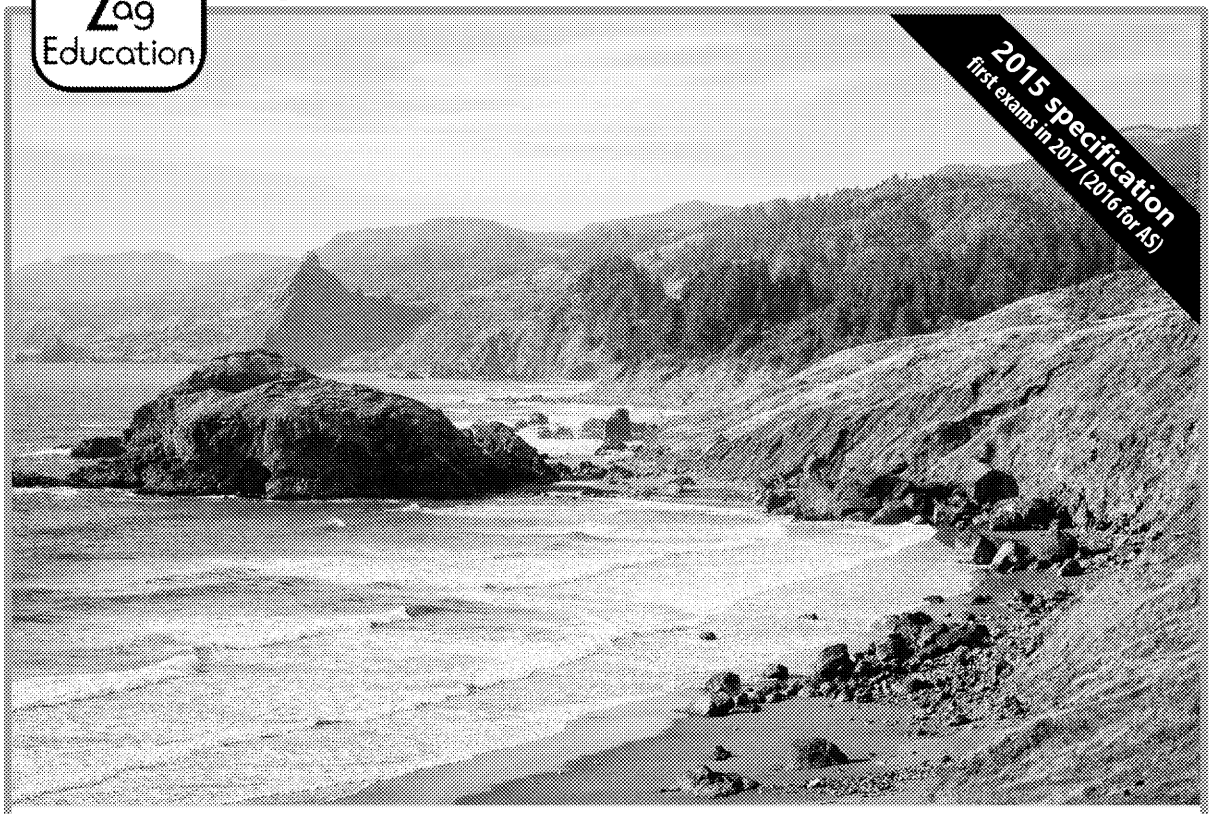
Zig Zag Education

English AS and A Level | AQA A | 7711/7712



Rebecca

Comprehensive Guide

for AS and A Level AQA A English Literature

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POD 7969

Contents

Teacher's Introduction

This ZigZag Education resource is intended as a comprehensive guide for the AS a
Daphne Du Maurier, and as such is designed for teachers and students working t
Literature. The resource will provide an analysis of the text, with plot summaries
understanding of the characters and main themes of the novel. Also included, di
are activities and discussion topics for group work, as well as directions for furthe
revision.

How to use this study guide

This resource is intended to support the classroom study of *Rebecca* at AS and A L
key themes, characterisation and relationships between characters are included o
and students are also presented with activities relating to the text in its entirety.

Activities for students include close reading for textual analysis, further reading s
the novel's historical context, and practice essay and exam questions comparing t
specification's 'Love through the ages' component.

Please note, that students will be comparing this text with poetry, either pre or p

The novel *Rebecca* contains potentially upsetting content, particularly on the dis
from the novel in this resource have not been censored. *These occur in Chapters 1*

This resource is cross-referenced to the following textbooks: Daphne Du Maurier
(ISBN 1-84408-038-2). ZigZag Education is not affiliated with Virago in any way n
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publication.

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Assessment Objectives

The Assessment Objectives set by *Ofqual* apply to all AS and A Level English Liter
by all exam boards. Exams and class assessments will determine how successfull
following AOs:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, u
terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the co
written and received.

AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Table 1: Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS English Literature A: 'Paper 2'

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx. %) Paper 2: *[Love through the ages: Prose]*	Ove
AO1	14	
AO2	12	
AO3	12	
AO4	6	
AO5	6	
Overall weighting	**50**	

Table 2: Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level English Literature A: 'Pap

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx. %) Paper 2: *[Love through the ages: Prose]*	Ove
AO1	11.2	
AO2	9.6	
AO3	9.6	
AO4	4.8	
AO5	4.8	
Overall weighting	**40**	

Table 3: Assessment Objectives coverage in resource

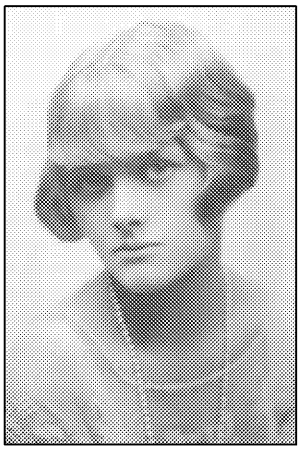
Key Features	AO1	AO2	AO3
Chapter analysis	✓	✓	
Main characters	✓	✓	
Themes	✓		
Character relationships	✓		
Linguistic and literary techniques		✓	
Genre			✓
Background on text			✓
Context			✓
Critical reception			
Literary approaches			

General Learning Aims For Students

This section is included to inform teachers of the aims of the learning resource.

- To aid creative academic responses to literary texts, and develop knowledge
- To analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts through lang
- To understand the importance of historical and cultural contexts to the crea
  in the responses to texts by readers over time
- To explore constructive comparisons between literary texts and how they rela

Background on the Tex



About Daphne Du Maurier

Daphne Du Maurier was born into an affluent artistic f the daughter of actor and impresario Gerald Du Maurier, and the granddaughter of the artist and writer George Du Maurier. Much of her early writing took place at the family's holiday home in Cornwall, where Du Maurier found a perfect environment for he creativity and a setting for much of her writing. Although classified by contemporary critics as a Romantic novelist, Du Maurier principally wrote dark, Gothic narratives characterised by suspense and psyc

Rebecca

Rebecca was Du Maurier's fifth novel, published in 1938. She commenced work o husband, Frederick Browning, who was stationed there as a Commanding Officer i the Grenadier Guards. The story' setting is based on Cornwall, and the house 'Manderley' partly drawn from Du Maurier's knowledge of 'Menabilly', a country house that she and her husband would later lease for many years. *Rebecca* is a Gothic romance with familiar elements such as the innocent heroine, the tormented hero, the property 'haunted' by a former resident, and madness in the shape of the also be sub-categorised as an exa of literature whose inspiration ca the Brontë sisters. The novel was film of the same name in 1940 by Olivier and Joan Fontaine in the l

Preparation for reading:

In addition to bibliographical details, the website devoted to Daphne Du Maurier contains a number of links to interesting facts, family history, book and play reviews and a forum for topical discussions relevant to the writer. Read through the content at -

- http://www.dumaurier.org/

Some informative articles on Daphne Du Maurier can also be found amongst the British Library's Literature resources on the author at:

- https://www.bl.uk/people/daphne-du-maurier

Additionally, some background reading on the novel Rebecca can be found at:

- https://www.bl.uk/works/rebecca

Go to **zzed.uk/7969**

Later life

Daphne Du Maurier had three children with Lieut. General Frederick Browning. In 1969, she was honoured as Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and became Lady Browning: Dame Daphne Du Maurier DBE. She died at her Cornwall home, scene of much of her fiction, in 1989. After her death claims were made about her bisexuality in a biography.[1] She was romantically linked to two women, including actress Gertrude Lawrence, and this is also suggested by the BBC biopic *Daphne* (2007).

Background reading:

The following studies give detailed overviews of Gothic fiction.

- Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Columbia Univ
- Catherine Spooner & Emma McEvoy (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Gothic* (Nev

1 Margaret Forster, Daphne Du Maurier: The Secret Life of the Renowned Storyteller (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993).

Critical Reception

***Note**: The following section is included to illustrate the AQA Assessm
exploring how literary texts may be informed by different interpretat*

Rebecca has received differing receptions since its publication. Initially it was vie
storytelling but limited literary value that would capture the public's imagination
Supplement, R D Charques described it as a novelette – 'a lowbrow story with a r
publication in 1938.[2] Novelist and critic V S Pritchett, writing in the *Christian Scie*
1938), assessed the work thus: 'From the first sinister rumors to the final conflag
excellent'. However, he also suggested that the public's interest in *Rebecca* wou

In recent years, a critical reassessment of *Rebecca* has been evident. Spooner and
Maurier created an intense psychological drama that was a breakthrough at the ti
literature.[4] Jonathan Yardley, writing in *The Washington Post*, argues for the nove
'that Du Maurier was the 20th century's Charlotte Brontë and "Rebecca" the 20th

> It is tempting to pigeonhole "Rebecca" as "Jane Lite," but that simply is not true. If it hasn't quite the depth, if at times it lapses into conventions of the Gothic novel or the English mystery novel, "Rebecca" is nonetheless a work of immense intelligence and wit, elegantly written, thematically solid, suspenseful even a second time around.[5]

What can certainly be said of *Rebecca* is that in its combination of Gothic romance, psychological drama and crime fiction, it represents a development within the canon of Gothic fiction, and one that has proven popular since the novel's publication in 1938.

2 TLS: Then and Now, 1938 < http://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/then-and-now-1938-2/> 3rd October, 2016.

3 V S Pritchett, 'Daphne Du Maurier Writes A Victorian Thriller – A London Letter'. Christian Science Monitor, 14th September 1938, p. W

4 Catherine Spooner & Emma McEvoy (eds), The Routledge Companion to Gothic (New York: Routledge Press, 2007), pp. 30–31.

5 Jonathan Yardley, 'Du Maurier's "Rebecca," A Worthy "Eyre" Apparent', The Washington Post (online) <http://www.washingtonpost
7th October 2016.

Feminist literary criticism

Feminism is concerned with advancing women's political, social, educational and
Feminist theory seeks to offer a critique of these issues in relation to literary and
lends itself to an interpretation from a feminist perspective on social and sexual
revealed in the narrator's relationship with the aristocratic Maxim at Manderley,
and in her feelings of cultural and sexual inferiority to Maxim's first wife Rebecca
The question of Rebecca's infidelity and subsequent murder as justifiable punishment also lends itself to a feminist critique of the boundaries of female behaviour expected or permitted in a patriarchal society.

The use of feminist theory as an interpretive aid for *Rebecca* will be discussed further in the 'Literary Approaches' section of the whole-text analysis.

Background reading:

The following studies give detailed overviews of Gothic fiction.

- Pamela Kester-Shelton (ed), *Feminist Writers* (London: St. James Press,
- Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Wo*
  Windus, 1990).
- Virginia Woolf, *A Room Of One's Own* (London: Hogarth, 1929).

Psychoanalytic literary criticism

Rebecca can also lend itself to a reading in terms of psychoanalytic literary critici
applied initially by Sigmund Freud to his patients' transcripts of their dreams can
underlying motivations of the author or to analyse the narrative content. Regarding the latter, *Rebecca* can be interpreted as a feminine family romance with the female protagonist acting out a Freudian Electra complex. Under this schema, the narrator is the female child falling in love with the father figure (Maxim) and wishing to 'destroy' the mother figure. It can be argued that in *Rebecca* this antipathy to the mother figure has three separate stages: the narrator's leaving Mrs Van Hopper, her psychological battle with Mrs Danvers and also with Rebecca or Rebecca's ghost.

