like the ancient audience, is void of logic and grounded on sheer sensory experience.

The other symptoms, the inevitable dreadful end of the Greek tales, 'the grim death of the heroes', together with the concurrent betrayal, are likewise dealt with in the fine parody made through one of the narrator's muses when her husband leaves for London:

I dreaded his going. When I saw the car disappear round the sweep in the drive I felt exactly as though it were to be a final parting and I should never see him again. There would be an accident of course . . . I should find Frith white and frightened waiting for me with a message. The doctor . . . would say, 'I'm afraid you must be prepared for a great shock. . . . And Frank would come, and we would go to the hospital together. Maxim would not recognize me. I could see the

crowd of local people clustering round the churchyard at the funeral, and myself leaning on Frank's arm. (157)

Actually, Frank, Mr de Winter's agent, is a faithful and loyal friend of him. This ironic portrait reflects an awareness of the critical animosity the novel will incur as though in anticipation of which du Maurier is pretty near saying I am by no means incapable of supplying what may appeal to such critic audience, but it is a matter of choice, a creed, and I would stick to it. Thus, the heroine once more backs away from the sham tragedy and Robert comes with the good news: "A message from the club, Madam, to say Mr de Winter arrived ten minutes ago. . . . Just that he had arrived safely." (157) After that she wipes 'the biscuit crumbs from' her 'mouth' (158), and soon afterwards banishes the thought that she wants to be with no one, '[n]ot even Maxim' saying: 'No, I did not mean that. It was disloyal, wicked. It was not what I meant. Maxim was my life and my world.' (159)

Indubitably, du Maurier does not mean that. The heroes of *Rebecca* 'emerge finer and stronger after suffering,' (9) and they 'march in unison' within their eternal bond. The author is totally resolved against any consumption from the Greek leftovers prescribed by critics in favour of a fresh brand of romance with its moral calling. After the channels of communication have been opened between Mr and Mrs de Winter, a symbolic operation of change is immediately executed by the heroine starting with the air of the library, progressing to the flowers in the morning room and the food for the dining-room. 'The library windows were open wide' while they were sitting there together (301). She leaves them so in spite of the heavy rain when Maxim has gone to bury Rebecca. The next morning she proceeds to the morning room:

After breakfast I took my letters along to the morning-room. The room smelt fusty, the windows had not been opened. I flung them wide,

letting in the cool fresh air. The flowers on the mantelpiece were drooping, many of them dead. The petals lay on the floor.

I rang the bell, and Maud, the under-house-maid, came into the room.

‘This room has not been touched this morning,’ I said, ‘even the windows were shut. And the flowers are dead. Will you please take them away?’ (302)

Then taking her ‘scissors’ she goes into ‘the rose-garden’ to ‘cut some young buds’ but not before scratching out the items of food supervised by Mrs Danvers and giving orders for fresh stuff (302–3). Given that Mrs Danvers is the character who represents du Maurier’s critics (see characterization), the following quotation is more or less an explicit statement of du Maurier’s refusal of the literary Greek remains:

The menu for the day lay on the writing-desk. . . . I recognised them all from the buffet-supper of the night of the ball. We were evidently still living on the remains. This must be the cold lunch that was put out in the dining-room yesterday and I had not eaten. The staff were taking things easily, it seemed. I put a pencil through the list and rang for Robert. ‘Tell Mrs Danvers to order something hot,’ I said. ‘If there’s still a lot of cold stuff to finish we don’t want it in the dining-room.’ (302–3)

Mrs Danvers’ subsequent protest and attempt to impose the old protocol are composedly resisted:

‘I’m afraid it does not concern me very much what Mrs de Winter used to do,’ I said. ‘I am Mrs de Winter now, you know. And if I choose to send a message by Robert I shall do so.’ (303)

To further stress the novel divergence from the track of Greek drama, a moral pertinent to epistemological controversy drawn from the story posits a striking contrast with that from one of the greatest Greek works. For du Maurier, knowledge acquisition is essential for the attainment of happiness. The heroine regrets her ignorance to which she ascribes the fancy-dress mistake; six times she repeats: ‘I ought to have known’. (226) The discovery of the truth which has occurred the following day has instantaneously set her

in effective action. Even then, she laments her tardy stance: ‘Had I made one step forward out of my own shyness, Maxim would have told me these things four months, five months ago.’ (289) Her sensation has been that of ecstasy as the ‘jig-saw puzzle’ (279) is completed in her mind.

On the other hand, in Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, for instance, the discovery of the truth has been fatal. More than once his advisers warn him against his hunt for truth believing it an ominous act: the oracle, his wife, and the blind seer. It is misery and agony that the solving of the riddle laid by the cruel creature has given him. It has precipitated the catastrophic events of the play: his blindness, his mother wife suicide, and (in *Antigone*) the subsequent killing of his unfortunate children. “It is the irony of the play that in this [solving the riddle of the monstrous Sphinx] he is successful, but only by bringing utter catastrophe upon himself”. (Edith Hall, 2008, p. xx)

#### 4.2.4.1.3. Romantic Love

The love between the hero and the heroine satisfies all the requirements of a romantic love. Familial happiness is uppermost in the heroine’s mind from the very start. Immediately after she is left to herself after their initial meeting, becoming immensely depressed by her present situation in which she is going to play bridge with Mrs Van Hopper and her company, She contemplates: ‘Bridge does not come easily to a mind brought up on Snap and Happy Families’ (23). The following day, her family history being the topic of their private conversation, he is as appreciative of the romantic bond of her parents as she is enthusiastic.

Through the heroine’s description of their marriage proposal (made whilst having his breakfast in the busy hotel restaurant), du Maurier has been outspoken in specifying legitimacy and marriage ascendancy as major components in the definition of the brand of romance offered by the novel:

Romantic, that was the word I had tried to remember coming up in the lift. Yes, of course. Romantic. That was what people would say. It was all very sudden and romantic. They suddenly decided to get married and there it was. . . . I was to marry the man I loved. I was to be Mrs de Winter. . . . No, he had not said anything about being in love. Just that we would be married. Short and definite, very original. Original proposals were much better. More genuine. (61)

The directness of speech is beautifully adorned by the artistic illustration of the genuineness and spirituality of their union. Potential holiness is marked by the fact that her parents' love was 'a vital, living force, with a spark of divinity about it' (27). It is strengthened by the subtle reference to the scriptural image of the original couple (Adam and Eve). The state of innocent shamelessness typical of that of the couple's prior to their transgression, the not-ashamed Adam and Eve who were in direct contact with the Divinity is implicit in the disappearance of shyness during their first private conversation in the restaurant: 'My shyness fell away from me . . . and out they all came, the little secrets of childhood' (27). This is reiterated afterwards with more fineness in the touching scene when her husband tells of his painful experience with Rebecca and what it has led to: 'My reserve was broken and my shyness too. I stood there with my face against his shoulder.' (276–7) The dramatic repetition of the phrase seems to shed light on the significance of the metonymic use of shoulder for rib: 'He went on holding me close to his shoulder. . . . I knelt in front of him, my hands on his shoulders . . . my hands upon his shoulders' (277, 279). The heroine being 'aware of no feeling at all, no pain and no fear,' (279) added to the quietude and the closeness between them, the scene seems more like being set against the backdrop of the original, the genuine paradisiacal situation. That would be more comprehended when we consider the fact that the couple are

occupying the eastern wing of the house, which is ‘a lot lighter . . . and it has a lovely view of the rose garden.’ (75) ‘There’s something peaceful and happy about’ it (81).

Their mutual emotional attraction is another element of such genuine romantic love. Whilst sitting together, unusual to her taciturnly reflective disposition, the chatter has been exclusively the heroine’s:

There was a strange air of unreality about that luncheon, and looking back upon it now it is invested for me with a curious glamour. There was I, so much of a schoolgirl still, who only the day before had sat with Mrs Van Hopper, prim, silent, and subdued . . . For some reason I felt impelled to speak, because his eyes followed me in sympathy . . . My shyness fell away from me, loosening as it did so my reluctant tongue . . . We had been sitting there an hour and a half, and the conversation had been mine alone. (27, 28)

He, too, experiences a corresponding change; ‘He laughed, looking quite different, younger somehow and less detached.’ (27) So great has been his pleasure: “‘I’ve enjoyed this hour with you more than I have enjoyed anything for a very long time. You’ve taken me out of myself, out of despondency and introspection, both of which have been my devils for a year.’” (28)

Theirs, likewise, is a mutual physical attraction. The heroine’s first impression is that ‘his face was arresting’ (18). However, her feelings have been suppressed by her idealized leanings. His, too, have been repressed until later time: ‘He had not said anything yet about being in love . . . and any way those things are not easily said, they must wait their moment.’ (61) Their moment comes sometime subsequent to their marriage, nay, subsequent to his avowal of the truth and the ensuing removal of the barriers between them: ‘Here I am looking at the piece of curtain, and Maxim is kissing me. For the first time he is telling me he loves me.’ (280) Only after

having reached a state of equal understanding that they begin to ‘kiss one another, feverishly, desperately, like guilty lovers who have not kissed before.’ (371)

A statement, delivered at an earlier stage of their acquaintanceship, exhibits the intellectual sympathy existing between them. While sitting silently in the Hôtel Côte d’Azur, the heroine states: ‘our minds must have run in the same channel’ (26). Ultimately, they become of one mind: ‘no clash of thought or of opinion makes a barrier between us.’ (9)

There is the right balance of powers. The ‘great sky’ and ‘white road’ observed by the heroine on first approaching their home as husband and wife epitomize the balance between heavenly and earthly requirements: ‘a great blue sky above our head and a white road in front of us.’ (66) That they were sitting in the restaurant to ‘an orchestral background and a clatter of plates,’ (28) portrays the balance between materialism and beauty.

Here is a romantic connection that is cemented by reasonableness, faithfulness, and honesty. Reasonableness is indicated by the heroine thinking of ‘Snap and Happy Families’ immediately after they meet (23). Snap, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, is a “card-game in which players call out ‘Snap’ when two similar cards are laid down together” (1208). The hero and heroine constitute a compatible pair. They share similar circumstances: ‘We have both known fear, and loneliness, and very great distress.’ (9) Maxim says, “‘we’ve got a bond in common, you and I.’” (28) They have similar dispositions: ‘We both appreciate simplicity’ (9). The age gap between them is reciprocally satisfying; he is looking for innocence that was lacking in his past life with Rebecca, and she finds in him the father she is deprived of, and the brother she does not have. His proposal is as mature and prudent as it is honest, ‘[n]ot like other people.

Not like younger men who talked nonsense probably, not meaning half they said. Not like younger men being very incoherent, very passionate, swearing impossibilities.’ (61) They are the faithful, devoted and loyal couple that could ever be. The faithfulness is sustained by perfect mutual candour: ‘We have no secrets now from one another. All things are shared.’ (9) The romantic love provided by du Maurier is a blissful eternal bond: ‘but there are other moments too, when time, unmeasured by the clock, runs on into eternity and, catching his smile, I know we are together’ (9).

Though an experience of unqualified joy, their marriage is never an ideal one nor do they live in a utopian world. ‘Of course we have our moments of depression’. (9) There have been misery and pain with material obstacles not all insurmountable though. The marmalade and the tangerine the hero has been eating while he is asking the heroine to marry him token the mixture of pleasure and pain: ‘he said, going on with his toast and marmalade . . . and all the while he ate his tangerine, giving me a piece now and then, ... the tangerine was very sour. I had a sharp, bitter taste in my mouth’ (58, 59).

They have both experienced pain and fears. His life with Rebecca was an experience of bitterness and great suffering that extended ever after her death. His suffering is occasioned by an assumption amounting to certainty that Rebecca ‘would win in the end.’ (278) The heroine’s is born out of ignorance which is also a result of her fears. She has been possessed by her illusions that Maxim loved Rebecca and loves her still. Thus Rebecca’s shadow, safeguarded by Mrs Danvers, stood between them for some time. Furthermore, the heroine has had a hard time trying to cope with the life at Manderley with Mrs Danvers’ malicious attempts to incapacitate her.

One of the key messages of the novel is that romantic love requires much courage and confidence: ‘if he is stout-hearted, he may walk there with



impunity. But your timid fellow, your nervous poacher – the woods of Manderley are not for him.’ (12) When at a critical juncture the heroine takes decision to grow out of her cowardice and come close to her husband, the truth is disclosed and they join together to fight the dead Rebecca and her living conspirators.

The moment of crisis had come, and I must face it. My old fears, my diffidence, my shyness, my hopeless sense of inferiority, must be conquered now and thrust aside. If I failed now I should fail for ever. There would never be another chance. I prayed for courage in a blind despairing way, and dug my nails into my hands. (276)

#### 4.2.4.1.4. **Characterization**

In unfailing symmetrical structure, the characters amazingly cover the range of the romantic portrayal. Maxim moves along the centre. The heroine, on the extreme right end, represents the idealization of romance. Rebecca, on the extreme left end, represents the illicit love. Scattered here and there at either end are the other characters. The heroine starts to move towards Maxim as soon as he appears. Rebecca is dead but her influence is too strong to be ignored and her supporters are there, fierce fighters, forming obstacles to the progress of the heroine, who finally surmounts them to arrive at Maxim and ‘march in unison’ with him (9).

