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**Byronic heroes and their manors: reflections
of masculinity in the Gothic mansions
portrayed in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and
Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca***

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Abstract

The Female Gothic is characteristic due to its powerful male characters and its enigmatic setting. The masculine protagonist, referred to as 'Byronic hero', is a mysterious and tragic character. He manipulates those that surround him, especially the heroine. The setting is usually a magnificent manor, which is as important in the novel as the characters themselves. These mansions create a dark and gloomy atmosphere, provoking the same feeling of uneasiness that the Byronic heroes do. This study is based on the analysis of the main masculine characters and their respective manors in the novels *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. The relationship between the proprietors and their manors is explored to understand how in both novels, part of the proprietor's identity is provided by their estate. Thus, although being written a hundred years apart, the discussion presents many of the features that these novels have in common.

Key words: Female Gothic, Jane Eyre, Rebecca, Byronic hero, Gothic mansion, Masculinity

Resumen

El gótico femenino se caracteriza por sus poderosos personajes masculinos y su enigmática ambientación. El protagonista masculino, denominado 'héroe byroniano', es un personaje misterioso y trágico que manipula a quienes le rodean, especialmente a la heroína. El lugar donde se desarrolla la historia suele ser una magnífica mansión, que tiene tanta importancia en la novela como los propios personajes. Estas mansiones crean una atmósfera oscura y lúgubre, provocando la misma sensación de desasosiego que los héroes byronianos. Este estudio se basa en el análisis de los principales personajes masculinos y sus respectivas mansiones en las novelas *Jane Eyre* de Charlotte Brontë y *Rebecca* de Daphne du Maurier. Se analiza la relación entre los propietarios y sus mansiones para comprender cómo en ambas novelas, parte de la identidad del propietario viene determinada por su propiedad. De este modo, a pesar de haber sido escritas con cien años de diferencia, la disertación presenta muchos de los rasgos que estas novelas tienen en común.

Palabras clave: Gótico femenino, Jane Eyre, Rebeca, Héroe byroniano, Mansión gótica, Masculinidad

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
2. An overview of masculinity and mansions in Gothic novels	4
2.1. The masculine figure in gothic novels	4
2.2. The Gothic mansion	5
3. <i>Jane Eyre</i>	6
3.1. Edward Rochester	6
3.2. Thornfield Hall	10
3.3. Relationship of Rochester with Thornfield Hall	12
3.4. Ferndean Manor-House	15
3.5. Relationship of Rochester with Ferndean	16
4. <i>Rebecca</i>	18
4.1. Maxim de Winter	18
4.2. Manderley	21
4.3. Relationship of Mr de Winter with Manderley	23
5. Conclusion	27
6. References	29

1. Introduction

Jane Eyre (1847), a novel written by Charlotte Brontë and *Rebecca* (1938), by Daphne du Maurier are two of the most representative novels of the Female Gothic. Although there is almost a 100-year gap between the publication of the two novels, they share many characteristics regarding Gothic fiction. Carter declared that *Rebecca* “shamelessly reduplicates the plot of Charlotte Brontë’s novel” (163). In both novels, romance, mystery, and horror are key for the development of the story. In order to understand better the development of these novels, it is essential to understand what Gothic is. According to Kennedy, Gothic literature can be defined as “writing that employs dark and picturesque scenery, startling and melodramatic narrative devices, and an overall atmosphere of exoticism, mystery, fear, and dread”. The Masculine or ‘Real’ Gothic first emerged in England, with Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, published in 1764. In the so-called Masculine Gothic, women are usually represented in a negative way, always being the victim of a stronger force, which in most of the cases is a male villain.

However, in the 1790s a new kind of Gothic emerged, the Female Gothic. Ellen Moers first used the term ‘Female Gothic’ in her book *Literary Women* (1976). She defines it as “the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic” (90). This definition may lead us to think that the only thing that is necessary for a Gothic novel to be considered part of the Female Gothic is that it has to be written by a woman. However, these novels have several common characteristics, which clearly differentiates them from the Male Gothic. For instance, it is concerned with the place of women in society. Whereas in the Male Gothic the feminine character is always represented as the victim. In the Female Gothic, the female protagonist can take the role of heroine and victim at the same time.

Therefore, *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* are part of this Female Gothic. According to Asmat Nabi, the female character of the Gothic novel usually takes the role of the ‘predator’ or the ‘victim’ (73). The characters of the ‘predator’ are represented by Rochester’s and Maxim’s first wives, Bertha and Rebecca. They both have a powerful nature that the masculine protagonist cannot control. Consequently, they suffer a fatal fate. The ‘victim’ are their second wives, Jane and Mrs de Winter, who are naive and inexperienced young girls, easy to control by the masculine patriarchal figure.

Nonetheless, this dissertation will explore the male protagonists in these two novels, Edward Rochester and Maxim de Winter. Analysing their characteristics as a representation of the hero-villain and their features as the patriarchal figure of their manor. Both fit within the description of the Byronic hero. This kind of character was first developed by the English Romantic poet Lord Byron. According to many critics, this character is a representation of Byron himself, who created this figure in response to his boredom with the typical Romantic hero. Therefore, this character is more psychologically complex and realistic, thus appealing more to readers. The Byronic hero is usually very attractive, both physically and in terms of personality. He is a rebellious man, which usually leads to social isolation, rejection, or exile. Besides, he is usually distressed by a dark and troubled past, which still haunts him. He is charismatic, which leads to social and romantic dominance. Lastly, he rejects the morals imposed by society to accomplish his goals and follows his strong passions (Aktaş). Accordingly, both Maxim and Rochester conform to the stereotype of this Gothic character.

Another key feature in Gothic fiction is the setting in which the narrative takes place. The mansion in which the action develops can even be considered a character of the novel on its own, being as important as the male or female protagonists. In *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca*, most of the action develops in two immense manors, Thornfield Hall and Manderley. These mansions share some characteristics, typical of Gothic fiction. They are isolated, extremely big and in decadence. They contain secret rooms and are full of dark secrets. They can be haunted by a supernatural entity. Furthermore, they are both destroyed by a fire at the end of the novel. Thus, this dissertation will explore the Gothic elements present in these two Gothic estates.

Lastly, the proprietors usually develop a strong bond with their houses. They cannot exist without their manors, and their manors cannot be without them. Those estates conform a huge part of their personality, and if they lose them, a part of their identity is lost. Moreover, the houses also need their proprietors to be at their grandest splendour, making them appear magnificent no matter how terrific they seem at first. The manors have been part of their families for generations and are a symbol of their power and social status. Therefore, their mansions are extremely important for them, and they will do whatever is necessary to maintain their reputation. These proprietors have a peculiar relationship with

their manors, cherishing them more than some people and even being similar in some respects. Hence, the final aim of this dissertation will be to compare Rochester and Maxim with their respective houses, alluding to how the owners interact with their property.