Further reading:

Detailed background on Freud's theories can be accessed at:

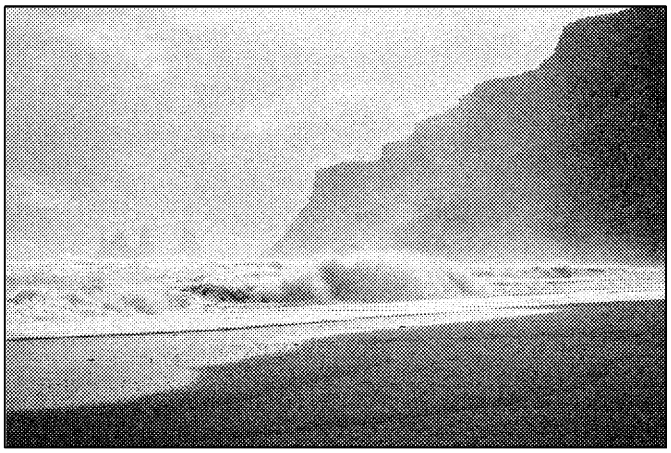
- http://www.freudfile.org/theory.html
- M H Abrams (ed), *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Col
  pp. 247–253.

Plot Summary

Rebecca begins with the description of the narrator's dream of returning to her former house Manderley, which is now 'an empty shell' (p. 3). The narrator is living what seems an unsatisfying existence, a type of self-imposed exile on a Mediterranean island with her husband Maxim de Winter. While they are free to travel, the narrator dearly misses England and the life she had at Manderley, with the exception of the housekeeper, Mrs Danvers, who has treated her with hostility. Her story takes the form of a flashback, and she begins by recounting how she first met Maxim in Monte Carlo.

The narrator is the youthful and socially awkward travelling companion of a well-
woman named Mrs Van Hopper. Maxim comes to stay at her hotel, and as an in
insistence on making his acquaintance, the two begin to spend time together ov
the narrator a book of poetry with an inscription from a woman called Rebecca, a
handwriting stirs the young woman's curiosity. The narrator reveals that Maxim
off a bay near the estate. By now, she is in love with Maxim, despite his detache
proposes marriage, and they marry in France and honeymoon in Italy before retu

The narrator experiences a sense of foreboding as Maxim drives them into the gr
sinister Mrs Danvers is housekeeper, and her appearance and manner unnerve t
agent Frank Crawley, sister Beatrice and her husband Giles come to Manderley t
Winter, and she finds them sympathetic. However, Rebecca's spirit is kept alive b
Danvers' devotion to her former mistress. After the visit, Maxim and his new wif



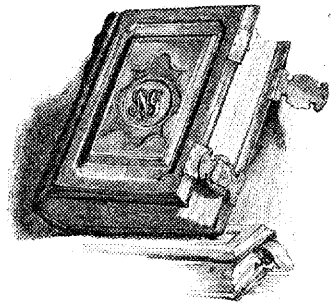
through the grounds a
beaches. The dog lead
boathouse, but this an
upsetting and confusin
that his bad memories
face being there. The
drowned in an acciden
identified Rebecca's bo
discovered forty miles
moodiness on the subj
Frank Crawley tells her
Rebecca was, the narra
live up to her predeces

The narrator struggles with the social and administrative requirements involved i
in tandem with Maxim's distant behaviour, heighten her feelings of inadequacy.
explores Manderley's West Wing and Mrs Danvers arrives and offers to show he
been preserved in Rebecca's memory with her belongings intact. Mrs Danvers' d
and she recounts the night of her mistress's death to the narrator, emphasising M
When a guest suggests that Maxim and his new wife revive a traditional fancy dr
county's residents, the narrator is both nervous and excited at the prospect. Ho
for a visit by Rebecca's disreputable cousin Jack Favell to Manderley having been
advises her to unknowingly wear a dress previously worn by Rebecca at her final
which belonged to an ancestor of Maxim, will impress her guests, the narrator ke
and the others present are horrified when she appears in the dress, and Maxim's
convinced that he cannot love her. Beatrice insists that Maxim will forgive her, a
rejoins the newly arrived guests. However, Maxim's aloofness at the party and s
marriage bed leads her to believe that the marriage is effectively over.

The following day, Mrs Danvers attempts to drive the narrator to jump to her de
An alert concerning a grounded ship interrupts matters. When divers investigate
Rebecca's sailboat with her decomposed body in the hold. Maxim is forced to re
devious nature to his wife. On the night of her death at the boathouse, Rebecca'
affair with her cousin Favell – had led Maxim to demand a divorce; she responde
threatening Maxim with an illegitimate heir. Maxim had shot her dead in anger,
boat, sailing it out to the harbour, and sinking both boat and corpse.

Maxim's stated hatred of Rebecca restores the narrator's commitment to him, a
Manderley. However, the inquest into the death threatens their happiness. Sup
convinces the local magistrate, Colonel Julyan, that he originally identified anoth
grief and mental confusion. However, at the inquest the boatbuilder, Tabb, state
revealed that holes were drilled in the bottom of Rebecca's boat. Despite this ar
Rebecca's nautical experience, the eventual verdict is one of suicide.

That evening, Maxim and Frank bury Rebecca's remains in the crypt. Jack Favell
accuse Maxim of Rebecca's murder and to blackmail him. He produces a letter f
her at the boathouse on the night she died as she has important news for him, a
According to Favell, Rebecca's letter confirms their affair and makes evident Max
Colonel Julyan is called to investigate and Mrs Danvers is summoned at Favell's r
Rebecca loved and intended to marry him, an assertion that the housekeeper re
also adamant that Rebecca would never have committed suicide.



Mrs Danvers retrieves Rebecca's diary and with Fra
Rebecca went to London to see a Doctor Baker on
Maxim and Julyan travel to London the next day, w
narrator fears that the visit will confirm Rebecca's
motive for murder, but instead the doctor reveals
pseudonym 'Danvers') was diagnosed with termina
claim to be pregnant was a lie, apparently to provo
of her cancer provides a reason for her suicide.

Maxim and his wife drive back to Manderley, stopping for a meal en route. Max
relief at the news about Rebecca, mentions that Mrs Danvers has apparently dep
Maxim's suspicions are aroused about the housekeeper's intentions, and they cu
the drive home. As they reach the crest of a hill near Manderley, they see a red
narrator assumes is early sunrise. However, what they are witnessing is actually

Character Summary

The Narrator (Mrs de Winter)

The novel's protagonist and narrator who, bar the surname conferred upon her b throughout. In middle age, she thinks back on her younger self: a socially awkwar woman in her early twenties who is prone to daydreaming and self-doubt, and wh ultimately seeks her own validation in a man's love. At the outset of her story in Monte Carlo she is the paid companion of the American Mrs Van Hopper. While there she meets Maxim de Winter and becomes his wife and mistress of Manderl

Maxim de Winter

De Winter is an English estate owner who is in his mid-forties when he meets the He is a commanding if enigmatic figure whose attention brings the narrator out o When he meets the narrator he has recently lost his beautiful wife, Rebecca, sup drowning accident. However, the truth is that he shot her dead himself.

Rebecca

When alive, Rebecca was the outwardly respectable and widely loved wife of Ma Winter who lived a dissolute double life while in London. After her death her pre haunts Manderley like a ghost, until her decomposed body is discovered and laid albeit briefly, in the estate's crypt.

Mrs Danvers

Mrs Danvers is Manderley's sinister, spiteful and mentally unstable housekeeper her obsessive loyalty to Rebecca's memory leads her to try to undermine Maxim unsuccessfully goad the second Mrs de Winter into attempting suicide. There is behind the burning of Manderley at the story's end, possibly with assistance fro

Frank Crawley

Maxim's estate manager is loyal to his employer and sympathetic to the narrator than the others that she meets at Manderley. He also seems to the narrator to h relationship between Maxim and Rebecca, and may even suspect that Rebecca's proves a valuable assistant in solving the mystery of Rebecca's health at the end about Mrs Danvers' flight from Manderley.

Beatrice Lacy

Maxim's candid and down-to-earth sister who is passionate about country life an Beatrice can be overbearing, and despite her affection for Beatrice, the narrator Christmas with her in-laws.

Giles Lacy

Giles is Beatrice's amiable if slightly clownish husband who has a love of the fine with Rebecca that estranged the Lacys from Manderley before Rebecca's death.

Jack Favell

Favell is Rebecca's disreputable and drunken cousin who has also had an affair w Favell visits Mrs Danvers at Manderley, as the housekeeper is well disposed towa relationship to her beloved mistress. On returning, Maxim forbids Mrs Danvers f again. His distrust of the man is well justified, as Favell's attempted blackmail at

Ben

Ben is a backward but good-natured man who spends much of his time in the no
Having been threatened by Rebecca with the asylum if he reveals her liaisons at
absence, he is initially confused and distrustful of the second Mrs de Winter. Ho
thinks she is nicer than Rebecca.

Colonel Julyan

Julyan is the local magistrate for the Manderley area who is presented as a pursu
and Rebecca.

Frith

Frith is the butler at Manderley who observes his duties to the letter.

Jasper

Jasper is the younger of Maxim's two dogs. The narrator spends a lot of time wit
to a friend that she has during most of her time at Manderley.

Mrs Van Hopper

Mrs Van Hopper is a wealthy but vulgar and slovenly American woman who love
her friends and gossip about their business. The narrator is employed as her com
the resorts of Europe. Mrs Van Hopper has little sympathy or apparent interest i
becomes engaged to Maxim. Mrs Van Hopper makes clear her opinion that the n
that Maxim only seeks to relieve his loneliness.

***Note**: The following sections on chapter analyses will include the relevant A in brackets beside the title of the textual elements analysed. Where applic Assessment Objective is specified in brackets for the textual elements unde*

Chapter One

Summary

In the first chapter the narrator remembers a previous night's dream of her former home Manderley. She imagines herself a spirit able to move past the padlocked gate and into the estate. As she makes her way down the long winding drive she dreams that it is overrun with trees, plants and shrubbery, and grass and moss grow up through its gravel surface. The drive only appears intermittently among all the growth, and she struggles to recognise the natural landmarks she once knew. When she reaches the house it is as she remembers it and not 'an empty shell', except that growth from the garden has overrun the terrace and the paths (p. 3). She dreams of seeing lights from the window and the library still as she left it, with her faithful dog Jasper waiting bro ken and Manderley is revealed to her as a burnt-out ruin. In her dream she remember the house and grounds in its heyday. She reveals that she is in a char with someone, and that she will not talk of her dream or of Manderley as it exist

Theme (AO1)

The dream presents the well-established literary motif of the expulsion of man and woman from Paradise. The sin committed by the narrator is her part in covering up the murder of Rebecca. When she says that 'there would be no resurrection' (p. 4), she is not only referring to Rebecca's death and the destruction of the house, but to her own chance of heaven on earth with her husband at Manderley. She has only the permanence of her memories of the gardens and 'the Happy Valley'.

A related theme established in the first chapter is that of the duality of Nature, its life-enriching and destructive power. The scene of unkempt and unruly natur in the dream, with its detailed description of the menacing woods and untameab revelation later in the novel that the wicked Rebecca was responsible for designi unmanageable just as Rebecca did when she was alive.

Form (AO2)

The narrative is told in the first person, and from halfway through the second chapter, in flashback. The first chapter introduces a narrative that subsequently involves the protagonist looking back at her younger self with the benefit of hindsight. The form of the narrative is circular, in that it presents a type of closure at the start before revealing the main events in the narrator's life that have occurred earlier.