Maxim is the paragon of romance. Early in the narrative he is established in a more advanced position in the way of romance: ‘I could not keep up with him . . . and he was always just a little ahead of me.’ Throughout, balance is maintained in his character. This is made clear in the following contrast between him and Frank:

I saw Frank’s lips about to form the inevitable and idiotic remark about an angel passing overhead, when Lady Crowan, balancing a piece of cake on the edge of her saucer, looked up at Maxim who happened to be beside her. (200)

A right proportioned synthesis of human faculties in his character qualifies for establishing him the best model of a romantic hero and thus a best substitute for the traditional romantic heroic, or rather unheroic, figures. That is what may be read in the narrator's axial statement at his first appearance, only a few minutes after he enters the restaurant, 'and I noticed, faint as gossamer, the line between his brows.' (19) So amazingly suggestive and productive, the statement alone would suffice to sum up du Maurier's perception of a proper romantic hero. The graphic detail of balance in 'the line between his brows' and in 'his steady, well-shaped hands', (14) besides expressing a telling focus on the harmony of design and proportion in his person, epitomizes his ability not only to recognize the lines separating the conflicting forces working upon the human soul, but also to stir a middle course between them. Such textual connection of his presence with middleness remains a frequent trope. Looking at his table and talking of him at first sight, Mrs Van Hopper's fork happens to be 'pausing in mid-air.' (37) The 'half angry expression on his face' (82), his 'half amused, half angry' attitude (148), and 'his tone [being] a mixture of amusement and exasperation' (149) are not meant to be a mere literal manifestation of his power to moderate his temper, as I may argue, but a cleverly symbolic portrayal of an intrinsic gift: his ability to explore a half-way ground between two contradicting options. His character exhibits too an extra layer of balance, that between the innate and acquired attributes. Naturally endowed with high sense of order and harmony, his equilibrium is partly achieved through the exercise of patience and forbearance. In a conversation with his wife, the heroine, he points out her shyness with people, and advises her to 'make an effort to conquer it.' (151) He makes it clear that his is acquired through training and self-discipline, 'it's not a question of

bringing up, as you put it. It's a matter of application. You don't think I like calling on people, do you? It bores me stiff. But it has to be done' (151–2). He places high value on social conventions and neighbourly duties though without lowering the motivations of individual psychic demands. He is, in the words of the heroine, 'punctilious in these matters and would not spare me,' (129) possessing an outstanding gift in receiving and entertaining his guests. 'Maxim was always at the other end of the room . . . playing the perfect host in his own inimitable way,' (200) but he would relish a walk out with his wife to the beach and would '[t]hank God' when his guests leave at an appropriate time to satisfy such desire (112). Practical-mindedness and competence in "[r]unning a place like Manderley," which, he says, "is a full-time job", (84) are never allowed to triumph over his tenderness or to render him negligent of his familial duties. He is a loving grandson, a devoted brother, and a caring husband: 'looking up now and again from his task to smile at me . . . Now and again he looked up at me and smiled, and then returned to his letters' (14, 73). With him the usually unresolved tension between the stress of work and one's comfort and relaxation can be brought under control; early in the morning he would be 'up and dressed and writing letters, even before breakfast' (84). In the evening, he would set off to 'smell the azaleas' with his wife (114). We see them 'playing on a beach' in the Happy Valley, throwing stones for the dog to retrieve, flinging 'ducks and drakes,' and fishing 'for driftwood.' (116) He possesses, too, an amazing power of keeping his equanimity even at the most difficult moments: 'and while I, sick and giddy, clung to the seat with both hands, he manoeuvred the car gently, very gently . . . I thought I should go mad. I kept my temper though.' (33, 332)

The overall depiction of Mr de winter reveals a kind of reformatory strategy to create a hero quite distinct from what du Maurier views as viciously corruptive subversives presented by traditional romance. Here we have a well-principled and morally upright hero as recalled by his name (according to Oxford Dictionaries, maxim means a well-known phrase that expresses something that is usually true or that people think is a rule for sensible behaviour). An aura of greatness is also sensed in his full name, Maximilian. In (MEANING-OF-NAMES.COM), Maximilian means “The greatest”. Initially, we are moved by impressive ‘unaffected’ gallantry and considerateness, matched only by his natural modesty and kindness. His behaviour towards the heroine the first time he sees her has been graciously polite, ‘He rose to his feet at once’ at her approach although she is usually ignored by others for reasons of age and social inferiority (17). Despite his wealth and social status, he offers his help and begins to ‘mop the cloth’ on her table in the hotel restaurant when she has accidentally knocked the vase (25), then he disclaims the importance ascribed to him by Mrs Van Hopper (26). Like courtesy, generosity and compassion are in no way occasional acts but stable traits in his character. Not only does he hasten to help the people in the stranded ship but also gives orders to the servants to be ready to receive the passengers in the house (259). He is held with much regard and esteem by his employees, servants, and the people in the county:

‘Maxim is splendid at anything like this,’ said Frank. ‘He always gives a hand if he can. You’ll find he will invite the whole crew back to Manderley, and feed them, and give them beds into the bargain.’

‘That’s right,’ said the coastguard. ‘He’d give the coat off his back for any of his own people, I know that. I wish there was more like him in the county.’ (266)

‘He is wonderfully patient and never complains,’ (8) and he is a man of his word, punctual and honest: ‘He was ready, as he had promised, in five minutes.’ (55) His merits include courage, unselfishness, and infectious confidence: ‘Maxim himself came to my side now, putting his arm through mine, giving me confidence.’ (99)

Most assuredly, having those attributes does not mean that he is infallible or immune to human errors. His sister has this opinion: ‘Maxim loses his temper once or twice in a year, and when he does – my God – he *does* lose it.’ (105) The heroine says: ‘I could see him moody, difficult, irritable perhaps, but not angry as she [Beatrice] had inferred, not passionate.’ (114) Either way, owing to his principled approach and in a tireless pursuit of human excellence, he would spare no effort to conduct himself with the utmost propriety by rectifying and eschewing any repetition of his lapses. ‘Never for a moment did he interrupt or glance at his watch’ while listening to Mrs Van Hopper; ‘it was as though he had set himself a standard of behaviour, since the original lapse when he had made a fool of her in front of me, and clung to it grimly rather than offend again.’ (21) Although Mrs Van Hopper has been hardly aware of the deserved ‘lash of his reply’ elicited by her tactless vulgarity (19), and in spite of his redemptive manner, he sends a note to the heroine to apologize for being ‘rude’ (23), and later confesses that his ‘manners were atrocious.’ (25) To yet prove a corrective mechanism of his person, the note has well prompted the initiation of the heroine’s transformation.

The nameless heroine, wearing ‘a shapeless mackintosh’ in her first bridal journey to Manderley (66), actually stands for the idealization of romance. To recall the definitions of traditional romance cited earlier in the present chapter, it requires little effort to grasp the figurative representations

of the traditional romance in the creation of her character. The very namelessness and shapelessness are evidently the tropes for the “fabulous or fictitious character; having no foundation in fact.” They are certainly the tropes for the “reaction against . . . physical materialism”. Her apprehension about the prospect of the life at Manderley, her wish for ‘that way of living,’ which is ‘easier . . . demanding no set standard’ (67), is the literary articulation of “a rejection of the precepts of order”. No one who reads the novel can miss the deficiency in “order, calm, harmony, [and] balance” in the heroine’s actions (gaucherie, clumsiness, and an occasional stumbling walk and talk) and appearance:

I can remember as though I wore it still my comfortable, ill-fitting flannel suit, and how the skirt was lighter than the coat through harder wear. My shabby hat, too broad about the brim, and my low-heeled shoes, fastened with a single strap. (31)

In some measure, the ‘self-conscious’ heroine (28) stands for the “egocentric plagued by guilt and remorse”. In greater measure, the use of the first person suggests “the individual, the subjective, . . . the personal”.

In approximately every detail of the heroine’s character, the inclination of the author to incarnate the concept in its idealized aspect is scarcely unobservable. There is the brilliant emblematic emphasis on “the visionary” in the heroine ‘gazing at’ her ‘Revelation suit-case’ (53). There is the yearning for the heroism of the tales of medieval chivalry in her tendency to initially invest Maxim with such attributes, in her intention to sketch a house of which window ‘might have held a presence medieval’ (23), and in the profile she has sketched of a man she had seen in a gallery with ‘a pointed beard and lace at the throat, as the painter had done, long ago in a different time.’ (23) There is the unceasing solitary dreaming; the larger part of the novel’s body is occupied by her inner soliloquies and monologues and she is

constantly engrossed in utopian meditations, fancied scenes and imagined conversations. There is the “wild or wanton exaggeration”: ‘and I wondered how it was he spoke so casually, as though the matter was of little consequence, a mere adjustment of plans. Whereas to me it was a bomb-shell, exploding in a thousand fragments.’ (59) She admits that she has been oversensitive, that hers is ‘the hypersensitive behaviour of a neurotic’ (128). While making his concise proposal, her ‘mind ran riot’ (58). There is the celestial: ‘You’ve got angle’s eyes’ (162). There is the transcendental; the transgression of spirituality, her sense of immortality excited by the beauty of nature while they are in the Happy Valley seems as a specimen of the pantheistic tenet associated with the Romantic Movement: ‘The spell of the Happy Valley was upon me. (115)

It is by such romantic portrait that du Maurier’s detractors pulled themselves in the wrong direction by their cursory reading. It is anti-traditional-romantic leaning that du Maurier is registering through the heroine’s characterization. There are three corroborative evidences to this hypothesis. In the first place, the heroine’s conduct and personality in general have been the subject of a steady self-criticism:

I was wrong of course, morbid, stupid; this was the hypersensitive behaviour of a neurotic, not the normal happy self I knew myself to be. But I could not help it. I did not know what to do. My shyness and gaucherie became worse, too, making me stolid and dumb when people came to the house. (128)

The pages of the novel are abundant in such critical indignation. She depreciates her talent, dislikes her lack of poise, and resents her submissive acquiescence: ‘Not for the first time I resented the part that I must play in her schemes.’ (16) She continually expresses uneasiness about her appearance, her shyness, her lack of confidence, her lack of courage. Those

worries are scarcely without aspiration for different circumstances: 'I wished I was older, different. . . . I wished he were less remote; and I anything but the creature that I was in my shabby coat and skirt, my broad-brimmed school-girl hat.' (24, 36) Then there is the fact that these qualities have constituted a source of inner turmoil, pain, and great suffering, and have contributed to distance her from her husband for a considerable period. They have threatened to destroy both her marriage and life by emboldening Mrs Danvers to carry her intimidating and obstructive endeavours too far: 'it was my lack of poise of course that made such a bad impression on people like Mrs Danvers.' (13) The last and most significant evidence is the carefully worked, gradual, and systematic transformation the heroine has undergone throughout the novel: 'I am very different from that self who drove to Manderley for the first time, hopeful and eager, handicapped by a rather desperate gaucherie and filled with an intense desire to please.' (13)

Three important factors have occasioned the transformation: Maxim's influence, the heroine's own mutability, and the discovery of the truth. Maxim has acted as the initiator of the change. When he sends the note-paper with the lift-boy, her name 'spelt correctly, an unusual thing', (23) she experiences a sudden reversal of feeling towards the profile of the man she has just sketched:

When he [the lift-boy] had gone I put the note away in my pocket, and turned once more to my pencil drawing, but for no known reason it did not please me any more; the face was stiff and lifeless, and the lace collar and the beard were like props in a charade. (23)

'The wind was too high for sketching' the house having a medieval look when he takes her there (32). This might serve as a reference to the change triggered by his company; traditionally the wind stands for the vital breath. It



is as though Maxim's presence provides her with a new life, force, energy, and vigour, all are associations of the wind.

That girl who, tortured by shyness, would stand outside the sitting-room door twisting a handkerchief in her hands, while from within came that babble of confused chatter so unnerving to the intruder – she had gone with the wind that afternoon. She was a poor creature, and I thought of her with scorn if I considered her at all. (31–2)

The second factor, the heroine's mutability, which lies in her ambivalent nature, has facilitated the change. Many of those qualities are not intrinsically hers. That is explained by the self-criticism I have cited before, 'this was the hypersensitive behaviour of a neurotic, not the normal happy self I knew myself to be.' That displeasure with her condition, for instance, and how she 'wished' that Maxim 'were less remote' betray an unconscious recognition of the unsuitability of the illusionary image of his belonging to a 'distant past' with which she has invested him only the previous day, just as it underlies a preference for the moderation of the true romanticism. Honesty, sincerity and modesty are only a few of several merits to disclose an ethical idiosthenia. Her 'hair hanging lank and straight' (174) symbolizes the rectitude, the uprightness that is characteristically hers. The way she loathes Mrs Van Hopper's snobbery and inanity evinces a sound critical instinct for decorum and moral conduct. So is her perceptive and mature assessment of the other characters. She is introspective beyond her age and experience, resilient like any who are in their formative years. That accounts for the rapidity with which a decisive turn in her behaviour and attitude has taken place after her knowledge of the truth, the third factor.

Knowledge has given the impetus to the heroine's transformation. It is in no time that a different picture of the heroine has been unveiled. She promptly begins to discuss the future possibilities and suggest whatever

plausible solutions could be attempted. In less than twenty four hours we see her, free of that diffident timidity, assuming her role as the mistress of the house reproaching the maid for neglecting the daily duties, firmly instructing the servant to change the food menu prepared by Mrs Danvers, opposing the latter's attempts to impose the old routine:

‘I’m afraid it does not concern me very much what Mrs de Winter used to do,’ I said. ‘I am Mrs de Winter now, you know. And if I choose to send a message by Robert I shall do so.’ (303)

She is no longer the confused young girl who has been ‘frightened, tearing at bitten nails, uncertain which way to go, what star to follow.’ (105) she has rapidly developed into a supervising and competent hostess who naturally converse with the guests:

I led the way into the hall . . . We all talked about the weather. . . . I judged the time had come to push back my chair.

‘Shall we go into the garden?’ I said.

We all stood up, and then I led the way to the terrace. (306, 311–2)

It may be hard to believe how instantly she has outgrown her mental and psychological infancy as expressed by Maxim, in a sorrowful tone though:

‘But you. I can’t forget what it has done to you. I was looking at you, thinking of nothing else all through lunch. It’s gone forever, that funny, young, lost look that I loved. It won’t come back again. I killed that too, when I told you about Rebecca. . . . It’s gone, in twenty-four hours. You are so much older . . .’ (313)

Before a week has passed, she is so different from the unpracticed clumsy girl. With due equilibrium, she is now ‘putting things methodically in [her] suit-case.’ (373) She soon develops a stable mentality. ‘The motion of the car was rhythmic, steady,’ she says ‘and the pulse of my mind beat with it.’ (393) Eventually she becomes the perfect wife who fits du Maurier’s perception of a genuinely romantic heroine.

