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# **Marriage and the Female Characters in the Selected Novels of Daphne du Maurier**

Manželství a ženské postavy ve vybraných dílech  
Daphne du Maurier

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Alena Knížová

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## **Anotace**

Práce bude zaměřena na analýzu vybraných románů Daphne du Maurier z hlediska tématu manželství a zkušenosti ženských hrdinek. Konkrétně se bude práce zabývat následujícími romány a postavami: *Hospoda Jamajka* (Mary Yellan a Patience Merlyn), *Rebecca /Mrtvá a živá* (bezejmenná hrdinka, paní Denverová a Rebecca de Winter), *Únik* (Dona) a *Králov Generál* (Honor Harris).

Teoretickým východiskem bude posouzení vlivu anglického gotického románu a vztahu žen k mužům v gotických hororových příbězích (Walpole, Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin), dále i v příbězích viktoriánské literatury, inspirovaných gotickým románem (sestry Brontëovy). V tomto směru bude práce čerpat ze studií J.E. Hogla, D. Puntera, F. Bottinga a M. Aguirra.

Praktická analýza bude rozdělena do několika částí podle výše zmíněných románů, jednotlivé podkapitoly pak budou věnovány konkrétním hrdinkám. V rámci charakteristiky bude pozornost věnována těmto tematickým okruhům: první láska, fyzická a duševní přitažlivost, svatba, život v manželství, věrnost a nevěra, konflikty a nedorozumění.

V závěrečném shrnutí se práce pokusí ukázat, jak se tradiční gotické stereotypy v díle Daphne du Maurier spojují s hlubším zájmem o psychologické otázky partnerských vztahů

## **Abstract**

The thesis will focus on the analysis of selected novels by Daphne du Maurier in terms of the theme of marriage and the experience of female protagonists. To be more specific, the thesis will analyse the following novels and characters: *Jamaica Inn* (Mary Yellan and Patience Merlyn), *Rebecca* (the unnamed heroine, Rebecca, Mrs Danvers), *Frenchman's Creek* (Dona) and *The King's General* (Honor Harris).

The theoretical starting point will be the examination of the influence of the English Gothic novel and the relationships of women to men in Gothic horror stories of the Victorian literature inspired by the Gothic novel (The Brontë Sisters). In this respect, the thesis will draw on the studies of J.E. Hogle, D. Punter, F. Botting and M. Aguirre.

The practical analysis will be divided into several chapters according to the aforementioned novels, and the individual subchapters will be devoted to particular heroines. Within the characterisation, attention will be paid to the following themes: the first love, physical and psychological attraction, marriage and life in marriage, fidelity and infidelity, conflicts and misunderstanding.



In the final conclusion, the thesis will attempt to show how traditional Gothic stereotypes in Daphne du Maurier's novels are combined with a deeper interest in the psychological issues of partner relationships.

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## Introduction

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to analyse several novels written by Daphne du Maurier in terms of the theme of marriage and the experience of female protagonists. Four works of du Maurier will be examined: *Jamaica Inn*, *Rebecca*, *Frenchman's Creek*, and *The King's General*, as well as the heroines of these novels: the unnamed heroine, Rebecca and Mrs Danvers from *Rebecca*; Aunt Patience and Mary Yellan from *Jamaica Inn*; Dona from *Frenchman's Creek* and Honor Harris from *The King's General*.

The theoretical part tries to define the term Gothic and its origin, and it will also focus on particular features that are shared by Walpole, Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin and also by Daphne du Maurier. This part will also consider the influence of the English Gothic novel and the portrayal of women in the Gothic stories by above mentioned authors, as well as in the stories of the Victorian literature inspired by the Gothic novel (The Brontë Sisters). To support the analysis, I will draw upon the studies of J. E. Hogle, D. Punter, F. Botting, and M. Aguirre.

In the practical part, the interpretation will be divided into several parts based on the aforementioned novels, and each subchapter will be dedicated to one female character. Each heroine is to be characterised and the following themes will be analysed: the first love, the physical and mental attraction, marriage and married life, fidelity and infidelity, conflicts, and misunderstanding.

In the conclusion, the aim is to show how traditional Gothic stereotypes in Daphne du Maurier's works are combined with a deeper concern for psychological issues of love relationships. Overall, the thesis seeks to provide a comprehensive exploration of the representation of marriage as well as the female experience in the selected works by Daphne du Maurier.

# 1. The Gothic Novel

The aim of this chapter is to briefly introduce the origin of the Gothic novels and the main themes and motifs that are common to most of the Gothic stories and that are significant to the practical part of the bachelor thesis. The works of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe will be examined in greater detail, with a particular emphasis on their contribution to the development of the genre. The Radcliffian heroines will be defined, and examples of such heroines are to be named. Additionally, the works of Matthew G. Lewis and Robert Maturin will be explored, both of whom made significant contribution to the genre.

## 1.1. The Beginnings

The term Gothic cannot be easily described because of many fields where the term is used.<sup>1</sup> In the literary area, the Gothic novel is a genre which originated in England during the late eighteenth century and continued to flourish in the nineteenth century.

The father of the Gothic novel is considered to be Horace Walpole with his novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Then Ann Radcliffe built on Walpole's foundation and helped to develop the Gothic genre into a more nuanced and psychologically complex form. Matthew G. Lewis was another important author of the Gothic genre. He was also a contemporary of Ann Radcliffe, but his works differ significantly from hers in the use of more explicit violence and sexual themes. Charles Robert Maturin can also be seen as someone who continued with the tradition which was established by Horace Walpole. Maturin was a contemporary of Lewis, and his work shares some similarities in terms of its emphasis on the darker and more macabre aspects of the Gothic.

1790s were very important for Gothic novels. From this period, the Gothic genre spreads on the continent of Europe, and also in the United States, and it was particularly favoured amongst the female readership. It can be the reason why it remained so favoured but also "*controversial, literary mode throughout [...] the Romantic period in European literature*", which lasted from "*the 1790s [to] the early 1830s*."<sup>2</sup>

In the twentieth century "*the Gothic expand across the widest range in its history, into films, myriad ghost stories, a vast strand of women's romance novels, television shows and series, romantic and satirical musicals*."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Punter, D. (2013). *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hogle, J. (2006). *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The first one who used the literary term Gothic is Horace Walpole. “A Gothic Story” is the subtitle of his work *The Castle of Otranto*. “Barbarous, as well as deriving from the Middle Ages” were the possible meanings of the term Gothic.<sup>4</sup> Punter adds that the term Gothic “was literally ‘to do with the Goths’, or with the barbarian northern tribes who played so somewhat unfairly reviled a part in the collapse of the Roman Empire”<sup>5</sup>. However, Punter also claims that the authors from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were using the term Gothic, but they had little to no idea who Goths were.<sup>6</sup>

The Gothic genre is sometimes divided into “*female Gothic and male Gothic*”. In the twentieth century, the female Gothic genre became increasingly popular mainly thanks to Daphne du Maurier and her novel *Rebecca*.<sup>7</sup> The term was used by Ellen Moers in the 1970s<sup>8</sup> and it primarily focuses on female protagonists dealing with difficulties stemming from constant oppression and pressure “*relating to female sexuality and gender roles.*”<sup>9</sup> Female Gothic is often associated with the writers such as Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Brontë and Mary Shelley. Their works share similar features when it comes to the heroines. They are strong females who are trapped in a terrifying situation, for example, in captivity. The heroines are also haunted by ghosts and must navigate their way out of the sinister situation.

## 1.2. The Main Features

As mentioned above, the Gothic came from the term barbaric and it also refers to the Dark Ages<sup>10</sup>. According to Punter, the Gothic “*stood for the old-fashioned as opposed to the modern; the barbaric as opposed to the civilised; crudity as opposed to elegance.*”<sup>11</sup> The words that are often associated with the term Gothic are “horrificing,” “terrifying,” “dark,” “haunting” and many other synonyms. The Gothic tales are usually situated in the following places:

an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space - be it a castle, a foreign place, and abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean crypt, a graveyard, a primeval frontier or island, a large old house or theatre, an aging city or urban underworld, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public building.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Mullan, J. (2014, May 15). The Origins of the Gothic. *British Library*. Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-the-gothic>. [Retrieved 29 March 2023].

<sup>5</sup> Punter, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Hogle, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Wallace, D. (2013). *Female Gothic History: Gender, History and the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, A., Hughes, W. (2012). *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*. Edinburgh: University Press, p. 124.

<sup>10</sup> Mullan, J. (2014, May 15). The Origins of the Gothic. *British Library*. Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-the-gothic>. [Retrieved 29 March 2023].

<sup>11</sup> Punter, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Hogle, p. 2.

The typical motifs are secrets from the past that haunt the main protagonists. The haunting comes in many different forms; it could be psychological, physical, or otherwise. There are no rules concerning the motif of haunting and writers use it in many different forms.

There are many features that are shared by the novels discussed in this thesis. The first and probably the most obvious one is the haunted castle or house. Aguirre adds that the motif of a haunted house is defined as an *unheimlich* centre, it is a house but by no means it is not a home.<sup>13</sup> Hauntings usually take place in the above mentioned settings, and “*these hauntings can take many forms, but they frequently assume the features of ghosts, spectres, or monsters that rise from within the antiquated space.*”<sup>14</sup> However, haunting is not necessarily connected with a supernatural creature, it can be done by someone from the past or even a dead relative. Enormous, dark and cold castles and houses with hidden passageways that were connected to medieval edifices, such as churches, abbeys and graveyards, were very popular among many Gothic authors.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned before, Gothic novels tried to picture the Medieval times, therefore using haunted, gloomy and stone-cold castles and houses was very favoured among Gothic novelists. “*Gothic writing remains fascinated by objects and practises that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic.*”<sup>16</sup>

Supernatural elements and superstition in general belong to the common features of the Gothic literature, and they are used to create a sense of fear or horror. By introducing supernatural events and characters, the authors like Walpole, Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin, Shelley and even du Maurier were able to explore the themes of death, the unknown, and the afterlife in the ways that were both thrilling and unsettling. As mentioned before, the haunting doesn't mean a ghost or a demon. For example, in Lewis's novel *Mistrust*, the main character is haunted by his hatred to another person. Dreadful dreams and visions are also presented in many Gothic novels, such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Monk*, *Jane Eyre* or *Rebecca*.

Atmosphere is also very important in the Gothic novels as the Gothic mood often creates a sense of dread or unease through the use of dark and mysterious settings, supernatural occurrences, and suspenseful plots. Botting says that “*gloomy and mysterious [settings] - have repeatedly signalled the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evoked emotions of terror and laughter.*”<sup>17</sup> The weather and lighting are often used to create an ominous mood, with

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<sup>13</sup> Aguirre, M. (1990). *The Closed Space: Horror Literature and Western Symbolism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 92.

<sup>14</sup> Hogle, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Botting, F. (1995). *Gothic*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Botting, p. 1.

scenes frequently taking place on dark, windy, stormy nights and in foggy and misty settings. The weather is as unpredictable and cruel as many of the characters. Sudden changes, intense winds and streams of rain mirror the psychological chaos and anxiety of the characters. This motif also provides a metaphor for the emotional states of the characters. The setting and weather in Gothic novels add to the sense of isolation and imprisonment that the characters often feel. Isolated locations and oppressive settings are used to heighten the sense of dread and tension.

The Gothic literature repeatedly uses the terms like “good,” “bad,” “reason” and “irrationality” and, usually, these terms are in contrast. However, there is no strict line between these terms. The contrast between seeming opposites plays an important role in Gothic novels. As Botting puts it:

Gothic is an inscription neither of darkness nor of light, a delineation neither of reason and morality nor of superstition and corruption, neither good nor evil, but both at the same time. Relations between real and fantastic, sacred and profane, supernatural and natural, past and present, civilised and barbaric, rational and fanciful, remain crucial to the Gothic dynamic of limit and transgression.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, the Gothic genre doesn't fall into binary categorizations of good and evil, reason and superstition, or light and darkness. Instead, it exists in a space where these seeming opposites coexist and even merge into each other and create a tension that is so important to this genre.

Power and constraint are as popular as gloomy and mysterious settings. Ann Radcliffe, Horace Walpole and also Charlotte Brontë were fascinated by violent differences in power; therefore, their stories are full of constant pressure, capturing and forced actions.<sup>19</sup> “*Senses of extreme threat and isolation – either physical or psychological – are always happening or about to happen.*”<sup>20</sup> Female characters are often portrayed as struggling against patriarchal oppression and societal constraints to assert their own autonomy.<sup>21</sup>

The portrayal of women in Gothic novels can vary, depending on the author and particular work, however, there are some common themes and characteristics that can be found in many Gothic novels. Eva Figes, a British author and a feminist critic, discusses the representation of female heroines in Gothic novels. In her study *Sex & Subterfuge: Women*

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<sup>18</sup> Botting, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Bowen, J. (2014, May 15). Gothic motifs. *British Library*. Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gothic-motifs>. [Retrieved 29 March 2023].

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Anolik, B. R. (2015). *Property and Power in English Gothic Literature*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, p. 98.