Characterisation (AO1)

The narrator's interpretation of her dream reveals a sensitive and sentimental ch drawn to her past. She seems not to be an impetuous young woman: she is able dreams to herself, and is resolved to live the type of lifestyle expected of someon

> The day would lie before us both, long no doubt, and uneventful, but fraug dear tranquillity we had not known before. We would not talk of Manderle For Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more. (p. 4)

Setting (AO2)

The narrator's dream conjures up a setting that is quintessentially 'Gothic'. Manderley's grand driveway is given a supernatural quality worthy of a horror story.

> The beeches with white, naked limbs leant close to one another, their branches intermingled in a strange embrace, making a vault above my head like the archway of a church. (p. 1)

> The trees had thrown out low branches, making an impediment to progress; the gnarled roots looked like skeleton claws. (p. 2)

The descriptions of the trees carry connotations of both sex and death which perhaps suggest something in a symbolic way about the human relationships that have occurred at Manderley.

The narrator's first vision of an apparently intact Manderley is explained by the effect of moonlight in the dream.

> Moonlight can play odd tricks upon the fancy, even upon the dreamer's fancy. As I stood there, hushed and still, I could swear that the house was not an empty shell but lived and breathed as it had lived before. (p. 3)

Moonlight is a key symbol of supernatural and Gothic fiction, as are large isolated houses, and the opening chapter echoes Jane's dream of a moonlit visit to the ruined Thornfield in *Jane Eyre*.

Class activity

Research and discuss the concept of 'the sublime' in relation to Gothic fic Study the narrator's account of the horror of her dream in light of this co

Language (AO2)

In her description of the narrator's dream of Manderley, Du Maurier makes sustained use of the literary technique of anthropomorphism, by describing nettles as 'the vanguard of the army' 'chok[ing] the terrace' as 'indifferent sentinels' (p. 3). This technique contributes greatly to the powerful illusion of supernatural forces haunting the Manderley estate. The trees by the driveway are endowed with the capacity for purposeful and threatening action 'with long, tenacious fingers'; the narrator is forced to duck to avoid 'the low swinging branch of a tree' and being crowded by trees that had 'thrust themselves out of the quiet earth' (p. 1). However, the technique is also extended to the 'secretive surrounding flora. Du Maurier invites the comparison of the plant life with a def battered and unable to offer protection, has lost its discipline and become unrul

In her dream, however, the narrator initially envisions that Manderley still 'lived a before', and she is sure that the library 'would bear witness to our presence' (p. 3 she understands that the house is only a ruin after all.

Comparative reading
Read Jane's dream of visiting Thornfield in *Jane Eyre*.
What parallels can you find with the first chapter of *Rebecca*?

Chapter Two

Summary

The narrator describes how she and her husband can never return to Manderley b associated with the place. She thinks of her husband, who has clearly been affecte experience and seems to struggle with memory and his emotions. The narrator be freedom, their life together, is the exile they have been apparently forced to unde her life at Manderley, and mentions the housekeeper, Mrs Danvers, who treated h about Manderley grow more negative, and she is relieved to look out on the viney

The narrator then revisits her time as travelling companion to Mrs Van Hopper, w woman of means, a vulgar and greedy gossip-monger in whose company the nar indifference when they travelled overseas. The narrator recalls their time in Mo the arrival of Maxim de Winter.

Theme (AO1) / Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and her husband
In the second chapter we are given some insight into the present relationship be husband, which touches on the theme of 'Love through the ages'.

The narrator's husband seems tense and strained after his time at Manderley, 'los expression dying away' and this mood is reflected in his behaviour as he smokes c extinguish them', a chain-smoking habit indicative of anxiety. As these stubs 'lie a there is a suggestion that he is shedding something of himself, that what is beauti petals) is deteriorating while he masks his emotions, the mask being 'beautiful sti description of her husband's behaviour indicates the narrator's love for him.

The 'irony' she refers to in the concept of 'endur[ing] ordeal by fire' and becomin lies in the contradiction between their present diminished and rather mundane li melodramatic description of their life at Manderley (p. 5). In addition, the coupl when Manderley was burnt down, but this does not seem to have advanced thei narrator also articulates her conception of love as companionship based on trust manageable ups and downs. Hers is essentially an unromantic conception of love

On the face of it, the narrator seems to have found love on her own terms with h she would 'willingly give [her] five senses' to 'ensure [their] present peace and se that 'We have no secrets now from one another' suggests a mutually reliant cou of how she spends her time, however, it is clear that she has to accommodate he life in England, such as cricket, boxing, billiards and dog racing. Topics that remin Manderley are off limits, as his response to her reading out an article on English

> We were saved a retreat into the past, and I had learnt my lesson. Read En sport, politics, and pomposity, but in future keep the things that hurt to m secret indulgence. (p. 7)

Clearly their relationship cannot survive without some secrets, after all. Furthern collecting what seems like minutely detailed information on the English countrys every owner of every British moor, yes – and their tenants too' (p. 7) – the narra homesickness and the unrewarding nature of her life in exile.

The narrator and Mrs Van Hopper

The narrator's reminiscence of her time in Monte Carlo with Mrs Van Hopper pre cartoonish fashion. The narrator's natural shyness aggravates her embarrassme tactless American woman, who lacks any empathy for her young companion. The bejewelled fingers questing a plate heaped high with ravioli, her eyes darting sus for fear I should have made the better choice' (pp. 10–11). The fact that the nar in terms of her social class compounds her awkwardness; but it is the relationshi Van Hopper that makes social situations the more painful. She is not allowed to personality in her role as companion.

> How young and inexperienced I must have seemed, and how I felt it, too. O there were thorns and pin-pricks in so many words that in reality fell lightly on the air. (p. 11)

The narrator's time with Mrs Van Hopper foreshadows the difficulties she will face upon her arrival at Manderley, where she has to adapt to the expectations of a more elevated social circle.

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For
An
ma
hap

Characterisation (AO1)

The narrator's description of her life with her husband is marked by inconsistency, most notably when she claims their relationship to be without secrets while revealing her own secret, almost obsessive interest in English country life and by extension Manderley: their life together has hardly 'saved a retreat into the past' as she claims (p. 7). Her detailed daydreams about afternoon tea and the environs of the estate are tinged with the menace of shadowy areas and rustling leaves 'like the stealthy movement of a woman in evening dress' (p. 9). She returns 'with relief' to the present scene from her hotel room. The reader gains the impression of a woman given to flights of fantasy in waking life to rival her dream in the first chapter.

At this early stage of the novel, Du Maurier presents her narrator as untrustworthy, at least to the degree that her recollections of Manderley seem factual and fanciful in equal measure. Her subsequent description of her own timidity as Mrs Van Hopper's travelling companion perhaps explains her tendency to succumb to her imagination as a character trait.

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Theme (AO1)

Exile

The narrator imagines 'this exile we have brought upon ourselves', which includes t
Mediterranean, as less preferable to the wet English countryside (p. 8). Her daydr
with her new life. In this chapter, however, Manderley appears something less tha
dream in the previous chapter, with mention of the unnerving Mrs Danvers and the
imprint of high heels. In this way, the nature of the couple's exile is kept ambiguou
enforced, expatriation or an escape from punishment or persecution? [6]

Chapter Three

The narrator recalls Mrs Van Hopper's machinations to ensure a meeting with M
She describes her resentment at being obliged to play her part in snaring famous
and her embarrassment at Mrs Van Hopper's tactlessness. However, the narrato
Maxim includes her in their conversation, contrary to the older woman's intentio
of Manderley get a cool response from Maxim. His moody reaction during parts
narrator's curiosity, and she senses a connection to his life at Manderley. Maxim
to join her party the following evening, and pointedly makes fun of her when she
in Mrs Van Hopper's room, while the narrator is sketching a likeness of Maxim, t
which Maxim apologises for his rudeness. She is pleasantly surprised that he has
envelope, and revises her pencil drawing in light of it.

Characterisation (AO1)

Mrs Van Hopper

The narrator's American employer is obsessed with social status and gossip to th
draws the parallel at one point with a 'large, complacent spider' (p. 14) waiting t
however, Mrs Van Hopper, annoying and bossy though she may be, needs to me
invalids are spooned their jelly' (p. 12). She is essentially harmless, reliant on oth
and social standing.

She also seems to live vicariously through the papers and their gossip columns, a
pitied. She has gathered some background on Manderley, including mention of
fog. In their conversation she can only associate Maxim with Manderley and his
of inferring anything deeper about his character from his manner or his barbed r
questions. This differentiates Mrs Van Hopper still more from the reserved narra
Maxim's mood closely during the conversation in his eyes and facial expressions.
emotional intelligence is allied to a comical lack of self-insight, as when she gentl
to monopolize the conversation' (p. 19
sudden departure may be on account
comparing his behaviour to that of a w
before adding: 'However, I was younge
Mrs Van Hopper's few sympathetic mo
than the narrator's caricature of her fo
see Mrs Van Hopper – who is either di
daughter whose scholastic achieveme
nephew who is Maxim's acquaintance
struggling to adapt to the prospect of
acquire important friends for bridge pa
loneliness and insecurity she feels as a

> **Discussion prompt**
> Identify which aspects of Mrs Van Hopper's characterisation are recognisable as caricaturing an American abroad. Can you think of any other characters in books, film or television who share characteristics with her?

6 For a brief overview of 'exile' as a historical motif in literature and of the various possible interpretations of the term 'exile' itself, see S
Poetics of Exile: Traveling to the Land of Intellectual Adventures'. International Journal of Humanities and Management Sciences (IJHM
online:< www.isaet.org/images/extraimages/IJHMS%200101201.pdf> 30th September 2016.

Maxim

Maxim is described by the narrator in terms suggestive of Gothic romance, brood

> His face was arresting, sensitive, medieval in some strange inexplicable way portrait seen in a gallery, I had forgotten where, of a certain Gentleman Un him of his English tweeds, and put him in black, with lace at his throat and at us in our new world from a long-distant past... (p. 15).

The parallel with the 'Gentlemen Unknown' summarises the narrator's appraisal clearly a man of breeding and takes control of the conversation with Mrs Van Ho treating the American woman's prying about Manderley with silent contempt. A closely observed by the narrator and is seemingly related to his life in England. T narrator with some consideration – most notably in his brief letter of apology – h from that suggested by his forbidding exterior. This is why the narrator discards has drawn from her first impression of him.

Theme (AO1)

Social class

There are two aspects of social class evident in this chapter. The first relates to t being forced to play a part in Mrs Van Hopper's scheming and as a virtual maid a is aware that her employer is exploiting her, using her 'as a bait to draw her prey convention prevents her from scuppering Mrs Van Hopper's plans and alerting M meeting. When Mrs Van Hopper and Maxim meet, the American woman intend their conversation, but Maxim insists otherwise. Maxim is certainly an upper-cla cannot assume that he holds English class conventions in disdain. It is rather Mr assumptions about the English nobility that Maxim seems antagonistic towards. topic of conversation, photos of her family in Florida, establishes his allegiance t treats Mrs Van Hopper's assumptions about the English gentry and ignorance of when she assumes that his ancestors frequently entertained royalty at Manderle

> ... the swift lash of his reply was unexpected. 'Not since Ethelred,' he said, ' Unready. In fact, it was while staying with my family that the name was gi late for dinner.' (p. 16)

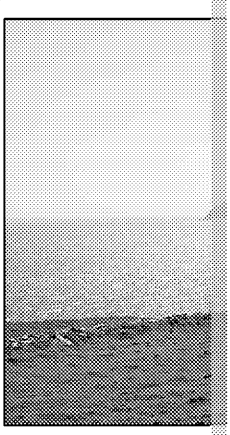
Mrs Van Hopper has no idea that she is the butt of Maxim's joke, as when he late be rid of her. She is cast in the conversation by the narrator as the ignorant color echelons of the Old World, with Maxim the discerning intellectual English noblem appraisal of Maxim as the discerning, deep English gentleman supports the focal p aristocrat prefers her, despite her relative lack of breeding, to women of his own

Class activity

Use the Internet to find out the meaning of Ethelred's nickname and the Can you find some context for Maxim's reference to this ancient king in t New World versus Old World attitudes revealed in Chapter Three?

