

## 摘 要

《吕蓓卡》是英国女作家达夫妮·杜穆里埃的代表作。小说通过独特的“实有”趁“虚无”的写作手法，成功地塑造了一个颇具神秘色彩的女性吕蓓卡的形象。这部小说一直被誉为是最好的悬疑浪漫小说，自1938年第一次出版以来，《吕蓓卡》得到了新闻界、评论界的广泛赞誉。小说充满悬疑和浪漫色彩，故事情节引人入胜，写作技巧独特、新颖，让评论家和读者无不叹为观止。

本文旨在结合杰拉德·热奈特、里门·凯南及申丹的叙事学理论，对《吕蓓卡》中的叙述层次、叙述者、聚焦方式和叙述时间进行了细致的分析。首先通过对叙述层次的分析，指出《吕蓓卡》的叙述层次分为三层，而且采用的是故事套故事的嵌入式叙述方法，外层故事只是作为框架出现，嵌入的故事才是小说的核心；其次从故事内和故事外、同故事和异故事、显性和隐性以及可靠和不可靠四个方面分析了小说中叙述者的类型。说明了小说的叙述者在不同的叙述层次分属不同类型的叙述者，通过叙述者全方位的叙述，使作品更加引人入胜。从而显示出作者在选择叙述者方面的独特技巧。然后通过分析小说中的内、外聚焦间的和不同聚焦人物之间的转换，尤其对叙述者“我”的双重聚焦进行分析，从而揭示了《吕蓓卡》中聚焦转换的效果和作用；最后通过对时间顺序、时间距离和时间频率的分析，指出《吕蓓卡》的叙事时间在渲染气氛以及制造悬疑方面的意义；通过以上分析，本文认为作者成功地利用了各种叙事技巧来深化主题以及刻画人物。所以《吕蓓卡》无论在形式上还是内容上都不愧是一部经典之作。

**关键词：**叙述层次、嵌入式叙述、叙述者、聚焦转换、叙述时间

## Abstract

*Rebecca* is Daphne du Maurier's most famous novel. From the time of its first publication in 1938, *Rebecca* has aroused acclaims as well as criticisms among contemporary reviewers. This novel has been regarded as the best romance suspense novel in modern English literature. Daphne du Maurier's unique narrative technique makes it a novel fascinating and captivating.

This thesis aims to conduct a detailed analysis of narrative level, narrator, focalization, and narrative time in *Rebecca* in the light of Genette, Rimmon-Kenan, and Shen Dan's theory. Through the analysis of the narrative levels of *Rebecca*, it is concluded that the novel is divided into three levels and Du Maurier adopts the "tale within tale" method to highlight its unconventional embedded narrative of Rebecca's story as the core of the novel. Then by analyzing the narrators from their relation to the narrative levels, their involvement in the narratives, and their visibility and reliability, the narrators' types are demonstrated. And the author's distinctive technique of choosing narrators are shown to the readers. Later with the investigation of shifting focalization between the internal and external ones and between different focalizers, especially the narrator's dual focalization, the functions and effects resulting from the focalization shifts can be manifested. At last the thesis explores the narrative order, duration and frequency of the novel, and points out that the functions of its distinctive narrative time are creating suspense and building up the atmosphere.

Through the detailed analysis, the thesis comes to a conclusion that *Rebecca* is a novel of delicate narrative techniques which helps deepen the theme and create vivid characters in the novel. As a perfect unity of form and content, *Rebecca* is classic in English literary works.

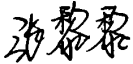
### Key words:

narrative level      embedded narrative      narrator      shifting focalization  
narrative time

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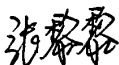
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## Introduction

Daphne du Maurier is an English novelist, biographer, and playwright. She was born in London into an artistic family. Her father, Sir Gerald du Maurier, was a well-known actor and theatre manager. Her mother, Muriel had acted too. Her grandfather, George du Maurier, had been a famous novelist. *Trilby*, his novel about the lives of artists in Paris, was extremely popular at the end of the nineteenth century. Daphne du Maurier received an education at home with her siblings and then was sent to Paris to “finish” her education.

Daphne published her first book, *The Loving Spirit*, in 1931 when she was 24. Her first publisher was Heinemann, and her agent was Curtis Brown Ltd., specifically Michael Josephs. In 1934, she changed her publisher to Victor Gollancz, who also became her agent, and Norman Collins became her editor. Daphne published fifteen novels, her most famous novels being *Jamaica Inn* (1936), *Rebecca* (1938), *Frenchman's Creek* (1941), *The King's General* (1946), and *My Cousin Rachel* (1951). She also published six collections of short stories, three plays, twelve non fiction books, and four essays. In her writings, Daphne demonstrates her fascination with her family's history. She wrote a biography about her family, *The du Mauriers* (1937), a biography of her father, *Gerald: A Portrait* (1934), and a novel based on her ancestors, *The Glass Blowers* (1963). Several of her novels and short stories enjoyed immense popularity in her lifetime and saw film adaptations, including *Rebecca*, *Frenchman's Creek*, *Jamaica Inn*, *My Cousin Rachel*, *The Scapegoat*, and the short stories *Don't Look Now* and *The Birds*. In 1942, Daphne and her family moved in to Menabilly, a house in Cornwall that they leased and then later bought. Most of the works of du Maurier were set in her beloved Cornwall, fueling an interest in what was already a popular tourist location. She fashioned Manderlay, the house in *Rebecca*, after Menabilly. She also wrote a non-fiction work *The Vanishing Cornwall*, published in 1969, where she describes in loving detail her memories of Cornwall as a child, and the glory that still exists there.

While contemporary writers were dealing critically with such subjects as the war, alienation, religion, poverty, Marxism, psychology and art, and experimenting with new techniques such as the stream of consciousness, du Maurier produced 'old-fashioned' novels with straightforward narratives that appealed to a popular audience's love of fantasy, adventure, sexuality and mystery. Most of her novels fall into the suspense category, which won her Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Award in 1977. "She was an artist who painted her pictures with words; and her style of narrative writing could conjure up rich dramatic scenes as she combined fact with fiction in the setting of a real place. For over half a century she entertained us with pictures of life drawn from her imagination. Like the famous Bronte sisters, Daphne lived through the characters she created." <sup>1</sup> "Du Maurier is a master storyteller who knows how to manipulate female fantasies. She creates a world that is simple, romantic, usually ambiguous, adventuresome, mysterious, dangerous, erotic, picturesque, and satisfying. It is a world that contrasts sharply with the mundane realities of ordinary existence, and it is a world that does not require the reader to suffer the pains of introspection and analysis. It is, in short, a world that brings considerable pleasure to millions of readers, especially women."<sup>2</sup>

*Rebecca* is Daphne du Maurier's most famous book. Its publication further amplified du Maurier's reputation, with most considering her one of the best novelists of her age. The story concerns a woman who marries an English nobleman and returns with him to Manderley, his country estate. There, she finds herself haunted by reminders of his first wife, Rebecca, who died in a boating accident less than a year earlier. In this case, the haunting is psychological, not physical: Rebecca does not appear as a ghost, but her spirit affects nearly everything that takes place at Manderley. The narrator, whose name is never divulged, is left with a growing sense of distrust toward those who loved Rebecca, wondering just how much they resent her for taking Rebecca's place. In the final chapters, the book turns into a detective story, as the principal characters try to reveal or conceal what really happened on the night Rebecca died.

From the time of the first publication, *Rebecca* has attracted many readers and

critics. It received mixed contemporary reviews. “Rebecca is a book temptingly easy to criticize or to praise.”<sup>3</sup> Critics praise many aspects of *Rebecca*, usually beginning with Du Maurier’s writing style. Many critics note that she is a natural storyteller. “‘Rebecca’ takes a familiar situation . . . and turns it into an occasion for mystery, suspense, and violence . . . Though reviewers point out (and du Maurier agrees) that she cannot take credit for inventing this formula. Many of them believe that her personal gift for story telling places her novels a cut above most other Gothic fiction.”<sup>4</sup> Critics also praise the element of suspense that du Maurier weaves so gracefully throughout the novel, which grabs the reader’s attention and keeps the pages turning. In reading *Rebecca*, one becomes so interested in what happens next that one is reluctant to put the novel down. However, critics have given the most praise to *Rebecca* for its gothic elements. Many critics have identified *Rebecca* as a modern gothic classic. Richard Kelly described *Rebecca* as “the first major Gothic romance in the twentieth century and perhaps the finest written to this day.”<sup>5</sup> He pointed out that *Rebecca* includes many key components of Gothic romances, including “a mysterious and haunting mansion, violence, murder, a sinister villain, sexual passion, a spectacular fire, brooding landscapes, and a version of the madwoman in the attic.”<sup>6</sup>

Some critics tend to make comparisons between *Rebecca* and Charlotte Brontë’s classic novel *Jane Eyre*, such as Jonathan Yardley’s *Du Maurier’s ‘Rebecca’, A Worthy ‘Eyre’ Apparent* and Bernadette Bertrandias’s *La Transformation de Jane Eyre dans Rebecca de Daphne Du Maurier*. They believe that there are many similarities in the two novels. Jane Eyre is governess to a wealthy girl; the unnamed narrator of *Rebecca* is companion to a wealthy older woman. Both women (19 and 21 years old, respectively) are mousy in appearance (or think they are) and beleaguered by self-doubt. Both come into the employment of brooding, mysterious men in their forties – Edward Fairfax Rochester and Maxim de Winter – and both fall in love with them. Both men harbor dreadful secrets: Jane learns Rochester’s on the eve of their wedding, the heroine of *Rebecca* learns de Winter’s after three months of marriage. The majestic country mansions owned by both men burn to the ground in spectacular

conflagrations. Happy endings are achieved, but at a high price.