*Writers to 1850*<sup>22</sup>, Figes argues that the Gothic genre provides a space for female writers to explore the constraints and limitations imposed on women in society. Female heroines in Gothic novels are often portrayed as vulnerable, exploited and trapped in environments that are oppressive. However, these heroines are also depicted as determined, some of them are even able to overcome the obstacles that are placed in their paths. By emphasizing the strength of these female characters, Gothic authors were able to challenge the dominant gender norms of their time. Gothic heroines are portrayed as being split or divided, torn between conflicting desires and impulses.

According to Figes “*there were only two basic plots for heroines [in the eighteenth century]. There was the story with the happy ending- the comic courtship plot with its emphasis on conduct; and the story with the unhappy ending, that of seduction, abduction and ruin.*”<sup>23</sup> At the end, Figes admits that women did not have many options to lead their lives as they wanted. On the contrary, “[r]eal life did not provide women with contrived endings. In real life women stayed imprisoned in their situation.”<sup>24</sup>

Edith Birkhead in her book *The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance*<sup>25</sup> points out the role of Horace Walpole who introduced the Gothic romance and who was instrumental in spreading the Gothic as a literary genre.<sup>26</sup> *The Castle of Otranto* was not only the first Gothic novel, but it was also “*an attempt to blend the marvellous of old story with the natural of modern novel.*”<sup>27</sup> Botting as well as Aguirre also add this aspect to Gothic novels. The modern romance is the romance of the eighteenth century and the ancient romance is the medieval romance.

In some Gothic novels, there can be two distinct types of romance or love stories. The first type is often characterized by conventional social norms, where the male protagonist is attracted to a pure and innocent female character. This type of romance is usually depicted as idealized, and it often contrasts with the darker and more passionate love story. For example, Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto* is portrayed as a beautiful, pure-hearted young lady and her love for Theodor is innocent, yet very tragic. Charlotte Brontë’s most famous novel *Jane Eyre* is the perfect illustration of the Gothic romance. Jane is presented as innocent and virtuous, and she has an intense sense of morality. However, her relationship with Mr Rochester is very passionate and filled with elements of danger, secrecy and mystery.

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<sup>22</sup> Figes, E. (1982). *Sex and Subterfuge: Woman Writers to 1850*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>23</sup> Figes, p. 56.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Birkhead, E. (2012). *The Tale of Terror*. Durham: Duke University Press.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

The second type of romance is characterized by forbidden love, intense passion, and even dangerous obsession. This type of romance may involve supernatural elements, such as ghosts or similar creatures. It often defies social conventions and expectations. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë involves both types of romance. The conventional romance between Catherine and Edgar, and also more intense and dangerous romance between Catherine and Heathcliff. *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier also offers both types of romance. As the story unfolds, the reader can realize that the first marriage of Maxim de Winter was not calm or loving as we expected. Maxim's first marriage was more mysterious and dangerous, as opposed to his second marriage, where he married a naïve, young and devoted woman that loved him in spite of all obstacles.

### 1.3. Horace Walpole

Horace Walpole is famous as the first author of the Gothic genre, who established many features of Gothic literature that were later expanded, improved and modified. As Botting adds, “*though [Walpole's works were] the blueprint for a new mode of writing, the framework that was established in The Castle of Otranto [...] underwent a number of significant changes in the hands of later writers, under pressure from different historical circumstances.*”<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, it was Walpole who introduced the genre known as Gothic.

*The Castle of Otranto* is a story of the lord of the castle, Manfred, who is desperate for keeping his lineage. Manfred's only son, Conrad, died before marrying Isabella. Out of sheer desperation, Manfred decides to marry Isabella himself, however, he is still married to his wife, Hippolita. Isabella doesn't agree to marry him and escapes from the castle with the help of a peasant, Theodor, who is falsely accused of murdering Conrad. As the story unfolds, family secrets are revealed, tragic deaths occur, and Manfred is punished for his sins.

Manfred is considered to be the perfect example of the Gothic archetype. The development of Manfred's character is marked by a descent into madness and willingness to do whatever it takes to achieve his goals. He becomes ruthless, manipulative, and he even tries to use black magic to maintain his hold on power. In many ways, Manfred is a tragic figure, who is obsessed and determined to do anything to keep control.

Manfred's view on marriage and love is complicated and evolves over the course of the novel. Manfred is married to Hippolita, a devoted wife and mother, who is devastated by the death of her son, Conrad. When she learns that Manfred wants to marry Isabella and disown

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<sup>28</sup> Botting, p. 45.

her, she cannot believe it. Manfred becomes obsessed with the idea of marrying Isabella, the young, beautiful and innocent woman. At first, he is attracted to her beauty and youth, but his desire for her quickly becomes more about power and control. It seems that he doesn't care who he is married to, as long as it brings him nearer to his aim.

#### 1.4. Ann Radcliffe

If Horace Walpole is considered to be the father of the Gothic literary genre, the creation of the Female Gothic must be ascribed to Radcliffe.<sup>29</sup> Ann Radcliffe is the most popular English Gothic novelist of the 1790s. To explain her popularity is quite easy. The number of the middle-class women readers was growing, therefore Radcliffe and other female novelists had a great impulse to develop the early Gothic theme of the imprisoned woman and to “*turn it into a journey of women coming into some power and property by their own and other feminine agency, albeit within a still-antiquated and male-dominated world full of terrors for every female.*”<sup>30</sup>

Radcliffe chose a young, virtuous and sensitive woman as the main protagonist of her novels. These heroines are often in difficult and dangerous situations which they must escape. These situations can range from the threat of physical harm, as in the case of Emily St. Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, to the emotional and psychological abuse endured by Ellena Rosalba in *The Italian*. Adeline from *The Romance of the Forest* is a young orphan, and she is left in the care of a cruel uncle. She is portrayed as sensitive and perceptive, and she must use her intelligence to escape from her uncle's clutches and find a way to live a life of freedom and happiness.

*Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey* share some similarities with Radcliffe's Gothic tales, although they are typically classified as realistic and social novels of the nineteenth century. Jane Eyre is known for her strong will and her determination to maintain her dignity and independence. Like Radcliffe's heroines, Jane is also subjected to various forms of oppression and abuse, including emotional and psychological abuse by her aunt and cousins, and physical abuse by her schoolmaster. Agnes Grey is often seen as a more pragmatic and realistic figure. She is intelligent, sensitive, and has a sense of morality. Agnes must use these qualities to navigate the social and economic challenges she faces as a governess.

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<sup>29</sup> Wallace, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> Hogle, p. 10.

The Radcliffian heroines often struggle to become independent from patriarchal oppression, they “*wrestle their destiny from the hands of patriarchal figures that dominate the texts, fashioning their own definitions of being female.*”<sup>31</sup> Despite the challenges they face, these heroines are typically strong, and they have an unwavering commitment to moral principles such as honesty, integrity and compassion. They are also portrayed as being highly perceptive, with a keen eye for detail and a deep appreciation for the natural world.

### 1.5. Matthew Gregory Lewis

Lewis was heavily inspired by *The Mysteries of Udolpho* written by Ann Radcliffe.<sup>32</sup> His work, *The Monk*, is considered to be a masterpiece of the Gothic literature and it also “*demonstrate[s] a remarkable understanding*” of the “*historical situation.*”<sup>33</sup> Matthew G. Lewis was well-travelled, therefore he had a broad knowledge of history and culture, including the time period and the setting of his novel.

*The Monk* employs supernatural elements, including demons and ghosts. These elements are used to create a sense of horror and dread, and to suggest that the characters are in the grip of the irresistible forces beyond their control. Punter even puts this novel into the contrast to the novels written by Radcliffe: “*Lewis, in fact, manages to take materials far more arcane and improbable than Radcliffe's and, by a terseness of style which sometimes approaches naturalism, to make them seem oppressively solid.*”<sup>34</sup>

Lewis's novel concentrates on the themes of sin, morality and the corrupting influence of power. In du Maurier's *Rebecca*, we can find similar themes, however, she also adds themes like jealousy, obsession and betrayal. These themes can be found in many novels connected with the Gothic, such as *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Italian*, *The Castle of Otranto* and also in *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

### 1.6. Charles Robert Maturin

Maturin's work *Melmoth the Wanderer* is considered to be “*the last truly Gothic text.*”<sup>35</sup> It is regarded to be one of the best works of the genre, and it is praised for its intricate plot, vivid descriptions, and psychological depth. *Melmoth the Wanderer* and Ann Radcliffe's Gothic

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<sup>31</sup> Davids, L. C. (2008). Female Identity and Landscape in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic [Dissertation, the University of the Western Cape]. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/58913507.pdf>, p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> Punter, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Brooks, P. (1973). *Virtue and Terror: The Monk*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 249.

<sup>34</sup> Punter, p. 61.

<sup>35</sup> Botting, F. (1995). *Gothic*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 105.

novels are often compared because Maturin used more vivid and horrifying themes than Radcliffe.<sup>36</sup>

The Gothic literature often features the characters with dual identities or conflicting personalities. This duality represents the struggle between good and evil, and it creates a sense of tension and unease. Another example is the duality between the reality and fantasy. John Melmoth is initially sceptical of the stories he hears about Melmoth and he dismisses them as superstition and folklore. However, as he continues to investigate and experience the supernatural events, he becomes aware of this line between reality and imagination. Botting adds that the “[r]eality and fiction are not clearly separated” but intertwined.<sup>37</sup>

Botting also compares *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *The Castle of Otranto*:

*“Otranto focuses on those three days which lead to the solution of the mystery; Melmoth goes much further back and concentrates on entire lives of slow degradation at the hands of a mystery which is never actually fully revealed.”*<sup>38</sup>

The experience of psychological distress, such as madness, hysteria and obsession, belongs to the main themes of both novels. These states of mind represent a collapse of reason and logic. They create a sense of uncertainty and unpredictability.

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<sup>36</sup> Botting, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> Botting, p. 108.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

## 2. Daphne du Maurier's Victorian Inspiration

As mentioned above, there are various features of Gothic novels. In the previous chapter, the origin of the Gothic literature and its typical motifs were described. The aim of this chapter is to analyse three works from the Victorian period, which reflect the influence of the Gothic tradition and represent an important inspiration for the novels of Daphne du Maurier. The three works are *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey*. Before doing so, it would be appropriate to define whether there are some differences between the period of Walpole, Radcliffe, Maturin and Lewis and the period of the Brontë sisters.

In the late eighteenth century, the gender-related issues played a significant role. The gender classification can be seen also in the earlier works. There are two main terms “*terror Gothic*” and “*horror Gothic*”. The first one is labelled as feminine and the second one as masculine. This distinction was made by Ann Radcliffe in her essay *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. The “*terror Gothic*” is linked to her own works and the aim of this type is “*to expand the soul by bringing it into contact with the terror-inducing sublime*”. Matthew G. Lewis is, on the other hand, linked to the second type of Gothic, which focuses “*on encounters with gruesomely depicted mortality*”. The gender distinction is also viewed in the Victorian literature inspired by the Gothic novels. In the Victorian period, the attention is paid to the gender-related issues, as well as to the patriarchal structures that formed British domestic life. The Victorian period was the age of changes that had an effect on “*traditional gender roles and relations*” that underpinned marriage and motherhood. One of the changes could be seen in the increasing number of working women.<sup>39</sup>

There are two manifestations of the Gothic during the Victorian period; the first one almost rejects the supernatural elements and the second one welcomes them. The works written in the 1840s belong to the first category and the works written in the 1880s and 1890s into the second. One might argue that this distinction is indeed true, but the supernatural elements can be also found in the Brontës' works, as will be shown later.<sup>40</sup>

The Gothic of the 1840s is characterised by the fusion of Gothic motifs with the social realism, which is reflected in the work of all Brontë sisters. The Victorian period valued domestic life and the comfort associated with it. The Gothic literature of this time explores “*repressed family secrets and histories [that are] probed and exposed.*” Domestic values and the middle-class identity are challenged. Other topics discussed in the works from this period

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<sup>39</sup> Smith, A., Hughes, W. (2012). *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*. Edinburgh: University Press, pp. 124-125.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

are self-estrangement (which is crucial) and annihilation. Social criticism also plays an important role and the relationship between the individual and the society is explored.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.1. Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Brontë's works can be connected with the Gothic genre due to the dark, mysterious, and supernatural elements. As mentioned above, the Victorian Gothic genre emerged in the nineteenth century and was characterized by the focus on horror, by the influence of the dark romanticism as well as the social realism (for example, the criticism of the traditional gender roles and the treatment of women in the Victorian society).

In this chapter some significant features of *Jane Eyre* will be discussed. The story of Jane is tragic and unpredictable from the beginning to the end. The reader first meets Jane as a little, peculiar girl, who is raised by a cruel aunt and cousin after the death of her parents. After years of mistreatment, Jane is sent away to a harsh boarding school, where she receives an education and begins to develop her own sense of identity. As an adult, Jane becomes a governess and takes a position at Thornfield. Throughout the course of the novel, Jane is confronted with the issues of gender, class, and identity, as well as the importance of personal integrity and moral values. Her story is a testament to the power of individual agency and the importance of staying to oneself, even in the face of adversity.