Chapter Four

Mrs Van Hopper is unwell in her bedroom, although the narrator feels that she is s
takes her lunch early, hoping for privacy. However, Maxim is in the dining room t
over a vase at her table he invites her to lunch with him. They talk, but Maxim re
his family home. In their conversation the narrator tells Maxim that her parents a
working for Mrs Van Hopper as a paid companion. Maxim suggests her choice of
invites her for a drive along the Riviera coastline. Eventually they reach the summit of a hillside and look down on the view below. The narrator realises that Maxim knows the spot from an earlier visit, and thinks that he is acting strangely. Unnerved, she suggests they return and he apologises for his manner. He talks about Manderley in detail on the return drive. When they reach the hotel, the narrator discovers a slim volume of poetry in the car door pouch. In her room she notices the distinctive inscription to Max from Rebecca in the book. The narrator has a daydream in which Mrs Van Hopper mentions Rebecca's drowning in the bay near Manderley.



Characterisation (AO1)

The narrator

When the narrator goes for lunch, she is essentially venturing out on her own for the
shyness and lack of self-worth are painfully evident in her first exchange with Maxim

> 'I don't mind,' I said, 'it doesn't matter a bit. I'm all alone.' (p. 23)

The narrator doesn't mind the mess because while she is alone, it doesn't matte
she also doesn't mind because she *is* alone, temporarily free of Mrs Van Hopper.
awkwardness when Maxim takes an interest in her family background, and she s
family despite her intention to keep the subject her 'secret property', 'because h
like the Gentleman Unknown' (pp. 25–26). Even though she is prepared to open
explanation of her new confidence is couched in a fantasy.

The narrator is clearly euphoric with this new-found intimacy ('I remember pausi
dazed', p. 26), but she remains unsure about the exact nature of her new associa
she does not wish to be compared to Mrs Van Hopper, she cannot help but meas
mentioning how 'the little maitre d'hôtel rushed forward to pull away my chair' (
snobbery' repels her, and she tells Maxim how she refused a commission from M
bringing the wealthy American to her shop. This reflects the narrator's attempt t
young woman of integrity trapped in the shallow class-oriented world of Mrs Van
her ride through Monte Carlo with Maxim as an event that took her entirely out
her interest is his detailed description of Manderley.

Maxim

Maxim's characterisation alternates between his interest in the narrator, and his
the subject of Manderley. He is sensitive to the narrator's social awkwardness, an
camaraderie' (p. 27). He also admits that his life as a widower has made him boo
demonstrates some self-insight, as well as establishing some common ground wit
family herself. Maxim also recognises the narrator's fundamental incompatibility
implies that she should leave her American employer. The narrator suggests that
but taken with her lower social status, it allows him to direct her behaviour in an

> 'How old are you?' he said, and when I told him he laughed, and got up fro
> it's a particularly obstinate one, and a thousand bogies won't make you fea
> change over. Go upstairs and put your hat on, and I'll have the car brought

Maxim's drive to the summit, which he made years before, seems like a means o
past, something the narrator claims not to want to know about. The lengthy des
may well be Maxim's way of unburdening his past tragedy, but it also might strik
impress (and perhaps attract) his young companion. Maxim's description of his
romantic idyll, of sunsets 'leaving a glow upon the headland' and 'the ripple of th
little bay' (p. 32). Given his earlier claim to have left his home 'in rather a hurry',
what extent this is really how he feels about Manderley, or whether the narrator
influences her memory of his words (p. 17).

Form (AO2)

The reader is reminded of the fact that the action being described is a flashback a
notably when the narrator recalls the intense, immediate experience of driving t

> This car had the wings of Mercury, I thought, for higher yet we climbed, ar
> danger pleased me because it was new to me, because I was young. (p. 30)

The narrator's reflection upon the innocence of her younger self also serves as se
innocence itself can be dangerous, as when she describes standing on the hillside
detached Maxim.

> 'It's getting late, shall we go home?' I said, and my careless tone, my little
> scarcely have deceived a child. (p. 31)

By drawing attention to her narrative as both an act of remembering and an act
distances herself from the behaviour of her younger self and gives the reader a h
different from her initially exciting time with Maxim.

> There was a strange air of unreality about that luncheon, and looking back
> me with a curious glamour. (p. 25)

The reader is entitled to assume that the narrator's life with Maxim will lose much o

Setting (AO2)

Maxim's description of Manderley is related in minute detail, and the reader can
embellished and infused with the narrator's later knowledge of the estate. The d
harbour and the hills nearby are cursory in comparison.

> The harbour was a dancing thing, with fluttering paper boats, and the sailo
> smiling fellows, merry as the wind. We passed the yacht, beloved of Mrs Va
> ducal owner, and snapped our fingers at the glistening brass, and looked at
> again. (p. 30)

This is a very artificial description, and seems like one of the narrator's daydream
the hillside precipice is similarly impressionistic.

> The sea, like a crinkled chart, spread to the horizon, and lapped the sharp
> the houses were white shells in a rounded grotto, pricked here and there b

By contrast, the grounds and flora of Manderley are described intimately, includi
flower are suited to the indoors and which are not. There is still an air of fantasy
valley, but the reader gains a strong sense of place nonetheless.

> You could stoop down and pick a fallen petal, crush it between your finger
> hollow of your hand, the essence of a thousand scents, unbearable and swe
> crumpled petal. And you came out of the valley, heady and rather dazed, t
> the beach and the still water. A curious, perhaps too sudden contrast... (p.

Du Maurier introduces Manderley in the novel's Monte Carlo chapters to provide th
perhaps too sudden contrast', in order to foreshadow the unexpected turn the narr

Chapter Five

The narrator looks back on her experience of first love and how at age twenty-or
She reveals how she lied to Mrs Van Hopper about her morning drives with Maxi
tennis lessons instead. She wishes that she could still experience the exhilaratio
understands that even if she could go back in time, everything would seem differ
remembers Maxim's kindness, she can also recall the barriers of their age gap an
Annoyed that the narrator believes their time together to be an act of charity on
has helped him forget the past and that he has remained in Monte Carlo for her
Mrs Van Hopper and her guests, the narrator is preoccupied by thoughts of Rebe

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Rebecca

The narrator's fascination with Maxim's dead wife, Rebecca, becomes more pro
compelled to bring up the subject of Rebecca's death in conversation with Maxi
destroy their new friendship. Later at Mrs Van Hopper's party, the 'phantom' of
thoughts. Thinking of the signature in Maxim's book of poems, the narrator con
Rebecca prepares her gift.

> ... I could see her turning to that first white page, smiling as she wrote, and
> from Rebecca. It must have been his birthday, and she had put it amongst
> breakfast table. And they had laughed together as he tore off the paper an

The narrator's inferiority complex is intensified by the fact that, unlike Rebecca, sh
as 'Maxim'. However, her response to Rebecca's idiosyncratic signature reveals w
the signature conveys boldness and confidence, the very qualities that the narrato

> That bold, slanting hand, stabbing the white paper, the symbol of herself, s

Characterisation (AO1) / Theme (AO1)

Love through the ages

The narrator's recollection of her drives in Monte Carlo with Maxim is infused wi
that she will no longer face the emotional turmoil of her youth; regret that she c
liberating freedom of their first days together; gratitude for Maxim's attention c
at her own youthful inexperience; her fear of Maxim's mood shifts, and her shan
to Mrs Van Hopper. However, now as she approaches middle age, she recognise
precious moments from Monte Carlo as fleeting and bittersweet, such as the me
passed on the road.

> I wanted to go back again, to recapture the moment that had gone, and the
> it would not be the same, even the sun would be changed in the sky, castin
> peasant girl would trudge past us along the road in a different way, not wa
> even seeing us. (p. 39)

The peasant girl might provide a metaphor for the narrator's own transition from
the trepidation and sadness that this can involve. Her fear is made apparent in t
Maxim, when the discussion becomes tense between them and she feels sure he
day. The narrator recalls how her 'adult pride was lost' after Maxim rebuked her
recalls taking refuge in her own thoughts. However, Maxim calms her torment b
Christian name and comforting her, bringing about 'an ease in our relationship' (

The impression that the reader gains of the narrator as a young woman is someo
doubt. Her emphasis upon friendship with Maxim also suggests that she is still n
relationship.

Comparative reading:
In relation to the theme of 'Love through the ages', compare the narrator's behavi
that of another young heroine in a romantic situation in a novel from the same or
extent do the social conventions of the day account for any similarities or differen

Form (AO2)

Throughout this chapter, the present narrative voice is interspersed with extend
time in Monte Carlo. This creates a division within the narrative which allows th
perspective on her younger self. For example, her recollection of how Maxim of
wind emphasises how her immaturity magnified the significance of his gesture.

> I remember that, for I was young enough to win happiness in the wearing o
> schoolboy again who carries his hero's sweater and ties it about his throat

> ... Not for me the languor and the subtlety I had read about in books. The c
> sword-play, the swift glance, the stimulating smile. The art of provocation

Similarly, she can look back on her wish for an invention that can preserve memory as impulsive, and a weak attempt to impress an older man. Du Maurier's narrative approach draws the reader's attention to the fact that the story will focus upon the protagonist's development as well as that of the plot.

Discussion pro
Consider how the n
chapters with Maxi
perspective, how do
today? What might
a first date in the tw

Language (AO2)

In the narrator's recollected conversation with Maxim, Du Maurier clusters toget
emphasise that the narrator is critical of her younger self. She raises topics of co
justify her argument 'rather foolishly', and responds to Maxim's gentle taunts 'sa
language accentuates the narrator's social awkwardness and the fact that she is
conversation.

Chapter Six

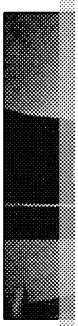
The narrator reflects upon her present transient lifestyle with her husband, and h visited become important in marking a particular time for her. She thinks back to leaving Maxim and not knowing how to act. When Mrs Van Hopper brings forwa the narrator goes to Maxim's room to say farewell. Over breakfast Maxim propo wishes to show her Manderley convinces the narrator that his proposal must be g Mrs Van Hopper about the marriage, and tells the narrator they should marry wh Mrs Van Hopper begrudgingly congratulates the narrator for Maxim's proposal, b the marriage is ill-fated, as Maxim is just lonely and in need of a housewife.

Character relationships (AO1) / Theme (AO1)

The narrator and Maxim

The narrator compares her relationship with Maxim in the present to the time of perspective on her marriage and their life in exile is that it erodes their individua temporary residence feels like leaving something of themselves behind, 'someth lives, a thought, a mood' (p. 49). The themes of exile and love are interconnecte describing the humdrum reality of a regular marriage. Although the mundane na conveyed, so is the fact that the couple's future is clouded with uncertainty.

> And then I open the door and go to the dining-room, where he is sitting wa think how in that moment I have aged, passed on, how I have advanced one destiny. (p. 49)



When the narrator thinks back to the day of her engagement in Monte Carlo, she remembers her sense of uncertainty about Maxim, and how he might react to her visiting his room: she wonders whether he 'would be still in bed, tousled in the head and irritable' (p. 55). However, in addition to winning her hand in marriage, Maxim manages to deftly extricate the narrator from her miserable employment with Mrs Van Hopper. He has all the confidence in handling an awkward social situation that the narrator lacks. However, Maxim's attitude towards the narrator does make the marriage proposal seem like an employment opportunity rather than a romantic union.

> ... instead of being companion to Mrs Van Hopper you become mine, and yo exactly the same. (p. 59)

In contrast, the narrator's description of her present life in exile does not involve narrator may regret the loss of such duties, which was part of Maxim's promise o Her daydream about nursing him in ill health, 'where I was putting eau-de-Colog is a role she sees for herself (p. 58).

Even although their union now seems to be based on love, the narrator's happin Indeed, the uncertainty of the narrator's new life with Maxim is compounded by Manderley was pre-ordained from childhood.

> I knew now why I had bought that picture post-card as a child; it was a pre the future. (p. 59)

Class activity 1

Attitudes and values (AO3)

Contextual information

Consider the postcard of Manderley from the narrator's childhood. Use t whether postcards of renowned country houses were commonplace in Br twentieth century.