Richard Kelly interprets the novel as a sophisticated version of the Cinderella story for the nameless heroine has been saved from a life of drudgery by marrying a handsome, wealthy aristocrat, but unlike the Prince in Cinderella, Maxim de Winter is old enough to be the narrator's father.

Some scholars study *Rebecca* from a feministic point of view. They believe that the book addresses the issue of feminism. Beta Candy states that "*Rebecca* interests me as a feminist because it's about three well-drawn, fleshed out women characters trying to carve out lives and identities for themselves despite gender and class privileges working against them."<sup>7</sup> In "*Returning to Manderley' – Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class*," Alison Light attributes the narrator's ineptitude to the class disparity that exists between the narrator and her new husband, Maxim de Winter. By comparing the confident social and sexual place of the aristocratic Rebecca to that of the insecure, up-start narrator, Light explores the subjectivity of the narrator as it evolves in resistance to the model of gender and sexuality provided by *Rebecca*. In this analysis, the construction of femininity is a process of wishful projection and identification, displacement and repulsion.

Assethoun shows her interest in *Rebecca*'s detective features. She regards the novel as a detective and romance fiction with a feministic perspective. At the heart of classic genre detective fiction is the quest for 'truth'. In the novel there is murder and mystery, and the novel's concern with discovering the 'truth' of, and about, the dead Rebecca, and the inquest that follows the discovery of her body conflates the genre of romance fiction with that of detective fiction.

Over the past decades *Rebecca* has been studied from diverse angles; what interests me most is still the way in which Daphne du Maurier produces such a great novel, that is to say, the narrative techniques employed in her story. Many readers and critics think the narration of *Rebecca* is captivating, "The narrative, moving backward, rises slowly to a climax. You probably won't put the book down, as the saying goes, until you get there."<sup>8</sup> This thesis aims to make a systematic analysis on the narrative techniques of *Rebecca* in the light of narratology so as to reveal its narrative

profoundness, get a deeper understanding of this novel, and further enrich the study of *Rebecca*.

Narratology is firstly mentioned by French scholar Todorov, who points out in *Grammaire Du Decameron* that “this is a nonexistent science and we define it for the moment as narratology, that is, concerning the narrative.”<sup>9</sup> In *A Dictionary of Narratology*, American narratologist Prince defines it as “the theory of narrative”. Narratology studies the nature, form, and functioning of narrative (regardless of medium of representation) and tries to characterize narrative competence”<sup>10</sup>. French narratologist Genette is a structuralist narrotologist, who originally employs such concepts as focalization, frequency, distance and so on, to analyze Marcel Proust’s *A la recherchédu temps perdu (In search of Lost Time)* systematically from the point of view of narratology. Another narratologist Rimmon-kenan analyzes and generalizes the key elements of the fictional narrative, including event, time, focalization, narration, text, etc. in the light of French structuralist and other schools of contemporary literature.

Based on concepts and definitions of Genette’s *Narrative Discourse*, Rimmon-Kenan’s *Fictional Narrative*, Prince’s *A Dictionary of Narratology*, and Shen Dan’s theory, using the experience of narratologists at home and abroad as reference, the analysis of narrative techniques of *Rebecca* is chiefly unfolded from the following aspects: its narrative level, narrators, focalization, and narrative time. Chapter One is a discussion of the narrative level and the application of embedded narratives of the novel, Chapter Two is an attempt at analyzing the types of narrators in this novel. Chapter Three is an interpretation of shifting focalization between the narrator and other focalizers and Chapter Four is about the narrative time which includes its use of analepses, various duration and frequencies.



## Chapter I. Unconventional Embedded Narratives

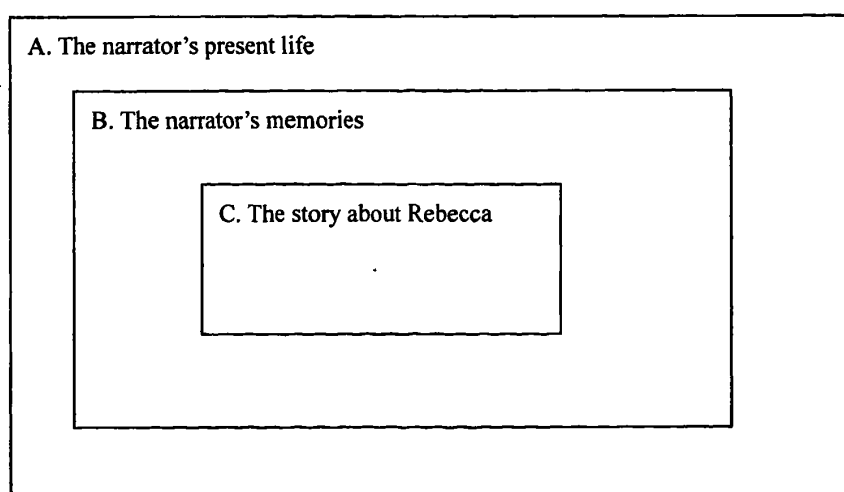
Various reading effects result from shifts in narrative level, traditionally known as embedding. Within the main plot, the author can insert other short embedded narratives, told by other narrators from other narrative perspectives. This is a rather common technique that adds diversity to the narrative act and increases the complexity of the narrative. Rimmon-Kenan uses the term hypodiegetic levels to refer to subordination relations between different levels. Genette prefers the term metadiegetic for narratives on a different level from the diegetic one. He argues that the secondary narratives are more significant and functional than the primary one, and therefore the relationship between the primary and secondary levels is one of dependency, not one of hierarchy. Genette gives a definition to the narrative levels as follows: “We will define this difference in level by saying that any event a narrative recounts at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed.”<sup>11</sup> According to him, there are three narrative levels: the extradiegetic level, the intradiegetic level and the metadiegetic level. Narration of the main (first-level) narrative occurs at the extradiegetic level. The event-story being narrated on this first level fills a second-level position, known as intradiegetic. If a character in this story tells some other narrative, his narrative act will also be on the same intradiegetic level. However, the events being told through the second-level narration are metadiegetic. In other words, a narrator who stands outside of the story events is on an extradiegetic level. A narrator who is involved in the story is on an intradiegetic level. When an intradiegetic narrator tells a story at a different or deeper diegetic level, a secondary narrative is created on a metadiegetic level.

The deep structure of *Rebecca* is very impressive when viewed from the angle of narrative levels. It begins with these famous first lines: “Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me.”<sup>12</sup> In this opening, the narrator is thinking over her dream about Manderley, a seaside estate in Cornwall. As

the dream is recalled, we learn that Manderley now lies in ruin. Then the story switches to years earlier, beginning in Monte Carlo, where the young and unsophisticated narrator (who is never named) meets and marries Max de Winter. Afterward they move to Manderley, where the lingering presence of the dead but larger-than-life Rebecca de Winter not only haunts the estate, but also the narrator's husband. Therefore, the narrative level of this novel can be divided into three degrees: the first-degree at the extradiegetic level, the second-degree at the intradiegetic level (the second level) and the third-degree at the metradiegetic level (the third level). And the relationships of the three levels can be expressed by the table below:

Narrative Degrees	Levels	Narrative Content
First-degree	extradiegetic	The narrator's present life
Second-degree	intradiegetic	The narrator's memories
Third-degree	metadiegetic	The story about Rebecca

The narrative levels can be also expressed by the 'Chinese – boxes models' as the following figure shows:



The first-degree of narrative level is the first two chapters of the novel. The narrator begins the story from her dream of their estate Manderley and her present life with her husband Maxim de Winter in exile in Europe after Manderley has been burnt down. This is a prelude and serves as a frame for the event story -- the narrator's memories. In this part, the narrator describes her present life and she also mentions from time to time the past life in her memories. For example, she uses the sentences like "we can never go back again" and "it is all over now; finished and done with" to indicate that what happened to them in the past is exactly what she wants to narrate in this story. Then from the later part of the second chapter, the narrator begins the second-degree of narrative level: her memories of the life in Manderley which is the event story of this novel and lasts to the end. On this narrative level, the narrator tells about her encounter of her husband and their living experiences in Manderley. She becomes the narrator of the event story which the narrator narrates on the first level. Because she is inside the story and pushes the development of it, she serves as the intradiegetic narrator. This event story fills a second-level position and is on the intradiegetic level. The story about Rebecca is embedded in the second narrative level of the novel. It is metadiegetic for it is told by several characters of the second level narration from different perspectives. The second-degree of narrative level which is about the narrator's memories of her past life is embedded in the first-degree narrative level which is about her present life; the third-degree of narrative level which is about the story of Rebecca is embedded in the second-degree narrative level of the novel. That is to say, both the story about the narrator's past life and the story about Rebecca are a kind of embedded narrative. According to Genette, there are three main types of relationships that connect the metadiegetic narrative to the main one into which it is inserted. The first type is the direct causality, which means characters and/or events on the metadiegetic level explain why something on the main level happened or did not happen. The second type is a thematic relationship, which is the one of analogy, i.e. similarity or contrast. The third type, no explicit relationship, which means the embedded narratives maintain or advance the action of the first narrative by the only fact of being narrated, regardless of their content. The relationship between the event

story of the narrator's past life and the embedded narrative of Rebecca's story is of the first type. The story of the narrator's life in the past is tightly bounded with Rebecca. It sets a frame for the embedded narrative of Rebecca's story and Rebecca's story goes alongside with the narrator's and takes up most part of it. What the narrator sees, uses, and feels in Manderley are all created and influenced by Rebecca. From the first day when she meets Maxim as the companion of Mrs. Van Hopper, she hears the words about Rebecca, "they say he can't get over his wife's death..." (p11) As the narrator falls in love with Maxim, she begins Rebecca's story with her jealousy and portrays a perfect image of Rebecca from her imagination and some other people's words. She believes that Rebecca was everything she herself is not: a perfect hostess, a perfect sexual partner, a perfect chaterlaine and a perfect wife. Her jealousy for Rebecca and misunderstandings with Maxim occupy most part of her life in Manderley. The combination of the narrator's story and Rebecca's story is realized through their connections with people and objects. People who have connections with the narrator also have connections with Rebecca: Maxim used to be Rebecca's husband; Mrs. Danvers used to be Rebecca's housekeeper, Frith and Frank used to be Rebecca's servants. Almost all the things that the narrator sees and uses in Manderley used to be Rebecca's: Manderley used to be Rebecca's home, Jasper used to be Rebecca's pet; the dinner menu used to be arranged by Rebecca and the cottage at the beach used to be Rebecca's rest place. Rebecca almost appears to the narrator's life at anytime anywhere. "Rebecca, always Rebecca. I should never be rid of Rebecca." (p262) Therefore, the story about Rebecca is the reason which leads to the present situation of the narrator's life in Manderley.