Jane is a character who is defined by her desire for independence and self-sufficiency. As mentioned above, the criticism of the female discrimination in the Victorian society was a significant theme. Jane is accurately aware of the ways in which women were often treated as second-class citizens with limited opportunities for education, employment and freedom in general. Jane Eyre herself points to this issue of inequality:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags.<sup>42</sup>

Jane Eyre and Mary Yellan from Daphne du Maurier's novel *Jamaica Inn* share certain similarities. Both characters are strong and independent young women who are forced to confront the challenges and limitations placed on them by society. Like Jane, Mary is an orphan

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<sup>41</sup> Smith, A., Hughes, W., p. 127.

<sup>42</sup> Brontë, Ch. (2010). *Jane Eyre*. Norwich: Samphire Press, p. 216.

who must rely on her own resourcefulness and resilience in order to survive. Both Jane and Mary also face the gender and social inequality, as they are often dismissed or belittled by those in the position of authority. Mary's experience is particularly striking, as she is forced to confront the extreme violence and misogyny of the men around her.

As in Maturin and many other Gothic authors, we can find the motif of duality in *Jane Eyre* as well. "The home which Mr Rochester offers Jane seems, on the surface and during daylight hours, to be all that a woman could desire. But at night, in the darkness of the soul, the house becomes a prison. Shrieks of despair and rage are heard."<sup>43</sup>

Mr Rochester is portrayed as a passionate and charismatic man, with a sharp wit and a deep capacity for feelings. However, Mr Rochester is also manipulative, particularly when it comes to his relationship with women. In the relationship between Jane and Rochester, the reader can find some similarities and parallels with the relationship of Max de Winter and the unnamed heroine from du Maurier's *Rebecca*.

## 2.2. Emily Brontë

The works of both Brontë sisters are often compared to the works of Jane Austen. The main focus will be on Emily Brontë's most famous novel, *Wuthering Heights*. Both Jane Austen and Emily Brontë were successful female writers in the society that was dominated by men. However, their approaches were different. Jane Austen presents her heroines as more submissive and conforming to the social norms, while Emily Brontë disregards the social and gender norms, remaining true to her free spirit. Austen's approach might have been strategic, but, as Eva Figes puts it, Emily Brontë was not constrained by the social expectations because she did not acknowledge their existence.<sup>44</sup>

The portrayal of the oppressed and trapped women is a common motif in the works of both Emily Brontë and Daphne du Maurier. Their female characters often struggle to break free from the expectations of other people and from the norms that limit their personal freedom. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine Earnshaw is torn between her love for Heathcliff and her duty to marry Edgar Linton for the financial and social reasons. In *Rebecca*, the heroine must navigate the oppressive influence of the first wife of Max, who continues to cast a shadow over the household even after her death.

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<sup>43</sup> Figes, p. 75.

<sup>44</sup> Figes, p. 139.



### 2.3. Anne Brontë

Anne's first novel, *Agnes Grey* (1847), is based on her own experience as a governess. The story is similar to *Jane Eyre* as both heroines follow the cruel life of a young and inexperienced governess.<sup>45</sup> After the great success with her first novel, Anne Brontë was able to publish her second book, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, in 1848.<sup>46</sup> But unlike her first work, her second novel is much darker and grimmer, pursuing far more difficult themes, such as alcoholism and domestic abuse.

*Agnes Grey* is more of a social novel that explores the realities of life of a poor governess and the struggles of women in the nineteenth century. As mentioned above, there are many similarities with the novel of her sister, Charlotte. Both novels put an emphasis on the themes of morality and personal integrity. Both Jane and Agnes are strong moral characters, who are willing to stand up for their beliefs and values. However, *Jane Eyre* is a novel that advocates and supports female independence and empowerment, while *Agnes Grey* is more concerned with the everyday reality and the difficult position of a governess.

Anne Brontë's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, employs more themes that are associated with the Gothic literature, especially the theme of the social and individual violence. The novel also features a mysterious protagonist, Helen Graham, who has a troubled past and secrets to hide. All these mentioned themes contribute to the creation of the Gothic atmosphere.

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<sup>45</sup> Figes, p. 162.

<sup>46</sup> Tompkins, J. M.S. (2023, March 27). Charlotte Brontë. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charlotte-Bronte>. [Retrieved 29 March 2023].

### 3. Jamaica Inn

#### 3.1. Mary Yellan

The key character in the novel *Jamaica Inn* is considered to be Mary Yellan. In the very first pages, Mary has to experience one of the worst things that could happen to a young lady, which is the loss of her parents. Mary and her mother had an extraordinary relationship, they were incredibly close and honest with each other. Mary was an only child, therefore her mother was the closest person she had, and, I dare to say, she might have been the only person Mary had. When her mother passed away, Mary had to start a new life with her aunt and her uncle. Initially, she disagreed with this arrangement because she spent her whole life on a farm, where everyone was a friend. That is why new life in a town was something unthinkable and absurd for Mary. Little did she know that her new life would not be connected with a dull and monotonous town at all.

She was reminded by her mother that she and Aunt Patience were quite alike. Before meeting Aunt Patience, her mother said to her: “*You’ll like your Aunt Patience; she was always a great one for games and laughing, with a heart as large as life*”<sup>47</sup>. Thus, Mary was looking forward to seeing her loving and always laughing Aunt Patience. As soon as she had begun her journey, she had an unpleasant feeling that the environment she was entering could possibly be hostile and even dangerous. This place was something new and scary for her. Not only the place but also her aunt and uncle made her feel uncertain. After a few minutes, Mary was sure that something dark and evil was happening at the Jamaica Inn and was convinced that it had something to do with her uncle Joss.

The relationship between Aunt Patience and Joss is a mystery for young Mary. She can see how different her Aunt is when Joss is anywhere near her. At first, she thinks that Patience would be calmer and more like her old self, but time shows that this renewal is impossible and that the old Patience was gone. The resemblance between the old Aunt Patience and young Mary is quite clear and obvious. Aunt Patience used to be full of life and dreams, she was also a cheerful and truly lovely lady and all of these qualities, by all means, Mary also has. Mary is hurt to see her Aunt act like a well-trained dog but she decides to be silent for the sake of her Aunt. The silence doesn’t last for a long time. Mary tries to threaten Joss to prove that she is resolute and has no intention to break down. Unfortunately for her, Joss is not impressed by her speech or protectionist behaviour towards her Aunt. Throughout the novel, we can see how

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<sup>47</sup> Du Maurier, D. (2015). *Jamaica inn*. London: Virago Press, p. 7.

Mary's constant trying to fight for herself and for her Aunt gradually changes into silent resistance and later even into renouncement.

### 3.1.1. Love and Attraction

A man who helps Mary in many different ways, who encourages and challenges her to do things she has never dreamed of, is Jem. Jem is a brother of Joss Merlyn, her despotic, evil, and wicked uncle. Mary fears the resemblance between these brothers and sometimes she tries to restrain these thoughts. This resemblance is something she fears the most because she knows that one day Jem could be just like his older brother Joss. Jem's eyes, mouth and smile are similar to Joss'. Unfortunately, even their behaviour is sometimes remarkably similar, and, in these situations, Mary is even more scared because she knows she could fall for Jem very quickly. She could see why Aunt Patience fell in love with Joss years ago but, for Mary, the idea of marriage is terribly stupid and unwise. Therefore, she must fight and restrain her feelings towards Jem. Nevertheless, she could not fall for Merlyn like her aunt.

As mentioned before, according to Mary, Joss and Jem are similar in many ways. However, unlike Joss, Jem is very charismatic and talkative. That is why, Mary tries to find some flaws in his character. At the first sight, Jem lacks tenderness, he is rude, he is a thief and a liar. For Mary, he represents everything she fears, hates and despises, but despite it all, she knows she could love him. She cannot figure out what exactly it is about him that attracts her. Mary knows that it is a common law of attraction, which has nothing to do with sense and sanity. She feels as if it was not her choice, she even compares this attraction to animal instincts. Her feelings towards him are always a mystery; a puzzle for her. He is an irritant and a stimulant at the same time, Jem Merlyn is a paradox.

Mary is not someone who would blindly and stupidly fall in love, let alone with someone like Jem Merlyn. Later on, Mary begins to feel she is in a trap, and it is all because of a man. The aforementioned feelings are new and strange for her. All her life she has been trying to obviate these particular emotions. She doesn't want to love or feel like a woman. She sees it as if it was a pain, suffering and misery that could last a lifetime. As mentioned above, Mary, and also the relationship between her and Jem, are complex and quite problematic. On the one hand, Mary says about him: "*Jem was a carefree, sympathetic, and attractive man who had kissed her in the market square. But in a few moments, he was like a stranger to her, obsessed with some grim purpose that she could not understand*"<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 216.

From the reader's perspective, Mary and Jem are both complicated and complex personalities. Mary is constantly fighting her feelings towards Jem and also herself; she wants to be an independent woman and she has no intention to be someone's well-mannered wife. Jem on the other hand, fights against his own nature and past. Jem knows very well who he is, what kind of family he comes from and of course, who his brother is. In their hearts, they both know that their relationship doesn't develop in a traditional, romantic way. However, what they have is more special; they care for each other.

Their bond is truly important to both of them, despite so many attempts to downplay and belittle the significance and importance of their relationship. Throughout the novel, Mary tries to disown and abandon Jem, but, in the end, it is he who saves her. Jem is described as a strong, rude, and disrespectful man, still, he has enough courage to show Mary affection, and he even proposes to her. However, to the reader, this proposal is austere and unromantic, and, moreover, that marriage and traditional married life, is something Mary doesn't want and desire. In all sincerity, Jem is not persuaded about life in marriage as well. Jem even says it about himself: "*I've been a rover since a boy; never any ties, nor roots; nor fancies for a length of time; and I daresay I'll die a rover too. it's the only life in the world for me*"<sup>49</sup>.

The proposal is only a gesture for Mary, to feel respectable. But how could she feel respected by others if she marries a rover, someone like Jem? His background and his difficult personality are something that even Mary herself struggles with. That is one of the many reasons why their relationship is not traditional, clear, and smooth. Their differences in nature do not make their relationship easy either. However, gradually, they learn to respect each other, and also to accept each other as they are. Eventually, they decide to spend their lives together. Jem can offer Mary rather destitute, difficult, and uncomfortable life, but still, Mary decides to go with Jem. As we can assume, Mary loves Jem in a very special way and Jem also loves her his own way. They both understand and, more importantly, respect their mindsets. We cannot be sure if they stay together until their death or if their paths will diverge but the motif of a common journey is strongly romantic, and it gives us hope that there can be a happy ending.

As mentioned above, Jem is the one who saves Mary, he saves her in many different ways, for instance, he saves her from Francis Davey. The Vicar Francis Davey is another very important man in Mary's life. His voice is low and gentle, but he has strange eyes, transparent like glass, his skin is also white as snow, he is a freak of nature.<sup>50</sup> Even though Mary is scared

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<sup>49</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 299.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

of his strange look, she feels she can trust a man for the first time in many months. Francis Davey could be her only friend; he could be someone she could talk to and rely on.

Mary's and Francis Davey's first meeting takes place under rather grim and harsh conditions. The Vicar saves Mary wandering in the woods. At first, she thinks he wouldn't even want to help her because people know she lives at Jamaica Inn. This fact discourages many people but not the Vicar. The Vicar takes her to his house and, strangely, Mary doesn't protest. She feels at peace after a long time, and the silence that reverberates through the rather cosy room is soothing and calming.

The same cannot be said of Jamaica Inn. Both places are quiet but the silence that pervades Jamaica Inn is oppressive. There is a strong contrast between Jem and the Vicar, and Mary is fully aware of this contrast. To her, the Vicar is someone who has saved her, helped her and listened to her. He is also very polite and well-mannered; he doesn't embody as much danger and fear for her as Jem. She always thinks of Jem in negative ways, in contrast to the Vicar. In the end, it turns out that everything is completely different from what she and everybody thought.

Nevertheless, the attraction she feels for Jem is nothing like what she felt at first for the Vicar. The feelings she has for Jem could be described as animalistic, which means that she has no control over those feelings. On the other hand, she feels closeness and affection for the Vicar in a psychological or spiritual sense. For Mary, Francis Davey is a friend, companion and mental support she sorely lacks. Mary feels that she is all alone in the world, with no one to confide in. The pity she felt at first for Aunt Patience slowly faded and she realizes that she doesn't have support from her Aunt either. Moreover, Mary knows that Patience would never stand up for her or help her. Mary tries to build walls around herself, beyond which she would not let anyone in. She claims that solitude suits her, and it makes her feel better. She chooses Francis Davey as a friend but she feels no attraction to him in the physical sense, on the contrary, she thinks him to be a freak.