2. An overview of masculinity and mansions in Gothic novels

2.1. The masculine figure in gothic novels

The masculine figure in the Female Gothic is usually powerful and tyrannical, but at the same time he can be portrayed as lonesome and isolated. Some of these characters can fit into the category of 'hero-villain', whose nature is somewhere between good and evil. The Gothic villain is not purely evil, he can possess heroic potential, either appearing as a hero at the beginning of the story or having enough heroic characteristics. Their morality is complex, it is a combination of light and darkness. They may have good intentions at the beginning, but they are too ambitious, and it is this ambition what causes a fatal end.

Another popular character type of this masculine archetype is the Byronic hero. These characters reject the typical heroic virtues. They experience strong feelings of affection and hatred, they are intelligent, arrogant, highly emotional, and violent. Macaulay describes the Byronic hero as "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection" (qtd. in Ford 327). This attractive personality makes the heroines an easy objective for their violence and manipulation.

Moreover, another typical characteristic is their attractive physical appearance. Mulvey-Roberts describes it as: "Physically he is dark and of powerful physique, and is frequently in possession of piercing eyes and an expression which indicates a mixture of contempt and gloom" (112). Furthermore, they usually occupy a high social position, they are very powerful and use this power to subject the heroine and the other characters of the novel. They are always more powerful in a supernatural, economic, or political way. However, this vast power is ultimately self-destructive. They use that power for selfish purposes and their ambition ends up destroying them.

To understand the personality of these characters, it is important to know the context of the society they were living in. In Victorian society, there was an obsession to preserve reputation and suppress the natural desires. Although they may appear to be dominant figures, the truth is that they are in part threatened by the female characters. When the heroine is not with the hero, his failures and weaknesses are exposed.

2.2. The Gothic mansion

Gothic mansions share some common characteristics. They are placed in an isolated location, so that the heroine in distress cannot escape or ask for help. They are large in size, too big for its current habitants. This enormous size may be overwhelming to the female protagonist. In the past, the mansion was known for its opulence, but currently it is in decay. There are attics, big hallways, and secret rooms, all of them hiding sinister secrets of the master. The ownership of the house may be under dispute, and disputes occur between the possible heirs. In addition, visitors are usually impressed when they see the house for the first time, also leading to a sense of uneasiness. Finally, another popular element is the destruction of the house at the end of the novel (Hall).

The setting where the events of the novel occur is central to Gothic fiction. This setting is usually a castle or an isolated manor, away from civilisation. Furthermore, the whole novel usually develops within the same location, which is usually associated with the sublime. According to Burke, terror is “the ruling principle of the sublime” (58). The sublime has power over the individual, being uncontrollable and dangerous, and thus superior to the human being (Fitzgerald). Edmund Burke explains “The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.” (52) These landscapes are terrifying, but exciting at the same time. It is the setting what dominates the person. Gothic novels use the dark and gloomy architecture in order to create an atmosphere of suspense.

The house does not appear as a mere setting, but as an essential element for the development of the plot, it could be considered almost as important as the other characters. The house alludes to the past, now it is in ruins, but it used to be magnificent. The appearance of the house is similar to the inner psychology of the master. Both are in ruins, isolated and gloomy. Sometimes it may seem that the master and his house are one. Ronneburg describes this phenomenon by saying: “The self is a structure, like a house: that is haunted by history - both one’s own and that of one’s family; that this psychic ‘house’ has secret chambers that need to be opened if the house is to be liveable” (42).

3. *Jane Eyre*

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) is undoubtedly a classic of English literature. The novel was an instant success at the time, and even nowadays it continues to be considered one of the greatest romantic novels of all time. *Jane Eyre* is a bildungsroman narrated in the first person. Thus, it follows the path and the experiences of the protagonist since she was an orphaned child until maturity. The novel follows the story of Jane Eyre, an orphaned child who has to discover her place in the world while she overcomes the difficulties that life presents. First, Jane must endure the mistreatment of her aunt and her cousins. She then starts her education at Lowood, where she discovers her passion towards teaching. Nevertheless, Jane craves for new experiences, therefore she accepts a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall. The master of that house is Edward Rochester, a mysterious man who hides many secrets. Rochester is powerful and charismatic; thus, Jane instantly falls in love with him. He manipulates Jane and tricks her to marry him. However, Rochester's real intentions are revealed when Jane discovers that he was already married to another woman, Bertha Mason. Rochester considers his first wife insane, and hence she is imprisoned in a secluded room of Thornfield. After Jane discovers the truth, she runs away and ends up in Moor House, where she meets three of her relatives. There, Jane realises that she still loves Rochester, and she goes back to Thornfield to meet him. Nevertheless, the house had been destroyed by a fire where Rochester was badly injured. They reunite and get married, this time accepting each other completely as equals in every aspect.

3.1. Edward Rochester

Edward Rochester is the male protagonist of Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*. He is a perfect example of the Byronic hero. According to Forina, this type of character is typically identified by:

Unflattering albeit alluring features and an arrogant although intelligent personality. This character is usually an anti-hero who has committed a great crime for which he may feel guilt, but for which he has not repented since he feels he is above societal or spiritual law (85).

Jane's first encounter with Mr. Rochester is quite representative for how their relationship dynamics will work. When Jane first sees Rochester riding his horse, it reminds her of a 'Gytrash', a mythical spirit from the north of England. This alludes to the mysticism and danger that surrounds the figure of Rochester. Moreover, Jane helping him to get into his horse after he falls and sending a letter for him, represents the relationship of dependence that Rochester will develop towards Jane, always asking for her help, opinion, and company. This encounter is also remarkable because of the questions Rochester makes about himself. He asks Jane: "Do you know Mr Rochester?" and "Can you tell me where he is?" (Brontë 135). He is hiding his identity because he wants to know what others think of him, thus showing some insecurities and curiosity, something not typical for a Victorian man.

Jane first describes Rochester's physical appearance by alluding to "his broad and jetty eyebrows, his square forehead [...] black hair. His decisive nose, more remarkable for character than for beauty". He is said to have a "good figure [...] though neither tall nor graceful" (141). It is repeated in many instances throughout the novel that Rochester's appearance is not particularly beautiful. The ugliness of his appearance is used to foreshadow his inner darkness. This feature is used in many novels and different films or TV shows in order to distinguish between heroes and villains. Hence, this suggests that Mr Rochester is ugly both on the inside and on the outside, alluding to the villainous side of his personality.