The deceased villain, Rebecca, represents the illicit love in that she bears a startling resemblance, both literally and figuratively, to this Greek literary tradition. Primarily, the influential power possessed by Rebecca, by no means abated by her death, leaves no doubt of her character having been delineated deliberately to embody the lengthy dominance of the tradition. What could be more suggestive of such power than having her, a dead villain, selected to be the eponymous character? What is more, the particulars of her characterization do marvelously feature close association with the potency that is implied by the novel appellation. The words she had written on the title-page of the poetry book remain energetic and powerful even after it has been torn into little pieces:

How alive was her writing though, how full of force. Those curious, sloping letters. The blob of ink. Done yesterday. It was just as if it had been written yesterday. I took my nail scissors from the dressing-case and cut the page, looking over my shoulder like a criminal.

I cut the page right out of the book. . . . I tore the page up in many little fragments and threw them into the waste-paper basket. Then I went and sat on the window seat again. But I kept thinking of the torn scraps in the basket, and after a moment I had to get up and look in the basket once more. Even now the ink stood up on the fragments thick and black, the writing was not destroyed. (62)

Her traces are everywhere in the house. Although she is dead, she still rules there; her orders are sustained through Mrs Danvers.

Brutality, immorality and sinfulness stamping the Greek theme in du Maurier's perspective are inherent attributes of Rebecca. 'And she doesn't come kindly,' so boasts Mrs Danvers. She goes on:

She had the strength of a little lion too. I remember her at sixteen getting up on one of her father's horses, a big brute of an animal too, that the groom said was too hot for her to ride. She stuck to him, all right. I can see her now, with her hair flying out behind her, slashing at him, drawing blood, digging the spurs into his side, and when she

got off his back he was trembling all over, full of froth and blood.  
“That will teach him, won’t it, Danny?” she said, and walked off to  
wash her hands as cool as you please. (254)

The rhododendrons at the window of her morning-room are ‘blood-red and luscious’ (88). She had all the licentiousness of the Greek heritage. ‘She was vicious, damnable, rotten through and through. . . . incapable of love, of tenderness, of decency.’ (283) The heroine has had to ‘set fire to the fragments’ of the page carrying those letters and to cleanse her hands to feel ‘better’ and to have ‘the clean new feeling’ (62). Whilst she is being buried in the crypt, the heroine, in the house, walks to the library window to breathe the ‘clean air.’ (334) ‘Those curious, sloping letters . . . in that long, slanting hand’ (62, 130) token her non-uprightness. Her serpentine ways are directly expressed by the idiot Ben: ‘Tall and dark she was . . . she gave you the feeling of a snake.’ (162) The uttering of her name, says the heroine in confirmation of Rebecca’s corruptive power, ‘acted upon me like a stimulant.’ (135) It is ‘hot and shaming as a sin confessed.’ (248) To think of her is to foster a ‘thought forbidden, prompted by demons.’ (62) To imply a full realization of the clay, the earth component, she refers to her burial as an act of putting ‘[d]ust to dust.’ (334) To yet confirm a zero employment of the light elements, she continues: ‘It was not Rebecca who was lying in the crypt, it was dust. Only dust.’ The forbidden relationship between Rebecca and her cousin Favell, a reminder of Clytemnestra’s, one of those sinners of the Greek tales, brings out their concomitant betrayal, deception, and treachery. The married Rebecca ‘held clandestine meetings’ with her cousin in the ‘cottage on the beach’ at Manderley (354), and used to live with other men in her flat in London.

If anything could be more indicative of Rebecca’s kinship to the Greek illicit passion, it is her unusual attractiveness and popularity. She ‘was the

most beautiful creature (142). ““Yes, she was a very lovely creature. So full of life.”” (131) ““She was so tremendously popular, you know. Such a personality.”” (129) ‘Of course she was always very amusing,’ Beatrice says, ‘[s]he had an amazing gift, Rebecca I mean, of being attractive to people; men, women, children, dogs.’ (195) See how her talents corresponds to Greek storytellers’, their wit, cultivation, their ability to please their audience:

‘She was clever of course,’ he said. ‘damnably clever. No one would guess meeting her that she was not the kindest, most generous, most gifted person in the world. She knew exactly what to say to different people, how to match her mood to theirs. Had she met you, she would have walked off into the garden with you, arm-in-arm, calling to Jasper, chatting about flowers, music, painting, whatever she knew to be your particular hobby; and you would have been taken in, like the rest. You would have sat at her feet and worshipped her.’ (283–284)

Maxim’s grandmother asks Beatrice: ““Why did not Maxim bring Rebecca? I’m so fond of Rebecca. Where is dear Rebecca?”” . . . “I want Rebecca,” . . . “what have you done with Rebecca?”” (194) Rebecca was immensely endeared by the grandmother:

‘When I married her I was told I was the luckiest man in the world,’ he said. ‘She was so lovely, so accomplished, so amusing. Even Gran, the most difficult person to please in those days, adored her from the first. “She’s got the three things that matter in a wife,” she told me: “breeding, brains, and beauty.” And I believed her, or forced myself to believe her. But all the time I had a seed of doubt at the back of my mind. (284)

I must remind the readers of du Maurier’s opinion with regard to the ancients’ fondness of the Greek tales before I quote Beatrice talking of her grandmother’s (representing here the ancient audience). My intent is to draw attention to the connectivity between the author’s unconscious and conscious mind. Du Maurier writes: “Here was the stuff that made our ancestors slap

their thighs and roll in their seats” (*The Rebecca Notebook and Other memories*, 94). Beatrice says her grandmother ‘used to rock with laughter at whatever Rebecca said. Of course she was always very amusing, and the old lady loved that. . . . I suppose the old lady has never forgotten her.’ (195) The *old* dog has never forgotten her:

The old one lifted her muzzle at my approach, and gazed in my direction with her blind eyes, but when she had sniffed the air a moment, and found I was not the one she sought, she turned her head away with a grunt, and looked steadily into the fire again. (88)

The discrepancy between her wicked deeds and her angelic appearance evokes the duplicity of the Greek deities.

They all believed in her down here, they all admired her, they never knew how she laughed at them behind their backs, jeered at them, mimicked them. I can remember days when the place was full for some show or other, a garden-party, a pageant, and she walked about with a smile like an angel on her face, her arm through mine, giving prizes afterwards to a little troop of children (286).

Maxim says ““she was not even normal.”” (283) ‘The X-rays showed a certain malformation of the uterus,’ so states the doctor (383). The two facts summarize du Maurier’s idea of the degeneration of romance in the Greek literary tradition.

Although they side with romance, Beatrice, Giles, and Frank represent some deviation from it. That is measured by the extent of their commitment to the moral order of the story as well as of their loyalty to Maxim and Manderley. To which extent they are supportive of the heroine and averse to Rebecca, is another criterion.

Beatrice, Maxim’s sister, has had a strong grasp of romance because she was born and bred in Manderley, but this has been partly undermined and buried by long years of separation. The heroine meditates:

It seemed strange that Beatrice had lived here for so many years. . . . She had been born here, bred here; she knew it all, she belonged here more than I should ever do. She must have many memories locked inside her heart. I wondered if she ever thought about the days that were gone, ever remembered the lanky pig-tailed child that she had been once, so different from the woman she had become . . . another person. (110)

She is kind, sincere, and devoted to her brother. She loves the heroine: 'I can see Beatrice, dear friendly tactless Beatrice, watching me from her partner's arms, nodding encouragement' (233–4). She is far from being an admirer of Rebecca. 'Bee did not like Rebecca', says her brother, 'I believe, in her funny abrupt, downright way she saw through her, guessed something was wrong.' (288)

Her downright way, which she has no scruples about calling it tactlessness, causes her to stray from the recommended middle course. She drives 'rather too fast.' She 'took every corner at an acute angle.' (185) While 'nodding encouragement, the bangles [are] jangling on her wrists, the veil slipping continually from her overheated forehead.' (233–4) With her, gratification of personal feelings surpasses social considerations; her behaviour is uninhibited by social restraint or concern about others. She believes in speaking her mind. "'There's no reserve about me. . . . Tact never was my strong point,'" she admits (105, 112). She would not hesitate to tell her nearly blind grandmother of old Marksman getting 'blind in both eyes' (190). Her intuitive impulses are triumphing over intellect. 'She never opens a book if she can help it.' (146) That her son 'goes up to Oxford' is '[a]wful waste of time' for her (185). Her character marks a relative deficiency in aesthetic activity; she is 'a hard, rather practical person,' (35) and painting for her is not objectionable "'on a wet day when there's nothing better to do.'" (101)

Her husband, Giles, is also a good fellow, but the symmetry of his existence has somewhat been disfigured. He is sociable and sympathetic: 'now and again he remembered my existence and flung me a remark at hazard.' (102) He is sincere: 'I blessed him for his pathetic simple gesture of understanding and sincerity' (234). He is pleasant and kind-hearted, yet to consider the narrator's diction, one can hardly ignore the deviation in the direction of the animal instinct: Giles stretched out an enormous paw and wrung my hand; squeezing the fingers limp, genial eyes smiling from behind horn-rimmed glasses. (98) Dancing with the heroine at the Fancy Dress ball, he, 'with dog-like sympathy and kind heart would take no refusal, but must steer me . . . as he would one of his own horses at a meet.' (234) It seems more likely that he could not help succumbing to Rebecca's seduction when she tried on him (288). The requirements of the clay rather than of the light elements are more fulfilled; he is fat. (107) He is 'more concerned with food than with the conversation,' (102) and when he does converse, he discusses the standard of cooking at Manderley. On a telephone call, he reports to his wife that London's dinner has '[p]oor food' (183). At the last 'Fancy Dress' he 'came as a cook' (215).

A symmetrical disturbance in the other direction of romance is afforded through Frank Crawley, the agent of the estate who is a good fellow too. His character presents an inclination towards the idealization of romance. In some aspects he is more like the heroine. 'We were both dull. We neither of us had a word to say for ourselves. Like to like. . . . There was a funny reserve in his manner as he said this, a certain shyness that reminded me of my own. ' (134) He understands and appreciates her good qualities: 'and I turned to the agent . . . in whose eyes I read relief as he looked upon me.' (99) He believes that she is 'so good for' Maxim (141), and is ever ready to



help her. To Maxim, he has unrestricted faithfulness: 'I realized that his loyalty to Maxim was such that he would not let himself be drawn into a discussion, even with me.' (327) He resisted Rebecca's attempts to seduce him (288). '[W]hat a good fellow he was, so thorough and reliable, and devoted to Manderley.' (114) A bachelor, 'a colourless, rather thin man' (99), he (in contrast to Giles) sacrifices the demands of the flesh to delude himself into thinking he can live like an angel: 'and Frank gallantly juggling with scones and angel cake . . . and I saw Frank's lips about to form the inevitable and idiotic remark about an angel passing over head' (200). His social duties have ascendancy over his individual dues. "'We're very conventional down here,' he states (203). On social occasions he is 'left to minister to the common wants of the herd.' (200) He is (in contrast to Beatrice) invariably tactful, considerate and formal; his remarks are always 'safe, conventional, very correct.' (134) The heroine loves 'his little solemn air of gallantry.' (203) Yet, she does not approve the excess of his social conventionality: 'How pompous and stupid it sounded. I wished Frank would not always be so terribly correct.' (203)

Terribly incorrect, on the side of the illicit love, are Mrs Danvers and Favell. The phonetic resemblance of their names to *danger* and *evil* is quite eloquent of their roles in the story. They are the agents of evil, advocates of illicit love, conspirators against and big threat to romance:

The living villain, Mrs Danvers, the old housekeeper, who brought up Rebecca, symbolizes the critics since she identifies with many—if not all—of their attributes. Let us take as a starting point those incessant attempts to thwart the romantic progress and safeguard the illicit tradition, watchfulness being a necessary qualification for that:

A black figure stood waiting for me at the head of the stairs, the hollow eyes watching me intently . . . I wondered why she must go on standing there, watching me, her hands folded on her black dress. . . . she was like a shadow standing there, watching me, appraising me with her hollow eyes, set in that dead skull's face. . . . watching me through the open door to the west wing, and that diabolical smile on her white skull's face (76, 78, 80, 251).

Mrs Danvers' perseverance to keep Rebecca's influence by keeping her things: orders, menu, clothes, etc., along with her malicious endeavors to preclude the heroine's, parallels the critics' struggle to preserve the Greek tradition and *dismiss* other writings regardless of their value. Fanatical blind love for Rebecca, results in a groundless hostility and prejudice against the heroine:

I met her eyes, dark and sombre . . . I found myself held by those eyes, that had no light, no flicker of sympathy towards me. . . . How dark and sombre they were in the white skull's face of hers, how malevolent, how full of hatred. (78, 181)

Her hatred is explicitly announced later on: "“Why did you ever come here?” she said. “Nobody wanted you at Manderley. We were all right until you came. Why did you not stay where you were out in France?”” (251–2) Mrs Danvers' obsession by set standards of conduct qualifies her to be a perfect representative of critics. Her stiff conventionality is expressed figuratively in her ‘prominent cheek-bones and great, hollow eyes . . . a skull's face, parchment-white, set on a skeleton's frame.’ (72) Her conduct corroborates that quality: ‘she bade me welcome to Manderley, in the name of herself and the staff, a stiff, conventional speech rehearsed for the occasion’. (72) See how clearly du Maurier confirms my view pertaining to the representative role of those three women:

Now that I knew the reason for Mrs Danvers' dislike and resentment it made things a little easier. I knew it was not just me personally she

hated, but what I represented. She would have felt the same towards anyone who had taken Rebecca's place. (143)

The fuss she makes about the breaking of the china cupid along with her insistence to repair it, emphasizes the symbolic reference to the critical persistence to preserve the Greek tradition: "Perhaps Mrs de Winter was not aware of the value of the ornament?" (149) Identical to the critics, her sense of ostensible superiority is coupled with an apparent willingness to despise, intimidate and boss those who seem inferior to her. 'She would have looked at me in scorn,' says the heroine, 'smiling that freezing, superior smile of hers' (12). Like critics, she delights in classification and rating:

I did not know why she must speak with such an undercurrent of resentment, implying as she did at the same time that this room, where I found myself to be installed, was something inferior, not up to Manderley standard, a second-rate room, as it were, for a second-rate person.' (80)

She likes to dominate and have the control over everything. This quality is stressed metaphorically by the repetitive use of the phrase 'her hand on the handle of the door'. While talking to the heroine, she 'was standing with her hand on the handle of the door.' (79) Once more, she 'hesitated by the doorway, her hand on the handle of the open door.' (79–80) Elsewhere she 'continued watching me, her hand on the handle of the door.' (207) Maxim says 'she's a bit of a bully to the staff.' (82) Even Favell, her own ally, likens her to a lion saying he 'bearded Danny in her den.' (169)

Jack Favell, Rebecca's cousin, is another sample of the traditional romantic profligates. Beatrice describes him as an 'awful bounder.' (187) Maxim says he 'had a black, filthy record.' (290) He is an accomplice in treachery and betrayal. He had illicit relationship with Rebecca. His 'low car,' (164) which he hides behind the trees during his secret visit to Mrs Danvers, further denotes his licentious and treacherous leanings. He is 'a

big, hefty fellow,’ an indication of the encroachment of the clay matter upon the light elements.