Nelles believes that all embedded narrative has effects that produce significant consequence. He writes, "Every embedded narrative, however brief or simple, must be considered to have some potential for structural/formal, dramatic/proairetic, and thematic/hermeneutic significance by virtue of the sole fact of its being embedded"<sup>13</sup>. As a narrative technique, the function of embedded narrative is obvious in adding diversity to the narrative act and increasing the complexity of the narrative. In the novel *Rebecca*, it has no doubt that what Du Maurier really wants to tell is the story

about Rebecca. However, she does not begin the story directly from Rebecca's side, but chooses the second wife of Maxim de Winter as the narrator and inserts Rebecca's story into the narrator's own story. By using the embedded narrative, the novel becomes more complicated and fascinating. For example, in the first narrative level, although it is the story about the narrator's present life, she mentions from time to time her past life. Therefore, when readers are reading this part of the novel, they usually do not care too much about what is going on now, they are eager to know what has happened in the past and how does the narrator end this way. Also, although the second narrative level of the novel is about the narrator's story, Du Maurier only uses it as the framework of Rebecca's story. She creates a fascinating web of perceptions that are only untangled when Maxim tells the narrator the whole truth. Once the truth is revealed, the threads of perception begin to fall into their place and the truth about Rebecca who sits at the center of the web can be fully understood. Just as Du Maurier said herself: "I want to build up the character of the first [wife] in the mind of the second... until wife two is haunted day and night... a tragedy is looming very close and CRASH! BANG! Something happens." <sup>14</sup>

## Chapter II. Multiplex Narrators

Narrator is the one that tells a story. The text or discourse can not show itself without the narrator's telling. No matter a novel centers on 'I', 'you' or 'he/she', it needs someone to tell the story. The narrator acts as a bridge between the reader and the events through his emphasis on certain characters and events and through his manipulation of imagination and language. Division of narrators in narratological studies has been made according to different criteria. According to the relationship between the level of the narrator and the level on which the events he narrates, there are extradiegetic narrator and intradiegetic narrator; according to the extent of the narrator's participation in the events, there are heterodiegetic narrator and homodiegetic narrator; according to the degree to which the narrator can be sensed, there are overt narrator and covert narrator; according to the relationship between the narrator and the implied author, there are reliable narrator and unreliable narrator. Different kinds of narrators may create different rhetorical effects, so this chapter will identify the type of narrator in *Rebecca*.

### A. Extradiegetic and Intradiegetic Narrators

Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck state that the narrator type depends on the relationship between the narrator and that which he narrates. The first criterion is about the relationship between the level of the narrator and the level on which the events he narrates happen. If the narrator stays over the narrated world, he is extradiegetic. An intradiegetic narrator, by contrast, tells a story on the narrative level of the characters. If a character is presented by a narrator with no other narrating agent above him, this narrator is extradiegetic. If the character starts to tell a story, he becomes an intradiegetic narrator. When various levels and stories are embedded in a frame narrative, a narrator on the first level is called an extradiegetic one, a narrator on the second level is the intradiegetic one, and a narrator on the third level is the metadiegetic or intra-intradiegetic one. When analyzing the narrator in the novel *Rebecca*, we need to consider its narrative levels. As mentioned in chapter one, there

are three levels coexisting in this novel: the extradiegetic level which is about the narrator's present life, the intradiegetic level which is about the narrator's memories, and, the metadiegetic level which is about the story of Rebecca. On the extradiegetic level, there is only one narrator – "I". The narrator "I" describes her present life and makes some comments on her past life. Since this level serves as the frame for the second level narrative, although the narrator is telling the story of her own, she is no longer inside the story and is a higher authority in relation to the story which she narrates. When narrating the story she knows "everything" about it, which makes her an extradiegetic narrator. On the intradiegetic level, the narrator "I" goes back to her memories and begins to tell her story in the past. When she narrates at this level, she is inside the story, serving as both the narrator and the character. She appears in the novel as "the second Mrs. De Winter", and the story is about how she and her husband – Maxim de Winter meet, get married, and live in Manderley. Therefore, she serves as an intradiegetic narrator on this level. The metadiegetic level about the story of Rebecca is told by several narrators. The narrator "I", the bishop's wife, Mrs. Danvers, Frank, Maxim, Doctor Baker, and Ben etc. all make contributions to the story about Rebecca. Since this level is the metadiegetic level and these narrators are all characters from the second or the intradiegetic level, they belong to the metadiegetic or intra-intradiegetic narrator type.

## **B. Autodiegetic, Homodiegetic and Heterodiegetic Narrators**

Besides the difference between intradiegetic and extradiegetic level, there is a second distinction on the basis of which one can identify narrator types. This distinction no longer concerns the narrative level, but rather the narrator's involvement in what is narrated. A homodiegetic narrator is a character in the narrated world that he/she describes. A heterodiegetic narrator does not take part in the narrated action. He/She is therefore not a character of the story that is told. If the homodiegetic narrator is the protagonist of the story he/she tells, Genette calls him or her autodiegetic narrator. If the narrator deals with things he has only witnessed, Van der Voort proposes to use the term allodiegetic. In the novel *Rebecca*, on the

extradiegetic level and the intradiegetic level, the author chooses “I” as the narrator, which means she is telling the story of her own. Thereby, she is a homodiegetic narrator. And since she is the heroine of the story, she belongs to the category of autodiegetic narrator. On the metadiegetic level, when telling the story about Rebecca, the narrator “I” becomes the heterodiegetic one. That is because the narrator’s narration about Rebecca derives from her imagination and suspects. She has never met and has any relation to Rebecca. The other character narrators of Rebecca’s story are homodiegetic ones. Each of them recalls their memories about Rebecca and their experience of dealing with her. As they all have involved in the events they narrate and what they narrate is just what they have experienced. Therefore, they are the homodiegetic narrators of Rebecca’s story.

When the level and the involvement are combined, the narrator “I” becomes the extradiegetic and autodiegetic narrator on the first narrative level, the intradiegetic and autodiegetic narrator on the second narrative level and the metadiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator on the third level. The other narrators of Rebecca’s story are all metadiegetic and homodiegetic narrators. As an extradiegetic-autodiegetic narrator, the narrator comments on her own story from an external point of view. It is said that the on-looker sees most of the game. Thus what the narrator narrates is truer and more reliable. As an intradiegetic-autodiegetic narrator, the narrator “I” does her narrative in the first person, shortening the distance between narrative and narrating, between the narrator and readers to the maximum. As a metadiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator, the narrator’s narration about Rebecca derives mainly from her imagination. Since her understanding about Rebecca is limited, her process of narrating the story of Rebecca is just her process of knowing and understanding Rebecca. This type of narrating can effectively create suspense, attracting the readers to follow her to explore the truth of Rebecca’s story. As the metadiegetic-homodiegetic narrators, the other character-narrators narrate the story of Rebecca through their memories. Since they have experienced the events they are narrating, their narrations are trustworthy. Through the narration of these characters, the narrator gets a lot of information about Rebecca. The information helps the narrator to have a deeper understanding about



Rebecca. And thereby, the myth of Rebecca is revealed.

### **C. Overt and Covert narrators**

Visibility is one of the narrator's important properties, which can be represented on sliding scale from a nearly invisible narrator to one that is extremely visible. Rimmon-Kenan speaks of a covert and overt narrator. The difference lies mainly in their narrative procedures: a covert narrator quotes a lot; he does not present himself/herself in the first person, and tries to avoid evaluative descriptions as much as possible. An overt narrator resorts to paraphrase instead of quotation; he/she definitely talks about himself/herself and therefore uses the first person; and often shows his/her own opinions. When analyzing the type of narrators in the novel *Rebecca*, we also need to consider its narrative levels. On the first narrative level, the narrator "I" falls into the overt one. She does not narrate the story of their present life in exile in Europe according to its development, but by making summaries and comments on it. For example, "We have no secrets now from one another, all things are shared."(p6) "He will fall to smoke cigarette after cigarette, not bothering to extinguish them, and the glowing stubs will lie around on the ground like petals."(p5) "Finals of school boy sports, dog racing, strange little competitions in the remote countries all these are our grist to our hungry mill."(p6) These sentences reveal the existence of the narrator, which makes the narrator "I" an overt one. On the second level, the narrator "I" first serves as an overt narrator in the earlier part of the story and then gradually becomes invisible. For example, at the beginning of the second narrative level, the narrator comments on her past life:

It was my lack of poise of course that made such a bad impression on people like Mrs. Danvers. What must I have seemed like after Rebecca? I can see myself now, memory spanning the years like a bridge, with straight, bobbed hair and youthful, unpowered face, dressed in an ill-fitting coat and skirt and a jumper of my own creation, trailing in the wake of Mrs. Van Hopper like a shy, uneasy colt. (pp.9-10)

In this comment we can identify the existence of the narrator, she comments on the event that has happened and been told before in which she did not exist. She is visible in the narration and serves as an overt narrator. There are also some other examples in this part: "I wonder what my life would be today, if Mrs. Van Hopper had not been a snob. Funny to think that the course of my existence hung like a thread upon the quality of hers."(p12) "I am glad it can not happen twice, the fever of first love. For it is a fever, and a burden, too, whatever the poets may say."(p37) Later, when the narrator begins to tell the events happen in *Manderley*, the narrator becomes invisible. The narrator is more of a character than a narrator in this part. She mainly allows the story to develop in its own logic and letting the characters act their roles in their own unique reasonable ways. She tries not to contact the narratee, not to influence him/her in his/her judgment of the characters and events, and not to show her own subject consciousness as well. Therefore, in this part, she is a covert narrator. As to the story about Rebecca, the narrator "I" and other characters are all overt narrators: they narrate the story either from imagination and suspects or from memories, which makes them outside of and become visible in the story telling.