Since the beginning, Jane feels an immense attraction towards Rochester, and he knows that. However, his behaviour towards her constantly changes, he is sometimes nice, others he despises her, he either constantly looks for her, or does not care about her at all. However, everyone in the house tries to justify his behaviour. While having a conversation with Jane about Rochester's character, Mr Fairfax, the housekeeper, says that "if he has peculiarities of temper, allowance should be made" as "it is his nature [...] and because he has painful thoughts, no doubt, to harass him, and make his spirits unequal" (149). She is suggesting that his bad behaviour is justified, thus he should act as he needs to. Rochester himself is aware of his wicked personality. In one of his first encounters with Jane, he describes himself as "hard and tough as an India-rubber ball" and wonders if there is any hope for his "final re-transformation from India-rubber back to flesh" (155). He knows he is not easy to love, and his exterior is just roughness, he is

not made of 'flesh' anymore. His sins of the past burden him so much that he turned into a harsh person.

According to Brooks, "every interaction between Rochester and Jane is a dance of power" (10). Rochester is more powerful than Jane, because he is a man, older and of a high social class, he considers himself to be superior than her and the rest of the servants in the house. He states:

I have the right to be a little masterful, abrupt, perhaps exacting, sometimes, on the grounds I stated, namely, that I am old enough to be your father, and that I have battled through a varied experience with many men of many nations, and roamed over half the globe, while you have lived quietly with one set of people in one house (Brontë 157).

Although he already knows about Jane's circumstances and difficulties in life, he still uses that information to reaffirm his position as a superior.

For Rochester, nothing has ever been denied to him, he uses any means to achieve his objectives, and this also applied to Jane. Following Brooks statement:

Their relationships are riddled with abusive behaviors, such as lying, coercion, and manipulation. His inability to accept Jane's independence, boundaries, and her refusals against their romantic advances, are a result of the toxic masculinity motif that appears throughout the novel. (6)

For instance, he does not respect her decision of not wanting to accompany him to his social gatherings, claiming: "Nonsense! If she objects, tell her it is my particular wish; and if she resists, say I shall come and fetch her in case of contumacy" (Brontë 197). In many instances, he does not consider Jane's feelings and he does not think how she may react. He tricks her so she thinks he is going to marry Blanche Ingram and obliging her to abandon Thornfield Hall, knowing well she had nowhere else to go. He also dresses as a gypsy to see if Jane is jealous of Blanche and to know how she feels about him. Rochester is doing what is necessary to get what he wants, while crossing boundaries of security with Jane and making her feel a deep mistrust.

In the Victorian period, some historians such as Mandell Creighton affirmed: "I find ladies in general are very unsatisfactory mental food" (qtd. in Tosh 465). However, this was not the case for Mr. Rochester. In most of the cases, women appear as counterparts to the men. Nevertheless, Rochester feels that Jane is his mental equal. He describes his feelings towards her by saying:

I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you – especially when you are near me, as now: it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous Channel, and two hundred miles or so of land come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapped; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. As for you – you'd forget me (Brontë 291).

In this passage, Rochester is describing the enormous dependence he feels towards Jane. He affirms that if they were to be separated, it would physically hurt him. He also suggests that Jane is on a higher stand than him, as their separation would not affect her as much.

After Rochester proposes to Jane, he starts behaving in a different way. He treats her as the Victorian stereotype, the 'angel in the house'. According to Quinn, he does this in order to "better understand his own role in their relationship" (60). Although they never valued beauty in their relationship, when their wedding is imminent, Rochester wants to buy dresses and jewels for Jane. He now expects her to fill the domestic role of a dependent woman whose only aim is to please her husband. Following Woodrow's statement "the desire to have an angel in his home is perhaps not so much about what he expects of Jane, but more about knowing what other people expect of him" (29). Moreover, his marriage to Jane will help him to leave behind his previous sins. Thus, "taking Jane as his illegal wife or as his mistress is an attempt to erase Bertha and the "problem" she represents for Rochester" (Kendrick 235). In addition, during the Victorian period, "the unmarried man came to be considered unmanly" (Sussman 94). He can thus pretend as if his previous marriage with Bertha does not exist, as for him it represents a failure. However, as his marriage with Jane was based on lies and manipulations, it could not work either.

Lastly, Rochester undergoes a huge change after Thornfield Hall is reduced to ashes. Losing his manor implies losing part of his masculinity, not only because of the loss of the house itself, but also because of the wounds that the fire provoked him. Rochester appears completely changed after the fire; he is no longer the authoritative, independent figure that he once was. He now needs to rely on Jane and seeks God's advice and forgiveness. Rochester has changed, both physically and spiritually. When Jane first sees him after the fire, she remarks that "his form was of the same strong and stalwart contour as ever". However, she adds "But in his countenance I saw a change: that looked desperate

and brooding [like] some wronged and fettered wild beast or bird” (Brontë 497). His nature also changed, as during the fire, he tried to save Bertha, the wife that he had previously neglected and denied. He was willing to risk his life to save his wife, thus showing a repentance for his previous sins. Moreover, he makes peace with God, acknowledging that there is a superior power above himself. He affirms: “I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere” (514). Contrary to his previous attitude while Thornfield Hall still existed, he recognises his weakness. His arrogance has disappeared, he has lost a hand and his sight, and with them, part of his masculinity. According to Nordstrand, “The altered Rochester is ready to live in a mutually dependant relationship with Jane, where he reshapes the autonomous masculine role in favour of a dependant one” (22). Now that their relationship dynamic has changed, their marriage can finally work. As Forina states:

During their first engagement, the two were not equal in their relationship, Rochester being the superior, and Jane the inferior. When she finds Rochester at Ferndean, however, their positions have changed; Jane now has money and family, while Rochester has lost Thornfield as well as his sight and his hand (87).

Therefore, Rochester shifts from the strong and controlling owner of a big manor to someone dependant who has lost everything. Whereas Jane has to sacrifice her dreams and independence to become Rochester’s wife and carer. Thus, now Jane and Rochester’s marriage can work, as they both alternate between the typical ‘masculine’ controlling role and the ‘feminine’ dependent one.

3.2 Thornfield Hall

Thornfield Hall is the place where most of the events in *Jane Eyre* take place. This manor is the residence of Edward Rochester, and it has been part of his family for generations. Thornfield has all the characteristics of the typical Gothic mansion. The manor is isolated, surrounded by a dark and gloomy atmosphere. The estate is constantly shrouded in mist and fog, and the tenebrous forest that surrounds it also helps to create this dark atmosphere. The architecture is typically Gothic, it is antique and immense in its

proportions. The edifice is really complex, containing several rooms, some of them inhabited. Moreover, it is full of dark passages and secret rooms where mysterious events occur. Some of these events may seem to be related with the supernatural, although in this particular novel, all the strange things that happen have a rational explanation. Lastly, this mansion hides a significant secret, which has to do with Rochester's past. This secret torments him and forces him to be away of his own home.