#### 4.2.4.1.5. Style

For all its simplicity, the style stands out as the chief excellence of the novel. It is curious how each sentence is pregnant with thought. We have already seen how dexterously the speculative thoughts that penetrate the dialogues and descriptions are used in the service of characterization and theme. Du Maurier’s rendering of Manderley, for instance, has made it a captivating idea, a lovely character, a place with an exquisitely charming presence in which drinking tea could be a memorable experience. In this brief analysis, however, I will stick to the general romantic enterprise of the novel; my aim is to cast some light on the symmetrical pattern sustained through a balanced mode of expression.

The oxymoronic expressions such as ‘positive dislike . . . painful pleasure . . . poor devil’ (79, 129, 307) form one of the devices for this phenomenon. More significant is the frequent use of antithesis. The phrase ‘up and down’, for example, is used thirty-six times, backwards and forwards is repeated eleven times. Here are other examples (emphases mine):

[A] *single* strap. A *pair* of gauntlet gloves (31)

I had never *looked more youthful*, I had never *felt so old*. (31)

It looked like a great *placid* lake out there in the bay.

I could not imagine it *rough* now, any more than I could imagine *winter* in *summer*. (159)

I would *blaspheme* and *pray* (298)

Sometimes it *shot ahead*, sometimes it *dropped behind*. (376)

The hills *rose . . . and dipped* (396).

Figures of speech are effectively employed to produce greater sense of balance. Read the following and notice how through simile du Maurier juxtaposes an imagined past with a present reality, ‘and stealing a glance at him I was reminded more than ever of my Gentleman Unknown who, cloaked and secret, walked a corridor by night. Mrs Van Hopper’s voice pierced my dream like an electric bell.’ (20–21) Thinking of the figurative use of an electric bell, we can see how the simile ‘sharp as a sword’ (12) keep the balance between modern inventions and tools of old times. In such ones as ‘like petals’ (9) and ‘shaking like a jelly’ (265) dimensions of both beauty and materialism are contained. Moreover, the context of the latter comprises another antithesis notable in how the firm solidity of the rock and the unstable softness of the jelly, still augmented by the fellow’s soggy condition, are introduced together: ‘We found him clinging on to one of the rocks here under the cliff. He was soaked to the skin of course and shaking like a jelly.’ (265)

Just as brilliant is the high command of diction; the choice of vocabulary is well calculated to explore the targeted subject of equilibrium. The word ‘balance’ comes once, the opposite ‘ill-balanced’ comes once as well. The same happens with ‘sincerity’ and ‘insincerity’ (three times each). Each of the antonyms ‘wide’ and ‘narrow’ appears twenty-eight times. Though not as accurate, there are other instances of such numerical balance. Exempting those in expressions like ‘what the devil’, the word ‘devil’ is repeated eleven times and ‘angel’ nine times. There are seven mentions of ‘south’ with six of ‘north’, and six of ‘placid’ with five of ‘rough’.

Additionally, the word ‘poise’ comes three times in the novel. Primarily, the heroine in a directly diagnostic manner identifies her ‘lack of poise’ as an enhancing factor of the bullying discrimination of Mrs Danvers and her

kind (13). Then follows the treatment phase. Here a sense of the necessity of change seems to stick out as she ponders on Frith's non-reactive stance, wondering 'if he suspected, as Mrs Danvers had done, that poise, and grace, and assurance were not qualities inbred in me, but were things to be acquired, painfully perhaps, and slowly, costing me many bitter moments.' (86) In a rather symbolic meaning, the last 'poise' explores a prognostic course. Following the climactic change triggered by the acquisition of knowledge, and while watching a new day in the rose-garden, a 'gull poised himself *high* in the air, silent and alone, and then *spread his wings wide* and *swooped* beyond the lawns to the woods and the Happy Valley.' (372, emphasis mine) This is a token of her new poised state. It reflects a hopeful view that du Maurier's romance with its moral connection would *ascend*, *prevail*, and *triumph*. If open to further scrutiny the sentence can give more. Considering the pun in the word 'gull' which also means 'a person who is fooled or deceived' (Oxford Dictionary), it sounds like a direct reference to her former state, 'silent and alone' and the new one, the strong heroine who would no longer be fooled or deceived by the traditional romance, and can swoop (carry out a sudden attack especially in order to make a capture or arrest) in order to impose the new genuine version. Rhetorical assertion of change flows immediately after: 'The housemaids would open up the house, throw wide the windows, draw back the curtains.' There will be 'the glass dishes of honey, jam, and marmalade' among the items on the breakfast table (no tangerine) (372).

Maids sweeping in the morning-room, the drawing-room, the fresh clean air pouring into the long open windows. Smoke curling from the chimneys, and little by little the autumn mist fading away and the trees and the banks and the woods taking shape, the glimmer of the sea

showing with the sun upon it below the valley, the beacon standing tall and straight upon the headland. (372)

The continuity of transformation determined by the natural revolution—the cyclical rhythm of seasons— merges into a wish for a better future, a trustful anticipation of new permanent blissful episodes:

The peace of Manderley. The quietude and the grace. Whoever lived within its walls, whatever trouble there was and strife, however much uneasiness and pain, no matter what tears were shed, what sorrows borne, the peace of Manderley could not be broken or the loveliness destroyed. The flowers that died would bloom again another year, the same birds build their nests, the same trees blossom. The old quiet moss smell would linger in the air, and bees would come, and crickets, and herons build their nests in the deep dark woods. The butterflies would dance their merry jig across the lawns, and spiders spin foggy webs, and small startled rabbits who had no business to come trespassing poke their faces through the crowded shrubs. There would be lilac, and honeysuckle still, and the white magnolia buds unfolding slow and tight beneath the dining-room window. No one would ever hurt Manderley. It would lie always in a hollow like an enchanted thing, guarded by the woods, safe, secure, while the sea broke and ran and came again in the little shingle bays below. (372–3)

Structural balance is another compositional technique. The pleasant picture of nature quoted above from the last chapter mismatches the unpleasant one of the first chapter. The mostly optimistic tone of the last chapter registers a contrast to the largely pessimistic rendering in the first one. There is a counter balance between the pleasant and sweet image of a lively bright future in the last pages and the melancholic gloomy picture of the stagnation and emptiness of the present in the first ones, the spread and triumph of evil. Below I cite just a few examples:

It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me. There was a padlock and a chain upon the gate. I called in my dream to the lodge-

keeper, and had no answer, and peering closer through the rusted spokes of the gate I saw that the lodge was uninhabited.

No smoke came from the chimney, and the little lattice windows gaped forlorn. . . . The woods, always a menace even in the past, had triumphed in the end. . . . And there were other trees as well, trees that I did not recognize, squat oaks and tortured elms . . . that had thrust themselves out of the quiet earth, along with monster shrubs and plants, none of which I remembered.

The drive was . . . choked with grass and moss. The trees had thrown out low branches, making an impediment to progress; the gnarled roots looked like skeleton claws. . . . the approach masked by the unnatural growth of a vast shrub that spread in all directions (5, 6).

The unnatural growth in the thriving woods of Manderley in the first chapter corresponds to the unhealthy growth in the withered body of Rebecca in the last one: ‘She looked ill, queer. . . . She looked very pale, very thin. . . . “rather too thin, I remember, rather pale”’ (290, 291, 383).

Such correspondence clarifies the parallel endings of the story: the disastrous end on the communal level and the happy conclusion on the individual level. The first one is symbolized by the burning of Manderley. On the individual level it has been a happy end; the heroine has won her personal battle; together they won their battle against Favell; the doctor’s explanation has settled the problem of Rebecca’s death locating its cause in her own body where ‘the growth was deep-rooted . . . The thing had got too firm a hold.’ (383)

One may go on endlessly. Du Maurier’s dislike and disgust of the Greek tradition has penetrated all the elements of the story. The glow of her brand of romance has shone through every sentence of the novel weaving a fine piece of literary creation. Apart from the literary tradition and romance, still consistent with her beliefs, du Maurier has much to say. It is high time we saw another facet of this masterpiece.



#### 4.3. *Rebecca* is a Typical British Contemporary Novel

The aim of the present part is to support the hypothesis contained in the above heading through tackling the fourth, fifth, and sixth of the research questions. Answering these three questions entails viewing another facet of this valuable creation and offers a different standpoint. I am going to examine the novel against the background of the British literary and cultural climate of the period. Question four outlines the similarities between the novel and contemporary literary productions through investigating it within the theoretical framework of the introductory chapter of Gindin's *British Fiction in the 1930s*, from which I have skimmed off the main characteristics of the decade fiction in my literature review in chapter II. My aim is to help the reader getting closer to understanding the point of this part of the analysis and to provide an easy-to-access reference. Although the language selection of my summary is designed to facilitate the analysis progress, occasional quotations from the origin are inevitable, certainly more apt to achieve that aim. To expound du Maurier's approach to the issues of contemporary concern, question five consults other sources including 'Free Love' and 'Modernity and Modernism', of which I have provided a brief summary in the literature review section. It chiefly addresses attitudinal differences as they reverberate in the narrative. Question six completes question four, yet it goes beyond Gindin's account and extends to the world outside literature. To conceive the difference between them is to conceive the difference between the architecture of a construction and its interior decoration. I must note that all emphases (*italics*) contained in the quotes from the novel are mine.

**4.3.1. Verification of the Fourth Hypothesis:** *Rebecca* possesses the distinctive qualities of British contemporary novels.

Primarily, the novel, not withstanding its timelessness, virtually belongs to the thirties and is as topical as most of contemporary literary works. If it tends to take considerable heed of the twenties, or any earlier period, it is only as their problems are transported in the present, only as far as they have contributed in formulating the conditions and the cultural orientations of the decade. In *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories*, du Maurier states that *Rebecca* “would be set in the present day, say the mid-twenties” (1993, p.4). The conditions of a certain period (and so a short one as more or less of ten years) can by no means be exclusively the product of that given time. Indeed, they are the accumulation of past experiences. Those of the twenties were too complicated to be skipped in the treatment of a decade immediately succeeding it; the twenties is the decade of high modernism, a movement that, having lasted for fifty years, have “disrupted the old order, upended ethical and social codes, cast into doubt previously stable assumptions about self, community, the world and the divine.” (Stallworthy and Ramazani, 2006, p. 1828) Gindin’s opening lines pay due attention to the collapse of the two decades into each other, for while he places much emphasis on “its sense of immediacy”, he cannot but recognize the decade literature as inseparable from that of the previous one:

British literature of the 1930s is insistently topical, both in reference to a world outside literature and in its sense of immediacy. In part an inheritance from an earlier literary modernism . . . and in part a response to an external world that seemed to be breaking down, literature for most audiences conveyed an obligation to deal with the immediate and

contemporary. The writing has a tone of urgency – not always an implicit message that something need be done now, but at least a recognition that the conditions of experience had drastically changed. (p. 1)

The recognition may be read right at the novel's inception— let us not forget that I am resuming my exploration in the unconscious of the author. The narrative commences with a dreary picture of the then state of affairs in Britain—symbolized by the Manderley estate and its annexes. In its very bleakness and melancholy, the picture, folded in metaphor, is typical of Gindin's depiction of the calamities of the period. The narrator's dream clearly manifests "that the conditions of experience had drastically changed." It is a miserable state that she has seen 'peering closer through the rusted spokes of the gate' (5). The empty lodge has the same dejected air. 'No smoke came from the chimney, and the little lattice windows gaped forlorn.' (5) Walking in the drive, the heroine is fully 'aware that a change had come upon it; it was narrow and unkempt,' she says, 'not the drive that we had known.' (5) The house garden had been swamped with 'another plant too, some half-breed from the woods, whose seed had been scattered long ago beneath the trees and then forgotten, and now, marching in unison with the ivy, thrust its ugly form like a giant rhubarb towards the soft grass where the daffodils had blown.' (6–7) The narrative thus continues to depict a sort of uncontrollable situation:

Nettles were everywhere . . . They choked the terrace, they sprawled about the paths, they leant, vulgar and lanky, against the very windows of the house. They made indifferent sentinels, for in many places their ranks had been broken by the rhubarb plant, and they lay with crumpled heads and listless stems, making a pathway for the rabbits. (7)

The reader need only go deep between the lines to discover that the decade crises: decline, fissures, Britain's intra-relations, international relations, world alliances generated by the war, fear of invasion, are all making the subtext of this opening chapter. See, for instance, how the following sentences conjure up the excruciating imperial contraction and the ensuing chaos:

The drive was a ribbon now, a thread of its former self, with gravel surface gone, and choked with grass and moss. . . . On and on, now east now west, wound the poor thread that once had been our drive . . . and this path led but to a labyrinth (5, 6).