#### **D. Unreliable Narrators**

The narrator's another property concerns reliability, which can also be represented on a sliding scale from a completely reliable narrator on one end to an entirely unreliable one on the other. Wayne C. Booth put forward the concepts of reliable and unreliable narrator in his book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* in 1961. A reliable narrator is characterized by the fact that his narrative is always regarded by the reader as the authoritative description of fictional truth. An unreliable narrator is characterized by the fact that that his description of and/or comment on the story always makes the reader plausibly suspicious, whether because the narrator is limited in his knowledge or he himself is involved in the event or there is something wrong with his value system. The narration in *Rebecca* is first-person, and the narrator's limited perspective signals that her account is potentially unreliable. She is one of the characters in the novel; she is not omniscient. She tells everything from her own point

of view and it is through her that the events unfold. In the novel, there are several descriptions of her misunderstanding of Maxim's feelings towards Rebecca, which are personal, unilateral, and limited, indicating that she is unreliable. For example, in chapter 12, after she breaks the china cupid, she talks about it with Maxim. She assumes that Maxim is thinking about Rebecca and the day when they receive this present:

He was staring straight in front of him. He is thinking about Rebecca, I said to my self. He is thinking how strange it was that a wedding present to me should have been the cause of destroying a wedding present of Rebecca. He is thinking about the cupid. He is remembering who give it to Rebecca. He is going over in his mind how the parcel came and how pleased she was. (p166)

The narrator believes that Maxim is still in love with Rebecca and always thinks of her. This can not be trusted by the readers because it is originated from her jealous imagination. As a character and first person narrator, the narrator serves as a filter for the events. What she does not know or observe cannot be explained to the reader.

Besides the first person perspective limitation, the narrator's own characteristics are also the reason to label her as an unreliable narrator. The narrator is soft-spoken, shy, and a little needy. In the beginning she searched for the approval of people around her in hopes that they would like her better for it. She is easily intimidated, and afraid of those whom are beneath her in the social hierarchy. She is easily influenced by others. The intangible nature of Mrs. Danvers makes her feel that Mrs. Danvers's eyes are on every move. She often thinks that she sees her skirt swish as she turns around a corner. Rebecca also has effect on the narrator. In many instances she feels that she is able to smell her scent and her footsteps. The narrator's own characteristics or weaknesses make what she narrates unreliable to the readers.

The other character narrators like Mrs. Danvers, Frank and Maxim are also unreliable because they are also restricted to their own perspective and identity. Their narrations are in first person, and they are all involved in the events they narrate. For

example, when Mrs. Danvers narrates, she describes Rebecca from her own point of view. Because she has been Rebecca's maid for many years and has very intimate relationship with her, she regards Rebecca as the most beautiful and elegant woman in the world and believes that everything Rebecca does is right. But readers may suspect Mrs. Danvers' words about Rebecca, which makes her an unreliable narrator. The use of an unreliable narrator can add a delicious element of uncertainty to a story, with occasional revisions of the readers' understanding of all that went before.

Hence, as is observed above, Du Maurier's technique of choosing narrators is very elaborative. Either extradiegetic or intradiegetic, homodiegetic or heterodiegetic, covert or overt, reliable or unreliable, the constant change of perspective and the positing of the narrators contribute a lot to the allsidedness of the narration. Sometimes the readers feel that they have already got the answer but later finds out they are blindfolded; sometimes they are directed by the narrators and believe everything they tell but later they pause and suspect. It is the multidimensional narrators that make the narration of the novel complicated and fascinating.

### Chapter III. Shifting Focalization

Focalization is Gerard Genette's term. In his *Narrative Discourse*, Genette corrects preceding theories of narrative point of view, like those of Norman Friedman and Wayne Booth, separating the functions of focalizer – who sees – and narrator – who tells. He chooses the term “focalization” because it both solves the problems of “the too specifically visual connotations of the terms vision, field, and point of view,” and because it recalls Brooks and Warren's “focus of narration”. Focalization is the most subtle means of manipulating the information presented to the readers. It is a triadic relationship between the narrating agent, the person recounting a narrative, the focalizer, the subject or character in a narrative who sees, and the focalized, who or what is being seen as object. Genette distinguishes three types of focalization in a narrative: (1) Zero focalization or non-focalization, which is roughly equivalent to omniscient narration; (2) Internal focalization of which the focalization may be fixed or variable. When the focalization is fixed, the whole story is told from the perspective of only one of the characters; variable focalization has different focal characters in the same story; and multiple focalizations have the same story told from the different perspectives of several characters. (3) External focalization in which both the voice and perspective are external to the story and only words and actions but not thoughts or feelings are presented. Generally speaking, the focalization can shift from external to internal. It can be fixed, variable or multiple by shifting between characters. As Genette mentions, “the commitment as to focalization is not necessarily steady over the whole length of a narrative. Any single formula of focalization does not, therefore, always bear on an entire work, but rather on a definitive narrative section, which can be very short”.<sup>15</sup> This idea is true to the novel *Rebecca*, in this novel, the focalization shifts between the narrator's internal focalization, her external focalization and other narrators' external focalization.

There are three narrative levels in the novel *Rebecca*, when narrating the story; different focalizations are adopted by the author. The first and second levels of the

novel are generally narrated by the narrator from both of her external and internal focalizations; the third level of the story is narrated not only by the narrator herself from her external focalization but also by some other characters from their respective perspectives.

### **A. Shifting between the Narrator's narrating self and experiencing self**

The novel *Rebecca* is narrated in the first person. Focalization and narration are also separated in the first-person retrospective narrative. "In a first-person retrospective narration, the focalizer, the first person pronoun "I" refers both to the narrator (narrating self) and to a character in the story (experiencing self)."<sup>16</sup> The narrator may describe past experiences from either past or present perspectives and the significance of the described events may viewed by a self who has changed between the story time and the telling time. In *Narratology and Stylistics of Fiction*, Shen Dan classifies the focalization of the first person retrospective narration into "the first person internal focalization" and "the first person external focalization". If the narrator keeps aloof from the experience and tells what he has experienced, focalization is adopted by the narrating self; if the narrator tells and narrates while experiencing, the focalization is labeled as experiencing self. a first-person retrospective narration can be told from the hindsight awareness of the narrating self or from the more limited and naïve level of experiencing self, therefore, in a first person retrospective narration, the narrator "I" has "dual focalizations through the narrating self and experiencing self". The focalization of narrating self is external while the focalization of experiencing self is internal.

In the first narrative level of the novel *Rebecca*, Daphne du Maurier basically adopts the dual focalizations of the narrator through her narrating self and experiencing self. For example, in the first narrative level, the narrator tells about what she is experiencing currently and also makes some comments on what she has experienced in the past. She describes their present life as a routine of stifling monotony: they move from hotel to hotel, they follow the cricket, they take afternoon

tea, the wife selects dull newspaper articles to read to her husband... All of the events are narrated in the simple present tense, which indicates that the narrator is stating what is going on at present, and as she is also inside the story. It is her experiencing self who is telling the story from the internal focalization. Besides the description of her present life, the narrator also makes some comments on her memories (second narrative level) from time to time. At this time, the narrator's narrating self stands in a position that is retrospective to the events of the story, she is older and more knowledgeable and more experienced than her experiencing self who is presented in the events happened in Manderley. She focuses her perspective on the occurrences and relationships of the past. Her narrating self has already experienced and witnessed the occurrences she is recounting, so she knows in advance the outcome of the events and the fate of the various characters. There are several narratives of this type in the first two chapters when the narrator begins her story-telling with her memories and dreams and her comments on what has happened in the story. Take the following paragraphs for example:

I believe there is a theory that men and women emerge finer and stronger after suffering, and that to advance in this or any world we must endure ordeal by fire. This is we have done in full measure, ironic though it seems. We have both known fear, and loneliness, and very great distress. I suppose sooner or later in the life of everyone comes a moment of trial. We all of us have our particular devil end. We have conquered ours, so we believe. (p5)

And confidence is a quality I prize, although it has come to me a little late in the day. I suppose it is his dependence upon me that has made me bold at last. At any rate I have lost my diffidence, my timidity, my shyness with strangers. 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. It was my lack of poise of course that made such a bad impression on people like Mrs. Danvers. What must I have

seemed like after Rebecca? I can see myself now, memory spanning the years like a bridge, with straight, bobbed hair and youthful, unpowered face, dressed in an ill-fitting coat and skirt and a jumper of my own creation, trailing in the wake of Mrs. Van Hopper like a shy, uneasy colt. (pp.9-10)

In the first paragraph, the narration is done from the external focalization through the narrator's narrating self. This is her understanding and summary of their past life in Manderley. And the sentence written in the present perfect tense "We have conquered ours, so we believe." is the indicator of the narrating self's narrative. She now realizes what happened before is a big disaster to them and now they have overcome it. It does not exist any more, but the narrator and her husband have learned a lesson from their experiences.