Jane describes Thornfield Hall when she first arrives to the mansion as follows: "I looked up and surveyed the front of the mansion. It was three stories high, of proportions not vast, though considerable; a gentleman's manor-house, not a nobleman's seat" (Brontë 117/118). Thus, Thornfield Hall is a big and impressive building, it can be deduced that it is the biggest house in the whole novel. Moreover, it has a certain medieval air, very characteristic of the Gothic buildings. Jane also describes the surroundings of the estate as "quiet and lonely hills, and seeming to embrace Thornfield with a seclusion" (118) This confirms that Thornfield is isolated from the rest of society. Then, Jane describes how looking at the mansion makes her feel by saying "everything appeared very stately and imposing to me: but then I was so little accustomed to grandeur" (117). Hence, Thornfield Hall fits under the description of the sublime by Edmund Burke, which is closely related to the Gothic. According to Burke

Sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; [...] beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy; [...] They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other one pleasure. (121)

Nevertheless, although Jane feels intimidated by the magnificence of the manor, she also feels somehow attracted to it, to its mysteries and to its Gothic atmosphere. This attraction to the mystery increases even more after she meets Rochester, and he starts living permanently in the house. She mentions "I liked the hush, the gloom, the quaintness of these retreats in the day" (Brontë 125).

The presence of ghosts and supernatural creatures is a typical feature of Gothic novels. Jane has a first encounter with the supernatural when she hears a mysterious laugh in the attic. She mentions "the last sound I expected to hear in so still a region, a laugh, struck my ear" (126). At first, she is surprised, as the laugh sounded very tragic, but she then

believes it comes from one of the servants, Grace Poole. According to Fall and Kapler “supernatural figures tend to enter the lives of the characters and impinge upon and disturb the order of the natural world”. This disturbance of the natural world is exactly what happens when Rochester’s room catches fire. Jane believes that the same supernatural entity that mysteriously laughs, is the responsible of the fire. The last encounter occurs when the ‘ghost’ appears in Jane’s room at night. She tears her wedding veil apart as a kind of premonition, as if she was trying to prevent the wedding from happening.

Another remarkable Gothic element is the secret room where Bertha is kept. This room is hidden to all the residents of Thornfield and acts as a kind of dungeon. There, Jane has to spend the night in complete darkness, helping Bertha’s brother, who had been stabbed by his own sister, and making sure that he will not die. She says: “I was in the third story, fastened into one of its mystic cells; night around me; a pale and bloody spectacle under my eyes and hands; a murderess hardly separated from me by a single door” (Brontë 242). Jane is in an unknown room, but she is asked to stay there by her master. Therefore, she cannot disobey no matter how frightened she is, thus demonstrating her devotion towards Rochester.

3.3. Relationship of Rochester with Thornfield Hall

Rochester is first mentioned in the novel to claim how important it is for a house to have his master. Mrs Fairfax suggests that although Thornfield Hall is a beautiful place, she “fears it will be getting out of order, unless Mr Rochester should take it into his head to come and reside here permanently [...] Great houses and fine grounds require the presence of the proprietor” (118). Accordingly, the house needs its proprietor to be at its greatest splendour. Furthermore, as it has been previously mentioned, Thornfield Hall is majestic and isolated at the same time, thus mirroring Rochester’s personality. As Girouard asserts, the landowners’ “houses were designed to go with their image” (272). He also claims that originally, country houses “were power houses – the houses of a ruling class [...] The size and pretensions of such houses were an accurate index of the ambitions – or lack of them – of their owners” (2-3). Hence, Thornfield and Rochester seem to be similar in several aspects.

In the first encounter between Jane and Rochester, he asks: “Whose house is it?” and “Do you know Mr Rochester?” (Brontë 135). He is not simply declaring his status, but he wants others to validate it. This implies his desire for recognition, as part of his power comes from being acknowledged as the owner of Thornfield Hall.

Before Rochester moves permanently to Thornfield, Jane is constantly bored. She mentions “I did not like re-entering Thornfield. To pass its threshold was to return to stagnation [...] both my eyes and spirit seemed drawn from the gloomy house” (137). However, after Rochester moves there, her thoughts differ. She now affirms “Thornfield Hall was a changed place [...] It had a master; for my part, I liked it better” (139). Therefore, Thornfield became a vivacious and captivating place, as his master is now where he should be, in his own manor.

Jane claims in several instances that she likes Thornfield: “I love Thornfield: – I love it, because I have lived in it a full and delightful life” (292). However, although Rochester is the proprietor, he cannot love his own house in the same way Jane does, because he knows the secrets that its walls hold. He claims “How long have I abhorred the very thought of it (Thornfield), shunned it like a great plague-house? How I do still abhor–”. Nevertheless, he does not dislike everything about it, “I like Thornfield, its antiquity, its retirement [...] its gray façade, and lines of dark windows” (167). He likes the atmosphere it creates, its isolation and darkness. Probably because both Rochester and Thornfield share those features. Thornfield is isolated as well as Rochester isolated himself from others and hid his feelings. In addition, it is dreary, as well as his wicked personality at the beginning of the novel. Furthermore, the different rooms of the house also seem to mirror somehow Rochester’s personality. The dark and haunting places emulate Rochester’s traumatic past, as well as his grim and imposing qualities. However, other places, such as the hall, are full of light and vivacity. Thus, they reflect the other part that conforms Rochester’s character, the part that is capable of loving, and his majestic aptitudes as the owner of Thornfield. Thence, according to Ehrmann-Falkenau “The two aspects of Thornfield Hall may also reflect Rochester’s two conflicting sides: although he is a noble person at heart, his unfortunate situation and unhappy past cause him to be rough and act immorally” (45).

He acts as a great host when he receives guests. He gives instructions to each of the workers of the house, orders to clean and prepare the best rooms. Thus, as a great proprietor it is crucial to give a good impression to anyone visiting his manor. Moreover, during this visit, Rochester clearly shows how he has complete control over what happens in the house and over the people who live there. He organises several meetings for his guests, and includes Jane in those, no matter how uncomfortable she is, clearly showing the complete domination he has over her. Moreover, it is also evident how all the guests are dependent of the host. As Jane puts it: "If he was absent from the room an hour, a perceptible dullness seemed to steal over the spirits of his guests; and his re-entrance was sure to give a fresh impulse to the vivacity of conversation." (Brontë 219). Implying then that any social gathering without the host should be tiresome, and Rochester is clearly the most beloved of all the people there.

The secret room where Bertha is kept hides a secret part of Rochester that Jane did not know before. He is using his mansion to hide a part of his life he does not want to confront. He even mentions "that house is a mere dungeon" (249), which clearly alludes to Bertha's imprisonment. This secret that Thornfield holds seems to trouble Rochester, making him hate the place. To that statement, Jane answers: "It seems to be a splendid mansion, sir". While Rochester says, "The glamour of inexperience is over your eyes" (249). Jane appreciates the mansion because she does not know all its secrets. However, Rochester associates his torment from the past with Thornfield. It is mentioned in the novel that he had been travelling for many years, probably with the aim of forgetting his past life. As Gambring observes "This indicates that his past life is in some way reflected in the house and that he travels to forget. He refers to Thornfield Hall as a prison because his dark past haunts his mind when he is there." (5).