The burning of Manderly and the protagonists starting a new life in a completely different world shows the wide extent of du Maurier's interest in apocalyptic transformation, which is a recurrent motif of 1930s fiction. Gindin maintains:

Apocalypse seemed imminent and necessary for the Auden Generation, even though many of its best writers finally backed away from the implications of totalitarian forms of political apocalypse in the world of the thirties. The backing away and the edging of the apocalyptic with irony became more pronounced in retrospect (pp 4-5).

It seemed imminent and necessary for du Maurier (By age she belongs to the Auden Generation). She finds this Armageddon redeeming and rewarding: 'we have paid for freedom. But I have had enough melodrama in this life, and would willingly give my five senses if they could ensure us our present peace and security.' (9) Having mixed feelings towards the two worlds, the heroine expresses the "backing away and the edging of the apocalyptic with irony". Although the new world is fraught with peace and tranquility she thinks the old world was lacking, it is also fraught with dull

emptiness and lacking many of the beauties of their excruciatingly irretrievable world. She yearns, therefore, for the destroyed world, and is apparently agonized by that loss:

In reality I lay many hundred miles away in an alien land, and would wake, before many seconds had passed, in the bare little hotel bedroom, comforting in its very lack of atmosphere. I would sigh a moment, stretch myself and turn, and opening my eyes, be bewildered at that glittering sun, that hard, clean sky, so different from the soft moonlight of my dream. The day would lie before us both, long no doubt, and uneventful, but fraught with a certain stillness, a dear tranquillity we had not known before. We would not talk of Manderley, I would not tell my dream. For Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more. (8)

Other crucial events in the story reiterate du Maurier's consciousness of the need for apocalyptic transformation. Maxim's decision to use the east wing instead of the west wing, which he used to occupy with Rebecca, may symbolically count as one of the "[c]onversions or serious considerations of conversions to . . . the Roman Catholic Church . . . , [which] were frequent, testimony to the appeal of total transformation." (Gindin, p. 5) (It also denotes the return to religion mentioned elsewhere by Gindin). "Many of the poems", Gindin continues, "debated the issues of a journey to some total and newly apprehended truth." The fact that Maxim has killed Rebecca and his subsequent journey to the south of France where he is destined to meet the heroine who is completely a different kind of person—different from Rebecca and different from his world—can suggest the prosaic expression of "a journey to some total and newly apprehended truth."

Within the apocalyptic frame, du Maurier, again, voices in prose what the poets of the Auden Generation have put in their poems. She is equally or perhaps more interested in the "heroic". Like many protagonists of the Auden Generation members, hers is elevated for the noble mission though—

to fit in with such extended prose form—with less exaggeration and surely with no naivety. Maxim's character is well designed to qualify him as "the figure who might propel the transformation." (Gindin, p. 6) We have known how he acted as the propulsive force of the heroine's transformation. He is the most appropriate kind of heroes who can lead the transformation of Britain because he possesses all the required powers: economic means, administrative sagacity and activity, social status, affordable new technology, integrity and other qualifying personal abilities, to mention only a few. 'His premonition of disaster was correct from the beginning', so states the heroine (9). Being so far-sighted a man, his character provides an edited image of what Gindin believes the most common portrait in the works of the group that come to be "the critically canonical formulation of the decade." (p. 3) If the heroes of the Auden Generation are "abstracted" and god-like, du Maurier's is human with due connection with divinity. Gindin seems to me to be drawing very close to maxim's character as he is speaking about "the heroic airman who, combining range, comprehensive sight, totally new technology, activity and distance might point the way for human redemption." (p. 6)

If du Maurier has managed to conform to a poetic trend in the novel, it is never plausible that she would fail to keep pace with the fiction of her male peers who frequently degraded their protagonists especially women. The temporary degradation of the heroine, which I have explored in the previous part, is sufficient to prove the novel as an integral part of the decade fiction.

The historical and literary recreation of the past, a topic that has exhausted the literary performance as well as scholarly studies of this inter-war period, has proportionately exhausted the narrative of *Rebecca*. 'Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again.' (5) This is the opening sentence

of the story. In addition to starting the narrative with this retreat in the past, du Maurier devotes the entire opening chapter and part of the second to present a survey of the past. The opening chapter reviews the past with its all dimensions and contradictories: the negative and positive, the good and bad, the beautiful and ugly, the grandeur and insignificance, the threats and immunities. The chapter concludes with the bitter reality, the loss of Manderley, in a statement that is very expressive in this regard: 'We would not talk of Manderley, I would not tell my dream. For Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more.' (8)

The statement is telling us that du Maurier is quite knowledgeable of the uncertainty regarding the representations of the past in the literary and non-literary discourses of the period. Discontent with the past, it is the gist of Gindin's view, is the dominant sentiment of the majority of the male writers although urges to court the past invade the works of some. These urges (determined by formative experience: birth, class, school, education, etc.), are aided by their dissatisfaction with the present. That contributes to the ambiguity largely typifying the decade literary commitment. "Historical complacency was impossible for any thoughtful writer," Gindin maintains, "as were assurances that some permanent perspective could tie past, present and future together." (p. 1) At the same time, incensed by contemporary dysfunctional society, they "needed to recall or invent stable pasts." (p. 21) Du Maurier's message concerning this question is so sophisticated and so intensively presented that I am going to tackle it out of this research. It is enough here to assert that the narrative, with remarkable insight, is full of references to the past that corresponds to both stances. Here is one of them:

We can never go back again, that much is certain. The past is still too close to us. The things we have tried to forget and put behind us would

stir again, and that sense of fear, of furtive unrest, struggling at length to blind unreasoning panic – now mercifully stilled, thank God – might in some manner unforeseen become a living companion, as it had been before. (8)

The psychological theories of Freud and other psychologists, which had substantial effect in 1930s fiction, are undoubtedly obtruding in the novel. Phrases like ‘subconscious minds’ (33) and ‘inferiority complex’ (141) are explicit testimony to the strength of the Freudian influence. The theories of Freud, Gindin argues, were “devoured” by the members of the Auden Generation in particular to influence their confusing attempts at assuming a schoolmasterly stance as a means to carry on a didactic mission they saw imperative to challenge the moral emptiness of their time. (pp. 8–9). If re-read in psychological terminology, my characterization analysis in the previous part of the present chapter will reveal an unmatched scale of the working of the psychoanalytic theory of personality.

The characters of Favell, Maxim, and Frank offer an optimum reification of the id, ego, and superego respectively. Compare the character study of these three men in the ‘characterization’ section with Guerin’s formulation of the concepts:

Whereas the id is dominated by the pleasure principle and the ego by the reality principle, the superego is dominated by the *morality principle*. We might say that the id would make us devils, that the superego would have us behave as angels (or, worse, as creatures of absolute social conformity), and that it remains for the ego to keep us healthy human beings by maintaining a balance between these two opposing forces. It was this balance that Freud advocated— not a complete removal of inhibiting factors. (p.158)



Through a detestably despicable sybarite like Favell, the untamed passions of the id in their lowest form are brought into light for the reader. The reader may acquire some caution of the id's dangerous potentialities. The narrative sympathizes with Frank's absolute loyalty and honesty, but at the same time it condemns his excessive compliance with social norms. His overly correctness and unnecessary deprivation, or, in technical terms, the ascendancy of the superego at the expense of the id's natural impulses, is reproachfully put on view. Indeed Maxim stirs us by his admirable mastery of the ego; his ability to manage the tension between the id and the superego, his success in mediating between them and bringing them to a state of stable reconciliation offers a guide for a perfect pattern of conduct.

The instructive possibilities of the protagonist as an ego-representative character are still observable in the characterization of the heroine and the process of her transformation. Assuming the role of a psychologist this time, I have re-examined the heroine's character to rediscover her as a superego-ridden personality. This is due to the circumstance that she has been orphaned at a very young age. She has become exceedingly attached to the ideals —the superego in the psychological jargon— of her beloved parents especially her father for whom she had great love and veneration. To read how Freud describes the symptoms of a weak ego is to read the analysis of the heroine's character in the previous part (see characterization). She has lived with her subdued ego until she meets Maxim. His strong ego strikes a chord with her and she starts to change. *He* soon realizes her problem, and through the influence of his character and his assistance (direct and indirect), she has managed to develop a strong ego and to achieve the right balance between the id and superego. The psychological details of her experience are amazing, but they are too many to be permitted by the limits of this study

that I have to treat them in a separate paper (a copy of which will be available for whoever cares to request).

The psychological representation is fathomed with “logical meticulous” details that ought to have established du Maurier as a typical member of the Auden Generation. One must wonder how she could be neglected in Gindin’s account of their “explanations of themselves [which] were likely to be schoolmasterly as well.” (p.9) By such psychological insight she is confirmed as a deft tracer of “influences of family and school,” a literate devourer of “Freudian and Marxist accounts of personal, social and historical experience” as any of the other members of the Auden Generation as they are assessed by Gindin. He continues:

Although they were not necessarily ideological Marxists (and among themselves demonstrated a range of current reading and knowledge), they tended to explain themselves and others in inflexible chains of cause and effect, in terms of social and historical necessity. The account of cause and effect was likely to be carefully logical, meticulous, an assemblage of topical details that demonstrated society’s corrupt stasis. (p. 9)

Surely, Gindin’s point is valid for du Maurier’s as it is for her peers. Her message is exactly the same. “All this was to be swept away by change, by the future, by the heroic airman or other transforming figure.” (Gindin, p.9) Through the heroine’s transformation, the narrative provides too du Maurier’s version of the “transforming love” defined by “the committed Marxist Christopher Caudwell” (p.10) though different from his communist approach.

*Rebecca’s* share in the “proliferation of . . . the condition-of-Britain novel” as expressed by Gindin (p. 14) cannot be ignored. “Both socially and

psychologically,” Gindin writes, “the writers of the thirties, almost universally, convey a fear of invasion.” (p. 14) Du Maurier also makes an allusion to the threat of invasion. That is visible in the choice of the historical words ‘Conquest’ and ‘Ethelred . . . the one who was called Unready.’ (19) The reign of Ethelred had remarkably witnessed frequent series of invasions and defeats. His epithet, Unready, meaning ill-counseled, may also serve as a reference to the incompetency or “the apparent sterile stasis of the British government” as termed by Gindin (p.1). Historical allusion is strengthened by geographical one carried by the mention of the border town Sospel (21). Calais, another border town, is mentioned elsewhere (374). Du Maurier is in no way an exception from her contemporaries who also “constantly suggest a perspective that fears encirclement and destruction, as if, physically or metaphorically, to be surrounded or to be threatened is to be destroyed.” (Gindin, 14) The narrator expresses just the same thought as she states that the ‘woods, always a menace even in the past, had triumphed in the end’, that they ‘crowded, dark and uncontrolled, to the borders of the drive’ (5), that ‘the long strands crept across the lawns, and soon would encroach upon the house itself.’ (6) The implication that the fear of invasion is not confined to their private home will be more conceivable if we consider Gindin’s note about the expansion of “the definition of the ‘home’ threatened by invasion”. “In pre-1914 popular fiction,” he observes, “home was literal, the Englishman’s castle and the repository of virtue. But the serious fiction of the thirties extended the signification of home.” (p.14) A dread of invasion and, simultaneously, of social and political immobility (p.14) has prompted a desire for continuous progress. “Settings are often outside Britain,” he writes, ‘or, when within Britain, far from the point of origin.” (p. 15) The two minor settings are

outside Britain; the beginning of the story is in France, the end of the story in an island somewhere out of Britain. The major setting fully keeps up with the general preference among the writers of the decade for “landscapes and provinces as settings, facts and metaphors.” (Gindin, p.15) Few, to my mind, can rival the beauty and richness of meaning in the following sample of landscape description:

We stood on a slope of a wooded hill, and the path wound away before us to a valley, by the side of a running stream. There were no dark trees here, no tangled undergrowth, but on either side of the narrow path stood azaleas and rhododendrons, not blood-coloured like the giants in the drive, but salmon, white, and gold, things of beauty and of grace, drooping their lovely, delicate heads in the soft summer rain.

The air was full of their scent, sweet and heady, and it seemed to me as though their very essence had mingled with the running waters of the stream, and become one with the falling rain and the dank rich moss beneath our feet. There was no sound here but the tumbling of the little stream, and the quiet rain. . . .

We stood quite still, not speaking, looking down upon the clear white faces of the flowers closest to us, and Maxim stooped, and picked up a fallen petal and gave it to me. It was crushed and bruised, and turning brown at the curled edge, but as I rubbed it across my hand the scent rose to me, sweet and strong, vivid as the living tree from which it came.

Then the birds began. First a blackbird, his note clear and cool above the running stream, and after a moment he had answer from his fellow hidden in the woods behind us, and soon the still air about us was made turbulent with song, pursuing us as we wandered down into the valley, and the fragrance of the white petals followed us too. It was disturbing, like an enchanted place. I had not thought it could be as beautiful as this.

The sky, now overcast and sullen, so changed from the early afternoon, and the steady insistent rain could not disturb the soft quietude of the valley; the rain and the rivulet mingled with one another, and the liquid note of the blackbird fell upon the damp air in

harmony with them both. I brushed the dripping heads of azaleas as I passed, so close they grew together, bordering the path. Little drops of water fell on to my hands from the soaked petals. There were petals at my feet too, brown and sodden, bearing their scent upon them still, and a richer, older scent as well, the smell of deep moss and bitter earth, the stems of bracken, and the twisted buried roots of trees. I held Maxim's hand and I had not spoken. The spell of the Happy Valley was upon me. This at last was the core of Manderley, the Manderley I would know and learn to love. . . . We came to the end of the path, and the flowers formed an archway above our heads. We bent down, passing underneath, and when I stood straight again, brushing the raindrops from my hair, I saw that the valley was behind us, and the azaleas, and the trees, and, as Maxim had described to me that afternoon many weeks ago in Monte Carlo, we were standing in a little narrow cove, the shingle hard and white under our feet, and the sea was breaking on the shore beyond us. (114 – 116)

Like many of the “best novels”, *Rebecca* contains “accounts of travel,” believed by Gindin to be “gestures against the fears of both insularity and destruction that home represents.” (p.15) The account of their travel to and back from Barnet through London at the end of the story consists of “a good deal of conflict” subsisting “between the representations of London and the provinces.” (p.15) See the contrast between the above description of the Happy Valley at Manderley in the west country and the following one:

We came to the suburbs of London about three o'clock. It was then that I began to feel tired, the noise and the traffic blocks started a humming in my head. It was warm in London too. The streets had that worn dusty look of August, and the leaves hung listless on dull trees. Our storm must have been local, there had been no rain here.