In another paragraph, the narrator comments her own image as she was in the story. The narrator is standing out of the story and makes her own comment; the image of her at that moment lies in the narrator's memory. When she narrates, she is no longer like that any more; she is more confident and more relaxed. So this narrative is also done from the external focalization through the narrator's narrating self.

The narrator begins her story of the second narrative level from her life in Mante Carlo as Mrs. Van Hopper's companion and her meeting with Maxim. In these chapters, the narrative focalization shifts between the narrator's narrating self and her experiencing self. The narrator makes comments on the events from time to time when she narrates the story. In Chapter 5, when the narrator mentions her feeling of falling in love with Maxim, she refers to it as a "fever", "a burden", and she thinks that the young people are "not brave", "They are full of little cowardices...easily bruised, so swiftly wounded" "even a small deception scoured the tongue, lashing one against the stake itself." When she makes these comments, she is already an adult, she is already not what she used to be, and she is standing outside the story and gives her comments on it. At this time, the narrator is her narrating self from an external focalization. But later, the narrative focalization shifts to an internal one, the narrator



begins to tell the story as her experiencing self; she narrates Mrs. Van Hopper's questioning on her after her dates with Maxim. It goes like this:

“What have you been doing this morning?” I can hear her now, propped against her pillows, with all the small irritability of her patient who is not really ill, who has lain in bed too long, and I reaching to the bedside drawer for the pack of cards, would feel the guilty flush from patches on my neck.

“I have been playing tennis with the professional,” I told her, the false words bring me to panic, even as I spoke, for what if the professional himself should come up to the suite, then, that very afternoon, and bursting in upon her complain that I had missed my lesson now for many days? (p37)

In this narrative, the narrator stands at her experiencing self side, she is experiencing the event. “The guilty flush from patches on my neck” is just what the narrator feels like in the story. Also, after her lying to Mrs. Van Hopper, she is worried that the tennis professional will come and unfold her secret. The narrator narrates exactly what is happening in the story, she is telling the story as her experiencing self through the internal focalization. Shortly after this event, the narrator shifts her focalization again to the external one; she again makes comments on herself when she is dating with Maxim in Monte Carlo, “I remember that, for I was young enough to win happiness in wearing of his clothes...” the narrator now feels that she was too naive in the story, she is viewing her past self from her narrating self.

Most of the narratives about their life in *Manderley* are done from the internal focalization of the narrator's experiencing self. Because she is telling the story in the form of recalling, the narrator puts herself back into the story as a heroine and is telling the story with her experiencing self. Unlike the narrating self who is free to state her opinion of the events, the narrator's experiencing self is bounded by her experiences. She is experiencing events as they occur and also looking ahead with an air of expectancy to the events that she has yet to experience. The narrator says only what the given character knows. The narration is done from her point of view. For

example, in chapter 9, when the narrator hears the sound of the car of Beatrice and her husband who are coming for lunch, she was so nervous that she feels like running away and hiding herself because she was too shy and feels too inferior to meet them. The narrator narrates the event like this:

When I heard the sound of the car in the drive I got up in sudden panic, glancing at the clock, for I knew that it meant Beatrice and her husband had arrived. It was only just gone twelve; they were much earlier than I expected. And Maxim was not yet back. I wondered if it would be possible to hide, to get out of the window, in the garden... (p99)

Later she does escape from the morning room and wants to hide herself in her bedroom but takes the wrong way and intrudes Rebecca's bedroom on the other side of the building. In the narration of this event, the narrator is her experiencing self, she tells the readers what she is experiencing which makes her narration realistic and vivid. Another example is the event in which the narrator asks Frith about Rebecca's death, she totally has no idea about the truth of that accident, as the second Mrs. de Winter, with her jealousy, she is eager to know things about her husband's ex-wife. When she asks Frith about this matter, she is experiencing the event as the heroine, she feels "a strange sort of excitement" and although she knows that Frith does not want to mention it, she still "could not be silent". She makes judgments from Frith's words: "I had the impression he was being loyal to someone. Either to Maxim or to Rebecca, or perhaps even to himself. He was odd. I did not know what make of it." (p146) What the narrator narrates now is exactly what she is experiencing. She is narrating from her experiencing self through the internal focalization.

When the story is told from the internal focalization, readers are viewing everything from the narrator's experience. They share her experiences, her emotions, her unease, and they too want to unravel the mystery of Rebecca. This narrative of internal focalization strengthens the sense of the reality of the novel and enlarges its expressive force, and since the narrator takes the protagonist's perspective, she is

limited in her liberty to enter the other characters' inner world, and thus the story becomes complicated and full of suspense. In this novel, the narrator's misunderstanding of Maxim's attitude towards Rebecca can serve as a good example of this. In chapter 12, after the narrator knows that the china cupid that she has broken is the wedding-present of Maxim and Rebecca and that Rebecca knows a lot about china, she begins to conjecture that Maxim is thinking about Rebecca, and "he is going over in his mind how the parcel came and how pleased she was." (p166) and in chapter 18, on Mrs. Danvers's suggestion the narrator wears a costume that, it turns out, is the same dress that Rebecca wore at the last ball. Upon seeing her, Maxim is horrified, and she becomes convinced that he is still devoted to Rebecca, that he will never love her and her marriage is a failure. These misunderstandings are caused by the narrator's internal focalization because she is limited to her character and can only narrate what she sees and hears.

When the narrator narrates the story about Rebecca, she adopts the external focalization. Her narration mainly concentrates on her imagination of Rebecca because from the beginning of the story, Rebecca has already died and she has never seen her before. Therefore the image of Rebecca in the narrator's narration is not from what she has seen in person. It is mostly from her judgment from what she sees and hears. There are many descriptions in the novel about the narrator's imagination of Rebecca. For example, in chapter 5,

She had beauty that endured, and a smile that was not forgotten. Somewhere her voices still lingered, and the memory of her words. There were places she had visited, and things she had touched. Perhaps in the cupboards there were clothes she had worn, with the scent about them still.  
(p47)

And in chapter 8,

She who sat here before me had not wasted her time, as I was doing. She

had reached out for the house telephone and given her orders for the day, swiftly, efficiently, and run her pencil perhaps through an item in the menu that had not pleased her. She had not said “Yes, Mrs. Danvers”, and “Of course, Mrs. Danvers”, as I had done. And then, when she had finished, she began her letters, five, six, seven perhaps to be answered, all written in that same curious, slanting hand I knew so well. She would tear off sheet after sheet of that smooth white paper, using it extravagantly, because of the long strokes she made when she wrote, and at the end of each her personal letters she put her signature, “Rebecca”, that tall sloping drawing its fellows.(p97)

And in chapter 11,

...and in the car going home I sat in my corner...and I could see Maxim standing at the front of the stairs, laughing, shaking hands, turning someone who stood by his side, tall and slim, with dark hair, said the bishop’s wife, dark hair with a white face, someone whose quick eyes saw to the comfort of her guests, who gave an order over her shoulder to a servant, someone who has never awkward, never without grace, who when she danced left a stab of perfume in the air like a white azalea.(pp.140-141)

Since the narrator has never met Rebecca before, her descriptions about her are just the narrator’s imagination. When the narrator narrates these events, although the focalizer is her experiencing self in her own memories, she is outside of Rebecca’s story, so the narration is from the external focalization. Another similar example can be found in chapter 10, when the narrator finds out the handkerchief of Rebecca in the mackintosh she wears, she makes the conjecture that Rebecca must be tall, slim and broader than her about the shoulders.

When the narrator’s narrating self becomes the focalizer, her focalization is external and she is outside the events she narrates; when her experiencing self becomes the focalizer, her focalization is internal and inside the story. Therefore the

narrator has dual focalizations in the novel - the external focalization of her narrating self and the internal focalization of her experiencing self.

## **B. Shifting among Other Character Narrators**

The story about Rebecca is not only narrated by the narrator herself, but also by other related characters in the novel. While the narrator's narration mainly concentrates on her imagination, the other characters' narration about Rebecca derives from their own experiences. The bishop's wife describes Rebecca as "a very lovely creature, so full of life." And "She was certainly very gifted...Yes, she was very beautiful." (P139) Mrs. Danvers regards Rebecca as the perfect woman in the world and Maxim could not live without her. After her death, he can't go to sleep; he moves away from the bedroom and travels out for a long time in order to get over it. When Frank talks about Rebecca, he says that "I suppose she was the most beautiful creature I ever saw in my life." (P151) Maxim overthrows the phony image of Rebecca created by other people, he reveals that Rebecca is in fact a malevolent, wicked woman, who lives a secret life and carries on multiple affairs, and Rebecca did not drown in a yachting accident, she was killed by Maxim. These characters are both first person narrators and the focalizers at the same time. Their narrations are embedded in the narrator "I"'s narration on the second narrative level through the presentation of direct quotations. The narrator "I"'s narration belongs to the narrator's level and the other characters' narrations belong to the level of character's discourse. These characters' narrative focalization of Rebecca's story is the external one. Because when they narrate the story they are already out of it, they are just telling about the Rebecca in their memories. Through the narrations of these characters, the narrator gets a lot of information about Rebecca. The information helps the narrator to have a deeper understanding about Rebecca. Moreover, different ideas about Rebecca from different characters set more obstacles for the readers to know a "real Rebecca" and thus will strengthen the effect of suspense.