Bertha is the main source of his torments. Although as the proprietor he should have complete dominance over his house, there is only one thing he cannot control, Bertha. She stabs her brother, burns Rochester's room, rips Jane's wedding veil and is the responsible for the destruction of the whole Thornfield. It is because of her that Rochester cannot proceed with his plan of marrying Jane. Thus, Woodrow points out that "Because of Bertha, his home does not offer him the sphere of domestic sanctuary he longs for" (26).

Notwithstanding, while in *Jane Eyre* Bertha is portrayed as monstrous and violent, in its prequel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Jean Rhys, readers can understand better Bertha's character. This novel gives voice to what had been previously a silenced madwoman. The motives of her madness are depicted, as having a difficult childhood, and living in a dangerous social climate (Donaldson 100). However, Rochester is the greatest responsible of Bertha's insanity. They both got engaged in an unwanted marriage, and when Rochester discovers the madness that runs in Bertha's family, he starts neglecting her. He ignores her and sleeps with another woman. This betrayal makes Bertha desperate. Her own husband takes her to England without her consent and locks her in a dark room. Thus, it is undeniable that what really provoked Bertha's madness are the mistreatments of her husband.

When the truth about Bertha is revealed, Rochester starts losing power and credibility. He previously had the mastery of captivating Jane, making her act as he wished. However, he cannot even make her stay at Thornfield when she discovered that Rochester was a married man. After Thornfield bursts into flames, the loss of power is even more evident. He has lost the ancestral home that had belonged to his family for generations, the representation of his wealth and value as a gentleman. As Ehrmann-Falkenau claims, "what was once august and imposing about the house is now no more. Ruined and abandoned, the place represents anything but the majestic splendour of the Rochesters" (46). Therefore, the loss of his manor implies the loss of his power and authority.

3.4. Ferndean Manor-House

Ferndean is first mentioned in the novel while Thornfield still stands. Rochester describes it as a place of solitude, where not even Bertha could have survived: "I possess an old house, Ferndean Manor, even more retired and hidden than this, where I could have lodged her safely enough" (Brontë 360). Thornfield is already described as a completely isolated place, so it is impressive that there is a place even more remote than that. A place appropriate to keep imprisoned a madwoman where no one would ever find her. However, after Thornfield's destruction, Rochester is the one who inhabits Ferndean.

Ferndean, as well as Thornfield, has several gothic characteristics. It is described as “a building of considerable antiquity, moderate size, and no architectural pretensions, deep buried in a wood” (496). Thus, with this initial depiction of the house, the contrast between Ferndean and the majestic and splendid Thornfield Hall is evident. Ferndean had been uninhabited and unfurnished for long, contrary to the opulence of Thornfield, and to its vivacity when guests were invited. As opposed to that, Ferndean was only occupied by three people, Rochester and two servants. As MacPherson puts it, “What’s left is an unpretentious cottage instead of a gothic mansion with galloping aristocrats” (116).

The descriptions ‘say sky’, ‘cold gale’, and ‘penetrating rain’, contribute to create a gloomy tone. Moreover, the manor is in such a remote place that it is difficult for anyone to have access to it. The carriage cannot continue travelling along that path, and Jane has to continue by foot. In addition, she has to cross two barriers, first iron gates and lastly a portal. These barriers allude to the prison that Ferndean supposes to Rochester, making it a desolate spot where no one could even find happiness.

3.5. Relationship of Rochester with Ferndean

Ferndean mirrors Rochester’s psychological state after the fire. He has poor physical and mental health. He has lost everything that was important for him, his house, his status, and Jane. Rochester does not care how ‘unhealthy’ the house may be, as he is now a crippled and blind man, he expects Ferndean to be his final resting place. He has lost everything he loves, along with his material possessions and his self-sufficiency, thus, his life is not worth living anymore. As Leeves claims “his self-exile to this ‘unhealthy’ place is supposed to be his final resting place” which “demonstrates Rochester’s intension to imprison himself to this house until he dies an early death”.

Moreover, Leeves argues that “his decision to move to Ferndean after the destruction of Thornfield is not merely his last resort, but a type of self-punishment.” It is in Ferndean where he is conscious of all the crimes and sins that he has committed throughout his life, and he starts praying for forgiveness. Rochester is in the lowest point of his life; thus, he thinks he deserves no more than living isolated in a desolated place. The house is in

decadence, as no one had lived there for a long time. Rochester's body resembles that kind of deterioration, as he was injured in the fire, losing a hand and his sight.

Nonetheless, Ferndean's perception changes after Jane arrives. Ferndean does not only represent the current state of the hero, but it also depicts the possibility of a happy ending and the start of a new life. Rochester's only love came back for him, and he feels hopeful again. When they are together, the fields seem cheerful, the flowers refreshed and the sky sparkling blue. This implies that while they stay together, happiness and beauty can be found even in the most remote place. At the end of the novel, they get married and have a child. After some years, Rochester even recovers the sight in one eye. Thus, although Ferndean was at the beginning a representation of the desperation of the hero, it then became a representation of hope and the place where both Jane and Rochester got their happy ending.

4. *Rebecca*

Rebecca is a novel written by the English writer Daphne du Maurier (1907-1989). It was first published in 1938. The novel, written in first person, follows the life of the unnamed narrator, from the moment she meets her future husband, Maxim de Winter. They meet in Monte Carlo and get married few weeks after. They both move to Maxim's estate, Manderley. There, the protagonist acknowledges that Maxim is a reserved man, and the only thing she knows about him is that his wife had recently died. Mrs de Winter feels like a stranger, not knowing how to act in a world that belongs to the high class. Moreover, she is followed by the memory of Maxim's dead wife, Rebecca, being constantly compared with the perfect, attractive wife. Thus, she feels inferior, and she believes that Maxim is still in love with Rebecca. She tries to adapt to that glamorous life, but she is utterly alone, as her husband is always distant. However, everything changes when Rebecca's boat is found near Manderley. Maxim confesses that he killed her as Rebecca had a manipulative and disturbing nature. When he could not tolerate that anymore, he ended her life. An investigation takes place to determine the cause of her death. Maxim is found innocent, and it is determined that Rebecca killed herself. Hence, it seems that Mr and Mrs de Winter can finally be happy without Rebecca's 'ghost' incessantly haunting them. However, when they return home, Manderley is in flames.

4.1. Maxim de Winter

Maxim de Winter is the main male character of the novel *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. Contrary to Mr Rochester, he is present since the beginning of the story. This first time Maxim is introduced, Mrs de Winter describes him thus:

He belonged to a walled city of the fifteenth century [...]. His face was arresting, sensitive, medieval in some strange inexplicable way, and I was reminded of a portrait seen in a gallery, I had forgotten where, of a certain Gentleman Unknown (15).