. . . There was a smell of waste-paper, and orange-peel, and feet, and burnt dried grass. Buses lumbered slowly, and taxis crawled. . . .

Shopping centres on the outskirts seemed congested. Tired women with crying babies in prams stared into windows, hawkers shouted, small boys hung on to the backs of lorries. There were too many

people, too much noise. The very air was irritable and exhausted and spent. (376, 377)

The story, again like most of the “serious fiction of the thirties”, contains other journeys that reflect the technological change. Maxim’s and the heroine’s journey to France, their excursions by car in the streets of Monte Carlo, their honeymoon in Italy (189), his dinner in London, and the aforementioned journey to Barnet, are only a few examples. The following statement by Favell sums up the ease of transport brought about by technological advance: ‘a lot can be done in twenty-four hours, can’t it? Trains can be caught, ships can sail, aeroplanes can fly.’ (364)

In connection with the condition-of-Britain novel, the inescapable scenarios of the two great wars register a tough presence. The atmosphere of war is witnessed in the heroine’s face looking ‘like death’ while ‘staring up at . . . the foolish rockets’ bursting in the sky of Manderley (236). I have just cited two examples of the “language of Battle” permeating the novel. We can also identify the battle vocabulary in the nettles being ‘the vanguard of the army’ and in ‘their ranks [that] had been broken’ (7). It is in the heroine’s meditations: ‘we must give battle in the end. We have conquered ours’ (9). It is in Mrs Van Hopper’s ‘method of attack [that] was so downright and sudden’ (15) and in Maxim’s remark mocking her: ‘Wouldn’t that rather defeat the purpose?’ (20) It is in the ‘daffodils . . . massed like an army, shoulder to shoulder.’ (34) “Bombing metaphors infuse” *Rebecca*, “explosions of emotions and sensitivity.” I am using the same wording Gindin uses (p.14) for “Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Death of the Heart* (1938)” because, I am persuaded, it is just as applicable to the 1938-novel of du Maurier. ‘Whereas to me it was a bomb-shell, exploding in a thousand fragments.’ (59) That is the heroine’s phrasing of her sentiments towards the

marriage proposal. Violence penetrates the narrative. There is Rebecca ferociously hitting her horse ‘slashing at him, drawing blood, digging the spurs into his side, and when she got off his back he was trembling all over, full of froth and blood.’ (254) There is Maxim shooting Rebecca, ‘there was so much blood. . . . It was all round where she lay on the floor.’ (293) There are the explosions while Mrs Danvers is pushing the heroine ‘towards the open window’ of an upper-floor room provoking her to jump out of it (257–8). There is Maxim hitting Favell causing him to ‘stagger and fall against the arm of the sofa, and down on to the floor.’ (349)

There is a subtle reference to the general disillusion following the First World War in the conversation between the protagonists at the Hôtel Côte d’Azur. They are in *France* and talking about the *American* Mrs Van Hopper. A keen observer may easily understand the conversation as a simulation of the US entry into the war with its forces coming into France and joining the British troops: ‘I think you’ve made a mistake in coming here, in joining forces with Mrs Van Hopper.’ (30)

The novel transcends the haunts of the first war to forecast the aftermath of the second. The heroine has won her battle but at a terrible cost, the loss of her home. This is a synecdochic dramatization of the British having, equivalently, won the war at a terrible cost. “In winning a war, Great Britain lost an empire.” (Stallworthy and Ramazani, p. 1832) The heroine ‘trailing in the wake of Mrs Van Hopper’ (13) foresees the post-World War II “diminution of British political power, its secondary status in relation to the United States” (Stallworthy and Ramazani, pp. 1831–1832).

Social class issues and betrayal lie at the core of the narrative. The previous part of the analysis has shown how exhaustingly the narrative has trodden the area of betrayal through the eponymous character whose name

can be set as a synonym of treachery and deception. With regard to collective representation, the story is moving in step with most of 1930s fiction—Gindin claims that “a great deal of the betrayal in thirties fiction is localized in terms of social class.” (p. 17) He maintains that the wide gap between anticipations and reality is profoundly felt by the writers. “In a decade of economic deprivation in which social and educational inequities lingered from a system that writers saw increasingly as never having been justifiable,” he continues, “a consciousness of class issues was part of every novel that dealt with British society.” (p.17) *Rebecca* is fundamentally a classification-themed novel. The statement of Margaret Forster, cited in the publisher’s note, is not overstating the case. “No other popular writer has so triumphantly defied classification”, she wrote. Nowhere in the decade fiction, I should imagine, could the tone of urgency be more dramatized than in *Rebecca*. Nowhere in *Rebecca* does urgency more apply than to the issue of class mobility. The rapidity with which the marriage has been executed is unprecedented (it is an emblem of the merging between social classes). Everything is settled during a quick breakfast in a hotel restaurant.

Du Maurier’s heroine certainly marks a contribution in the increase of “the attempt of the middle-class educated writer to develop masks, personae, submerged guilts, changed voices or names, in order to participate in the experience of other, often voiceless classes.” (Gindin, p. 17) Originally, by birth, the heroine belongs to the middle class. Her father was an ‘unusual person.’ His was a ‘vibrant personality’ (27). It is apparent from his satirical attitude, ‘his scorn of superficial snobbery’ (29), that he was a middle-class intellectual. In *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories* he was supposed to be a doctor (p. 8), yet this is to be masked in the story and we just know that he is dead. Orphanhood has proved to be a blessing in disguise! Leading



her to work ‘like a maid,’ (50) almost a servant, it benefits as a measure of camouflage. It is “the writer’s transcription of an honest attempt to change or become part of a deprived and mostly silent other class,” and it satisfies “the need to deal with the ambiguities of class and society, the pain of social, political and sexual fractures” (Gindin, p. 17). Consider her unidentified name and you will be convinced that she is a closet middle-class affiliate in a lower-class persona. Her conversation with her husband savours of the heroine’s concern to identify with this section of society:

‘I am like a between-maid,’ I said slowly, ‘I know I am, in lots of ways: That’s why I have so much in common with Clarice. We are on the same sort of footing. And that’s why she likes me. I went and saw her mother the other day. And do you know what she said? I asked her if she thought Clarice was happy with us, and she said, “Oh, yes, Mrs de Winter. Clarice seems quite happy. She says, ‘It’s not like being with a lady, Mum, it’s like being with one of ourselves.’” Do you suppose she meant it as a compliment or not?’ (150–1)

The text is abundant in clues regarding class transgression, but they are dwarfed by the cogency of the plot thematisation that to dwell on them would be a mere redundancy.

In addition to having a multi-message theme as it has so far proved, the coherent and organized plot of the story signals a revert back to the older novel form, a practice preferred too by certain 1930s writers. The writers, according to Gindin, “saw themselves . . . as in a tradition of the growth of the novel as a voice of the emerging bourgeoisie of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, trying to articulate and assimilate its view of the world.” (p. 18) The analysis has clearly shown that like “serious, able, reflective novelists of the thirties”, du Maurier has “avoided the parable or other form that could yield a single message.” (Gindin, pp. 17–18)

The humanistic approach in tackling human body and the liberation of sexual experience are two main areas of concern in the literature of the inter-war period. Although with certain individual peculiarity, writers almost unanimously were as zealous as D. H. Lawrence in dealing with the theme of “physical response”. High-minded writers of fiction displayed a growing concern on homosexuality, another consequence of the conditions brought by the First World War as well as of the influence of liberators of sexual experience such as Freud and other psychologists. (Gindin, pp. 15–16)

With regard to human body, du Maurier provides a typical picture. “The fiction of the thirties, like the writing of the Auden Generation, reveals an increasing interest in the human body,” Gindin notes. “Physical experience was valuable both in itself and as a representation for all experience when danger and destruction threatened.” (p. 15) This very idea, believed by Gindin as commonly held during the period, is visible in the fact that concealed fears have suspended true physical intimacy between the protagonists; only when “danger and destruction” have “threatened” by the discovery of Rebecca’s body that the heroine is able to break away with that state of gutless indecision and inaction. Harmonious physical closeness between them was impossible before that. ‘How could I hold you like this, my darling, my little love, with the fear always in my heart that this would happen?’ (277) Those were the words of the protagonist months after the wedding day. It is the sense of the approaching danger that made such intimacy reachable; they become able to jointly take decisive action and face the threat together.

*Rebecca*, in common with contemporary fiction, has amply debated the issue of sexuality. In tackling the topic, however, the outlook reflected by the narrative is so far different from that of the majority of du Maurier’s

contemporaries. Therefore, I see it more appropriate to discuss the topic within my treatment of the fifth question.

**4.3.2. Verification of the Fifth Hypothesis:** The novel addresses contemporary subjects and issues from a perspective that is different from the majority of its author's contemporaries.

The above analysis has shown the novel as part of the general discourse of the period. It has revealed its consistency with contemporary concerns. What is it, then, that causes it to be discarded, belittled, and denied recognition by contemporary critics? Why should du Maurier be reckoned aloof from her peers when her attention to the literary milieu is as tense, her response to the cultural challenges is as potent as (and in some aspects it outdoes) theirs? The answer is quite simple. It is the opposing position she is taking that has raised the unjustified critical indignation. Her intellectual attitude regarding certain crucial social phenomena is the real object of the unfair critical enmity. The shift in the novel perspective featured as part of its narrative strategy forms the subject of the following analysis.

To start with, let us see to the two points that have concluded the last question: the interest in human body and sexuality. Human body has received intensive care inside the pages of *Rebecca*. The narrative features a detailed depiction of the physical appearance of all the characters, yet the focus on the inner and outer body of Rebecca bears a special significance. The 'malformation of the uterus' (383) bespeaks du Maurier's aversion to the moral dissolution entrained by movements such as modernism and free love both of which are connected with Rebecca. The movements are demonized through her characterization. Her modes of behaviour are typical of that of the "loud and flashy women" associated according to Wikipedia (2013) with the free love movement: her deliberate infidelity, her unfaltering

and unmitigated antagonism to the marriage bond, her purposeful defiance of the obligations of the wedlock, her disrespect for her husband, the loose life she is leading, etc. The doctor states that the malformation ‘meant she could never have had a child;’ (383) the statement suggests the sterility of the movements she represents. “‘This cancer business,’” as worded by Favell, (385) suggests the destructive power of both movements. The ‘cancer’ supports the assumption that they are self-destructive ideologies particularly as it furnishes a motive for Rebecca’s supposed suicide while their negative possibilities as major contributors in the annihilation of high societal values is exemplified in sweeping denunciation by the burning of Manderley.

Favell represents the complicity of the male proponents of free love in this destructiveness and in threatening the legitimate institutions, which du Maurier believes crucial to the stability of societies. “Although this movement largely concerned women,” states Wikipedia, “the chief organizers were mostly men”. The Coroner in the inquest asks: ‘What was ballast? What effect upon the stability of the boat would the shifting of the ballast have? Could a woman do this unaided?’ (332) To read the statement from the article about free love conjointly with the Coroner’s questions, one can conceive them as not simply questions about the boat ‘but there is a little bit more to it than that’, to use the words of ‘the boat-builder’ (321). The article also refers to the fact that “men were the main contributors to the organized and written part of the free love movement,” and it may seem interesting to notice he is sitting in the inquest beside Mrs Danvers ‘leaning forward, his chin in his hands’. Favell is an overt promoter of the promiscuously libertarian views associated with the movement. He is explicit as he is rude in declaring himself a “free lover” or “sex radical”:

I'm a bit of a Socialist in my way, you know, and I can't think why fellows can't share their women instead of killing them. What difference does it make? You can get your fun just the same. A lovely woman isn't like a motor tyre, she doesn't wear out. The more you use her the better she goes. (341)

The portrayal of his character is sufficiently declarative of du Maurier's abhorrence for all that he represents, extra-marriage relationships being one of the major butts of her satire. 'He had the hot, blue eyes usually associated with heavy drinking and loose living.' (166) The heroine is scared by his conspiracy with Mrs Danvers and 'filled with vague disquiet.' (171) For her he is 'the unpleasant Favell' (208). He is 'a bounder' and had '[T]hose hot blue eyes, that loose mouth, and the careless familiar laugh.' (208) She reproaches Jasper for his delight at seeing Favell and sadness at his departure describing that as "so idiotic." (170) She believes he is an 'accomplice,' (171) and says: "It's not right that he and Mrs Danvers should sit there, listening to that evidence. I don't trust them, Frank. . . . They might do something; they might make mischief." (327) Maxim does not 'approve' of him either (170). 'The very thought of him walking about the woods in Manderley,' he says, 'in places like the Happy Valley, made me mad.' (290) Favell boasts of winning the bet to take 'Robert out . . . on the razzle' (336) and curses Frith for not allowing Robert another opportunity: "Poor kid," said Favell. "I don't suppose he's been on the loose since. That old ass Frith keeps him on a leading string." (337) He prides himself upon his illegitimate relationship with Rebecca: 'We were lovers, weren't we? I've never denied it, and I never will.' (339)

Although du Maurier attaches considerable importance to physical response, hers is an explicit statement that this is to be within a legitimate bond (see Romantic Love). Heterosexual marriage is the sole institution for

providing an outlet for human emotions and psychological responses. In the best interest for humanity, family life, with children in the bargain, is the institution recognized by du Maurier. While “in the thirties,” as pointed out by Gindin, “young writers, both in fiction and in experience, deliberately experimented with homosexuality as a broadening of sexual knowledge in a more liberated age” (p. 16), du Maurier strongly fulminates against the phenomenon viewing it as a very unfavourable detrimental scenario. She looks upon the rampant same-sex discourse with a huge amount of dread and is fully alert to its dangers and fatal possibilities. That is quite conspicuous in the portrayal of the carefully drawn character of Mrs Danvers. To be sure, the sinister Mrs Danvers is a lesbian; her love for Rebecca is by no means a motherly affection. ‘Of course she’s insanely jealous.’ (107) To read the emphatic remark by Beatrice, together with the atmosphere of intensive embarrassment it has created, one cannot fail to notice that Mrs Danvers’ adoration for Rebecca is something abnormal. Beatrice ‘paused, frowning a little,’ and then goes on to explain: “‘I thought you knew,’” said Beatrice; “‘I thought Maxim would have told you. She simply adored Rebecca.’” (107) Her jealousy is compared to that of a husband according to her own estimation: ‘Of course he was jealous. So was I.’ (256) While in Rebecca’s room, she is ‘excited in a strange unhealthy way. (175) There, she ‘smiled, and her manner, instead of being still and unbending as it usually was, became startlingly familiar, fawning even. (175–6) ‘Her manner was fawning again, intimate and unpleasant. The smile on her face was a false unnatural thing.’ (180)

‘I came here when the first Mrs de Winter was a bride,’ she said, and her voice, which had hitherto, as I said, been dull and toneless, was harsh now with unexpected animation, with life and meaning, and there was a spot of colour on the gaunt cheek-bones.