The effect of the *Rebecca's* technique of shifting focalization is to enable us to assimilate the story of Rebecca. What we come to know of the story depends wholly

on the experiences of the focalizers. With each focalization, we learn something more about it, more than one is necessary because there is a great deal to assimilate. The descriptions of Rebecca from different narrators in different focalizations provide us with a real and vivid Rebecca. As a dead person, she lives only in the past. As a result, people's memories of Rebecca hold the power of the present. The power of death is that what Rebecca did or thought is still true now. Each focalization, each memory is a point from which the web hangs or an intersection of partially seen threads.

## Chapter III. Distinctive Narrative Time

The category of time deals with temporal relations between narrative and story. “While text time refers to the linear (spatial) disposition of linguistic segment in the continuum of text, story time refers to ideally natural chronology.”<sup>17</sup> According to Genette, the relations between text time and story time can be analyzed in terms of order, duration and frequency. The relationships between story and text time can be described as normal sequence, analepses, prolepses and so on. Besides, the proportional relationships between story-time and text-time bring up the problem of duration; times of narrating events inevitably bring problem of frequency. Therefore, in this chapter, time will be discussed from three factors: order, duration and frequency.

### A. Analepses and Prolepses

Order determines the connections between the succession of events in the story and the way in which they are arranged in the narrative. Genette uses prolepsis (for) “any narrative manoeuvre that consists of narrating or evoking in advance any event that will take place later; analepsis (for) any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at a given moment and...anachronism to designate all forms of discordance between the two temporal orders of story and narrative...”<sup>18</sup>. In other words, prolepses pertain to what may happen and analepses pertain to what has happened. Analepses whose extent remains external to that of the first narrative are called external analepses, and those within the extent of the first narrative are called internal analepses. Mixed analepses can reach a point earlier and arrive at a point later than the beginning of the first narrative.

The narrative order of *Rebecca* is in coherence with its structure which consists of two main parts: the narrator’s present life in Europe and her memories of her life in the past before the destruction of Manderley. As the novel is about the narrator’s own memories, the temporal order of the actual chronological succession of events in the story is different from the order of their arrangement in the narrative text. In the novel

*Rebecca*, the story order is as follows:

1. The narrator and Maxim first meet at Monte Carlo.
2. The narrator and Maxim go back to Manderley.
3. The narrator lives a miserable life in Manderley.
4. Rebecca's body and sunken boat are discovered.
5. Maxim reveals the secrets of Rebecca and her death.
6. The magistrate judges Rebecca's death as suicide.
7. Mrs. Danvers leaves Manderley.
8. Manderley is burnt down.
9. The narrator and Maxim lives in exile in Europe.

While the order of the text is as follows:

- A. The narrator and Maxim lives in exile in Europe.
- B. The narrator and Maxim first meet at Monte Carlo.
- C. The narrator and Maxim go back to Manderley.
- D. The narrator lives a miserable life in Manderley.
- E. Rebecca's body and sunken boat are discovered.
- F. Maxim reveals the secrets of Rebecca and her death.
- G. The magistrate judges Rebecca's death as suicide.
- H. Mrs. Danvers leaves Manderley.
- I. Manderley is burnt down.

The relationship between the text and story orders is as follows:

1B - 2C - 3F - 4D - 5E - 6G - 7H - 8I - 9A

From the above analysis we can see that most of *Rebecca* follows a chronological path, from the time the narrator meets Maxim de Winter at Monte Carlo to the night that Manderley is burnt down (segment B to G). There is, however, a prelude that takes place some time after the events in the novel which constructs the first narrative level (segment A). Segment B to G is an analepsis that is inserted into the first narrative. It is the second narrative which tells about the narrator's past life in Manderley. Because the story narrated in the analepsis happens before the first narrative starts, its extent remains external to the first narrative, so it is an external



analepsis. The function of this analepsis is to provide information for the event, character and story line on this level. When the narrator begins to tell the story, she does so in a cyclic way; she begins at the end, with her self and her husband living in exile in Europe, for reasons that are unclear. In this beginning of the first narrative level, Mrs. Danvers is mentioned, and so are Jasper the dog and Favell. They are all brought up in the natural way that they might pass through the mind of someone thinking about the past. Because readers do not know what these names refer to, however, they serve in these first chapters to focus attention, to keep readers alert for the story that is about to unfold. The most important element of this introduction is the fact that the man travelling with the narrator is not identified: while reading the main story, readers have to be alert to signs that her love affair with Maxim de Winter might end and to look for clues that hint who her true love might turn out to be. The analepsis of segment B to G is a complete analepsis which lasts to the end of the novel. It is used to answer all the questions proposed in the first narrative. Within this analepsis, the story of the narrator mainly follows the chronological order. From this analepsis we understand how the narrator meets her husband and marries him; what their life in Manderley is like; what kind of woman Rebecca is and why Maxim shoots her to death; how Maxim escapes from Rebecca's conspiracy and why Manderley is burnt down. The answers to these questions do not come until the final pages. During the reading, conflicts jump out at the reader page after page, and in spite of knowing the ending, suspense continues to build.

The story about Rebecca which goes alongside the narrator's life story is narrated by a series of external analepses through other character's recalling. The first example of this series of analepses is in chapter 11, when the bishop's wife recalls the ball and the garden party held by Rebecca she attended in Manderley:

"There was a garden party, too, we went to one summer," said the bishop's wife. "Everything always so beautifully done. The flowers at their best. A glorious day, I remember. Tea was served at little tables in the rose-garden; such an attractive original idea. Of course, she was so clever..."

“She was certainly very gifted. I can see her now, standing at the foot of the stairs on the night of the ball, shaking hands with everybody, that cloud of dark hair against the very white skin, and her costume suited her so. Yes, she was very beautiful.” (pp.138-139)

Another analepsis of this type appears in chapter 14, when Mrs. Danvers finds the narrator stays in Rebecca’s room, she tells her more about Rebecca: how beautiful Rebecca was in her beautiful clothes; how Maxim brushed hair for her; what happened at that night when Rebecca died; how sad Maxim was after her death. In chapter 18, after the ball in which the narrator offends Maxim by adopting Mrs. Danvers’s advice and wearing the same dress as Rebecca, Mrs. Danvers again mentions Rebecca to the narrator, she says Rebecca is the best person and nobody can do better than her. She recalls how Rebecca tamed the horse when she was only sixteen and how much she admires her. In chapter 20, when Rebecca’s dead body and sunken boat are found, Maxim reveals the secrets of Rebecca and her death to the narrator, Maxim recalls and describes exactly what a true Rebecca was and how did he killed Rebecca at that night. This analepsis serves as the center of Rebecca’s story. The similar external analepsis can also be found in chapter 26, when Favell, Maxim, and the narrator accompany Julyan to London to see the doctor that Rebecca has consulted. Doctor Baker recalls the day when Rebecca came and tells them that she had cancer and was going to die a painful death. Rebecca dies long before the narrator begins the second narrative of her story. Therefore Rebecca’s story is told through a series of analepses. These analepses constitute a large part of the novel and they are also external ones for they happen before the narrator begins her second narrative level. These external analepses are also designed to provide information for the previous events and characters. Here they are used to help the readers understand what kind of person Rebecca is. Through these character narrators’ memories, an explicit image of Rebecca is presented in front of the readers and their suspense disappears.

Though to a lesser degree than the external analepses, internal analepses also

characterize the retrospective narrative in *Rebecca*. For example, in chapter 19, the narrator reflects that on the second day after the party Maxim does not go away: "Maxim had not gone away. He was down there in the cove somewhere...He had just been for a walk... He had been on the headland, he had seen the ship closing in towards the shore."(p282) This internal analepsis serves as a completion of what the narrator mentions before that Maxim disappears for the whole night after the party as he is offended by the narrator. The description of the poetry book which Rebecca gives to Maxim is an example of internal analepses with a repeating function: "Once again I saw the inscription on the fly-leaf of that book of poems, and the curious slanting R."(p41) "I had a book that she had taken in her hands, and I could see her turning to the first white page, smiling as she wrote, and shaking the bent nib. Max from Rebecca."(p47) Most of the internal analepses in the novel have a completing function, and thus fill in some omissions in the previous narrative.

Prolepses are a narration of a story-event at a point before earlier events have been mentioned. When these prolepses occur, they build up another kind of suspense, revolving around the question "how is it going to happen." As for this type of anachronies, most of them are in the form of the narrator's imagination and surmise. For example, on hearing Mrs. Van Hopper's decision of leaving for New York the next day, the narrator imagines her journey with this woman: "Tomorrow evening I should be in the train, holding her jewel case and her rug, like a maid, and she in that monstrous new hat with the single quill, dwarfed in her furcoat, sitting opposite me in the wagon-lit..."(p51) And she also imagines what will happen when they part with Maxim: "I should say good-bye to him in the lounge, perhaps, before we left. A furtive, scrambled farewell, because of her, and there would be a pause, and a smile, and words like 'Yes, of course, do write', and 'I've never thanked you properly for being so kind'..."(p51) it turns out that later the narrator does not go with Mrs. Van Hopper and there is not a farewell like what she has imagined, these prolepses are only her imagination. The narrator's imagination of her life in *Manderley* before she goes there also falls into the category of prolepses. When she goes to Maxim's room to say good-bye to him before her leaving, Maxim tells her that he loves her and

wants to take her to Manderley. The narrator begins to imagine what will happen to her if she accepts Maxim as her husband: "I would be his wife, we would walk in the garden together, we would stroll down that path in the valley to the shingle beach... We would be in a crowd of people, and he would say, 'I don't think you have met my wife.' Mrs. de Winter, I would be Mrs. de Winter."(pp.59-60) And later when she really becomes the Mrs. de Winter and goes back to Manderley with Maxim and begins their life there, she also imagines what will happen to their future life:

We should grow old here together, we should sit like this to our tea as old people, Maxim and I, with other dogs, the successors of these, and the library would wear the same ancient musty smell that it did now. it would know a period of glorious shabbiness and wear when the boys were young ---our boys --- for I saw them sprawling on the sofa with muddy boots, bringing with them always a litter of rods, and cricket bats, great clasp knives, bows-and-arrows.(p77)

The above-mentioned examples are explicit prolepses or direct prolepses, in which the narrator clearly tells an event that will occur in the future. Meanwhile, prolepses also include implicit or indirect ones, which means that the events that will occur in the future are implied. This kind of example can be found in *Rebecca*. on their road back to Manderley from Doctor Baker's home, Maxim tells the narrator that he does not know whether he has get rid of Rebecca's curse or not, the narrator thinks that "It was all over. It was all settled. It did not matter anymore. There was no need for Maxim to look white and troubled." But Maxim says that "It was her last practical joke... the best of them all. And I'm not sure if she hasn't won, even now." Maxim's worry turns out to be a prolepsis that implies the fate of Manderley, at the end of the novel, when they drive close to Manderley, they find that "The sky above our heads was inky black. But the sky on the horizon was not dark at all. It was shot with crimson, like a splash of blood. And the ashes blew towards us with the salt wind from the sea." Manderley is finally burnt in the fire and Rebecca wins the last joke.