Even though she declares her love for him in this chapter – drawing an initially ar
the narrator imagines her new relationship in terms of fantasy and destiny, whic
for the practicalities of married life.

> This sudden talk of marriage bewildered me, even shocked me I think. It w
> one. It did not ring true. And he went on eating his marmalade as though
> books men knelt to women, and it would be moonlight. Not at breakfast, n

Discussion prompt
As you read through *Rebecca*, note the many references to food included in the narrator's account. Does this suggest anything about her character? Are detailed references to food out of place in a flashback narrative, or not?

The narrator and Mrs Van Hopper

The narrator's difficult relationship with
in this chapter. Tidying up after her em
older woman's slovenly, wasteful habits
news that they are leaving for New Yor

> She had flung a letter at me the morni
> her coffee at breakfast. 'Helen is sailin
> Little Nancy has a threatened appendi
> go home. That's decided me.' (p. 50)

The narrator does not dwell on the point a
granddaughter's ill health, which provides
changing her travel plans. Mrs Van Hopp
of enthusiasm also demonstrates a degre
discomfort among the upper-class guests

> 'Don't you realize that at home girls in your position without any money ca
> Plenty of boys and excitement. All in your own class. You can have your o
> needn't be at my beck and call as much as you are here.' (pp. 50–51)

This can be interpreted as a reasonably sympathetic argument, although Mrs Va
clearly disagreeable. The narrator's focus is on her parting moment with Maxim
departure forward, denying the narrator 'even ten minutes perhaps to say good-
towards Mrs Van Hopper turns from 'indifference' to 'hatred' (p. 55).

Mrs Van Hopper's reaction to news of the engagement is a mixture of surprise, c
suspicion. The older woman clearly thinks the narrator is a whole lot more calcu
'double-time worker' (p. 64). The narrator finds Mrs Van Hopper's new attitude
unpleasant; however, the narrator's appraisal of Mrs Van Hopper's negative asse
one that echoes her own doubts – demonstrates insight in identifying the older w

> Perhaps she was being sincere at last, but I did not want that sort of honest
> young. I knew all that. She did not have to tell me. I suppose her attitude
> odd feminine reason she resented this marriage; her scale of values had rec

The narrator's attitude towards Mrs Van Hopper also suggests that of a child lon
mother figure – to go away and not scold her for playing.

> Perhaps, once she had gone, he [Maxim] would talk to me at last, about lov
> (pp. 66–67)

Mrs Van Hopper's parting words to the narrator certainly have the familiarity of
confidence to tell the narrator that he is only marrying her because 'that empty h
an extent he nearly went off his head' (p. 67). Mrs Van Hopper is the mother wh
and for the narrator she is an obstacle to be overcome.

Theme (AO1)

Social class

> I grudged the months I had spent with her, employed by her, taking her mo
> like a shadow, drab and dumb. (p. 66)

The theme of social class underpins the narrator's relationships with both Maxim
focal point in this chapter. She resents being forced to work for someone who sh
and effort, and she has not felt free on account of being employed or 'owned' by
Hopper identifies the matter of class as difficult for her employee in Monte Carlo
have her 'own little set of friends' in New York (pp. 50–51). The narrator's disma
mainly due to her love for Maxim, but she also reveals a cultural aversion to Ame

> 'D'you like Hot music?' Snub-nosed boys with shiny faces. Having to be po
> with my own thoughts as I was now, locked behind the bathroom door... (p

This tells the reader that the narrator has preconceptions about people, and this
class is a major factor. It is the belief that she wouldn't fit into the world of Man
Maxim's marriage proposal. Similarly the extent of her fantasy about Maxim has
in social class: far from ever imagining herself as Maxim's bride, she has only eve
nurse, or his tenant at a lodge on Manderley's grounds that he might occasionall

Class activity 2

Research some background on American popular culture from the 1930s,
was written. Where might the reference to *'snub-nosed boys with shiny face*

Discussion prompt

The narrator portrays herself as unworldly and timid. Given her reflection upon what it will mean to be Mrs de Winter, do you see any justification for Mrs Van Hopper's description of the narrator as a 'double-time worker'?

Maxim, in turn, promises the narrator that
entail similar duties to that of Mrs Van Hop
admits that this may not be the narrator's
clear whether he is apologising for his sens
being ironic. However, it is the promise of
becoming mistress of Manderley that seem
and she convinces herself that Maxim's inv
means that his proposal must be serious.
Manderley reveal how the prospect of bec
standing, is a seductive as prospect as Max

> I would be Mrs de Winter. I considered
> on cheques, to tradesmen, and in letters

Love through the ages

Over and above the class factor, the narrator's conception of love is a dated, ron
emphasis on male chivalry. She seems baffled by the fact that Maxim proposes t
breakfast table, and not on one knee. Similarly, her expectation of a white wedd
mindset where love and marriage are concerned.

> 'Not in a church?' I asked. 'Not in white, with bridesmaids, and bells, and c
> relations, and all your friends?'
>
> 'You forget,' he said. 'I had that sort of wedding before...' (p. 61)

The narrator's attitude to love and understanding of marriage are presented as p
assumes that, being an English gentleman, Maxim will still adhere to a high degr
tradition in marriage.

Chapter Seven

The couple arrive at Manderley after their honeymoon in Europe. The narrator i she will make on the household staff and how she will manage the household du the lengthy serpentine driveway that leads to the house. When the narrator me sinister housekeeper, Mrs Danvers, seems slightly scornful of her new mistress. Manderley by the butler Frith, and her room by Mrs Danvers. Maxim shows her a but in the library after dinner he pays his new wife little attention. The narrator i presence in the library when the dog Jasper lays his head on her knee as he did v

Setting (AO2) / Language (AO2)

The importance of Manderley in *Rebecca* is clear from the detailed description o the house itself. The narrator's immediate experience of the estate is sinister, ev

> ... The drive twisted and turned as a serpent, scarce wider in places than a p was a great colonnade of trees, whose branches nodded and intermingled v archway for us, like the roof of a church. (p. 71)

The symbolism of the serpent and the church roof strongly suggests the presenc House of God, but Manderley. The vivid and overwhelming crimson rhododendr of untameable passion with the place, and the flowers even leave the narrator b imposing and opulent, and the narrator reflects on how out of place she looked a metaphor of the condemned woman at the guillotine being watched by a crowd and curious, gazing at me as though they were the watching crowd about the blo hands behind my back' (p. 74).

The behaviour of the staff, the ambience and even the smell of the house remind the words of Mrs Danvers about her mistress – and the behaviour of Maxim's do presence of Rebecca.

Class activity

Discuss the use of setting, and primarily large remote houses, in other G you have read or watched on film. In groups, list prominent characteris Gothic setting.

Characterisation (AO1)

Mrs Danvers

The housekeeper is presented in terms that suggest a dead person: 'gaunt, dress eyes and a white, skull-like face.

> She came towards me, and I held out my hand, envying her for her dignity a she took my hand hers was limp and heavy, deathly cold, and it lay in mine

Our immediate impression of the housekeeper is of a peculiar, cold and efficient Manderley. It would be unusual for a servant to behave in a familiar way with a narrator interprets in Mrs Danvers' unflinching gaze. However, Mrs Danvers doe in the household order, as her reaction to Maxim's arrival outside the room sugg

> Then I saw a shadow flit across her face, and she drew back against the wal sounded outside and Maxim came into the room. (p. 84)

The narrator's perception is that Mrs Danvers' reaction is that of someone who However, the reader is not knowledgeable enough about the housekeeper's cha conclusion.

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Mrs Danvers

Her quintessentially Gothic appearance aside, Mrs Danvers clearly bears her auth
the narrator envies her for it. However, the housekeeper's forbidding manner, 'r
before her, her eyes never leaving my face', suggests that she is trying to intimid
As she shows the narrator her room, Mrs Danvers subtly implies that it is inferior
the other wing of the house.

> 'You can't see the sea from here, then,' I said, turning to Mrs Danvers.
>
> 'No, not from this wing,' she answered; 'you can't even hear it, either. You
> anywhere near, from this wing.'
>
> She spoke in a peculiar way, as though something lay behind her words, an
> words 'this wing', as if suggesting that the suite where we stood now held s

The narrator presents Mrs Danvers as someone who wishes to intimidate and ur
When Mrs Danvers becomes more talkative on the subject of Rebecca, the narra
and that this is all part of 'an undercurrent of resentment' on the housekeeper's
in the story the reader cannot conclude whether Mrs Danvers' intentions are rea
narrator's heightened imagination and self-doubt are responsible for that impres

The narrator and Maxim

The narrator's observations of Maxim at home emphasise his work in managing t
is also the implication that their honeymoon period has been brought to an end b
'I knew him as a lover, as a friend, and during those weeks I had forgotten that he
life which must be taken up again, continued as before, making vanished weeks a

Maxim seems to take his new wife's ability to acclimatise to life at Manderley so
narrator is nervous at the prospect of being shown her room by Mrs Danvers, he
lack of confidence.

> 'I'll just finish these letters and then I'll come up and join you. Run along a
> Danvers; it's a good opportunity.' (p. 78)

On the surface it seems that Maxim assumes that the narrator's immaturity, or t
making a success of her life as mistress of Manderley, and that she should outgr
possible. However, when he is alone with his wife in their room after Mrs Danve
has undisclosed reasons for being nervous about his wife's relationship with Mrs
the narrator not to take the housekeeper too seriously, while promising 'if she re
we'll get rid of her' (p. 85). While he is trying to reassure his young wife that he i
Mrs Danvers cannot risk stepping out of line, he reacts defensively when the nar
resents her. His annoyance is clearly due to his sensitivity to the subject of Mrs D
for reasons that the reader cannot at this point understand.

Chapter Eight

The narrator finds it difficult to navigate her way around Manderley, and Maxim is preoccupied with the business of running the estate. As she is evidently struggling to fall into the household routine, the butler Frith intervenes to help her find the morning room, where Rebecca used to manage her correspondences. The room's design reinforces the narrator's perception of Rebecca as confident and capable. When Mrs Danvers phones the morning room to arrange the lunch menu and asks for 'Mrs de Winter', the startled narrator automatically thinks that the caller is referring to her predecessor Rebecca. Horrified at her stupidity, she is obliged to apologise to the housekeeper.

Tone (AO2)

The tone of the first part of Chapter Eight is lightly comic, as the narrator reflects back on her inept behaviour during her early days at Manderley. After she trips over her feet in front of the staff, she searches for a box of matches to light a fire in the library, too embarrassed to ask

> There were matches upstairs in the bedroom, but I did not like to go for the disturbing the housemaids at their work. I could not bear their moon faces decided that when Frith and Robert had left the dining-room I would fetch sideboard. I tiptoed out into the hall and listened. (p. 90)

The tone of the chapter shifts when the narrator describes the morning room, ar detail that Rebecca has shown in her choice of furnishing and decorations.

> There was no inter-mingling of style, no confusing of period, and the result and startling way, not coldly formal like the drawing-room shown to the pu something of the same glow and brilliance that the rhododendrons had, ma window. (p. 93)

Du Maurier employs a variation of tone in this chapter to juxtapose the narrator's feelings of confusion and alienation at her new home with her observations of Rebecca's proficiency as mistress of Manderley.

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Rebecca

Rebecca's presence at Manderley is made almost tangible for the narrator by the de tickets for the pigeonholes and entries in the guest book are written in Rebecca's dis narrator is shocked to see it again. She almost feels her predecessor admonishing h

> At any moment she might come back into the room and she would see me t drawer, which I had no right to touch. (p. 95)

The narrator's sense of unworthiness, and even potential persecution, is made w finding her way around Manderley. In contrast, she imagines how Rebecca woul step by step, how she would have had urgent letters or phone calls to send to dr she would have had a purpose to her daily routine. In this way, Rebecca's ghost narrator's nemesis.