The change was so sudden that I was shocked, and a little scared. I did not know what to do, or what to say. It was as though she had spoken words that were forbidden, words that she had hidden within herself for a long time and now would be repressed no longer. (78)

The heroine is full of repugnance and fear of her, of what she represents:

I glanced up at her and once more I met her eyes, dark and sombre, in that white face of hers, instilling into me, I knew not why, a strange feeling of disquiet, of foreboding. . . . I felt very frightened. . . . The touch of her hand made me shudder. And her voice was low and intimate, a voice I hated and feared. (78, 176, 175)

Du Maurier holds her accountable for the origination of corruption (she brought up Rebecca), she holds her accountable for its endurance (she insists on keeping Rebecca's relics and system), and she holds her accountable for the dire consequences (she burns up Manderley). She is utterly averse to what Mrs Danvers represents. The adjectives employed to modify her person or behaviour convey no sympathy whatsoever with her personality. Her eyes are 'dark and sombre . . . malevolent . . . full of hatred.' (181) Her face is 'distorted, horrible.' (198) The 'expression on her face' is 'loathsome, triumphant. The face of an exulting devil.' (224) She has 'that diabolical smile. . . cruel and evil.' (251)

It is enough to read the text carefully to be aware of the bisexuality of the two female antagonists. 'There was a strange buzzing at the end of the line, and then a voice came, low and rather harsh, whether that of a woman or a man I could not tell,' (91) says the heroine referring to Mrs Danvers. 'She had all the courage and spirit of a boy, had my Mrs de Winter. She ought to have been a boy,' says the latter talking of Rebecca, 'I often told her that. I had the care of her as a child. . . . She had the strength of a little lion too.' (253, 254) When Favell requests her testimony to his relationship with Rebecca, 'there was something of scorn in the glance she gave him. "She

was not,” she said.’ (355) her attitude has been astonishing even to her friend Favell as she continues:

‘She was not in love with you, or with Mr de Winter. She was not in love with anyone. She despised all men. She was above all that.’

Favell flushed angrily. ‘Listen here. Didn’t she come down the path through the woods to meet me, night after night? Didn’t you wait up for her? Didn’t she spend the weekends with me in London?’

‘Well?’ said Mrs Danvers, with sudden passion, ‘and what if she did? She had a right to amuse herself, hadn’t she. Love-making was a game with her, only a game. She told me so. She did it because it made her laugh. It made her laugh, I tell you. She laughed at you like she did at the rest. I’ve known her come back and sit upstairs in her bed and rock with laughter at the lot of you.’ . . . Then Mrs Danvers began to cry.

She cried like she had done that morning in the bedroom. (355–6)

The subtlety with which du Maurier has dealt with the issue while writing under the influence of a general stream favouring moral laxity, in fiction as in practice, ought to give her credit for artistic nobility. She has managed to pass her message concerning sexual orientation without succumbing to the pornographic scatology celebrated by contemporary modern writers (D.H. Lawrence a major example). The impact of Freudian theories immensely resonates in the delineation of her characters, yet with none of the eroticism characterizing the language and meanings of his conceptual speculations. Hers is a selective and refined response. In territories where morals are not at stake and where she can safely draw nearer to her generation (canonically monopolized by men), gender-related differences may still be observed. Although du Maurier has degraded her female protagonist, she has asserted her hidden powers, her good qualities and her ability and readiness to change for the best.

Considering the momentum it has gained during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, gender-role controversy is unlikely to be



skippable by a woman writer. Moderation is the best term to define du Maurier's approach to the question. She steers a middle course between the two extremes: the modernistic and feminist call on one hand and the strict conventional view on the other. The phrase 'my face against his shoulder', repeated twice (277, 297), denotes a recognition of the natural differences between the sexes, a fact which is implausibly denied by feminist radicalism and unfairly exploited by stale stringent fanaticism. It is noteworthy to explain that du Maurier's image portrays a spousal position. In terms of social role, we find a different portrait. The protagonist in all earnestness advises the heroine to train herself so as to be equipped for an effective social role. In the fancy dress party (an epitome of the societal structuring), they stand 'beside one another' (235). Both protagonists express much desire for having children. Maxim says to the heroine: 'You'll have children too.' (334) Nonetheless, they do not seem to think giving birth is the sole job of a woman. The following scene displays the heroine's sense of blamefulness and uneasiness about her idleness while the men are so busy in the reconstruction and decoration of Manderley, and her concern that such inactivity is obstructing the progress of their work:

I was a lay-figure, no use to man or beast. I used to stand about doing nothing except get in the way. 'Excuse me, Madam,' I would hear a man say, just behind me, and he would pass, with a smile of apology, carrying two chairs on his back, his face dripping with perspiration. 'I'm awfully sorry,' I would say, getting quickly to one side, and then as a cover to my idleness, 'Can I help you?' (213)

Later, in her plans for the future, we see much readiness to undertake the duties of motherhood beside a firm determination to participate not only in the management of the estate but also in the decision making process:

I would learn more about the estate, too. I should ask Frank to explain things to me. . . . I would go into things, and learn how they were

managed. What they did at the farm. How the work in the grounds was planned. I might take to gardening myself, and in time have one or two things altered. That little square lawn outside the morning-room with the statue of the satyr. I did not like it. We would give the satyr away. There were heaps of things that I could do, little by little. People would come and stay and I should not mind. There would be the interest of seeing to their rooms, having flowers and books put, arranging the food. We would have children. Surely we would have children. (392)

The above passage with its clearness leads us to the last distinctive feature I am going to mention about *Rebecca*: the clarity of its message. The hard line du Maurier draws between good and evil distinguishes it from the majority of the fiction of her generation and modernist writers in general who are intent upon blurring the boundaries between the two concepts. The contrast between the villains and protagonists is demarcated with admirable transparency. Still clearer is the narrator's, or rather, Du Maurier's sentiments towards both. The protagonist is never regretful of killing Rebecca: 'If it had to come all over again I should not do anything different. I'm glad I killed Rebecca. I shall never have any remorse for that, never, never.' (313) The heroine responds with euphoria to his act when she comes to know it. While du Maurier's protagonist, we have seen, is a good man and is loved and respected by his family members, friends, neighbours, and employees, Percival of the modernist Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, 1931, for instance, is "both loved and despised by his friends" (Purifoy, 2011). Woolf has confounded critical assessment as to whether, in a novel supposed to be principally exploring imperial and patriotic attachment, her "work is critical of or complicit with nationalism and imperialism" (Purifoy). They are, in Purifoy's argument, scarcely able to settle on whether hers are patriotic or unpatriotic sentiments. Of du Maurier's own generation, Graham

Greene offers an exemplary instance of writers that are more likely to confuse critical judgement. Critics find it hard to know whether he is a “devout catholic” or “bitterly cynical”. These are two of more than sixteen contradictory “calling cards”, which are used by *The Nation* to describe him. (Wikipedia, 2016) Critics are treading the same risky course trying to identify George Orwell since “the representations of his social and political perspectives and the ambiguities of his commitments”, as Gindin argues, “were sufficient to warrant a number of different and contradictory posthumous glorifications by other writers.” (p.7)

*Rebecca* is a premeditated shot levelled at the anarchy and corruption of the modern age. To kill the villain beforehand and defeat the living ones, du Maurier seems desirous to disrupt the fashionable strategy among modernist writers to obliterate the heroes or, alternatively, any morally or religiously disposed characters. Woolf kills Percival who represents order in *The Waves*, and Septimus commits suicide in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925); in another story of hers, Septimus has delusions ‘that he is the messiah’ (Pawlowski, p. VII). Mrs Moore who shows some respect for religion dies in *A Passage To India* (1924) by E.M. Forster, to name just a few. With unequivocal preference for order and moral triumph, du Maurier stakes out a private ground among her generation whose “Ambiguities of Commitment” have inspired the title by which Gindin is to define the decade.

**4.3.3. Verification of the Sixth Hypothesis:** *Rebecca* is a natural product of the period; it largely reflects the conditions and events of the period.

*Rebecca* is truly a natural product of the period. The antithesis it proposes may well bolster my belief because the synchrony between opinions and counter-opinions is the most natural of social and cultural phenomena. New trends of thought are never dividable from the reactions they engender; they

invariably provoke opponents to provide antitheses in response. As regards the second segment of the question, I believe my analysis in question four is quite sufficient, and I could have stopped at that had it not been for specific points of similarity that have caught my attention while exploring some contemporary fiction and cultural events. The following snippets of literary representations, cultural trends, and political events that have worked their way through the novel are going to supplement the points I have made in my treatment of question four.

Echoes from *Spain*, 1937 by W.H. Auden (born in 1907) mirror some of the generational accord attained by *Rebecca*. The novel supports the notion of the necessary murder explored by the poem. (I am quoting from the version in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, pp. 2424 – 2427). “The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder” (94), is suggested by the heroine’s joy at hearing that Maxim has killed Rebecca, and is emphasized by his avowal that he does not regret his doing: ‘I’m glad I killed Rebecca. I shall never have any remorse for that, never, never.’ (313) Although Auden and du Maurier may differ as to the object targeted by murder, they both focus on the necessity of action and struggle. “But to-day the struggle” is a recurrent phrase in the poem. The panoramic view of the past delivered in elegiac wistful tone, the bleak image of the present, and the hope of a pleasant future are further mutual qualities between the two works. They make the structure of the poem as well as the plot of the novel.

Specific details in Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Death of the Heart* cast light on other area of agreement between *Rebecca* and other novels of the time. The two 1938-novels feature almost the same satirical note of the intellectual lethargy of the period. Both novels make a comment on the huge amount of books compared to the scarcity of readers. The books in the Manderley

library are 'lining the walls to the ceiling . . . musty and never read . . . that mass of books stretching to the ceiling' (73, 74). There are 'tables littered with magazines and papers, seldom if ever read, but left there from long custom' (89). On the other hand, Bowen's heroine, who is also a young orphan, does not go to the library to read. "Mrs. Heccomb pressed her to drop in on Daphne at Smoots'." (237)

"No subscribers were in the library when Portia came in, and Daphne, already leaning back from her desk, looked up with a quite equable scowl.

"Oh, hullo!" she said, "what do *you* want?"

"Mrs. Heccomb thought you might like me to drop in." . . . Portia, one finger on Daphne's desk, looked round and said: "What a large number of books."

"And that isn't all, either. However do sit down."

"I do wonder who reads them." (p. 238)

The smell of the stale unchanging air is *permanently* inhaled from both rooms, and in both rooms, it is originally coming from the books:

There was an old quiet smell about the room, as though the air in it was little changed, for all the sweet lilac scent and the roses brought to it throughout the early summer. Whatever air came to this room, whether from the garden or from the sea, would lose its first freshness, becoming part of the unchanging room itself, one with the books, musty and never read, one with the scrolled ceiling, the dark panelling, the heavy curtains.