From the above analysis we may conclude that the narrative order of *Rebecca* mainly takes the form of analepses. By putting the ending out of the front, it allows the readers to work the story against it, to show how all the story lines progressed to that final point. Then through using analepses, “the gaps” in the story is filled and readers are driven forward to penetrate to the core of the novel.

## **B. Various Duration**

Duration examines the connections between the variable duration of the story sections and the length of the text in which they are recounted: duration pertains to connections of speed. The rhythm of a narrative is determined by the accordance or discordance between the duration of the story sections and the pseudo-duration. Genette states: “...it is hard to imagine the existence of a narrative that would admit no variation in speed-and even this banal observation is somewhat important: a narrative can do without anachronies, but not without anisochronies or, if one prefers (as one probably does), effects of rhythm.”<sup>19</sup>

Anisochrony pertains to the rhythm of narrative discourse, the speed with which it moves forward or slows down. Narrated time as compared to narrating time-that is the duration of the story set against the length of the text- indicates the rhythm of narrative discourse. Genette distinguishes four basic forms of narrative movement that he calls the four narrative movements: pause, scene, summary and ellipsis.

In *Rebecca*, Du Maurier employs pause and scene to present the slowdowns of the narrative, and summary to accelerate it. She almost does not use any ellipses in her narrative of *Rebecca*.

Pause is the minimum narrative speed. In a pause, the text corresponds to zero story duration, or, story-time stops though the discourse continues. Usually a pause can be a description, commentary, exposition, and direct addresses of the narrator to the reader. Strictly speaking, a true pause is when an external narrator describes a picture “solely for the information of his reader”.<sup>20</sup> This implies that the inward thoughts of a character are not really pauses, because the narrative does not exactly come to a halt.

*Rebecca* is crammed with description, particularly of places. It serves to build up atmosphere, which in a subtle way increases the tension. The most typical example is in Chapter 14, when the narrator sees Mrs. Danvers and Farvell's meeting, she is curious about their relationship and she enters Rebecca's room to find what is happening, here comes a pause, there is a description of Rebecca's room:

I had expected to see chairs and table swathed in dust-sheets, and the dust-sheets too over the great double bed against the wall. Nothing was covered up. There were brushes and combs on the dressing-table, scent, and powder. The bed was made up, I saw the gleam of white linen on the pillow-case, and the tip of a blanket beneath the quilted coverlet. There were flowers on the dressing table and on the table beside the bed. Flowers too on the carved mantelpiece. A satin dressing-gown lay on a chair, and a pair of bedroom slippers beneath. (p185)

In this passage, the narrator focuses her narration on the space and appearance of Rebecca's room. When the narrator is describing these contents, the plot of story does not develop, that is, the story time is still. Here we can identify the descriptive pause employed by the narrator. These descriptions make the narrative time extend largely.

The pause is also embodied in portrait description. The portrait description of the main characters can help to depict the characteristics of the figures and impress readers. For example, in Chapter 7, there is a paragraph about Mrs. Danvers's portrait:

Someone advanced from the sea of faces, someone tall and gaunt, dressed in deep black, whose prominent cheek-bones and great, hollow eyes gave her a skull's face, parchment- white, set on a skeleton's frame. She came towards me, and I held out my hand, envying her for her dignity and her composure; but when he took my hand hers was limp and heavy, deathly cold and it lay in mine like a lifeless thing. (p74)

Traditionally a scene pertains to “the strong periods of the action coinciding with the most intense moments of the narrative”<sup>21</sup>. Scenes are moments of dramatic actions described in an equal dramatic way. Story and discourse here are of relatively equal duration. The two usual components are dialogue and overt physical actions of relatively short duration, the kind that do not take much longer to read. Scene, most often in dialogue, which realizes conventionally the equality of time between narrative and story is frequently employed by Du Maurier in the novel. In *Rebecca*, Du Maurier likes to use scene to describe what really happens to the characters. There are many narratives in the form of dialogue. For example:

“Was it very valuable?”

“Heaven knows. I suppose so. I’ve really forgotten.”

“Are all those things in the morning-room valuable?”

“Yes, I believe so.”

“Why were all the most valuable things put in the morning-room?”

“I don’t know. I suppose because they looked well there.”

“Were they always there? When your mother was alive?”

“No. No. I don’t think they were. They were scattered about the house.

The chairs were in a lumber room I believe.”

“When was the morning room finished as it is now?”

“When I was married.”

“I suppose the cupid was put there then?”

“I suppose so.”

“Was that found in a lumber room?”

“No. No. I don’t think it was. As a matter of fact I believe it was a wedding-present. Rebecca knew a lot about china.”(pp.165-166)

This dialogue appears in Chapter 12 between the narrator and Maxim, they are talking about the china cupid that the narrator has broken. This scene is only composed of dialogues without any other element, such as “He said” or “I said”. At

this time, the narrator completely disappears. The similar dialogues also can be found in following chapters: Chapter 6, in which the narrator tells her leaving with Mrs. Van Hopper to New York; Chapter 8, in which Mrs. Danvers calls to ask the narrator for her opinion to the menu; Chapter 17, in which Beatrice tries to comfort the narrator after the party in which she has offended Maxim by wearing the same dress with Rebecca; Chapter 21, in which Robert talks about the telephone call from Colonel Julyan about going to Rebecca's boat with the narrator; and in chapter 22, in which the Coroner questions Maxim about Rebecca's sunken boat.

Besides dialogues, a detailed narration of an event should also be considered scenic. Dramatic scenes are employed in many cases in *Rebecca*. These energetic scenes with intensive interactions of characters throughout a short period of time, would normally witness a brisk narrative progression with little interruptions from the protagonist's consciousness. For instance, in Chapter 8, there is a scene in which the narrator is searching for some matches. It is described so detailedly that the narration almost keeps the same pace with the physical action and shows an atmosphere of tension. Another scene which carries the dramatic moments of the narrative is about the party in Chapter 16. When the narrator walks down the stairs with the white dress that is the same with Rebecca's, all the people are shocked. The scene is almost wholly constructed by dialogue and brief physical actions, with the emotional reactions of all the participants of it. In fact, most of the narration in the novel *Rebecca* is composed of dialogues and physical actions, in other words, the author adopts mainly the equal narrative speed with the story speed. The scene in *Rebecca* reflects keen perception and great narrating skill of the narrator. It also controls the narrative speed and the narrative rhythm of the novel.

Pauses and scenes make the narrative decelerate while summary and ellipsis accelerate. To control the rhythm of narration, Du Maurier sometimes employs summary. A summary is defined as "...the narration in a few paragraphs or a few pages of several days, months or years of existence, without details of action or speech."<sup>22</sup> In summary, the narrative sums up what happened over a relatively long period in a relatively short way, that is, the pace is accelerated through a textual



“condensation” a given story-period into a relatively short statement of its main features. The degree of condensation can vary from summary to summary, producing multiple degrees of acceleration. And the main effect of the summary is ensuring the brevity and the conciseness of the novel. In *Rebecca*, Du Maurier does not very frequently employ summary. But in some chapters or paragraphs, she would use summary to present some less significant events or situations. Here is one example of summary in Chapter 12:

I did not see much of Mrs. Danvers. She kept very much to her self. She still rang the house telephone to the morning room everyday and submitting the menu to me as a matter of form, but that was the limit of our intercourse.  
(p152)

In this paragraph, the narrator just summarizes briefly her contact with Mrs. Danvers after her coming to Manderley by using “everyday” and “a matter of form”. Although it is a longtime period, the narrator does not state it in detail; she only makes a summary of it.

Another example can be found in Chapter 16: “The preparations went on for the ball. Everything seemed to be done down at the estate office. Maxim and Frank were down there every morning. As Frank had said, I did not have to bother my head about anything.”(p221) This summary is about the preparation of the party in Manderley, the narrator does not describe it according to the story time, and the narrative time is much shorter than the story time.

In a narrative, the shift of duration can lead to the fact that the whole of the rhythmic system of novelistic narrative is thereby profoundly affected. In this way, the shift of duration can affect the artistic glamour and aesthetic sensibility. Pause, scene and summary contribute to the rhythm of the narrative discourse: summary can speed up the rhythm of the novel, and scene, on the contrary, produces an opposite effect. In *Rebecca*, Du Maurier is thoroughly versed in controlling the basic forms of narrative duration to make the novel have a dramatic and rhythmic narrative discourse.

Especially her use of pause and scene which gives this novel many detailed descriptions makes it a book suspenseful, dramatic, and vivid.