As mentioned above, the Vicar is a particularly important person in her life and also in her story. Unfortunately for Mary, it turns out that the Vicar doesn't really care about her, anything or anyone. Francis Davey is a man who is worse, crueller and meaner than Joss Merlyn. It is Jem again who saves Mary's life from the clutches of the evil Vicar in a completely helpless situation when Mary doesn't even believe in the possibility of her rescue.

### 3.1.2. Marriage and Life in Marriage

Mary grew up in a complete family; she had a father and a mother, but unfortunately, her father died, and she had to grow up on a farm only with her mother. The fact that she grew up only with her mother may have affected her greatly, in my opinion. She saw her mother as a strong female figure, someone who could take care of the farm and Mary herself. This may be reflected in Mary's view on marriage. Her mother could be the perfect example of a strong and independent woman because she did not need anyone. This is something they have in common. Mary decided not to marry anyone. However, her mother didn't agree with this opinion and attitude at all. Mary's mother said to her: "*A girl can't live alone, Mary, without she goes queer in the head, or comes to evil*"<sup>51</sup>. Mary is aware of what her mother said but she decides to act according to her own will.

Mary's thoughts and beliefs about marriage are progressive and non-traditional. For her, love and marriage are two different things. And even her view of love changes and develops. The man who is the cause of this constant change is Jem Merlyn. Neither Mary nor Jem long for a traditional relationship. However, despite Jem's negative view of marriage, he asks Mary to marry him. It is interesting because Mary has no desire for marriage or any kind of bond in the traditional sense. Mary knows that she will be judged by other people even if she chooses to live in marriage.

It can be said that Mary and Jem know that they are not a compatible and prospective couple. They don't try to merge with the majority. They want to be themselves and have no intention to conform to the expectations of other people. Mary is progressive in many ways; her thinking about married life certainly doesn't fit the traditional stereotypes. Her view of marriage may be influenced by her mother's independence and freedom. On the other hand, she lives with her Aunt, who is completely dependent on her husband, has no opinion of her own and cannot express her true feelings. In other words, she is just a mere puppet, a mere shadow.

### 3.1.3. Fidelity and Infidelity

The theme of fidelity and infidelity are not fundamental for Mary, as she just begins to realize her attraction to men. She enters her adult life and becomes aware of her new feelings, aware of her future, and aware of the prejudice that accompany her. The path she has chosen for herself will probably be harder. Infidelity in the sense of cheating and lying hasn't

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<sup>51</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 6.

been experienced by Mary. Nevertheless, the relationship with Jem is challenging and difficult for her as it is the first serious relationship she has ever had.

Men had not counted for much in her life up to the present; there had been too much to do on the farm at Helford to worry about them. there had been lads who had smiled at her in church and gone with her to picnics harvest-time; once a neighbour had kissed her behind a hayrick after a glass of cider. it was all of very foolish, and she had avoided the man ever since.<sup>52</sup>

She doesn't know anything about true and faithful relationships. The feelings she has for Francis Davey are also strong and real, she feels a psychological closeness to him. These feelings don't disturb her but fill her with comfort. On the contrary, the relationship with Jem is based on physical attraction she has no control over. The issues that Mary discusses with the Vicar are very deep and sensitive for her, he is able to help her and listen to her, or at least he is good at pretending his interest in her. On the other hand, she knows she couldn't talk to Jem about it because he is a thief and Mary always see him as an immoral person. Both relationships are important to her, even if they are quite different.

In conclusion, Mary is a very young and inexperienced girl for whom the subjects of relationships and marriage are a great unknown. She encounters infidelity in her surroundings. Her father died early, so Mary's mother lived as a widow and she decided not to marry again. Aunt Patience is the opposite of her mother. She is a frightened and insecure lady who cannot even make a single decision for herself. She would never lie or defy her own husband, let alone cheat on him. For Mary, these themes don't resonate as much as the theme of the first love or disappointment. She may feel insecure and perhaps even jealous, but it is by no means the main or central theme. Her view of love and relationships isn't always unambiguous, and her feelings change quite frequently.

#### **3.1.4. Conflicts and Misunderstanding**

If the themes of fidelity and infidelity are not central to Mary, the themes of conflict and misunderstanding certainly are. Mary's story is based on the conflicts she has with her uncle Joss and his brother Jem. Mary has one conflict after another every day, with other people and even with herself. Mary has no one to turn to, confess to or talk to and, moreover, she has no one to confide in. Therefore, solving the problems and conflicts is more difficult and complicated for her than anyone else.

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<sup>52</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 135.

Mary's conflicts with her Aunt Patience are influenced by the fact that she is her only family. Moreover, the reader can see the similarities in Patience's and Mary's behaviour. Mary's relationship with her Aunt is very complicated and not always straightforward. It is important for Mary, at least in the beginning, to maintain an acceptable relationship with her, and not to do anything that might harm or hurt her Aunt. Unfortunately, as time proves, it is not possible. Mary was very fond of Patience when she was a little girl; she was even looking forward to reuniting with her. Sadly, their relationship gradually began to deteriorate until eventually Mary became completely estranged from her Aunt, as she lost hope for her and for herself and she had no desire to try to protect Patience anymore.

Mary cannot understand why her Aunt repeatedly defends Joss and it makes her very uncomfortable and even angry. She can see how much Joss hurts her aunt Patience and how he hurts everyone around him. Patience chooses to remain passive, turning a blind eye to it and pretending she doesn't see, hear or know anything about Jamaica Inn. Mary realizes how ignorant and naive her Aunt is:

*"In her own way Aunt Patience was a murderer too. She had killed them by her silence. Her guilt was as great as Joss Merlyn's, for she was a woman and he was a monster. He was bound to her flesh and she let him remain."*<sup>53</sup>

When her aunt dies it touches Mary deeply. She loves her very much, but the way Patience behaves is impossible to accept. Mary is a wild, unrestrained young girl who is not emotionally dependent on anyone. Her Aunt Patience is the complete opposite. She is never herself in her relationship with Joss, she is attached to him, forgetting about everything else. It is not until the end that Mary genuinely realizes she almost became as passive as her aunt, trying only to survive. The stay in Jamaica Inn almost resulted in the loss of her own identity.

The main character with whom Mary has the most intense conflicts is her uncle Joss. Joss has a very erratic and volatile nature, he is also an alcoholic and for this reason, communication with him is extremely difficult. Mary's relationship with Joss is very complicated and difficult because Joss himself is a very complicated personality. He is unpredictable and she doesn't know what to think of him. She wonders whether he is just an irritable drunk or whether he plans his actions:

And yet, allowing his personality, his energy, the very fear which his enormous physical strength must engender in his compassion, had Joss Merlyn the necessary brain and subtlety to lead such an enterprise? Did he plan every move

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<sup>53</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 134.



and every departure, and had he been making preparations for tonight's work during the past week, when away from home? It must be so; Mary could see no alternative.<sup>54</sup>

One of the reasons their relationship is so complicated is Aunt Patience. Mary tries to do everything she can to protect her Aunt. She wants the best for her and she knows that Joss destroys her life. Mary was able to stand up to Joss at first, but it turns out to be useless because Joss Merlyn isn't afraid of her. On the contrary, he is able to destroy her, her aunt, or anyone else. Mary tries to escape, to stand on her own feet, but she always ends up in the dreadful Jamaica Inn. Joss is a truly evil and insidious man because of whom even Mary herself would probably eventually break down.

The conflicts she has with Joss's brother Jem are also an integral part of her life. As I mentioned above, this relationship isn't simple and straightforward. Every time Mary interacts with Jem, she learns how to talk to him and get along with him. However, when she learns new things about him she cannot resist to develop new arguments. Mary has a clear idea of what she wants to do and how she wants to lead her life. She made up her mind many years ago but Jem can interfere with her plans. She slowly falls in love with him and it scars her. Jem even tells her about the Merlyn's complicated relationships with women:

*"We Merlyns have never been good to our women." [...] "I can remember my father beating my mother till she couldn't stand. She never left him, though, but stood by him all his life. When he was hanged at Exeter, she didn't speak to a soul for three months. Her hair went white with the shock."*<sup>55</sup>

Here we can see a parallel between Joss and Patience: it seems that their relationship was already predetermined and doomed to a bad ending. Jem actually defends his elder brother and thinks about some higher forces that prevent him from developing a happy, peaceful and harmonious relationship. The question remains whether Jem is strong enough or even capable of reversing this determination and breaking out of the cycle.

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<sup>54</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

## 3.2. Aunt Patience

As mentioned above, Aunt Patience is married to a man called Joss Merlyn and she is also a sister of Mary's mother. According to her sister, Aunt Patience used to be someone who "*was always a great one for games and laughing, with a heart as large as life*"<sup>56</sup>. She had many good qualities: she was caring, loving and compassionate, beaming with positive and calming energy. At the beginning of the novel, Patience is described as 'the fun and kind aunt', however, her behaviour completely changes because of the constant terror of her husband Joss. The perpetual stress, fear and powerlessness fill Patience's every day for many years.

There is no doubt that Patience is a victim of domestic violence, and it is impossible for her to leave her torturer. Even though Patience's life is miserable and even unbearable she cannot see any opportunity to live differently. From Patience's point of view, her situation is unsolvable. This passive attitude results in the number of disputes she has with Mary. Mary's view is different; she is convinced that her aunt must fight to free herself. Mary believes that fighting against the uncle's terror would result in a happy ending for her aunt. However, Mary gradually begins to feel lost and it is difficult for her to see any solution. Aunt Patience seems to be frightened and broken but we cannot forget that the atmosphere of fear and stress she lived in would destroy many people. From my perspective, Patience only adapts to her miserable situation in order to survive in Jamaica Inn. The changes in her behaviour are caused by her unbearable situation. The danger of similar changes can be observed also in Mary's behaviour, nevertheless, Mary is finally able to resist this threat and to liberate herself.

### 3.2.1. Love and Attraction

As far as we can see, the only man in Patience's life is Joss Merlyn, a despotic man who loves only alcohol, money and power. Joss and Patience have a complicated relationship and there is no doubt that this relationship is not healthy. Love is missing in this marriage, along with trust, understanding and respect. From my point of view, there are many reasons why this relationship could not ever work.

As stated above, Joss is an extremely difficult man to get along with. Thanks to his alcoholism and propensity to violence he is feared by everyone, and Patience is not an exception. Patience is submissive and passive, therefore she has many difficulties with asserting her own opinion in the relationship with Joss. Joss's alcoholism and rudeness are pivotal aspects of this marriage. However, Joss may hate himself and perceive himself as someone who isn't

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<sup>56</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 7.

able to change his life. To understand Patience's passive attitude, we have to imagine the reality of her life with a man like Joss. Joss treats his wife with no respect and it seems that he despises her. Patience is in a position where she couldn't do anything right for Joss. Nevertheless, this fact doesn't stop her from trying to please him or get out of his way.

The attraction between Joss and Patience is a mystery because their marriage is only depicted as miserable and not functional at all. We cannot see any acceptable or positive aspects of their marriage. It seems they are held together only by their dark secrets. Neither Joss nor Patience show affection to each other, which can be caused by Joss's despise and Patience's fear. In contrast to their relationship, Mary and Jem can express their passionate feelings and needs.

### **3.2.2. Marriage and Life in Marriage**

Marriage, in general, is a pivotal event in Patience's life. She married Joss when she was young, and she perceived it as a necessity. She had no other option than to marry someone, even though her marriage was very abusive, violent and unfunctional, Patience never says a bad word about Joss or their marriage. She states: "*He's a very good husband to me, and has been so since our wedding-day*"<sup>57</sup>. It seems Patience tries to live in self-denial and lies and after so many years she begins to believe them. This behaviour can be a coping mechanism for her because her situation never gets better.

Marriage is a commitment to another person and, for Patience, it is also a promise of confidentiality, a vow never to reveal the real truth about Jamaica Inn and the real Joss Merlyn. Marriage is sacred to Patience and she decides to sacrifice everything for this marriage and for her husband. She doesn't even stand up for Mary and she doesn't give her a helping hand, therefore Mary feels alone, lost and abandoned. Patience helps Mary after she was brutally beaten by her uncle. However, it may be only her conscience because she knows she did not protect Mary and it is too late for both of them. Nevertheless, we cannot forget one significant thing: Patience lives in an extremely hostile environment, she is a victim of domestic violence. Her husband is abusive towards her in many ways, psychological and also physical, so her situation is absolutely unbearable.

A happy marriage involves love, trust, humility, respect, and many other important qualities. Joss and Patience made promises to each other, but they cannot keep them. We do not know why they made their promises. Whether they were happy at the beginning or not because

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<sup>57</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 19.

Patience's view is quite unrealistic and biased. As for Joss and his view of marriage, we cannot even be sure that he wanted to marry Patience. Joss doesn't love anyone and doesn't care about anyone. To understand Joss's hostile attitude towards women we have to look at his childhood. His brother Jem remembers their father beating their mother, who, nevertheless, "*stood by him all his life.*"<sup>58</sup> There are striking similarities between Joss's parents and the relationship of Joss and Patience. Even though Joss's father was an alcoholic and a criminal, his abused mother still loved him and never left him. This paradoxical situation repeats itself in the story of Patience, as an urgent warning for Mary.