It was an ancient mossy smell (73)

For Portia, the "first call was alarming—in the upstairs library heating drew out a gluey smell from the books; Daphne's nostrils wore a permanent crinkle. In all senses, literature was in bad odour here." (p. 237) The library in Manderley is well heated too, and du Maurier, like Bowen, sheds light on the use of the room for irrelative activities:

I think of half past four at Manderley, and the table drawn before the library fire. The door flung open, punctual to the minute, and the performance, never-varying, of the laying of the tea, the silver tray, the kettle, the snowy cloth. . . . ‘We sat in the library after dinner, and presently the curtains were drawn, and more logs thrown on the fire; it was cool for May, I was thankful for the warmth that came from the steady burning logs.’ (11–2, 83)

Bowen expresses the idea in more explicit terms: “Contempt for reading as an occupation was implicit in the way Daphne knitted, stopped knitting to buff her nails, and knitted again, impatiently hiking by the long strand towards her her [sic] ball of coral wool.” (p. 237) Finally, we can see how, in the two libraries of the coastal towns, apathy is even accentuated by the indifference of the animals. The heroine ponders:

He [Frank] did not notice, every day, as I did, the blind gaze of the old dog in its basket in the library, who lifted its head when it heard my footstep . . . and sniffing the air drooped its head again . . . The old dog lay asleep in her basket. (144, 272)

The cat in Bowen’s novel is still lazier: “The twitch of the coral ball did not disturb the apathy of the library cat—this furious mouser had been introduced when mice began to get at the *belles lettres*, but he only worked by night.” (pp. 237–238)

It remains to shed light on the reverberations of a few events and social realities in the story. Mrs Van Hopper has been staying in France. ‘For many years now she had come to the Hôtel Côte d’Azur’(15). Du Maurier apparently alludes to the surge of American expatriates in France during the 1920s and 1930s:

Nothing before, or since has equaled the mass expatriation of the 1920's. It was as if a great draft of wind picked up these very peculiar people and dropped them off in a European life style. . . . Europe and the rest of the world were beginning to see a large

population of these American expatriates. . . . Along with the intellectuals went the wealthy élite, the recent college graduates, the art students, and the recent war veterans aptly called “The Lost Generation”. Although many went all over the world, the largest density of these expatriates was in France. “Indeed, to young writers like ourselves, a long sojourn in France was almost a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.” (Cowley 102) (123 help me! com)

Mrs Van Hopper surely represents the wealthy elite with her ‘bejewelled fingers’ and ‘jewel case’ (14, 50). Du Maurier makes a literal reference to the fact elsewhere in the story. Frank says he has been ‘staying a week-end in Paris in the middle of August,’ and he states that the ‘people were mostly Americans.’ (307)

There is another reference to an important political phenomenon in the 1930s. Stallworthy and Ramazani write about the turn of the “majority of young intellectuals (and not only intellectuals) in the 1930s to the political left.” (p. 1831) “The 1930s were the so-called red decade,” they state. Their statement agrees with Beatrice’s idea that the holes in Rebecca’s boat are ‘much more likely’ done by a ‘Communist’ and her remark that ‘[t]here are heaps of them about.’ (370) Moreover, there is the symbolic reference to socialism with its anarchical connectivity in the depiction of the rhododendrons. Favell’s car, ‘drawn up behind the rhododendrons,’ (165) highlights the emblematic use of the word; he has openly declared himself a socialist and his ‘hair was reddish like his skin.’ (166) The rhododendrons ‘blood-red . . . massed one upon the other in incredible profusion, showing no leaf, no twig, nothing but the slaughterous red.’ (70) When Maxim asks the heroine if she likes them, she tells him:

‘Yes,’ a little breathlessly, uncertain whether I was speaking the truth or not, for to me a rhododendron was a homely, domestic thing, strictly conventional, mauve or pink in colour, standing one beside the other in a neat round bed. And these were monsters, rearing to the sky, massed like a battalion, too beautiful I thought, too powerful; they were not plants at all. (70)

Stallworthy and Ramazani make the point that it had been a short-lived turn, that many were disillusioned and shocked away from their “radical political views of the left,” and that the “outbreak of World War II in September 1939 . . . marked the sudden end of the red decade.” (p. 1831) Du Maurier makes just the same point through the metaphor conceived in the following prophetic statement:

We were out of the dark wooded drive and into the light again. The rhododendrons were upon us. Their hour would soon be over. Already they looked a little overblown, a little faded. Next month the petals would fall one by one from the great faces, and the gardeners would come and sweep them away. Theirs was a brief beauty. Not lasting very long. (141)

Certainly, *Rebecca* is capable of giving much more. Literal and figurative refractions of events and realities of British life are abundant in its rhetoric, yet they are greater than the scope of my study can comprise.



## *Chapter Five*

### *Conclusion and Recommendations*

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### Conclusion and Recommendations

Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, for all its greatness, has fallen victim to the questionable tendency of criticism to imprison writers in fixed frames. The dismissal of the novel, the negligence and disrespect it has suffered because contemporary critics, almost unanimously, supposed it was belonging to an outdated vogue, has warranted this research. I have specifically targeted the claim laid by the Encyclopaedia Britannica that the novel was invalidated out of the literary canon for being a romantic story since the statement has summed up the critical consensus. The close analysis of the work, conducted in two separate parts, with all possible reasonableness and objectivity, has proved the injustice and wrongness of the verdict.

#### 5.1. Summary

In the first part, I addressed the double assumptions contained in the statement of the Encyclopaedia: the connectivity of *Rebecca* with romanticism, and the expiry of its appeal by virtue of such identification. In refutation, I laid out my argument against the inadequacy of the judgement of literary works on chronological or spatial basis because of the constancy and universality of human nature—the subject of this human art. I also argued against the conceptual categorization of literature. Through the investigation of a number of literary theories and practices, the study showed how literary movements were so confusingly interrelated that it was unfeasible to classify literary works in separate categories. I put the traditional definitions of romance in trial where they failed to stand as one substantial concept; they appeared self-contradictory and inapplicable.

Again, I adduced some examples of literary performance that, in accordance with literary theory, fell within the romantic domain, yet in certain aspects they tended to diverge from its main route. The scrutiny of certain works by writers known to be inclined against romance, also demonstrated that something was getting wrong between theory and practice. Most important, the analysis revealed substantial incompatibility between the traditional conceptions of romance and *Rebecca* thus annulling the veracity of the novel appellation.

Since the critical categorizations proved unsatisfactory, I stuck to my belief that a literary work ought to be judged according to three basic principles: the purpose of the author plus the message conveyed by the work, the method of artistic performance employed to deliver the message, and the effect of the work on readers.

Accordingly, I set off to measure *Rebecca* by the standards of its own author. My summary of her article on romantic love illustrated du Maurier's aversion to the portrayal of romance in the English literary tradition. According to her account, the tradition has disagreeably stained and disfigured the concept. Being applied to tales far irrelevant to its true meaning, traditional romance fell on two opposite poles. It was either a contemptible bawdy seen by du Maurier as originating from the Greek art or a formless ideal celebrated by other literary tendencies seemingly influenced by a heavenly religion. I then identified the features of true romance portrayed in *Rebecca* because du Maurier believed it was indispensable to fiction. For du Maurier, romance resided in the middle between the aforementioned extremes yet with uncompromising insistence on higher moral principles. It put material emphasis on the balance between the clay

and fine components of human beings maintaining that their happiness requires the right mix of these components.

Dependent on the differentiation I made between the two types of romance, the traditional versus the genuine one perceived by the author, my concern was to clear *Rebecca* from the guilt of being romantic in the former sense and to figure out the genuine romantic portrayal in the novel. Conducting my analysis of this creative product of imagination with the author's conscious view in mind, the findings were exciting, even more than I have ever expected.

All the elements of the story were incredibly consistent with the thoughts given in the article. The setting, Manderley, with its perfect symmetry furnished a solid proof of the required balance painting a fine symbolic picture of romance. The theme was a fine satire on the obscene portrayal of romance known of old and the modern servility to it. Du Maurier's main interest was to cleanse the notion from the long and deep-rooted pornography she ascribed to the Greek culture with its gruesome and violent rendition. She was also concerned to set right the image of romance at the opposite pole. Du Maurier provided, in contrast, a genuine romantic love that satisfied the higher aspirations of humanity without frustrating the desires inbred in them by virtue of the earthly formation. The du Maurier-ian romantic love restored the proper original situation and relationship between men and women. The heroes merged and progressed in unity towards their eternal happiness. The loss of this sort of love on the universal level resulted in utter disarray symbolized by the burning of Manderly. The story presented a model of romantic hero with all the required virtuous equanimity and tranquility to distinguish him from the conventional heroes of fiction. Du Maurier's dissatisfaction with the idealization of romance exhibited itself

in the transformation of the heroine from the traditional romantic ideal represented by her personality to a confident romantic character. The extra-immoral Rebecca turned our eyes deep into the ugliness of the interiority of the illicit love versus its exterior sweetness, beauty, and superiority. The story staged a revolt against the disconcertingly ill nature of the established critical moulds guarded by critics through the sinister character of Mrs Danvers. Favell heightened our consciousness of the abomination of vice, treachery, and corruption celebrated by the Greek tales. Du Maurier created an overall picture by presenting some samples of stray-ness from romance in the characters of Beatrice, Giles and Frank who represented the majority of people. To crown the whole, the style by which du Maurier carried out all these elements fully matched the romantic portrayal by its unprecedented balance; the analytical calculations I conducted on the diction unveiled a wonderful precision thereof. No wonder, the overall output was a very enjoyable and effective piece of literary creation.

The second part went further to disprove the accusation implied in the statement of the Encyclopædia Britannica considering the novel an old fossilized piece of art. I examined the story in relation to 1930s fiction to come out with the conclusion that it was as fresh as any other literary product of the day, and, with the exception of its outlook, as responsive to its contemporary literary and cultural atmosphere.

My analysis covered almost all the subjects and issues that received a lot of attention during the decade with a view to figuring out their congruity with those in *Rebecca*. These I extracted from a chapter on the 1930s fiction by James Gordin. I explained that the novel was committed to the topicality of the decade by underlining the metaphorical concentration on the problems and miseries of the period with its emphasis on the necessity of change. I

showed how, like most of contemporary writers, du Maurier explored apocalyptic transformation and how this was contradicted with some sort of withdrawal from the notion. With due adaptation to the novel form, the principled hero of du Maurier was the prose equivalent of the elevated heroes of the poets of the Auden Generation, the canonical voice of the decade. His character contained the suitable powers and abilities needed for the inevitable change. I also noted her contrivance to give in, without breaching the moral commitment of the story, to a common propensity among the fiction writers of her generation to degrade their protagonists. After that, I referred to the problematic relationship with the past in the 1930s writings directing attentions to du Maurier's consciousness of the issue. Prompted by the thought that the influence of Freud on the thirties fiction was too strong to be eluded by any thoughtful writer, I proceeded to investigate his theories to see if they were applied in the story. The results were truly positive. If Freud had the chance to study the characters of Favell, Maxim, and Frank, he would have chosen them to represent the triad of his psychoanalytical theory—the id, ego, and superego—in the way he had selected Oedipus to embody the theory he had named after this Greek hero. The influence of the psychological theories was even more evident in the characterization of the heroine and her didactic experience of transformation. (I have the details thereof explored in a separate article). I illustrated how the historical and geographical references signalled du Maurier's share in the fear of destructive foreign attack pervading the decade fiction as part of the concentration on the conditions of Britain. I also directed attention to the setting of the novel away from London—a not-unusual literary practice seen as a reactive gesture against a parallel dread of isolation and immobility. The effect of the Great War, which was all too familiar in the inter-war literature,

was just quite evident. I pointed out the language of war, the violence, the fears, the explosions, and the horrors subsisting in the body of the narrative together with the predictions of the other one. It goes without saying that betrayal and social class issues were the backbone of the story. I disclosed the emphasis the author made on the necessity of immediate action to solve the long-standing dissensions between social classes carried out through the masked middle-class heroine along with the orderly artistic form, which took the readers to the time when the novel was a middle-class concern.

My interpretation of the novel put out the distinction between the novel and contemporary fiction, which lay in the different moral lesson *Rebecca* provided. Tracking the representations of the humanistic approach to sexuality, I clearly recognized du Maurier's footmarks. Despite the importance she laid on physical response, she made it plain that legitimacy was a must. More remarkable, she equalled her contemporaries in the thoroughness with which she treated the subject of homosexuality although with a difference. She was opposed with unmitigated abhorrence to the ubiquitous same-sex relationship and was never reluctant to present her loathing of the ongoing trends to push heterosexuality outside the connubial bond. Within the same context, I traced the subtle attack on two pivotal movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their contribution to the general chaotic conditions: free love movement and modernism. I also made a remark on the stylistic decency achieved in approaching these and other sensitive issues before skimming the narrative to pick out an intellectual sort of thinking regarding the respective role of men and women. The cautious approach du Maurier held avoided the extremity of the existing dialectics. The unmistakable differentiation between good and evil made by du Maurier concluded my discussion of the novel's peculiarity; I shed light on the

articulateness of its moral lesson in contrast to modernist and contemporary fiction by adducing some specimens of literary and critical incertitude.

I went further in ascertaining the uniformity of the novel with its time. I first presented the different outlook provided by the story, operating as an exorcism of the influence of subversive new philosophies, as a logical evidence of its relatedness. Then progressing to furnish ancillary evidences, I compared it with two immediate contemporary literary works. I worked out the thematic affinity the novel had with the seminal work of W. H. Auden who was the most prominent of the thirties canonical literary figures. I did so with the similitude between *Rebecca* and the novel published in the same year by one of the critically respected authors of the decade explaining how the two women writers diagnosed the generational lack of interest in reading. Samples of cultural and social occurrences discernible in the story reinforced my opinion concerning the awareness of the general state of affairs mirrored by the novel. The American migration to France and the remarkable rise and fall of communism, which were two well-known social and political facts of the period that were highlighted in the story, constituted my final testimony for the inclusiveness of *Rebecca*.

Now comes the moment for the last word. Critics were guilty to disparage the story. I will not hesitate to say their guilt amounted to a critical crime. They were either too shortsighted to see the hidden message or too intolerant to accept any opposing point of view. Most probably, they were both. Having enabled me to unveil so much depth, fecundity, and potentiality, the novel proved to have sufficient strength to stand almost all types of criticism: mythological, biographical, historical, psychological, etc. *Rebecca* managed to crush the unjustifiable charge that du Maurier was an



idle dreamer. It succeeded to assert its author as a deft player of the game, a rational social thinker, and a serious writer of her time. I may add, she would continue to be so for times to come.

## 5.2. Suggestions for Further Studies

The novel could afford much more. The limits of time and space of my study, however, had forced me to stop where I could go farther and to float where I wished to sink deeper. I had to leave out some crucial points and to have others very hurried. In what follows, I put forward a few of those ideas in brief with the hope they can be beneficial for other researchers to consider.

First, the novel offers commentary on the social determinant of economic behaviour in the musings of the heroine regarding the squandering of resources in Manderley. Secondly, in addition to the complacency about the imperial past of Britain exhibited by certain categories of the American people, the character of Mrs Van Hopper sheds light on other aspects of Americanism with a sharp note of satire. Thirdly, there are clear representations of the pre-war and post-war sentiments of British people hidden in the text as well as in the development of the plot. Fourthly, if carried on to cover the entire novels, the comparison between *Rebecca* and *The Death of the Heart* can further support my thesis on the sixth question; a contrast between the two novels will serve the same purpose for the fifth one. Lastly, there are plenty of flowers, trees, and plants that are so impressively treated by du Maurier that one is convinced they go far beyond their natural appearance and literal meanings. All these can constitute a rich material for whoever cares to work them out looking at the text with a vigilant eye.

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