### **C. Multiple Frequency**

Frequency has bearing on the relationships between the events that occur repetitively in the story, and the number of times that they are repeated in the narrative. In other words, this has to do with how many times something really happen and how many times is it reported in the narrative. Narrative frequency pertains to “the relations of frequency (or more simply, of repetition) between the narrative and the digenesis.”<sup>23</sup> It includes singulative frequency, iterative frequency and repetitive frequency. The singulative frequency is that an event that occurs once is described only once in a work. The iterative frequency is an event that occurs more than once but is narrated once. The repetitive frequency is that an event that occurs once is described many times in a work. Iterative and repetitive frequencies can stress an important event, under this situation, what we care about is not the event itself, but the view and the feeling that the narrator conveys for the same event. In *Rebecca*, the singulative frequency is commonly employed. Du Maurier uses them to describe the important and tense events which drive forward the narrative. As singulative narrative is the most common narrative form and it is widely spread in *Rebecca*, there is no need to list the examples here in details. Therefore, this part tends to discuss the iterative and repetitive frequency used in this novel.

Du Maurier often adopts iterative frequency to describe things that often happen in the narrator’s daily life. For example, in chapter 3, when the narrator still serves as Mrs. Van Hopper’s companion, Mrs. Van Hopper asks her to get the letter of her nephew as the means of knowing Maxim de Winter. The narrator says “Not for the first time I resented the part that I must play in her schemes. Like a juggler’s assistant I produced the props, then silent and attentive I waited on my cue.”(p13) From the sentence “not for the first time”, we may infer that this kind of things must often happen to her, but she only narrates it for once. That is an event that happens many times but only narrated once, it is the iterative frequency. This iterative frequency

helps the readers know more about the narrator's life as a companion, and makes the readers understand more about the characteristics of Mrs. Van Hopper. Another example is in chapter 20, Maxim reveals the secrets of Rebecca, and he describes the relationship between Rebecca and Favell:

“She used to have this fellow Favell down to the cottage,” said Maxim, “she would tell the servants she was going to Sail, and would not be back before the morning. Then she would spend the night down there with him. Once again I warned her. I said if I found him here, any where on the estate, I'd shoot him.”(p310)

This is another iterative frequency, the words “used to” and “once again” indicates that Rebecca often spends nights with Favell, and Maxim has warned them for many times. This is an event happens not only once but narrated only once. This iterative frequency unfolds the secret of Rebecca's “going to sail”, and exposes the relationship between Rebecca and Favell to the readers.

Besides singulative frequency and iterative frequency, Du Maurier also employs repetitive narrative in her novel. In *Rebecca*, the most impressive repetitive frequency is about the death of Rebecca. In chapter 4, the narrator first mentions Rebecca's death through Mrs. Van Hopper's words: ““She was drowned you know, in the bay near Manderley...””(p36) Later, in chapter 11, the narrator once again mentions Rebecca's death when she asks Frank about it, this time, the conversation goes like this:

“What happened to it?” I said. “Was that boat she was sailing when she drowned?”

“Yes,” he said quietly, “It capsized and sank. She was washed overboard.”

...

“She must have been drowned, then, trying to swim to shore, after the boat sank?” I said.

“Yes,” he said. (pp.145-146)

In chapter 14, Mrs. Danvers tells the narrator again about Rebecca’s death: “‘The rocks had battered her to bits,’ you know, she whispered, ‘her beautiful face unrecognizable, and both arms gone.’” (p191) Rebecca dies once, but the narrator tells about it over and over. It is just because Rebecca’s death is a very important suspense of the novel. By repeating this event, the narrator gives the readers a phony possibility that Rebecca dies in a boat accident, and later when Maxim reveals the truth, the readers may feel very astonished at the unexpected result and the purpose of suspense is realized.

The description of Rebecca’s handwriting on the poetry book which Rebecca gives Maxim is another example of repetitive frequency. When the narrator first sees Rebecca’s handwriting on this book, she describes it like this:

...I read the dedication. ‘Max – from Rebecca. 17 May’, written in a curious slanting hand. A little blob of ink marred the white page opposite, as though the writer, in impatience, had shaken her pen to make the ink flow freely. And then as it bubbled through the nib, it came a little thick, so that the name Rebecca stood out black and strong, the tall and sloping R dwarfing the other letters. (p36)

Later, the narrator mentions twice about Rebecca’s handwriting on this book of poem, both of which are in chapter 5. After the first time the narrator mentions Rebecca in front of Maxim, she remembers the poetry book again and she narrates “Once again I saw the inscription on the fly-leaf of that book of poems, and the curious slanting R.” The other one appears later in the narrator’s imagination after she hears Mrs. Van Hopper talk about Rebecca and her death. She creates a vision of Rebecca and how she wrote down the words on the poetry book to Maxim: “I had a book that she had taken in her hands, and I could see her turning to the first white page, smiling as she wrote, and shaking the bent nib. Max from Rebecca.” (p47) The

repetition of Rebecca's handwriting on one hand emphasizes the narrator's eager and strong curiosity upon Rebecca and on the other hand implies the characteristics of Rebecca who is strong, proud, independent, and debauched, like a demon.

Du Maurier's handling of narrative time in *Rebecca* is quite impressive to the readers. With respect to order, she uses the external analepses to create suspense and catch the readers' interest. She also uses some internal analepses in the novel fill in some omissions in the previous narrative. For duration, pause, scene and summary are employed to control the rhythm of the narrative discourse: summary speeds up the rhythm of the novel, and scene, produces an opposite effect. In *Rebecca*, Du Maurier is thoroughly versed in controlling the basic forms of narrative duration to make the novel have a dramatic and rhythmic narrative discourse. In regard to frequency, Du Maurier adopts singulative, iterative and repetitive frequencies to drive the narrative, stress the importance of some events and complement the story of the present with that of the past.

## Conclusion

As a writer of romance and suspense, Du Maurier adopts distinctive narrative techniques in the novel *Rebecca*. By autodiegetic and intradiegetic narrators and shifting focalization, she tells her story with authority and assurance, making the characters and events seem believable, even realistic. She satisfied all the exacting requirements of “real” literature, something very few novelists ever do. With pauses and dramatic scenes, and her unique beginning sentences, she weaves the elements of suspense so gracefully throughout the novel that it grabs the reader’s attention and keeps the pages turning. In reading *Rebecca*, one becomes so interested in what happens next that one is reluctant to put the novel down.

As one of the bestsellers, *Rebecca* has been a success with popular audience for the past sixty years, yet it has been virtually ignored by the literary world. Literary critics have dismissed it as an inconsequential romance that has no real substance. Many literary critics have attacked du Maurier for writing for the popular audience instead of trying to create a work of literary merit. However, the novel does contain aspects with which the female readers can identify with.

The delicate narrative techniques used in this novel helps enforce the theme and create vivid characters, which makes it a perfect unity of form and content. As a dark, deeply psychological and revealing novel, it is morally ambiguous and unafraid of asking the hard questions. And this fact alone reveals a more mature, pluralistic view of life. On one hand, the novel *Rebecca* can be considered as the maturation of a young, naive woman into a more sophisticated and strong one. The narration is narrated in first person, which makes the readers have the sensation of being spoken to by a person who is telling of her own. It makes the women readers identify with the narrator. In the novel, all the second Mrs. de Winter wants from her husband is his love and attention, but Maxim de Winter controls his wife and totally oppresses her. At the time *Rebecca* was published, the man was still the head of the household, and the woman continually was still fighting for equal rights. Women of this time could sympathize with the second Mrs. de Winter, for they were able to share her pain due

to their own experience of being controlled by their husband. On the other hand, the novel is named “Rebecca” and takes the form of embedded narrative by putting the most impressive and attractive story about Rebecca on the central level. This arrangement also embodies the author’s sympathy with Rebecca, another kind of woman who is different from the narrator. We usually get the impression that we are supposed to sympathize with Maxim de Winter because the narrator does, and we see the story through her eyes. In the novel, Rebecca is supposed to be believed as a demon and a menace. However, what Mrs. Danvers says about Rebecca reminds us that Rebecca is not so much cruel and domineering. Of course, she is wicked and nasty and all the rest of it, but what she actually does that is so terrible is fairly vague. Rebecca refuses to be tied up and controlled. She refuses to live the typical life of the devoted wife, sacrificing herself for her husband and family. In order to escape that fate, she uses whatever power is available to her, including sexual power. She has her own strength independent of men. That’s also why she frightens the male and male-dominated characters in the book. Therefore, *Rebecca* is the novel about Rebecca, a feminist work about an indomitable woman. The reason women of today continue to enjoy *Rebecca* is that the novel highlights the advances women have made in the past sixty years. Daphne du Maurier created a scale by which modern women can measure their feelings about mating and marriage, and judge the progress our society has made toward sexual equality.

The story of *Rebecca* has aroused many people’s curiosities and has influenced several writers. In 1939, it was adapted for the stage and the play, and has retained its popularity ever since. In 1940, its film adaptation directed by Alfred Hitchcock, featuring Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine, won him his only Oscar for best picture. The novel left one with lots of unanswered questions and there have been a number of attempts to write sequels to *Rebecca*. In 1993 Susan Hill wrote *Mrs de Winter*, which continues the story to quite a successful conclusion and in 2001 Sally Beauman wrote *Rebecca’s Tale*, which moves the story twenty years on and then looks back at what happened with interesting results and without spoiling any of the tension of the original novel.

*Rebecca* is the most important novel to Daphne du Maurier. It won her the reputation as one of the best novelists of her age. Just as Kelly said: "If Daphne du Maurier had written only *Rebecca*, she would still be one of the great shapers of popular culture and the modern imagination."<sup>24</sup>



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