### **3.2.3. Fidelity and Infidelity**

As Patience is an extreme example of dependence, infidelity isn't a prominent motif in this novel. Despite this fact, there are some indications or hints that can be considered as infidelity. There is no doubt that Joss has complete control over Patience and, in general, over everyone. Patience's faithfulness can be perceived as silence: she doesn't even try to tell anybody about Jamaica Inn or Joss. Everyone knows that Jamaica Inn isn't a fair, peaceful and quiet place, and everyone knows that Joss Merlyn is, without any doubt, a criminal with an immoral and evil character. However, Patience has no intention to defame her husband. On the contrary, she defends him and tries to depict him as an honest, loving man, who has a problem with alcohol and is easily irritable and short-tempered. In this respect, Patience represents a perverted side of faithfulness.

As there are no visible indications of Joss being unfaithful, we can only speculate whether he breaks his promise of being faithful or not, due to his personality and drinking problems. Joss has complicated relationships with all people, therefore, we can presuppose that he cannot love any woman. He doesn't treat women with respect and as equals, and he found the model for his rude and brutal behaviour in the life of his father.

### **3.2.4. Conflicts and Misunderstanding**

For a good marriage mutual communication is necessary. Two people should be able to communicate their problems, thoughts and personal opinions but in the marriage of Patience and Joss, nothing is functioning, including communication. Non-functioning communication is a significant motif of many relationships in this novel. People don't communicate because of

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<sup>58</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Jamaica Inn*, p. 71.

fear as talking is forbidden, it is perceived as a taboo. As a result, Joss and Patience are left in terrifying and endless silence.

Misunderstanding, in this case, is caused by the lack of communication rather than by saying wrong words. Patience never talks to Mary about anything, which can be seen as a missed opportunity for them to become allies. Both of them are witnesses of frightening crimes and both are victims of Joss's aggressive behaviour, therefore, their alliance could help them in many ways. It is Patience's fear of Joss, or simply fear of doing anything, that prevents both women from alliance. However, Mary still has hope, faith and desire to fight for her life even though she knows it might be pointless. Her strong instinct of self-preservation, which helps her overcome the hopeless situation, can remind the reader of Ann Radcliffe's Emily from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Mary is increasingly critical about Patience because she can see her as someone who decided to do nothing about Jamaica Inn. As mentioned above, Mary thinks that her aunt bears as much blame as her uncle even though she did not practically murder anyone. It is her silence that killed the men cheated by Joss.

The relationship between Patience and Mary is not honest and true because Patience doesn't not even try to help her niece or, at least, give Mary some space to live her own life, which is another motif inspired by Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novel.

## 4. Rebecca

### 4.1. The Unnamed Heroine

The character of du Maurier's unnamed heroine (the second wife of Maxim de Winter) is revealed gradually, nevertheless, we are not able to watch a complete disclosure of this protagonist. Daphne du Maurier didn't give a name to her main female character. Therefore, this thesis refers to her as the unnamed heroine or the heroine.

The absence of the name is connected with the fact that the heroine lives in the shadow of Maxim's first wife Rebecca, and she is constantly compared to Rebecca. Moreover, according to Mrs Danvers, the heroine could never match Rebecca. As we can also assume, the heroine's missing name and using only her husband's name from the beginning could suggest that she belongs to him and is bound to him. Moreover, the heroine's origin remains hidden throughout the novel. She reveals only a few things about her family or her origin:

*"My father was a lovely and unusual person"<sup>59</sup> [...] "It was not easy to explain my father and usually I never talk about him. He was my secret property. Preserved for me alone, much as Manderley was preserved for my neighbour. I had no wish to introduce him casually over a table in a Monte Carlo restaurant."<sup>60</sup>*

The absence of the name is followed by the insufficient description of her personal traits. When people describe or judge her, they always comment on her clumsiness, timidity and mediocrity. All of these qualities are regularly mentioned in contrast to the qualities of Rebecca. People cannot see the real character and morality of the heroine because they are blinded by Rebecca's omnipresent ghost. However, when the new wife of Mr de Winter is introduced at Manderley, there is someone who appears to be able to see her positive characteristics: this person is Frank. Frank is an overseer at Manderley, and he is perhaps the only person whom the heroine could open up to because he is not blinded by Rebecca's power. He helps the heroine to find courage:

You have qualities that are just as important, far more so, in fact. It's perhaps cheek of me to say so, I don't know you very well. I'm a bachelor, I don't know very much about women, I lead a quiet sort of life down here at Manderley as you know, but I should say that kindness, and sincerity, and – if I may say so – modesty are worth more to a man, to a husband, than all the wit and beauty in the world.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Du Maurier, D. (2015). *Rebecca*. London: Virago Press, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

The character of the heroine is broadened on the basis of her opposition to Rebecca. We could see very well how different they are: they have little or even nothing in common.

At first, the heroine is perceived as naïve and childish because she cannot understand anything, especially her husband, Max. It can be said that the heroine's character is formed by circumstances and also by her husband. The heroine recognizes this change:

*"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"*<sup>62</sup>.

We can notice the heroine's crucial quality in this passage: her desire to please everyone in Manderley, including Maxim. This desire is understandable but she knows that this task will be difficult to achieve. The reasons for this difficulty have been already mentioned: her immaturity and inexperience in comparison to Rebecca.

However, there is a situation that changes her personality from a timid, selfless woman to someone who is willing to stay with a man who murdered another woman, his first wife Rebecca. The way how she gains her confidence is bizarre because it is at Rebecca's expense. When Maxim tells his second wife that Rebecca was cruel and manipulative, the heroine suddenly feels better about herself because she can believe that Maxim loves only her, not Rebecca. The heroine even chooses to live with a man who is a criminal, with someone who lies and runs from the law. What is the most important to her is the fact that he describes Rebecca as evil and devious and that he doesn't love her.

There is no doubt that the role of the heroine is prominent and important, even though we do not know her name or origin. Her role in Maxim's life may not be so visible but it is her whom Maxim opens up to and confides. The heroine's mediocrity is mirrored in her behaviour and also in her appearance. But she doesn't think much of herself either, she states: *"I wished I was older; different"*<sup>63</sup>. Her confidence could not be very high after constantly being told she was not good enough for Mr de Winter. It is true that she is younger than her husband and she has no experience in communicating with others, except for her employer, Mrs Van Hopper. Her age is perceived rather negatively because Maxim is about twenty years older, and she is perceived as a child, as someone with no proper manner or education, so she is not a good match for Maxim. During her stay at Manderley, she has to face much prejudice originating from her age, origin, behaviour and appearance. It is hard to overcome such suspicion. It is almost impossible because for everyone there is only one Mrs de Winter: Rebecca. The heroine is timid

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<sup>62</sup> Du Maurier D., *Rebecca*, p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

and perhaps scared of the new situation she has been thrown into; therefore, it is difficult for her to assert herself.

#### 4.1.1. Love and Attraction

The first love and enchantment, as well as the emotions and feelings linked to this experience are something special for every young woman and the heroine is not an exception. Maxim de Winter is her first love and the first man she has developed deep and intense feelings for. Naivety, innocence and gullibility are understandable because, after all, the heroine is only twenty-one when she meets Maxim and she has no experience with similar emotions. She is aware of her inexperience and her young age; therefore, she never feels confident and worthy. Mr de Winter, on the other hand, is polite and has proper manners, anyway, he seems to be distant and perhaps too direct. He is not afraid to ask her anything he has on his mind, and it seems that he is deeply involved in her personality. Her first impression of Max is uncertain, however, after they had lunch together, she changes her opinion: "*I had ill-judged him, he was neither hard nor sardonic, he was already my friend of many years, the brother I had never possessed.*"<sup>64</sup> The reader can feel that they have a genuine tie, a spark and their conversations seem to be effortless. Perhaps this is the reason why the heroine changes her opinion on Max. It is very interesting that the heroine decides to use the phrase: "*the brother I had never possessed*"<sup>65</sup>. The bond between siblings is considered to be very strong. The relationships between siblings are different from other relationships because we do not choose our family, and the ties between the family members could be seen as destiny.

The first meeting of the heroine and Mr de Winter is awkward, uncomfortable and full of embarrassing moments. From my point of view, these feelings are caused by Mrs Van Hopper's snobbery and her curiosity. Without the omnipresent Mrs Van Hopper, their conversations are much more natural and even the shy heroine feels more and more confident, her shyness slowly disappears. As for Mr de Winter, he has similar feelings for her: "*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.*"<sup>66</sup> Their initial open conversation can be one the main reason why they fell in love with each other. Maxim could seem difficult to charm, please or engage, but with the heroine, they created a bond over their solitude.

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<sup>64</sup> Du Maurier, D., *Rebecca*, p. 29.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.



Monte Carlo is the place they fall madly, deeply and unexpectedly in love. The heroine has to lie to her employer, Mrs Van Hopper, to spend time with Max. The feeling of doing something forbidden, something she is not allowed, makes her fall for Max more and more. In Monte Carlo, it is only her and him, and no one else. They have all the time only for themselves, time to develop and deepen their exciting and passionate feelings.

Nevertheless, even to the heroine, it is obvious that he doesn't want to talk about his life with his first wife, Rebecca, and their life in Manderley. Their carefree and untroubled life is slowly but surely coming to an end. Mrs Van Hopper decides to travel to the United States to visit her son and the heroine seems to have no other option than to travel with her. Immediately, the heroine knows her heart is broken for the first time ever and she has to say goodbye to her mysterious and intriguing man.

However, Max seems to have a clear mind about what his next steps are going to be. His proposal is not romantic or planned but he does it his own way: Max shows her what she means to him, even though they have known each other for a few days. There could be many reasons why he proposed to her, and the reader can honestly hope that the main reason is love as what they experienced in Monte Carlo was something unexpected and intense. Another explanation for his decision could be the pity or sympathy Max feels for a young woman who has no one in her life. Max could provide her with a beautiful mansion, money and comfortable life. And last but not least, the heroine absolutely adores him and is in love with him. For Maxim the reason could be different, he may find what he missed in his previous marriage. The heroine faces an important and difficult decision whether to stay with the man she loves or to be reasonable and travel to the United States with Mrs Van Hopper. The heart decides and she says yes to Maxim's purpose.

#### **4.1.2. Marriage and Life in Marriage**

As stated above, the couple had their perfect romance in Monte Carlo, and they continued their joyful newly-wed life there. But everything has its end, as well as their honeymoon, and they travel to Manderley where Max has some obligations. The new Mrs de Winter has to adapt to the role of a mature and charming wife. Mrs de Winter is warned about Mrs Danvers and her rather extraordinary character, however, she has no idea how badly she could be treated. Maxim's new wife matures and improves her social skills, but nothing can prepare her for Manderley and Mrs Danvers's constant comparison with Rebecca.

Manderley seems to be a perfect mansion, and everyone loves and adores the place and what it represented. It has an excellent reputation, which is credited to Rebecca because it was Rebecca who organised the most beautiful and perfect balls. The role of the new Mrs de Winter is truly complicated, and no one cares to explain it to her. Therefore, she ends up in a hopeless and desperate situation when all people, including Max, leave her. Mrs de Winter's introduction to Mrs Danvers isn't encouraging, on the contrary, it is obvious what Mrs Danvers thinks of the new Mrs de Winter. For the heroine, it is impossible to charm her because no one can be better than her beloved Rebecca.

Mrs de Winter tries to settle in Manderley, where she also meets Rebecca as Manderley is always full of Rebecca's presence. Mrs Danvers tries to preserve things exactly how Rebecca wanted and left them, and Maxim's second wife cannot do anything about it. Max doesn't help his new wife to feel more confident or worthy, he rather eludes her. His return to Manderley changes their marriage and his wife doesn't understand the sudden change in his behaviour. At first, she thinks that Max still loves Rebecca because every person appears to admire her, but it is the complete opposite. Max's new attitude is a mystery to his new wife and, in addition, Max decides not to talk to her at all. This Maxim is a completely different person, he is unusually distant from her and, no matter what she can do, he doesn't care. Maxim's behaviour is strange and inexplicable for the heroine and their relationship may partly echo the story of Jane Eyre and Rochester.

Mrs de Winter feels completely hopeless and useless and after a few failures, their marriage is on the verge of collapse, even if she is constantly trying to persuade Maxim that they can be genuinely happy and that their marriage can be successful.

Just like old people, married for years and years. Of course we are companions. Of course we are happy. You talk as though you thought we had made a mistake? You don't mean it like that, do you, Maxim? You know our marriage is a success, a wonderful success?"<sup>67</sup> And she was telling him: "We are happy, aren't we? Terribly happy?"<sup>68</sup>

There is no doubt that she is trying to persuade herself as well. Even if Maxim seemingly agrees with his wife, he has no interest in convincing her that he truly and absolutely loves her. Mrs de Winter comes to the conclusion that she must have disappointed him because she is entirely

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<sup>67</sup> Du Maurier D., *Rebecca*, p. 164.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

different from Rebecca. To fully understand Mrs de Winter's attitude and feelings, we have to remember that there is one extra person in their marriage, Rebecca.