By providing this description, readers can portray Maxim as someone so extraordinary that he even seemed to belong to a different century. Moreover, the protagonist further adds "he did not belong to the bright landscape, he should be standing on the steps of a

gaunt cathedral” (Du Maurier 42). This passage evokes the sublime, alluding to the bewildering presence of Maxim, elucidating his features as a Gothic villain.

Mr de Winter quickly gets interested in the protagonist, approaching her as if he had some secret interest in mind. The first time they meet, Maxim seems to be a cold and solitary man, a hint that can be deduced from his own surname ‘de Winter’. However, he then appears more human, as the heroine implies “he was not hemmed in by the shadows” (26). His appearance and personality are irresistible to the protagonist, who will soon fall madly in love with him. Although the protagonist has already idealised Maxim, there are some instances where she doubts his sanity. She mentions, “perhaps he was not normal, not altogether sane” (31).

Maxim asks the heroine to marry him, as she does not want to move to a different city, away from him. The proposal is rather cold and harsh, and he never mentions anything about being in love. Maxim says, “instead of being companion to Mrs Van Hopper you become mine, and your duties will be almost exactly the same” (59). Thus, since the beginning of their relationship, Maxim suggests that he will not treat the protagonist as his wife. She will be a companion, and not an equal partner to him. Moreover, when Mr Van Hopper is informed about the marriage, she states:

You know why he is marrying you, don't you? You haven't flattered yourself he's in love with you? The fact is that empty house got on his nerves to such an extent he nearly went off his head. [...] He just can't go on living there alone... (67).

Thus, Maxim is looking for an ‘angel in the house’, the same that occurred when Rochester first proposed to Jane. Both Maxim and Rochester were looking for a new wife in order to forget their previous traumatic marriage. They did not get any heirs or a happy life with their first marriage, so they influence a young and naive girl, who has nowhere else to go, to marry them. Hence, they can finally achieve the life that was determined for them. In addition, after their marriage the protagonist is always referred in the novel as ‘Mrs de Winter’. As Beauman puts it, her identity “is to be determined by her husband” (14). Implying that the protagonist is no one apart from her husband and making reference once more, to the huge influence he has upon her.

When Mrs de Winter moves to Manderley, she feels like a stranger in her own home. According to Lombart, Mrs de Winter experiences an alienation “not only from the

upper-class, male-dominated world that Manderley represents, in which she does not fit, but also from the world of adult femininity and sexuality, of which she remains ignorant” (13). However, her husband, instead of worrying about her, only worries about Manderley. In his selfishness, he just accomplishes his role as a proprietor, but not as a husband. Moreover, Mrs de Winter is tormented by the ghostly presence of Rebecca in the house, a similar presence to the one Jane encountered in *Thornfield*.

The most important legacy of the *Jane Eyre* plot is [...] the structural division of ‘woman’ into the good, passionate, but innocent new girl and the evil, dangerous first wife. The point that needs to be emphasized though is that this splitting of woman means that it is the man who remains at the narrative centre. (Chow 146)

Following this statement, the similarities between these two novels are evident. Both Rochester and Maxim hide a secret that torments them regarding their first wives. This secret and their tragic past lead them to act in a reserved manner. According to Maxim’s sister, Beatrice, he is “very quiet, very reserved” (Du Maurier 110) Whereas it is mentioned that before the death of his wife, “he was always laughing and gay” (190). Thus, his past made him change, and he is not as happy as he used to be even if he has a new wife.

Furthermore, Maxim sometimes acts like a father instead of a husband towards the heroine.

A husband is not so very different from a father after all. There is a certain type of knowledge I prefer you not to have. It’s better kept under lock and key. So that’s that. And now eat up your peaches, and don’t ask me anymore questions, or I shall put you in the corner (225).

By using this paternalistic attitude, Maxim is assuring his position as the dominant one in the relationship. He made Mrs de Winter feel safe, as a father would do, so she is easier to manipulate. Moreover, in this fragment, Maxim shows certain anxiety over his wife’s desire for knowledge. It is better if women do not know certain things as “the curiosity of women – as we know from the stories of Pandora, Eve, Psyche, and Lot’s wife, among others – has given rise to misery, evil, and grief.” (Tatar 3).

Mr and Mrs de Winter relationship completely changes after Maxim confesses his sin. Rebecca’s death was not an accident, he had killed her. From this moment, the readers’ perception towards Maxim is altered. He is not a desperate man who is grieving his wife’s

death anymore, he is a killer. Nevertheless, for the protagonist this confession does not seem to be a problem, it is a relief. In *Jane Eyre*, the acknowledgement of Bertha's existence separates the protagonists. Whereas in *Rebecca*, the revelation brings the protagonist closer together than ever. From this moment, Maxim commences to depend on his wife, as they both share a fatal secret. Now, it is Mrs de Winter who acts as a motherly figure, and Maxim becomes the child. He showed her his vulnerable side, which had been hidden before, and she is willing to protect that.

Although Maxim is a killer, and some of his closest friends suspect that, they still try to protect him. Maxim is still perceived as the victim. He mentions the several reasons he had for committing the murder. But Rebecca's "only real crime was in insisting on her right to individuality" (Nigro 153). What probably bothered Maxim the most was that she seemed to have more authority over Manderley than him. According to Horner and Zlosnik, "Rebecca signifies both femininity and masculinity" (211). Rebecca embodied all the features that the ideal patriarch could not tolerate. She was promiscuous, she could not give Maxim an heir and, above all, she was trying to feminize the estate, thus challenging the patriarchal order (Llombart 18). Maxim could not tolerate that a woman tried to take his place, so he killed her.

4.2. Manderley

In *Rebecca*, as in most Gothic novels, the setting has an essential role for the development of the plot. Thus, Manderley is as important as the rest of the characters for the story. The story of *Rebecca* is told as a flashback, where the protagonist recounts her memories of her life in Manderley. However, the first chapters are set on the present. Manderley appears as a dream vision, buried in wild vegetation, which helps to depict a fairy-tale tone. It is described as "a desolate shell, soulless at last, unhaunted, with no whisper of the past about its staring walls" (Du Maurier 4). The house is secluded, inhabited, a place where they cannot return. It is represented as a lost paradise, where they had been expelled from it in order to pay for their crimes.

Then, the narration begins. Every mention of Manderley alludes to its beauty and magnificence. For instance, "I'm told it's like fairyland" (15), thus connecting the place

with the mythical and the supernatural. Moreover, as well as Thornfield, Manderley is isolated, and difficult to access. It is supposed to be located somewhere in Cornwall, but the exact setting remains vague. When the protagonist arrives, the view of the house produces her a big astonishment. She mentions, “a thing of grace and beauty, exquisite and faultless, lovelier even than I had ever dreamed” (73). It can be deduced that everyone has the same amazement when observing Manderley for the first time.