Chapter Nine

The arrival of Maxim's sister Beatrice and her husband Giles sends the panicking narrator on a detour around the house to the West Wing, where she discovers unused but fully furnished rooms. Mrs Danvers appears and seems to want to show the narrator the unused rooms. The narrator eventually meets Beatrice and Giles, and Maxim's agent Frank Crawley, all of whom she likes. Although her confidence grows in conversation, she makes the awkward mistake of asking whether bathing is safe in the bay where Rebecca drowned. W
Beatrice tells the narrator that she is not the new sister-in-law that the Lacys exp
Beatrice mentions Maxim's quick temper and the fact he seems to have changed

Setting (AO2)

The interior of Manderley is presented as a type of labyrinth in which the narrator suffers sensory confusion. Not having any visual memory of the layout of the West Wing, she is guided by her imagination and even her sense of smell. When she comes to an alcove window and sees the sea, the narrator imagines it in winter, when 'it would creep up on to those green lawns and threaten the house itself' (p. 101). After peering into the rooms, the narrator returns to the head of the stairs where she is confronted by Mrs Danvers, like the Minotaur at the heart of the labyrinth.

Contextual Inform

Theseus and the Minotaur

In legend, Minos, King o
people of Athens deliver
maidens every nine yea

The Minotaur was a hyb
bull and body of a man t
Minos' wife, Pasiphae, a
gifted to Minos by Posei

Class activity 1

In groups of four or five, using the information that you are given in this
of Manderley, draw the layout of the house, marking the rooms, hallways
by name.

Character relationships (AO1)

Chapter Nine develops the dynamics of the novel's character relationships by int
Frank Crawley. The narrator observes that Beatrice and her brother are inclined
candour (here on the topic of her brother's health) can irritate and even anger M
conversation is to compensate for Beatrice's tactlessness. The narrator, in spite
herself as a competent conversationalist when in sympathetic company, only ma
where Rebecca drowned. Later, when out walking together, Beatrice establishes
new bride to lean on if difficulties arise, and advises the narrator to have little to

Theme (AO1)

Love through the ages

With characteristic candour, Beatrice comments on the narrator's age, describin
before asking whether she is very much in love with Maxim (p. 107). Beatrice cle
narrator's youth and inexperience, her emotional feelings will be intense. She al
learned all about Maxim's previous marriage to Rebecca, that there would be fe
they are in love.

> ... I wondered what Beatrice would say did she realize that I knew nothing
> details of the tragedy that had happened down there, in the bay, that Maxi
> himself, that I questioned him never. (p. 108)

Beatrice's view of marriage seems quite conventional, and there is the implicatio
Maxim's past – and perhaps the difference in the couple's ages and backgrounds
Beatrice tells the narrator that she hopes the couple will be happy, but does not s
bride is nothing like Rebecca. She advises the narrator to change her hairstyle an
advice a young woman might receive at a finishing school. Despite her kindness,
owes much to her social class, and the narrator requires to be suitably groomed f

Language (AO2)

Metonymy

The author employs an example of metonymy at the end of the chapter. A description of a change in the weather is used to reflect the narrator's feelings at Beatrice's mention of how different she is to Rebecca.

> And we came out on to the steps and found the sun had gone behind a bank of cloud, a little thin rain was falling, and Robert was hurrying across the lawn to bring in the chairs. (p. 118)

The coming of cloud and rain suggests the effect Rebecca's ghost will have on the narrator's marriage, with the rain here a metonym for the narrator's sense o dejection or sorrow. This contrasts with the earlier description of the 'drowsy, p enjoys with Maxim in the pleasant company of their guests (p. 114).

Class activity 2

***Attitudes and values* (AO3)**

While you are reading *Rebecca*, pay attention to references to the elemen and air. Consider the association of one or more of these elements with a

How do such associations assist your understanding of the character and

Chapters Ten and Eleven

After the guests leave, the narrator and Maxim walk through the grounds of the e The dog Jasper heads for the beach that borders the estate and, ignoring Maxim's retrieve him. She comes upon a cove and the beach and sees a cottage cum boa woods. On the beach Jasper is playing with a simple-minded man named Ben, an new mistress. The narrator searches the boathouse and finds some twine for a l puzzling conversation with Ben. Afterwards Maxim seems irritated that the narra and they argue as they return to the house, leaving the narrator in distress. In th moodiness to Beatrice's behaviour during her visit. The narrator's disquiet return lipstick-smudged handkerchief in the pocket of her mackintosh.

A week passes, and there is still some tension between the couple. The narrator something that might recall Rebecca's death, but questions Frank Crawley about feelings of inferiority to her predecessor. Frank praises the narrator's qualities a for her as his wife. He also admits that Rebecca was the most beautiful woman h

Chapter Ten

Setting (AO2) / Language (AO2)

Metaphor

The variations in the couple's feelings during their walk are mirrored by the varyi
surroundings. The Happy Valley is a metaphorical paradise, and the couple are e

> There was no sound here but the tumbling of the little stream, and the quie
> his voice was hushed too, gentle and low, as if he had no wish to break upo

The scent of azaleas and the birdsong add to the feeling of enchantment, and the
Valley as 'the core of Manderley, the Manderley I would know and learn to love' (
of nature allows her to see beyond her difficulties as an 'interloper' at the house

Conversely, when they emerge with Jasper from the Happy Valley into the cove, t
tide foreshadows the upset to come in their relationship: when the dog runs ove
narrator's decision to follow it and explore Rebecca's favoured domain causes te
also has the narrator specifically describe their wet walk home from the beach as
Valley', with the rain 'unpleasant, like a cold finger' down her neck (p. 128).

Characterisation (AO1)

Ben

Ben is the simpleton that the narrator meets on the beach where he is digging for s
characteristics indicative of retardation, 'small slit eyes' and a 'red, wet mouth' (p. 1
Rebecca are enigmatic, hinting at a dislike or fear of her. Neither the narrator nor t
remark, 'I never said nothing, did I?', in response to the narrator's reassurance tha
(p. 127). Maxim's comment to the narrator afterwards, that Ben 'makes out he's w
utterances may be worthy of more attention than both the narrator and the reade

Discussion prompt

Can you find evidence in the sections of this chapter involving Ben to support Maxim's assertion that 'he makes out he's worse than he is'? (Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, p. 128)

Character relationships / C

The narrator's prior unease at Maxim's
walk back to Manderley. Seeing him w
with that dark lost look they had had w
tightly to his hand, trying to reassure h
In this way, the narrator's relationship
that of the heroine and the Romantic h
example, Maxim's response to the nar
him reveals that they are both inhibite

> 'Do you?' he said. 'Do you?' He held me very tight, and his eyes questioned me, dark and uncertain, the eyes of a child in pain, a child in fear. (p. 131)

Maxim is caught in an as yet ill-defined struggle between good and evil, and is self-absorbed and moody on account of it, and in this respect belongs in the mould of the Romantic hero. However, like the narrator, he appears more neurotic than heroic, taking refuge from the world in household routines. Maxim is hardly a rebel or outsider in the vein of the Byronic hero; however, it is possible that the narrator is attracted to his moodiness and mysteriousness despite her apparent distress at his behaviour.

Class activity

***Attitudes and values* (AO3)**

Research some background online about characteristics of the romantic r
Write one paragraph describing these characteristics, and a second highl
the central relationship of *Rebecca*.

Chapter Eleven

Theme (AO1)

The 'other woman'

The narrator's unhealthy interest in Rebecca comes into sharp focus in this chapte
to talk about Maxim's ex-wife in glowing terms, which allows the narrator 'little sn
my secret store' (p. 137). The narrator feels that she is unable to escape unfavoura
but satisfying her curiosity about Maxim's first marriage gives her 'a furtive, rather

Attitudes and values and character relationships (AO3/A

There is a stark contrast drawn between the attitudes and values of the visitors t
wife, and that of the narrator and Maxim's agent Frank Crawley. The former are
county, who view Manderley and its goings-on as an important focal point of the
speaks for this group when she inquires of the narrator whether Maxim intends t
Dress Ball, and whether she participates in traditional country pursuits such as ri
and Maxim are essentially fodder for gossip among the county residents. This re
inadequacy regarding her new role as Maxim's wife.

The narrator's friendship with Frank Crawley, in contrast, is largely based upon th
the country set. This is symbolised by the narrator's decision to step out of the c
visiting, and accompany Frank on foot along the driveway to Manderley. Frank d
the bishop's wife and her ilk go walking or hunting; he is a bachelor who lives in a
Maxim to keep the affairs of the estate in order. When the narrator probes him a
Rebecca's organisational skills, his reply differs noticeably from the platitudinous
the visitors to Manderley.

> 'We all of us worked pretty hard,' he said quietly.
>
> There was a funny reserve in his manner as he said this, a certain shyness t
> I wondered suddenly if he had been in love with Rebecca. (p. 143)

The narrator and Frank share what can be described as lower-middle-class sensib
reluctance to offend in conversation. Despite Frank's guarded responses to the n
of loyalty to Maxim, there is an honesty and degree of openness between these t
from the narrator's relationship with Maxim. For example, Frank is prepared to e
death. However, when she pries further, the narrator realises that as with Maxim
cross with Frank. She describes her feelings with a direct reference to social clas

> I was like a poor person in a tenement building, when someone had died, a
> I hated myself. (p. 146)

Using the same context of social class, she explains her intrusiveness as the cons
disadvantage at Manderley, living 'Not the sort of life I've been brought up to' (p
Frank will understand how she feels, largely because his background and lifestyle

Comparative reading:

Have you come across the theme of the 'other woman' in any of the other texts yo
or have read before? What are the key characteristics of the female characters ca

Class activity

***Attitudes and values* (AO3)**

From what you have learnt about Daphne Du Maurier's background and
assess her attitude to class and country living to be? Is it possible to argu
values are discernible in the way the characters interact in both Chapter

Chapters Twelve and Thirteen

The narrator grows more used to life at Manderley, with a new maid, Clarice, wh
to learn from Beatrice that Mrs Danvers' objection to her is only due to the hous
However, the narrator breaks a valuable ornament and doesn't disclose it, which
and draws an incredulous response from Maxim. He argues that she must make
Manderley, and is angered by her insecurity about their relationship.

While Maxim is away in London, the narrator relaxes more. She walks to the bay
hiding in the cottage with a fishing line that he has stolen. When she scolds him,
will send him to an asylum and refers to a secret of some sort. The narrator reas
favourably to 'the other one', meaning a woman of whom Ben was afraid (p. 174)
looked in the cottage and had caught this woman (Rebecca) in the midst of some
she threatened him with the asylum. The narrator assumes that Ben is talking no
notices a sports car concealed at the edge of the drive and a furtive figure at a W
the narrator overhears Mrs Danvers talking to a man. On spotting the narrator, h
the housekeeper, who reluctantly introduces him as Mr Favell. As he leaves, Fav
mention his visit to Maxim, arousing her suspicions about Favell's business with

Chapter Twelve

Attitudes and values and character relationships (AO3/

The narrator's relationships with both the housemaids, Alice and Clarice, and Ma
outsider at Manderley. Alice's visible contempt for her mistress' style of underw
the narrator's attitude to how she should dress.

> I had never thought about my underclothes before ... Alice's face taught me
> a shop in London and asked for a catalogue of under-linen. (p. 152)

When Clarice takes over Alice's role, however, the narrator no longer feels the n
Nonetheless, her self-consciousness about being the subject of staff gossip rema

The incident involving the broken Cupid figurine exposes a gulf in attitudes towa
between the narrator and Maxim. Her clumsiness in arranging Beatrice's gift of
knocks over the Cupid exposes her lower-middle-class attitudes of guilt and fear
betters. Instead of admitting to the accident, the narrator hides the broken piec
drawer. When Mrs Danvers finds the figurine missing, she blames the male serv
forced to come clean to Maxim privately, before the housekeeper is informed in
inability to act authoritatively with the staff incomprehensible. However, it is Ma
towards Mrs Danvers' cool contempt for his wife that is more significant.