Maxim's behaviour towards the heroine doesn't improve, he begins to treat her as a child. The lack of open and honest communication becomes the main reasons why their marriage seems disappointing at the beginning. Maxim's first marriage is connected with a dreadful mystery of which the heroine doesn't know anything. Maxim doesn't talk about Rebecca until the moment when a body of an unknown person is discovered, washed ashore near Manderley, and he has no other option but to reveal his secret to his second wife. It is the moment when the young, naïve, timid and childish Mrs de Winter has to grow up and help her husband.

Nevertheless, does this sudden change in her personality show her good character or her lack of morals? As mentioned above, for Mrs de Winter marriage is sacred and very important, therefore she has to stand by her husband through thick and thin. She has to keep their marriage vows in order to maintain their marriage. However, Mrs de Winter could simply lack character and morals when she doesn't report her husband. The knowledge of her husband's crime makes her more confident and Maxim assures that it is only her whom he loves, not Rebecca. Does he tell the truth or is he simply scared she could go to the police? Max's personality is ambiguous and complicated. He is a self-seeking person with a knowledge of women. He may tell his wife what she wants to hear, and by this act, he can ensure her fidelity and secrecy.

Would their marriage be the same as Maxim's first marriage, doomed to failure, or could it turn into a standard, normal relationship? Perhaps the bland (if not non-existent) character of Mrs de Winter might be helpful. However, Mrs de Winter's inconspicuous character may fade in this marriage. Her submission to Maxim might probably work for a few years but her individual personality would disappear altogether. Perhaps she doesn't have any other option as the burden of the terrible secret would probably break her anyway.

#### **4.1.3. Fidelity and Infidelity**

There is no doubt that the marriage of the unnamed heroine and Maxim is not fully functional, prosperous and contented. The fact they are not able to communicate their feelings and thoughts doesn't help their marriage as well. The second wife cannot be unfaithful to Max because she simply has no opportunity. She is extremely dependent on her husband and she is willing to do everything for him. For her, marriage is sacred and valuable, therefore infidelity

on her part is unthinkable. Maxim's second wife is a woman who would do anything for her husband, anything to keep him and protect him.

Maxim's view on marriage could be perceived as ambiguous because his first marriage ended in his wife's murder, and he was the murderer. His relationship with Rebecca continues and follows him to his second marriage. He carries the burden of the murder to his second marriage and passes this burden on the new Mrs de Winter. In Max's case, we can talk about infidelity in a sense of not committing to Mrs de Winter and not confiding in her. Because of the murder of Rebecca, Max has to hide his true feelings towards Rebeca, and he cannot reveal his experience of this marriage. Hiding, lying and dishonesty characterize Max's everyday life and his second wife is forced to adapt to this situation. Although it is indeed true that Maxim did propose to the heroine and they spent extraordinary days in Monte Carlo, the reader cannot avoid the feeling that he did all this just to forget Rebecca and his terrible crime.

After a few days in Manderley, everything reminds him of what he did to Rebecca. Therefore, Manderley is like torture to him, and he decides to run away to Monte Carlo, into the arms of another woman. The reader cannot but wonder whether he truly loves his wives or not because the first woman is hated and the second is completely subservient to him.

#### **4.1.4. Conflicts and Misunderstanding**

As in *Jamaica Inn*, in *Rebecca* the conflicts and misunderstanding play an important role. There are many types of conflicts, for example, the conflict between the unnamed heroine and everyone who adored or loved Rebecca, the conflicts in marriages, and, last but not least, the internal psychological conflicts, experienced especially by the heroine. Misunderstanding is mainly caused by the lack of communication, but also by lying and hiding the truth. Max, Mrs Danvers and Rebecca could be seen as manipulators and overall dishonest people.

People who worship Rebecca cannot see the new Mrs de Winter as someone who could possibly replace or equal the first wife and they are very critical and unfriendly. When the heroine decides to organize a masquerade ball at Manderley, Mrs Danvers gives her the costume. It is a trick that causes a great commotion because it was the last costume that Rebecca wore. It is Mrs Danvers's plan to expose the heroine and show her in a bad light. Max doesn't stand up for his second wife, on the contrary, he turns his anger towards her. Moreover, Max's sister Beatrice doesn't spare the heroine and compares her to Rebecca like everybody else.

There is no doubt that both Maxim's marriages are not perfect but his first marriage was mysterious and surrounded by secrets. Maxim's description of the marriage with Rebecca is

biased and the reason for that is the fact that he perceived Rebecca as evil and manipulative, therefore their marriage could never be happy. We can only learn about this marriage from Max because Rebecca was murdered, and we are not able to find out anything about her opinions, feelings and thoughts. On the other hand, the second wife is the complete opposite of Rebecca. She is young and inexperienced, without her own opinion or attitude. When she tries to be more herself, he is immediately furious, and she is forced to retreat. The second wife feels lost without him, therefore her conflicts with the hero are caused mainly by Maxim's fear of revealing his secret and by the heroine's panic fear of having a not-functional, unhappy marriage.

As suggested above, Rebecca becomes the main source of many internal conflicts as a reminder of the hero's dark past. Maxim doesn't want to say anything about his previous life to his second wife. His sudden change in behaviour is not caused by some kind of awakening but he simply doesn't not have any other option than to tell his wife the truth. The heroine's fears are connected mainly with the relationship of Max and Rebecca, she would like to know whether he still loves his first wife or not. The heroine changes along with her husband, receiving an opportunity to establish her own position and convince Maxim about her virtues. Nevertheless, there is an open ending and the reader cannot be sure whether she becomes truly herself for the first time or whether she changes to be a supporting, yet dull wife.

## **4.2. Rebecca de Winter**

Rebecca de Winter was the first wife of Max de Winter and although she was never fully present or alive, her omnipresent ghost affects everyone. Rebecca's character, just like herself, remains a mystery because she is only described by someone who hates her the most or loves her the most. In the first case, the person who hates her is surprisingly her husband and, in the second case, the person who loves her and adores her unconditionally is her maid Mrs Danvers. As we can imagine, none of the pictures could be seen as authentic or real because no one is only good or bad, and in the case of Rebecca, it is most definitely true.

The reader cannot see the real Rebecca, however, there are several repeated references to her personality. She is always described as the most beautiful and intelligent woman with sharp wit and an intriguing personality. For her husband, she is the most devious and evil person. This fact is surprising because why would anyone marry someone who was as immoral and wicked as Rebecca? Max never tells the main reason why he married Rebecca and perhaps he doesn't know the true reason himself:

You thought I killed her, loving her? I hated her, I tell you. Our marriage was a farce from the very first. She was vicious, damnable, rotten through and through. We never loved each other, never had one moment of happiness together. Rebecca was incapable of love, of tenderness, of decency. She was not even normal.<sup>69</sup>

In the following passage, his description of Rebecca continues:

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.<sup>70</sup>

Maxim declares that he is the only person who knows the true character of Rebecca. The reader may wonder why he always describes Rebecca negatively. As mentioned above, she was not faithful to him and she didn't treat him well, on the contrary, she was cruel and insensitive. Nevertheless, it is his subjective portrait of Rebecca and it may reflect the hidden shadows of his own nature.

The ambiguity and inconsistency of Rebecca's character and personality is perfectly seen in the novel. The description of her husband is quite different from Mrs Danvers's characterization. According to Mrs Danvers, Rebecca was indispensable, no one could live without her. For Mrs Danvers, there is no life without Rebecca, and she hates the new Mrs de Winter because she tries to replace Rebecca. In Mrs Danvers eyes Rebecca was fearless and brave and she always excuses her: "*She was never one to stand mute and still and be wronged*"<sup>71</sup>. This quality was admired by Mrs Danvers but disliked by Max because Rebecca was not someone who was easily influenced.

As we cannot see Rebecca's personality objectively, we can only deduce what was her view on marriage. Her idea of marriage was quite different from the unnamed heroine's understanding. Rebecca was not faithful to her husband and she didn't even try to hide it from him. The reason can be the fact that she never had any feelings for Max and her rebellious or selfish behaviour could be caused by their non-functioning marriage. According to Max, they were constantly arguing. Therefore, cheating and being with somebody else could be her way to happiness.

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<sup>69</sup> Du Maurier D., *Rebecca*, p. 304.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

Rebecca's behaviour in marriage with Max is justified by Mrs Danvers because Mrs Danvers cannot believe or comprehend that Rebecca could act selfishly. Rebecca benefited from this marriage because she had the praise of other people, Manderley, money and attention. On the other hand, it was her marriage that murdered her. Her murder is described as a crime of passion. However, what happened next was extremely calculated. He staged her body to look like a suicide, which is awfully cold and there is no indication that he was truly sorry for his deed. On the contrary, he decides to continue with his lies as well as with his life.

### 4.3. Mrs Danvers

Even though Mrs Danvers is not the main character in this novel, she has a considerable impact on many lives. None of the female characters, such as Mrs de Winter, Rebecca and also Mrs Danvers, is authentic. The character of Mrs Danvers is very closely linked to Rebecca's, and it almost gives us the impression that Mrs Danvers could not exist without her. There is no one who is so dependent on Rebecca. We are not able to see some other personal traits of Danvers because she dedicated her whole life to her, and after some time she merged with Rebecca. Mrs Danvers could be seen as a motherly figure because they had a close relationship and there was nothing that Mrs Danvers could not do for Rebecca. Despite the fact that they had a very close relationship, for Rebecca it was only a beneficial alliance. Rebecca kept many secrets from her, and she had no problems lying to her. But for Mrs Danvers, Rebecca was a saint, someone who was predetermined to do great things because she possessed only positive qualities. There is no doubt that for Mrs Danvers, Rebecca was the closest person she had and probably the only person she has ever loved but the same could not be said about Rebecca.

The difference between Mrs Danvers and Max is connected with the fact that Max is able to live without her. Mrs Danvers transformed Manderley into the shrine of Rebecca because she is not able to move on from Rebecca's tragic death. After Rebecca's death, Danvers resents Max for his moving forward with his life. She cannot accept the reality when he finds a new wife, someone who replaces her beloved Rebecca. At first, Mrs Danvers tries to hide her dislike for the new Mrs de Winter. However, as time goes on, she reveals her true feelings:

You'll never get the better of her. She's still mistress here, even if she is dead. She's the real Mrs de Winter, not you. It's you that's the shadow and the ghost. It's you that's forgotten and not wanted and pushed aside. Well, why don't you leave Manderley to her? Why don't you go?<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Du Maurier D., *Rebecca*, p. 275.

This situation must be hard for Mrs Danvers because she lost someone whom she loved very deeply and unconditionally. No one but Danvers had such a deep affection for Rebecca.

#### **4.4. Susan Hill – Mrs de Winter**

Susan Hill's *Mrs de Winter* (1993) was written as a sequel to Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. Hill's novel follows the life of du Maurier's heroes after Manderley burned down. However, it can be difficult for the reader to identify with Susan Hill's heroine. For example, Mrs de Winter longs for children but she doesn't even confide to her husband about her desire. She always assumes that Max also wants to have children but they never have a proper conversation about this topic. Therefore, the reader cannot see whether Max really wants children or not.

Moreover, their whole relationship changes: in Maurier's novel it is Max who has secrets but in Hill's novel Mrs de Winter is the one who is constantly lying. For example, she doesn't reveal to her husband that she met Jack Favell or Mrs Danvers. Mrs de Winter considers her lying to Max as unproblematic because she wants to protect him from the reality. However, it isn't only a selfless act of kindness. Max doesn't want lies and secrets, he can see how his wife has changed and how distant she is. Nevertheless, Mrs de Winter chose to lie and she cannot stop.

Susan Hill's story begins ten years after Maxim and his wife decided to leave Manderley and everything that could remind them of this place. They had many reasons to escape Manderley: for example, both were aware that they escaped from justice. Moreover, for Mrs de Winter Manderley was not a happy or safe place where she could feel welcomed. After a few chapters, the readers learn that Beatrice, Max's sister, died, and Mrs de Winter persuades Max to go to the funeral. At Beatrice's funeral, Mrs de Winter meets Frank Crawley and they talk about the past and their friendship. This motif may seem strange as in du Maurier's novel there is no reference either to Frank Crawley's and Beatrice's relationship with Mrs de Winter, or to the support she could find in them. In both novels, Mrs de Winter is very lonely and it may be the reason why Hill's heroine considers Beatrice and Frank as friends, appreciating they are not cruel to her like everyone.

Gradually she realizes that her beloved husband is a murderer and has a dark side she cannot understand. In *Rebecca*, their marriage is not perfect but the heroine decides to protect the man she loves and to share the secret as well as the burden of guilt. This decision can be



understood as a turning point in her life: she doesn't act as a naïve young girl, on the contrary, she takes responsibility for someone else. Her brave and courageous behaviour can remind us of Mary from *Jamaica Inn*: both heroines decide to fight and live for something or someone.