Soon, Manderley manifests the characteristics of one of the most common elements in Gothic fiction, the haunted house. The presence of Mr de Winter’s dead wife seems to be everywhere in the house. In *Jane Eyre*, there was also a supernatural presence in the house. Nevertheless, Bertha was trapped in a locked room in the third story, and not many knew she was there. Whereas in *Rebecca*, this ghostly presence conquers the whole house. Instead of a small room, all the west wing belongs to her although she is dead. Through the windows of the west wing, the sea could be seen. The sea is closely related to Rebecca, as she loved sailing, had her own cottage near the sea and died there. From the east wing rhododendrons can be seen. Rebecca’s presence is also there, as she is associated with the colour red, implying her lust and sensuality.

According to Brazzelli “Manderley is the family seat of the de Winters, yet it is Rebecca who really possesses it” (145). Her presence haunts Manderley, and although she has been dead for a year, the house is taken care of in the same manner as when she was alive. Thus, “Manderley has become the expression of the absence and, at the same time, of the presence of Rebecca, bearing in its rooms and gardens the footprints of its first mistress” (Brazzelli 150). However, the new Mrs de Winter is obliged to live in the east wing, a place which has never been occupied before. Moreover, it is implied that it is inferior to the west wing. Thus, the house is ruled by the dead, as Mrs Danvers will always be faithful to Rebecca and not to the new Mrs de Winter. Accordingly, everything in the house is as Rebecca left it, everything still belongs to her and there is not a place for a new mistress. ‘Rebecca’s chair, Rebecca’s cushion, Rebecca’s desk’, her presence is everywhere, and her influence is still the same as when she was alive.

In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha’s room is terrifying, in complete darkness, located in the most remote area of Thornfield. However, Rebecca’s room is the most beautiful of the house. According to Mrs Danvers, she can feel her presence “in the morning-room, in the hall,

even in the little flower-room. I feel her everywhere” (Du Maurier 194). However, although Bertha was not dead, her presence was not so evident. It was only when she laughed, or when she caused incidents in her room that Jane could deduce that there was a strange creature at Thornfield. Mrs de Winter acknowledges Rebecca’s presence too. She concludes “Rebecca was still mistress of Manderley. Rebecca was still Mrs de Winter” (261). Thus, she assumes the victory of the dead over the living.

When Maxim is found innocent for Rebecca’s murder, the heroine gains a bit of confidence. “The peace of Manderley could not be broken or the loveliness destroyed [...] No one would ever hurt Manderley” (401). It seems that finally they can start living a truly happy life. But Rebecca’s ghost will haunt them until the end. Manderley is destroyed by a fire, probably provoked by Mrs Danvers. Manderley’s suffers the same outcome as Thornfield. However, Rochester and Jane could get their happy ending, contrary to Mr and Mrs de Winter, as the dark memories from the past will continue haunting them for years.

4.3. Relationship of Mr de Winter with Manderley

It is implied since the beginning of the novel, that a considerable part of Maxim’s identity derives from being the owner of Manderley. Mrs Van Hoper introduces him as “Max de Winter, the man who owns Manderley” (11). Thus, suggesting that Maxim and Manderley cannot be seen as two separate entities, as one gives purpose to the other. It is also mentioned that the house has been in his family’s possession for generations, a place of pride and honour that has even been visited by the royalty. Accordingly, being the proprietor of Manderley is an honour for him, as it provides him a certain status in society. As Kelsall states “for centuries the country house has been the dominant source of power both in the local community and in the state; the goal for the upwardly mobile; the place of leisured retreat for the successful” (303).

Maxim seems to have a dark secret, something related with Manderley that he cannot tell anyone about. Trying to escape from that, he travels to Monte Carlo. At the beginning of the story, it seems that he cannot confront the loss of his dead wife. However, it is later discovered that what he was trying to hide was a crime. The same happened with

Rochester, he ran away to Europe, trying to forget his insane wife who was hidden in Thornfield. Thus, both Maxim and Rochester hide their sins between the walls of their respective manors.

When Maxim proposed to the protagonist, it is difficult to believe that he was in love, as he never mentions it himself. His first marriage “signally fails to deliver happy heterosexual romance with its conventional promise of domesticity and procreation” (Brazzelli 146). Rebecca never fulfilled the stereotype of the perfect wife that Maxim had imagined for Manderley. She was constantly travelling, having affairs and she could not give Maxim an heir to inherit Manderley. Therefore, Maxim saw the heroine as the perfect mistress for Manderley. A naive, innocent, and submissive young girl that he could control as he wished to. Rochester also saw in Jane the opportunity to fix his past mistakes. He tricked and used her, so he could finally portray the perfect image of Thornfield that he imagined. Rochester and Maxim’s first marriages failed, Bertha and Rebecca were not adequate for the grandeur of their mansions. Thus, they trick their second wives. They do not consider their feelings, just the status they will acquire as the owners of an estate.

Contrary to Rochester, who saw Thornfield with disgust and rage, Maxim still loves his manor. The traumatic events that occurred there do not diminish his high regard towards Manderley. When the married couple arrive to Manderley, the protagonist observes that Maxim was “careless and at ease, and the little smile on his lips which meant he was happy to be coming home” (Du Maurier 71). According to Goodspeed “Maxim has the strength to continue to love Manderley, to live there, to bring his new wife in those rooms, and even to keep Mrs. Danvers, who continues to run the house as if nothing changed” (5).

As the story progresses, it is evident that Maxim does not have complete control over his house. It was Rebecca who managed everything when she was alive, and now that task had been handed over to Mrs Danvers. The latter affirms “when the late Mrs de Winter was alive; there was a lot of entertaining then, a lot of parties [...] she liked to supervise things herself” (Du Maurier 82). In *Jane Eyre*, the guests wanted to be in Rochester’s presence, as he was charismatic and the soul of all the social gatherings that happened in Thornfield. But in *Rebecca*, it is Maxim’s first wife the one that guests love, everyone

enjoys her presence and want to be around her. As specified by Michael Kimmel, being a man is not the same as being in a powerful position within patriarchy (24). Rebecca has control over the most precious possession for Maxim, thus having some kind of control over him. Rebecca was also the responsible of ‘the Manderley ball’, a big party that made Manderley even more famous than it was. However, Maxim did not participate in the organisation of that big event, mostly Rebecca was in charge. Furthermore, although Rebecca has been dead for a year, Maxim still does not use the west wing, which belonged to her. Although Manderley is Maxim’s property, Rebecca still governs over it.

When Maxim confesses his crime to Mrs de Winter, the control that Rebecca had over him is evident. Rebecca promised to run Manderley, and “make it the most famous show-place in all the country” (Du Maurier 305). Maxim hated her, but still he accepts, because Manderley is the most precious thing he has. Rebecca knew that Maxim would sacrifice anything for Manderley and to maintain his own honour. He says “I thought about Manderley too much [...]. I put Manderley first, before anything else” (306). Moreover, he mentions “I accepted everything – because of Manderley. What she did in London did not touch me – because it did not hurt Manderley” (308). Maxim did not care about Rebecca being adulterous, as long as it did not affect his reputation or his estate. Hence, Maxim’s real sin comes from venerating his honour above anything else. Notwithstanding, it is when Rebecca tries to have affairs with those near Manderley that Maxim decides to kill her. He prefers to murder her, rather than going through the humiliation of a divorce.