Nevertheless, Susan Hill's Mrs de Winter is quite different: she remains timid, naïve and incapable of taking responsibility for her actions, which echoes the behaviour of Aunt Patience from *Jamaica Inn*. Mrs de Winter's transition from Mary to Aunt Patience in Hill's novel can be partly understood with respect to her original shyness, however, the reader might wish for a more hopeful development of her story.

The only thing Hill's heroine can do is complaining about Max as a criminal and rejecting her own part in his escape from justice. Her dependence on Max continues and she is even more passive than du Maurier's unnamed heroine. Even if Mrs de Winter idealizes herself and her motives, she refuses to accept the fact that she is completely dependent on him and cannot live by her own.

Rebecca doesn't leave Susan Hill's novel, on the other hand, her omnipresent ghost continues to haunt Mrs de Winter. Rebecca's and Mrs de Winter's relationship is complicated and never fully explained even in Maurier's novel. The reader can imagine the second wife's feelings of powerlessness as Rebecca is always put on a pedestal. This situation changes when Max confesses to killing Rebecca and admits how he really felt about her all along. Max's true feelings towards his first wife help the unnamed heroine to realize that Rebecca was not perfect after all. Nevertheless, Maxim's second wife is left with unresolved feelings towards Rebecca.

In the sequel of *Rebecca*, Mrs de Winter tries to convince the reader that she has never hated Rebecca:

*"Hated her, as I had never really hated Rebecca, for how could I hate someone who was dead, someone I had never seen, never spoken to, only been made aware of through others? She meant nothing to me at all, I felt neither fear of her nor jealousy nor the slightest resentment."*<sup>73</sup>

However, Mrs de Winter's feelings towards Rebecca are strong and complicated as people around her compare them and naturally put them against each other. Therefore, Mrs de Winter is constantly fighting with her and she cannot let her stay in the past. As a result, Mrs de Winter doesn't make any decision about her present or future, on the other hand, she always concentrates on her past. At the end of Hill's novel, it is Maxim who makes a decision to finally

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<sup>73</sup> Hill, S. (1999). *Mrs de Winter*. London: Penguin Random House, p. 256.

tell the truth. He writes a letter of confession, however, he has a car accident and dies, and all the secrets are once again passed to Mrs de Winter.

## 5. Comparison of Jamaica Inn and Rebecca

*Jamaica Inn* was the first novel written by du Maurier I have read, and this novel was a great introduction to Maurier's novels. The beginning of *Jamaica Inn* is dark, mysterious and surprisingly engaging, and the suggestive setting and story doesn't change. On the other hand, *Rebecca* has more sun-drenched beginning, but the sun disappears with the heroine's arrival at Manderley. *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* share some features, in particular, similar characters and motifs.

There are various types of heroines in these novels. Rebecca and Mrs Danvers represent strong, fearless and even manipulative women. These heroines are quite similar and they share several qualities. They are perceived as women who are capable of doing anything they set their minds to. And everyone around them is aware of their strength and fearlessness.

As mentioned above, we could see a certain similarity between Mary from *Jamaica Inn* and the unnamed heroine from *Rebecca*. Mary is intelligent, courageous and brave. However, the unnamed heroine's character needs more time and some impulse to develop. The situation of Mary is dreadful from the beginning, and she is certain about her future and what she has to do in order to survive. Mary is also aware of the fact that the environment where she lives is violent and cruel and she has no other option than to fight. The unnamed heroine is blindfolded by her love for Maxim and seems more naïve and timid than Mary.

Their opinions on marriage, relationships and love are not identical. On the contrary, for Mary marriage and love are never her priorities, fighting for herself and surviving are her main concerns. Marriage is sacred for the unnamed heroine, therefore she doesn't primarily fight for herself but for her husband and their marriage. For Mary it is a different fight: the fight for her life.

Aunt Patience is a victim of domestic violence and, unfortunately, Patience is not able to fight for herself and she doesn't even realize her situation. Patience is emotionally and physically dependent on her husband who is abusive and manipulative towards her. The inability to stand up to an abuser, in this case her husband, could be attributed to the years of abuse. Susan Hill's Mrs de Winter is more similar to Aunt Patience than to Mary. Aunt Patience and Hill's Mrs de Winter live with the burden of lie, they cannot find happiness and freedom in their life. Neither Aunt Patience nor Hill's Mrs de Winter are murderers in the true sense of the word, they have never murdered anyone, but their husbands' lies turn them into accomplices.

The motifs of domestic violence are prominent in both novels but in *Jamaica Inn* it is more prominent. Joss is an abusive alcoholic who abuses everyone around him. Max doesn't

physically abuse anyone but the question remains whether his second wife wouldn't be in danger if she refused to help him. Max murdered his first wife, and their marriage was never happy. On the contrary, their marriage was a failure in every aspect. They hated each other and they were never in love. The women like Aunt Patience and the unnamed heroine from *Rebecca* tend to accept their roles as they are presented to them. They want to be supportive and obedient wives and they never perceive themselves equal to their husbands.

Aunt Patience and the unnamed heroine are completely dependent on their husbands. They are not able to live without them, even if it can cost them their own lives. Aunt Patience's absolute loyalty and the inability to face the truth result in her death. In *Rebecca*, the unnamed heroine doesn't find any hobby or a friend and this passive role is pointed out also in the sequel written by Susan Hill. Her Mrs de Winter defends herself by saying that she must take care of Maxim as she doesn't have any other option. Therefore, she cannot imagine her life without him even if it makes her unhappy.

## 6. Frenchman's Creek

### 6.1. Dona

The story of Lady Dona is quite different from the previous two novels and their main protagonists. Dona's life could be described as unproblematic, happy and fulfilled because she had everything a woman could have ever wanted, but this unworried state is changed after she arrives in Navron. At first, she doesn't like the people there and the monotonous, dull surrounding. However, she appreciates her privacy and freedom from her husband Harry and their London lives. Monotonous and dull times did not last long because she senses an opportunity for a great adventure that she cannot resist and succumbs to the temptation.

Dona is not someone who is obedient or submissive, on the contrary, she is impulsive and the idea of a perfectly peaceful life doesn't please her. The heroine even admits how impulsive was her decision to marry her husband Harry: "*She had married Harry on impulse, because of his laugh – its funny lazy quality had attracted her*"<sup>74</sup>. As we discover later, her short-tempered and impatient nature leads her down to a new, dangerous and highly desirable path. Her impulsivity is not something that makes her a fool, because she simply desires excitement. Lady Dona is intelligent, cunning and determined to follow her instincts even if it means jeopardizing her own safety and her family.

Lady St Columb's current life is fairly difficult for her, as for someone who still desires adventure in her life. Calm and slow life without any excitement is therefore exhausting for her. Dona doesn't feel ready to abandon her unrestraint life and her freedom just because she is now married and has two children. Dona is aware of the fact that she is still important as an individual and her thoughts and feelings matter. The reader can feel there is an internal struggle that Dona has with herself: the struggle between her married self, who has two children, and the other part of Dona, who still feels young and knows that there may be more adventure in her life.

Dona's life begins to be complicated after the arrival of a pirate ship and the meeting with the captain Jean-Benoit Aubéry. Dona feels the urge to know more about this mysterious and most definitely dangerous pirate's boat, therefore she decides to investigate where is the boat situated. The heroine is alone in the deep woods. Approaching the creek near Navron, she is suddenly kidnapped and taken to the pirate ship. In these very inhospitable and stressful conditions, Dona meets the ship's captain, Jean-Benoit Aubéry. Immediately, Dona is amazed how different Jean-Benoit is from other pirates:

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<sup>74</sup> Du Maurier, D. (2003). *Frenchman's Creek*. London: Virago Press, p. 9.

[she] realized [...] what made him different from other men. He wore his own hair as men used to do, instead of the ridiculous curled wigs that had become the fashion, and she saw at once how suited it was to him, how impossible it would be for him to wear it in any other way. How remote he was, how detached, like some student in college studying for an examination.<sup>75</sup>

For Dona, the mysteriously charming pirate instantly becomes a great temptation which she could not resist for too long.

Gradually, temptation, remorse and a great dilemma turn to Dona's everyday feelings. The heroine is forced to make a decision about how she wants to spend the rest of her life. The decision of whether to leave with the pirate and follow wild and dangerous desires or to choose the safer path and return to her loving, yet boring husband and her two children is immensely difficult for Dona to make. For many readers, her decision is reasonable because she chooses her family. However, for Dona this decision is not something obvious and clear from the beginning because she usually follows her heart and wild emotions rather than cold reason.

### **6.1.1. Love and Marriage**

As mentioned before, Lady Dona is a married woman with two children and life that could be seemingly desired by any woman. Despite the fact that Harry is a husband of Dona, he is not the main male character in this novel. His role is not as significant as one would expect, however, the reader could say he has some influence on this story as well as on his wife, Dona. Dona says she married Harry for his laugh and his funny character. Interestingly enough, there is almost no reference to his physical appearance, therefore, it is quite hard for the reader to imagine him as someone special. The reason for this may be Dona, because Harry's appearance is not that important for her, and she respects him for his inner qualities. One might say, Harry is not a complicated man who doesn't know what he wants or even questions his own decisions. He is straightforward and, in many cases, he doesn't understand his wife needs, feelings and thoughts. Nonetheless, it is obvious that Harry loves his wife, but he does it his own way.

The reader can see that Dona's passionate and unexpected love is not her husband Harry but the above-mentioned pirate, Jean-Benoit Aubéry. The love and passion Dona feels for the pirate is intense: it is something that happens once in a lifetime. Forbidden love is a great motif in this novel and Dona experiences it with Jean-Benoit. Love that she shares with Harry is quite different from the one she has for Jean. Life with Harry is more simple, safe and calm. On the other hand, feelings towards the captain are unpredictable, untied, exciting and new: they give

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<sup>75</sup> Du Maurier, D. *Frenchman's Creek*, p. 45.

the heroine what she misses in her marriage. On the contrary, Harry provides her safe home, and he also respects her: he doesn't try to change her, he always accepts her. Misunderstanding and problems are not obvious in the marriage of Dona and Harry. They argue and they have some conflicts as everyone else. However, these conflicts stem from the fact that Dona wants to live differently than her husband and he doesn't understand the reason.

Jean-Benoit and Dona experience young and naïve love. Dona behaves irresponsibly and she doesn't want to see the consequences of her behaviour. The reader cannot fully see the reality of her marriage or what had happened before she met the pirate. However, we can assume that calm and dull married life is not something what Dona wants. On the contrary, Dona loves and respects her husband, nonetheless she wants more from life and she is very determined to enjoy her latest adventure to the fullest. Her adventure with Jean-Benoit finally brings her the excitement and thrill she has always wanted.

The reality of marriage is not always pretty or pleasant in this novel. The story of unexpected and intense love turns into the story of infidelity, lies and intrigues. Dona is unfaithful to her husband Harry, and she is also lying to him and to her children. However, the reader may not fully perceive it as infidelity because for Dona it is something more. It is a great love she has never experienced before. Dona's situation is not easy in any way because her stay with the pirate is dangerous not only for her, but also for her family. To the last pages, the reader cannot be sure whether Dona will follow her heart or her reason. As I have already mentioned, Dona decides to stay with her husband, and we will never know if she will ever be as happy as she was with Jean-Benoit. To sum up, Dona may not be as happy with Harry as she was with the pirate, however, she may find peace and calmness with her husband, and she would keep her adventure with Jean-Benoit forever in her heart.

Even though *Frenchman's Creek* is a romantic story about a young heroine falling in love with a pirate, it is not a cliché in any way. It is a story about a woman who wants more from life and who is not satisfied with boredom and safety she experiences at home. Dona is a strong female character and she can prove to everyone that she is capable of everything she sets her mind to. Her wit, ingenuity and intelligence increase her strength, and everyone appreciates her for these qualities. On the other hand, in the beginning, she can be very impulsive and lets her emotions control her too much. The reader can see it as a constant battle between the mind, sense and the heart. Every part commands and desires something different and Dona is forced to choose. Despite the fact that she follows her sense, it is not a decision that makes her terribly unhappy or depressed. Her heart is full because of Jean-Benoit and their unforgettable

adventure, and her memories will always be etched in her heart as well as in her memory. Nevertheless, we cannot be sure how Dona will feel in a few years that will follow.

## **6.2. Jane Austen – Sense and Sensibility**

The character of Dona can be linked to the main female characters of Jane Austen's novel *Sense and sensibility*. Marianne and Elinor Dashwood represent the emotions pointed out in the title. *Sense and Sensibility* and *Frenchman's Creek* develop a romantic story of the heroine who struggles with contradictory feelings in her intense experience of the first love to learn that sense and rational thoughts can coexist alongside with romantic and even irrational feelings. Both novels describe various difficulties connected with the relationships between men and women, as well as the authentic emotions of a young heroine who falls in love.

Marianne Dashwood is a younger sister of Elinor and she represents romantic, dreamy and exciting emotions. Marianne's feelings control her behaviour and it becomes very difficult for her to look away from her own problems. Marianne seems quite selfish when emotions are considered: she often forgets that everyone cannot display feelings like she does. In many cases, she unfortunately condemns people just because they seem cold and aloof at first sight. When Marianne mindlessly, blindly and quite naively falls in love with Mr Willoughby, she completely forgets about Colonel Brandon; she forgets how nice, thoughtful and respectful he was towards her. Marianne's falling in love is surprising and it brings Marianne great happiness. However, when her older sister warns her about risks and dangers of love, Marianne doesn't want to look at the consequences of her behaviour and she selfishly acts as if no one existed except her and Mr Willoughby. Unfortunately, the love between Mr Willoughby and young Marianne doesn't last long. Marianne is left in complete despair and for quite a long time it is hard for her to look away from her sorrow. When Marianne discovers that her sister didn't confide in her and was left alone with a broken heart, Marianne has an epiphany. The younger sister realizes how inconsiderate she has been of Elinor's feelings and tries to be a better, calmer person for her older sister.

Elinor may seem reserved, cold and aloof, however, she is not selfish or inconsiderate of the feelings of others. Her aloofness may stem from living in a house where her mother and her two younger sisters are caught up in their emotions and are rarely able to fully control their behaviour. Therefore, Elinor might have put herself in the opposite role and has to present herself as someone who can take care of everyone. Elinor feels the need to be the responsible and deliberate one, when no women around her are able to control their emotions. The feelings



of Elinor are as real, deep and true as Marianne's, however, the older sister keeps everything to herself so that she wouldn't bother people around her. She understands and sees the possible consequences of her behaviour. Moreover, she does everything she can not to endanger her family, even if it means suppressing her own desires. At the end, both Elinor and Marianne understand the importance of both sense and sensibility. One cannot exist without the other.

Dona is the perfect example of the behaviour typical of both Elinor and Marianne. She has two voices in her head. The first one is Elinor, who tells her to be reasonable and cautious, and the other one whispers to her to live her life to the fullest and not to look at anything or anyone but herself. Dona lets herself be irresponsible but happy, however, at the end she already knows how she should decide and what is right.

## 7. The King's General

### 7.1. Honor Harris

Honor Harris may represent, along with Mary Yellan from *Jamaica Inn*, the most independent woman from all discussed novels in this thesis. It doesn't mean she has never been in love or never believed in love. However, she is able to control her feelings and emotions, sometimes she even suppresses them. Honor becomes a woman who, despite her physical handicap, is not bound by her volatile emotions, she is not emotionally dependent on the love of anyone. Honor is able to manage herself and many people around her without any problem. Moreover, many people even rely on her because she handles everything with great grace, calm and reason. Even though Honor is aware of her handicap, she always tries to compensate this fact and offer people something else: her intelligence, her wit and her shrewdness.

The reader meets Honor as a young, healthy and imprudent rather than obedient and anxious women. Her beauty is highly visible to everyone, her wit is also obvious, and Honor is well aware of all this. At the beginning, Honor is quite young and inexperienced as any other young woman of her age. However, these qualities do not show in foolish naivety or absent-mindedness, but rather in tremendous vigour and a fair amount of audacity. Honor's courage to stand up for herself and the people she loves is incomprehensible to most people. She doesn't follow the opinions of other people. Honor can be very stubborn and persistent in her plans and wishes.

One fall, an unfortunate accident, completely changes Honor. Her fall doesn't only change her ability to stand, walk or do anything but it also changes the way she perceives herself and other people perceive her:

It was thus, then, that I, Honor Harris of Lanrest, became a cripple, losing all power in my legs from that day forward until this day on which I write, so that for some twenty-five years now I have been upon my back, or upright in a chair, never walking any more, or feeling the ground beneath my feet. If anyone therefore thinks that a cripple makes an indifferent heroine to a tale, now is the time to close these pages and desist from reading. For you will never see me wed to the man I love, nor become the mother of his children. but you will learn how that love never faltered, for all its strange vicissitudes, becoming to both of us, in later years, more deep and tender than if we had been wed, and you will learn also how, for all my helplessness, I took the leading part in the drama that unfolded, my very immobility sharpening my senses and quickening my perception, while chance itself forced me to my role of judge and witness.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Du Maurier, D. (2004). *The King's General*. London: Virago Press, p. 51.

The Honor before the fall is now completely gone because she is never able to live her life without help and never able to be with the man she loves the most. She was strong, independent and fearless but her accident puts her in a different situation where she has to adapt to a new life. This fall doesn't make her less strong or fearless, on the other hand, she has to prove to herself and to the others that she still has valid opinions and thoughts. Regardless her tremendous persistence, stubbornness and strength, adapting to a new role as someone who will always be dependent on other people is incredibly difficult, even for Honor. Nevertheless, she never gives up, and despite her disability, she tries to continue with her life.

### **7.1.1. Love and Attraction**

Honor falls in love with a man called Sir Richard Grenville, the king's general. Richard Grenville means everything to Honor, and she is capable of anything when it comes to Richard. Honor meets Richard one night in her family's house and they immediately begin to talk. Their conversation may seem unimportant or insignificant, however, for them it is the beginning of something new, unexpected and intense. They meet many times, talk and both know there is something special between them. At first, Honor doesn't want to admit her feelings, however, the more they see each other, the more intensely they fall in love. After several meetings Honor cannot deny her feelings and even cold, distant Richard seems very fond of her. Their age difference could be seen as a problem, however, for Richard and Honor it is no obstacle because Honor is more mature than other girls of her age. She can have meaningful conversations with Richard and can also be a fully-fledged companion to him.

Regardless Honor's injury and later disability, Richard proposes to her. The reader may think that this is good news to Honor because marriage would help her and could be a beneficial for both of them. Honor and Richard have a connection and feelings for each other. However great this proposal may seem it is not something Honor would appreciate. She loves Richard and he definitely loves her, but this proposal is an act of mercy for Honor. Surprisingly, Honor refuses to marry her beloved Richard because she doesn't want to become a burden to him, and she doesn't want to be an obligation. This refusal doesn't mean that they stop seeing each other or have romantic feelings for each other. Honor never stopped loving him and, by the end of the novel, the reader realizes that Richard never stopped loving her either.

There is no other man in Honor's life, only Richard has her heart. The same could not be said about Richard. As mentioned above, Honor rejected Richard's proposal because she did not want to be a burden to him. For Richard, the situation is more complicated because he feels

the pressure to marry and secure himself. He decides to marry a woman that is completely different than the wise, smart, and beautiful Honor. Richard marries “*lady Howard of Fitzford, a rich widow, three times wed already, and four years older than himself*”.<sup>77</sup> One might expect that Honor would feel jealous that Richard marries someone else, but on the contrary, she wishes him the best, she wishes him wealth and happiness, even if the marriage is not with her. For Honor, it is important that Richard is not married for love, desire, or any romantic feelings. His marriage is only practical and convenient.

Later in the novel, Honor meets a son of Richard, Dick, and she slowly understands how bad Richard is as a father. Dick doesn't behave or talk like his father, and at first glance, there is no resemblance either. Dick may still be a relatively young boy but, according to Richard, he is too weak, emotional and generally lacking all the qualities that any good, proper man should have. The young son of Richard immediately clings to Honor and constantly wants to be close to her. Despite their good relationship, Dick cannot understand why Honor likes or even loves Richard. Dick is a son of Richard, however, he hates him and cannot find his way to him. Every mention of his father is always very negative, and Dick puts him in the worst possible light and doesn't even try to find any sympathy for him.

However, Dick's behaviour is very easy to understand because Richard abandoned his mother, leaving her alone with a child, Dick. Later, Richard did not try to make any contact or re-establish relations with Dick's mother. Richard as a father is undoubtedly stubborn, mean and unwilling to show any affection toward his own son. Even Honor says to Richard that he is too hard on his son, and he should accept him the way he is. The reader can see some similarities in the behaviour of Richard and Honor, both are stubborn and persistent. However, Richard doesn't care about the consequences of his actions and words on others. One might say that Honor is probably a better diplomat, and she can make judgements without excited emotions, unlike Richard.

Honor and Richard's story is relentless, suspenseful and heart-breaking from the beginning to the end. It is a story of great and unfortunate love, desire and many unspoken wishes. Honor has to say goodbye to Richard many times, and every time it breaks her heart because she never knows whether it will be their last goodbye or not. When the Parliamentarians win and Richard is betrayed, he has no other option but to leave England. He and Dick escape from Menabilly with the help of Honor. But little did she know that it would be the last time she sees Richard. They never meet again but she never loses hope.

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<sup>77</sup> Du Maurier, D. *The King's General*, p. 52.

## Conclusion

In the first chapter of the thesis, the beginnings of the Gothic novel and the origin of the term are described. The distinction between the female and male Gothic was my subject of interest as well. The main features of the Gothic romance are also described. The Gothic plots typically centre around a young vulnerable heroine, who finds herself in a dangerous or mysterious situation. The female Gothic novels tend to focus on emotions, relationships and the internal lives of the main characters. The women writers explore the issues of gender and power. The most famous female Gothic novelists are Ann Radcliffe with *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Charlotte Brontë with her classic novel *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte's sisters Emily and Anne are also famous writers who made significant contributions to the Gothic genre, which is further developed by Daphne du Maurier in her novels. This thesis concentrates on *Rebecca*, *Jamaica Inn*, *The King's General* and *Frenchman's Creek*.

In the second chapter, particular features of the Gothic novels are discussed. The Gothic space is of immense significance and it is the first category described. The Gothic literary tradition places great emphasis on locations and setting, often using dark and mysterious environment to create the atmosphere of fear, unease and uncertainty. These feelings correspond with the themes of mystery and the unknown forces threatening the main characters. There is another element associated with the Gothic atmosphere: the weather which can be used as a metaphor for the emotional experience of individual characters.

Haunting is another important aspect described in this thesis. In many Gothic novels, haunting is used as a metaphor for unresolved trauma, guilt or grief. Haunting can be also understood as a return of the past.

A large part of this bachelor thesis is devoted to the description of the Gothic heroines and their relationship to men. The issues of power and constraints are addressed as they are common themes that reflect societal anxieties related to gender, class and social status. The power dynamics between characters is often characterized by a sense of constraints, particularly for female characters who are limited by the social norms. These constraints are also expressed through isolated settings.

The next section is devoted to the individual representatives of the Gothic novels. In particular, the focus is put on Horace Walpole and his work *The Castle of Otranto*, mainly on the typical Gothic motifs that were used here. Themes such as marriage, relationships and women were fundamental for the analysis. In the chapter dealing with Ann Radcliffe her contribution to the Gothic novel and the so-called Radcliffean heroines are discussed. Another

section is devoted to Charles Robert Maturin and Matthew Gregory Lewis, whose works contributed to the development of the Gothic literature and are of great importance.

The Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, are important figures in the development of the Gothic genre and its influence on English literature. Their novels are often considered to be Gothic in style and subject matter, and they helped to refine and develop many of the key themes of the genre. Charlotte Brontë's most famous work *Jane Eyre* is mentioned, as a prime example of the Gothic novel, featuring a young and virtuous woman, and it also has a gloomy atmospheric setting. Emily Brontë's only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, is also considered to belong to the Gothic genre, with its wild moors, haunted houses and the tragic love story. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Agnes Grey* are the works of Anne Brontë and they are also of significant importance to the Gothic genre.

The practical part focuses on the main characters from the works by Daphne du Maurier that are described from many perspectives, such as love, attraction, marriage, fidelity and infidelity, misunderstanding and hope for the unity. The first analysed novel is *Jamaica Inn*, where the characters of Mary Yellan and Aunt Patience are described in detail. Mary is considered to be a typical Gothic heroine because she possesses many of the characteristics typically associated with this literary archetype. The reader can perfectly see the duality of characters because her Aunt Patience is Mary's opposite. She is trapped in an abusive marriage where she is no one.

The same could be said about the novel *Rebecca*, where the main protagonist is haunted by the memory of Rebecca, and she feels that there is no escape. Both heroines experience a similar feeling, which is hopelessness. Du Maurier explores the psychological dynamics of these relationships and examines the power struggles, control and manipulation that can occur between partners. She also highlights the ways in which these dynamics can lead to violence and even death, as the characters struggle to assert their dominance or escape from abusive situations.

In *Frenchman's Creek*, the protagonist Lady Dona St Columb is trapped in an unfulfilling marriage to a dull husband. She seeks escape and adventure in a passionate and dangerous relationship with a pirate, Jean-Benoit Aubéry. Du Maurier explores the themes of passion, freedom and desire to escape from restrictive societal norms, as well as the psychological toll of being trapped in an unhappy marriage. In the novel *The King's General*, Honor Harris was a strong and independent woman, until one unfortunate fall changed her whole life. She becomes paralyzed and completely physically dependent on other people. Her

love becomes torture for her because she knows she can never be with the man she loves. Honor is trapped in the relationship with someone who is physically and emotionally unattainable.

Overall, du Maurier's use of traditional Gothic stereotypes serves to heighten the psychological tension in her stories. She examines the power struggles, desire for freedom and control, as well as the emotional toll of being trapped in restrictive or dangerous situations.

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