As it has been previously stated, when Rebecca’s boat is found, Maxim’s personality changes. He starts acting like a child, and Mrs de Winter is the ‘mother’ who must protect him. Maxim acts as his true self when he realises that he is going to lose what he had spent his whole life trying to protect, Manderley. Thus, it is implied that “Maxim is wearing a mask of respectability, as a means to fulfil the model of patriarchal masculinity that is imposed on him, and to hide his crime” (Llompat 33). Llompat also states: “Maxim is, underneath the surface, an immature, incompetent ‘boy’, who is forced by the system to become a father figure to protect his estate and those around him” (34). Mr de Winter must act as a respectable landowner and adjust to certain stereotypes that he was supposed to fulfil as the lord of his house. He is forced to become the perfect proprietor to protect his estate and the ones he loved. However, he is not able to accomplish these impositions,

and the 'mask' he was wearing finally falls, revealing an 'imperfect' and 'unmanly' villain.

Nonetheless, according to Brazzelli "the role of the villain in Rebecca is played by the haunting presence of an old-fashioned, strict patriarchal system" (146). Maxim fails to fulfil his role as Manderley's landowner. He is unable to control his house, delegating most of his tasks to Rebecca or Mrs Danvers. Moreover, he also exposes his weakness and dependence when he feared that his crime may be discovered. Thence, not adjusting to the powerful male figure that the owner of a marvellous state like Manderley should be. Furthermore, Rebecca does not fit into the figure of the 'angel in the house'. She is not the perfect and obedient mistress that Maxim wished for his manor. She fought for her individuality and even tried to feminize the patriarchal estate that Manderley was.

Manderley was a part of Maxim, and he was a part of his estate. Thus, when Manderley is burnt to the ground, Maxim loses part of his identity and becomes a 'ghostly figure', someone that wanders with no specific purpose. As Light argues "if identity is attached to places and places are vulnerable locations in time, identity itself is potentially unstable, always in danger of being uprooted and of needing to be re-housed" (188). When Manderley is burnt down, Mr and Mrs de Winter are forced to go into a kind of exile. In the first chapters of the novel, it is implied that they never found a new place for themselves, they still do not have a place to call home. They have been expelled from the 'paradise' that Manderley represented, and they will never find a place that will satisfy them. They are consumed with the desire of going back, of living earlier and happier times. "This nostalgia and the constant need to return to what is familiar and reassuring show how the characters can never actually break away from the world that Manderley stands for" (Brazzelli 155). Therefore, although Manderley has disappeared, the patriarchal power, the social duties, and the structures that it represented still remain.

5. Conclusion

Brontë and Du Maurier each shaped what is known as the Female Gothic: “a sub-category of dark romance novels with elements of horror, written exclusively by female authors with females at the centre of the drama” (Haddad 2). Although *Rebecca* and *Jane Eyre* were published almost a century apart, these novels share many themes, and even the setting and the characters are similar. As Yardley implies, “it is no exaggeration to say that Du Maurier was the twentieth century’s Charlotte Brontë and *Rebecca* the twentieth century’s *Jane Eyre*”. Presumably, the most significant similarities between these two novels are the personality of the masculine characters and how they observe and relate with their manors.

Maxim and Rochester’s circumstances and motivations are similar. Their first wives died or disappeared in mysterious circumstances. The failure of their first marriage makes them become isolated and afraid of loving again. They both blame themselves for the tragic circumstances of their past and they hide a secret that torments them. Thus, they are mysterious, passionate, and attractive characters. Moreover, they are very wealthy, from the high class. What makes Rochester and Maxim distinguished gentlemen is their big properties, Thornfield Hall and Manderley. Their estates are their greatest pride, something they value above everything else and that they are willing to protect, no matter what it may cost.

The evolution of Edward Rochester as a character is clearly represented in the house he inhabits at that precise moment, Thornfield Hall or Ferndean Manor-House. Rochester’s appearance is described as imposing and his personality as incredibly attractive. This is similar to the impression that a first look to Thornfield provokes, something so marvellous and impressive that causes intimidation. Both the owner and his manor are surrounded by a mysterious ambiance, as Rochester uses his mansion to hide his crime, his secrets, and his torturous past. What gives Rochester his status is being the owner of Thornfield, a splendid estate that has belonged to his family for generations. Thus, Rochester’s power is directly related to him being the owner of Thornfield. That power is what makes him believe that he can act as he wishes without consequences, hiding secrets, betraying, and controlling Jane. Accordingly, he would not be who he is without his manor, as being Thornfield’s landlord constitutes an enormous part of his personality.

Nonetheless, Rochester loses his manor and Jane, regarding both of them as possessions that made him a respectable man. He is then crippled and has nothing left. Thence, he lives in Ferndean, a place in decadence and completely isolated. Once more, the house mirrors the physical and psychological state of its owner.

Maxim de Winter's personality is passionate and dark, he astonishes every person he speaks to. Manderley bewitches and captivates its visitors, while causing a degree of uneasiness at the same time. Once more, both Manderley and Maxim share a secret, as only Maxim knows about the dreadful time he shared there with Rebecca and about the crime he committed. As the owner of Manderley, Maxim has complete dominance over others, especially over his wife. He cherishes and is obsessed with Manderley, doing unethical things in order to maintain his reputation and the beauty of his manor. As it happened to Rochester, Maxim loses his estate at the end of the novel. However, he does not find a replacement as Ferndean. He wanders as a ghost, mourning the destruction of his home, as someone who has lost part of his identity and has nothing left.

Therefore, Rochester and Maxim lose their most precious possession, their manors. They have lost part of their identity, and they now depend on their wives. Rochester is severely injured from the fire. And despite of Jane's pursuit for independence throughout the novel, she finally fulfils the patriarchal expectations of women, staying in the house, taking care of her husband, and having children. In Maxim's case, it is after he confesses his crime that his wife must take care of him, as he is depicted as a helpless child. This is even more evident after the destruction of Manderley, as Maxim loses all the purpose he had in his life. Thus, Rochester and Maxim, who had been previously described as powerful patriarchal figures, both become the dependent part of the relationship after their manor is gone.

Taking all this discussion into consideration, *Rebecca* can be considered a modernised version of *Jane Eyre*. As both Rochester and Maxim are proud proprietors, who dedicated their whole life to the flourishment of their estates. Their secrets, opulence and power are all present in their manors. Therefore, their mansions represent a big part of their personality, in the same manner that the characteristics of the owners are reflected in their own houses.

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