> She did not seem to be surprised that I was the culprit. She looked at me w
> her dark eyes. I felt she had known it was me all along and had accused Ro
> courage to confess. (p. 158)

Of course, the reader at this point in the story still has to entertain the possibility
neurotic personality that drives her imagination. However, Maxim does not alle
two women by jokingly comparing his wife's behaviour to that of 'the between-m
aftermath of the incident awakens in Maxim an angry suspicion that his new mar
narrator's mention of gossip is the spark, as it seems to expose Maxim's motivat
the existence of the secret he wishes to keep buried. The narrator's desperation
insecurity about the relationship is as strong as that of her husband.

Comparative reading:
Discuss in groups the portrayal of a troubled marriage or relationship in another t
How would you summarise what underlies the problem? How does the problem ma
characters behave towards one another?

Characterisation and Form (AO1/ AO2)

Rebecca

The characterisation of 'Rebecca's ghost' is made a little more rounded at the en
the imagination of the narrator. At the end of the chapter, the narrator's discuss
topic of the broken china, china being a subject about which Rebecca 'knew a lot
Maxim recalling Rebecca's reaction to her wedding present with the aid of an ela

> Perhaps he came into the room, and she was kneeling on the floor, wrench
> which the cupid was packed. She must have glanced up at him, and smiled
> said, 'look what we've been sent.' And she then would have plunged her ha
> and brought out the cupid who stood on one foot, his bow in his hand. (p. 1

Such a 'flashback' is an aspect of narrative form specifically employed by Du Mau
characterisation more vivid, while simultaneously revealing the overactive imagi

Chapter Thirteen

Setting (AO2)

The description of the narrator's second visit to the cove and cottage is influence
and the actions that may have preceded her drowning. The narrator tries to ima
and to rationalise it, wondering about trivial points such as the name and colour
author uses a description of setting to illustrate the narrator's obsession with he

The brief episode inside the boathouse is intended to invoke Rebecca's presence
cowering in fear. Having stolen a fishing line, he thinks he may face the fate he w
confinement to an asylum. On the walk back to Manderley with Jasper, turning t
cottage through the trees, the narrator senses a watching presence at the cottag
sudden unaccountable desire to run' (p. 175). Again the reader cannot be certai
overactive imagination is responsible for her feelings, or whether there is a hint
preceding scene at the cove.

Class activity

Study the episode at the beach (pp. 170–175). Note down examples of the
description of the setting and nature that convey her obsession with Rebe

Theme and characterisation (AO1/ AO1)

Social class / Jack Favell

Jack Favell's character stands out in the novel as being difficult to judge in terms
He is described by the narrator as 'good-looking in a rather, flashy, sunburnt way'
the fact that he has been drinking whisky and drives a sports car, this might sugg
playboy. The narrator makes the playboy comparison explicit by suggesting that
he would give to every woman' (p. 178). However, his manner with the narrator
and his friendship with Mrs Danvers muddies the issue of his own social status. T
to the house also suggests that he is of a different status to the regular guests at
when mentioning the narrator's time in France, Favell states that he used to kno
rather mixed impression we have of the character possibly suggests someone wh
and who is at odds with the clearly stratified society that the novel has depicted

Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen

The narrator revisits the West Wing and Rebecca's room, which is preserved in th
The narrator despairs at her envy of Rebecca. While she is investigating the ward
behind her, eager to show the narrator the room. The housekeeper describes he
and the evening of her death. Mrs Danvers grows more intense and blames hers
fateful night. The housekeeper unnerves the narrator further by insisting that sh
everywhere and insinuating that the narrator must feel likewise. Mrs Danvers be
returns to Manderley to observe the narrator and Maxim.

The next morning Beatrice phones Manderley to collect the narrator so they can
grandmother. On the drive, Beatrice reveals that Jack Favell was Rebecca's cous
subject. At the grandmother's house, the narrator is introduced to the old woma
conversation continues, the grandmother becomes confused and upset by the na
Rebecca. Embarrassed, Beatrice hastens their departure back to Manderley. On
overhears Maxim angrily admonishing Mrs Danvers in the library about Jack Fave

Chapter Fourteen

Theme (AO1)

The 'other woman'

The narrator's second visit to the West Wing is presented as an unconscious ena
Rebecca. Although she does not explicitly refer to it, the room she wants to see is

> The plan of the rooms was not familiar to me. I remembered then that last
> out of a door here, just behind me, and it seemed to me that the position of
> one I wanted, whose windows looked out upon the lawns to the sea. (p. 185)

Rebecca's belongings are observed with meticulous attention to detail. The narra
completed with Rebecca at the dressing table combing her hair. The narrator's d
most beautiful room in the house' is understandable as the room represents Reb
in status at Manderley (p. 187). However, the narrator goes so far as to describe
possessions in terms of 'horror turning to despair' (p. 187). Her handling of Rebe
case and the nightdress inside suggests an unhealthy obsession about its owner.

> I touched it, drew it out from the case, put it against my face. It was cold, o
> dim mustiness about it still where the scent had been. (p. 187)

Mrs Danvers' appearance, 'gloating, excited in a strange unhealthy way', frighten
unwelcome surprise, but because she recognises that the housekeeper's obsessi
something she shares (p. 188). The narrator's presence in Rebecca's room also i
the narrator acutely feels the burden of living in Rebecca's shadow.

Tone (AO2)

The narrative tone in Chapter Fourteen shifts subtly between the sinister and suspenseful and the ironic. As an 'uninvited guest', an intruder in Rebecca's bedroom, the narrator is waiting to be found out (p. 187). The narrative tension is largely created by Du Maurier's focus upon the narrator's senses, which conveys an immediacy of experience. She smells the mustiness of the room and the sweet scent of azalea beneath, hears the sound of the sea, appreciates t the shutter is lifted, as well as her own ghostly pallor in Rebecca's mirror. Rebec close detail; the fact that the narrator is so wrapped up in the experience of the Danvers' arrival will take her by surprise.

Mrs Danvers' presentation of Rebecca's belongings is by turns falsely ingratiating to direct the narrator's thoughts and actions. The nightdress, Rebecca's most int unwashed by Mrs Danvers, is treated like a shared fetish, as are Rebecca's slippe the narrator like forbidden fruit.

> '... Put your hands inside the slippers. They are quite small and narrow, ar
>
> She forced the slippers over my hands, smiling on the while, watching my e

The sinister tone of the scene is also heightened by the pointed resemblance of M her skin 'stretched across her face' and with 'little patches of yellow beneath her physically represents the dead Rebecca at work among the living.

Discussion prompt

The role of Mrs Danvers in Alfred Hitchcock's film of *Rebecca* has encouraged readings of a subtext of lesbianism in the story. Can you detect a subtext of lesbianism in this chapter of the novel? What do you make of the ways in which both the narrator and Mrs Danvers behave concerning Rebecca? How might Mrs Danvers' obsession with her dead mistress be interpreted otherwise?

Mrs Danvers' loving preservation o perhaps seems more extreme than with Rebecca, which is largely born that both women behave quite sim narrator in private, is an example o horror at Mrs Danvers' behaviour (over the narrator), the narrator's s Rebecca's belongings beforehand unhealthy relationship with the de

Further reading:

In connection with Hitchcock's film *Rebecca*, Mrs Danvers is included among a list roles in the appendix of the following text: Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet* (New Yo

Chapter Fifteen

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Beatrice

Beatrice's relationship with the narrator in this chapter resembles that of a conc the narrator of her family duty with the visit to Maxim's grandmother, expresses thinness and pallor and asks whether she is pregnant. Beatrice is pleased when t with the books Beatrice gave as a wedding gift; she invites the narrator to stay a world of bridge. When the narrator mentions Jack Favell, Beatrice is abrupt, as i her young relative. However, there is also a kinship between the two women. A narrator notes Beatrice's tedium at trying to communicate with the old woman; and interested in the old woman's feelings and how she lived when she was you people were sometimes such a strain' (p. 206). When they are forced to leave th gets upset and asks after Rebecca, the narrator is more concerned about Beatric However, on the car ride back to Manderley the narrator's discomfort grows wh strong relationship her grandmother had with Rebecca. This suggests that Beatr the major underlying cause of the narrator's difficulties at Manderley: the long s over the household.

The narrator and Maxim

The narrator's ruminations on how Maxim's grandmother might have lived at Manderley in her heyday reflect both her interest in Maxim's family history, and her fears about Rebecca's huge influence with the family: the fears seem stronger at this point in the narrative. After Maxim angrily reprimands Mrs Danvers over Favell's visit, the narrator longs for Maxim to confide in her about the incident. This is partly due to her curiosity about how Maxim had learnt about Favell, but it also reflects her awareness of a lack of trust and openness in the marriage and how this has the potential to undermine it.

Chapter Sixteen

On the insistence of some visitors to Manderley, the narrator and Maxim reluctan Manderley Fancy Dress Ball. The narrator sees this as an opportunity to prove h Manderley. Frank is supportive, but Maxim is clearly hostile to the event. The n choice of costume a secret, and is advised by Mrs Danvers to copy a portrait from apparent helpfulness puzzles the narrator, but she remains preoccupied with tho decides to base her fancy dress on the ancestral portrait of Caroline de Winter th the evening of the ball, she gets prepared with Clarice's aid and is delighted with She descends the staircase to join Maxim, Frank, Beatrice and the early guests, b Winter. The others are shocked at her appearance, and Maxim tells her angrily t confused narrator rushes back to her room, and sees a gloating Mrs Danvers smi door to the West Wing.

Theme (AO1)

Social class

The chapter is significant in revealing the emergence of the narrator's own class pretensions at Manderley. The reinstatement of the Fancy Dress Ball and Mrs Danvers' suggestion that the narrator has her dress made by a Bond Street dressmaker m mistress of Manderley. She explains her commitment to the event in terms of n front of the county set. However, there is also a hint of an underlying snobbery least hypocrisy on the subject of class. On the one hand, the narrator rejects the costumes from paintings by Rubens and Rembrandt as models for her fancy dres she is happy to adopt the costume of Maxim's ancestor Caroline de Winter with

Contextual Informat

The portrait of Caroline de Raeburn, the famous Scotti eighteenth and early ninete Internet to establish the ass with the gentry.

that carries. An explanation may lie in the narrator's desire to identify with Rebe
example, how a character like Jack Favell can be related to Rebecca. Her confusio
reveals the snobbery on her part, notably when she contemplates whether Favel

> Some people would consider him attractive. Girls in sweet shops giggling b
> who gave one programmes in a cinema...And I could not connect him with
> with her beauty, her charm, her breeding, why did she have a cousin like Ja
> of all proportion. (p. 224)

The use of the royal form of self-address, 'one', perhaps underscores the irony in
social class. Her attitude towards shop girls and cinema usherettes demonstrate
very differently from her time as Mrs Van Hopper's companion, when hotel staff
veiled contempt. The offhand reference to cinema usherettes possibly also reve
and entertainments.

Class activity

The narrator enjoys books, poems and painting, and seems not to think r
dance halls. As you read through *Rebecca*, consider whether the narrator
'cultural elitist'?

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Mrs Danvers

The manipulation of the narrator by Mrs Danvers in this chapter exposes the form
tradition at Manderley. Although she has no reason to trust the housekeeper, sh
Danvers' suggestion that she base her costume on one of those depicted in Manc
Danvers' additional advice on keeping the choice of costume a secret, and that th
made in London, might seem like the upholding of a tradition to the new bride; h
dress can be copied away from the scrutiny of Maxim, Frank or Beatrice. The nar
Danvers' motives for offering the helpful suggestion; however, instead of taking s
wisdom of taking Mrs Danvers' advice at face value, the narrator allows herself to
Rebecca and Favell, and subsequently succumbs to 'party fever' in the run up to t
shocked reaction to the narrator's appearance in an outfit resembling the one tha
she has to run past the 'loathsome, triumphant' Mrs Danvers on the return to her
the episode with the costume demonstrates that the housekeeper has been a bet
character than the reverse.

Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen

The narrator is now reluctant to attend the ball. Offered sympathy and encoura
eventually changes her dress and returns, imagining sounds in the house as she
her fragmented memories of the ball, which have a fairy-tale quality. When the
about to retire, Beatrice promises to inform Maxim. However, Maxim does not j

The next morning, the narrator realises that Maxim's bed has not been slept in.
Maxim has failed as he still loves Rebecca. The narrator phones Frank, telling hi
down the receiver. From the grounds, the narrator sees Mrs Danvers at a West
confront her about her advice. Mrs Danvers claims not to hate the narrator any
but insists that Maxim is unhappy in his new marriage. The two women argue ab
blames the narrator for telling Maxim about Favell's visit. Mrs Danvers' behavio
she tries to coax the narrator into jumping to her death from the bedroom windo
sea breaks the disturbing grip that the housekeeper has seemingly exercised on

Class activity

Briefly discuss in groups the possible significance of Maxim's suggestion
of Alice in Wonderland as the model for the narrator's costume.

Chapter Seventeen

Form (AO1)

Du Maurier makes substantial use of direct internal dialogue in this chapter, which conveys how the narrator imagines the guests at the ball will talk about her and judge her absence. This extended technique has the effect of giving the narrator's vivid imagination its own voice, almost like the creation of a separate character. The imaginary 'dialogue' is dramatised by the narrator in her descriptions of the actions of a guest or guests, as in the following extract.

> 'What did you hear?'
>
> 'Why, that there's nothing wrong with her at all, they've had a colossal row, and she won't appear!'
>
> 'I say!' A lift of the eyebrows, a long whistle.
>
> 'I know. Well it does look rather odd, don't you think? What I mean is, peo reason have violent headaches. I call the whole thing jolly fishy.' (p. 247)

This technique strengthens the reader's impression of the narrator as someone wh and who is demonstrating an unhealthy self-obsession, in addition to her obsessio

Tone (AO2)

The narrator makes explicit that her recollection of the ball is that of 'little isolat the vast blank canvas of the evening' (p. 250). The narrative tone that accompan of the ball is esoteric, conveying the impression of a dream, and it is also grotesq marks a sharp difference from the drama and distress of the costume incident th

The narrator's recollection of the guests makes them seem otherworldly grotesq whose dress represents 'a vague gesture to some past century'; Lady Crowan, di Nell Gwyn … or a strange erotic combination of the two' (p. 250); the couples wh and fro' (p. 252). The narrative tone is used to create an alienating effect, to con disorientation and alienation from the events she describes.

> The Destiny waltz, the Blue Danube, the Merry Widow, one-two-three, one- one-two-three, one-two-three, round-and-round. The salmon lady, a green pushed back off her forehead... (p. 253)

At the firework display, the lawns become 'black with people' (p. 254): it is as tho insects.

The more strikingly comic elements in this section of narrative seem to target tra the guests' attempting to suddenly switch from 'hilarious gaiety' to rigid formalit Save The King' (p. 255). Taken in tandem with Maxim's aloofness at the proceed of the ball focuses the reader's attention on the fact that the couple are uncomfo of life at Manderley.

Chapter Eighteen

Theme (AO1)

Love through the ages / The 'other woman'

> As I sipped my cold tea I thought with a tired bitter feeling of despair that I
> one corner of Manderley and Maxim in the other so long as the outside wor

The role of social convention in preserving a marriage preoccupies the narrator a
alone in the room she shares with Maxim. The narrator's perception of her marr
husband the kind of love he needs because she is not Rebecca. However, the ab
narrator clearly has a degree of pragmatism about the marriage as a social arran
in luxury at Manderley.

The Gothic component of the 'Other Woman' theme is that it is a ghost that occu
husband's affections. The ghost's presence is made to seem as tangible as possi

> Her footsteps sounded in the corridors, her scent lingered on the stairs. Th
> still, the food we ate was the food she liked. Her favourite flowers filled th

However, it is clear that the narrator's conviction that Maxim still loves his forme
third parties such as Mrs Danvers, Frank and Maxim's grandmother, who called o
narrator's visit. Once again, the major disadvantage the narrator has at Manderl
confidence, making her in turn more easily prone to the influence of others.

Character relationships (AO1)

Mrs Danvers and Rebecca

The narrator's decision to confront Mrs Danvers over her malicious advice about
revelation of the latter's intense, loyal relationship to Rebecca. Mrs Danvers, lik
conceive of Maxim loving anyone other than Rebecca. Mrs Danvers has looked a
the bond between them is forged by their shared ability to manipulate others: in
Mrs Danvers, 'raving like a mad woman, a fanatic', recollects Rebecca's precocio
her father 'round her little finger' and 'enter into conversation with men and wo
someone of eighteen' (p. 273). Mrs Danvers seems similarly proud of her mistre
having brought a string of lovers from London to stay at Manderley for the week

Mrs Danvers' wish to preserve Rebecca's spirit at Manderley while punishing Ma
on Jack Favell's visiting the house: as one of Rebecca's ex-lovers, Favell's visit rek
proves to the housekeeper that Maxim's love for Rebecca persists. In this contex
narrator for revealing Favell's secretive visit to Maxim seems irrational and sugge
unbalanced mental state. The housekeeper even tries to convince herself that R
Manderley and the narrator th
succeeds in convincing the na
means of escaping the torme
Rebecca and unloved by Maxi

The narrator and Mrs Danver

Mrs Danvers' fanaticism and t
a dangerous relationship. Mrs
Rebecca makes her seem less
but she is powerless to counte
Maxim over Rebecca's death a
narrator is both fascinated an
apparently all-powerful Mrs D
eyes, revealing a tortured ma

> ... a queer ecstatic smile w
> older than ever, making h
> (p. 273)

Discussion prompt

Mrs Danvers is an ageing spinster who had grown intensely devoted to *Rebecca* over the course of her working life. To what extent does her twisted ideal of her mistress, taken to the point of mental imbalance, conform to a stereotype of a frustrated woman without love or family in British life in the early twentieth century? Use the Internet to try to frame a critical context for your discussion.

However, Mrs Danvers is still able to manipulate the narrator by reinforcing the latter's inferiority to Rebecca, the point of weakness in the narrator's character that she seems incapable of overcoming. At that point the housekeeper's vice-like grip on the narrator's arm is a symbol of both the psychological and physical control Mrs Danvers has over the narrator. Only the chance event of an accident at sea averts a second tragedy at Manderley.

Class activity

In groups note down the examples of indirect characterisation used in Ch depict Mrs Danvers' mental state. Discuss how effective the descriptions o behaviour and actions are at creating an atmosphere of menace in the sce narrator's response to Mrs Danvers' behaviour help develop such an atmo

Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

After the accident Maxim reappears at Manderley to take matters in hand. Reas narrator goes to view the stranded steamer from the cliffs, before walking to the she has another confusing conversation with Ben. The narrator returns to the ho of Kerrith, Captain Searle, arrives with the news that the rescue operation has di sunken boat. A corpse has been found in the cabin, which is assumed to be that o However, on Maxim's return the narrator is overcome with fear and anxiety. Aft that the corpse is Rebecca's and that he had shot her in the cottage and sunk it w

The narrator is in a state of shock after Maxim's revelation. He passionately decl that the revelations about Rebecca will destroy their marriage. The narrator und better in light of his secret, while he claims that he could not confide in her earlie and aloof. The narrator explains her fear that Maxim still loved Rebecca, but he i Rebecca, and that the marriage was a sham that benefited Manderley. The narra never loved Rebecca. Maxim recounts shooting Rebecca after she threatened hi the disposal of the corpse. The couple plan how to explain Maxim's previous ide and she vows to keep his confidence.

Chapter Nineteen

Characterisation (AO1)

Mrs Danvers

Mrs Danvers' sudden reversion to an efficient housekeeper after trying to drive t that she has undergone a psychotic episode. However, her reaction to overhear Frith about accommodating the sailors is severe enough to suggest that she also 'Mrs Danvers drew back from the window. Her face was expressionless once mo knew.' *(*p. 278)

Her reiteration of the precise household arrangements Maxim has requested als convention still guides Mrs Danvers, despite her mental illness.

Maxim

Maxim is revealed as practical and community-minded in this chapter. Having w concludes that the tide will make moving the steamer impossible. He also instru on hand for the sailors as required. Frank and the coastguard also praise Maxim to the narrator. However, the contradictions in his character are exposed at the admits to murdering Rebecca.

The narrator

The narrator recovers well from the shocking interlude with Mrs Danvers. She observes the impact of the accident on the behaviour of Frith and Frank, and 'how alike people were in a moment of common interest' (p. 284). She also seems enlightened by her interaction with people at the scene, wishing she could 'enter their conversation, and then wander back with them during the afternoon to Kerrith and paddle on the beach' (p. 288). She recognises her own need to connect with ordinary people.

Disc
How
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When Captain Searle reveals the grim discovery of Rebecca's boat and its contents, the narrator's first thought is to protect Maxim's feelings. She naïvely asks the harbour master if it is necessary to inform her husband. However, after Maxim's return, the narrator recognises that the discovery of the body has created a defining 'moment of crisis' in their relationship (p. 296). The narrator resolves to overcor personality to support Maxim, even telling him that she wants his friendship and cannot have his love. While Maxim believes that his confession to Rebecca's mu the narrator is clearly determined it should be otherwise.

Language and literary technique (AO2)

Metonymy

Water – and specifically its qualities of reflectivity and fluidity – is evident as a m standing for the narrator's uncertainty about herself and life with Maxim. As she the water in the harbour is described as 'glassy like a mirror'. When she reaches water, causing him to look up. In these instances, the water reflects her presence and an awareness of the world around her (p. 289). Similarly, she can see the ur steamer from the cove. Walking back to Manderley she alludes to the calm lapp After the revelation about Rebecca's boat, however, the narrator understands th been deepened by the sea's blackness and the secrets it keeps from those on sh her knowledge of Maxim's past with Rebecca.

> It was the diver going down into those cool, quiet depths and stumbling up Rebecca's dead companion. He had touched the boat, had looked into the c on the cliffs and had not known. (p. 295)

The sunken boat and the decomposed corpse create a little tableau of death, so narrator can focus upon in trying to solve the mystery of Maxim's past.

Theme (AO1)

The 'other woman'

The story thread of Rebecca's apparent accident is central to the secrecy and deception in the narrative. However, Rebecca is never described, either by Maxim or the narrator, in terms suggesting a victim. This gives greater emphasis to the novel's first plot twist: Rebecca's murder. Rebecca's shooting is presented by Maxim as a suicide by proxy, Rebecca's maliciousness supposedly apparent in her 'slow treacherous smile' just before Maxim pulls the trigger (p. 297). In this way, the theme of the 'other woman' in *Rebecca* is not given a clear moral context by Du Maurier.

Chapter Twenty

Form (AO1)

The narrator describes her initial shock in a few sentences using the literary present

> When people suffer a great shock, like death, or the loss of a limb, I believe they don't feel it just at first ... You go on feeling the fingers. You stretch and beat them on the air, one by one, and all the time there is nothing there, no hand, no fingers. (p. 299)

The reader may infer from this that the narrator has thought about her reaction to Maxim's guilt over time, and not merely gone on, blinded by love, to conspire murder. The use of the literary present also reminds the reader that the narrato that she is trying to be rational and honest in doing so.

Attitudes and values and character relationships (AO3/A

The narrator and Maxim

After describing her initial shock in some depth, the narrator swiftly becomes wil Rebecca's murder. Initially, Maxim's display of affection and declaration of love shock. However, when Maxim takes this as evidence of her rejection, she makes interest of her marriage above all else.

> Realization flooded me at once, and my heart jumped in quick and sudden swiftly... (p. 300)

The narrator's major motivation is to pass the test of her love set by Maxim's un gesture. It is also clear from the narrative that she regards herself as worthless, thing in Maxim's arms' without his love (p. 300).

The narrator uses the metaphor of a jigsaw to convey how all the aspects of Max has been unable to understand now seem to be falling into place. She asks Maxi say, valuing the possibility of love over any notion of justice. Maxim's response t the narrator is one of relief that he no longer has to face everyone as a hypocrite regarding Mrs Danvers also reveal a strain of cowardice in his actions.

> 'Mrs Danvers, who I had not the courage to turn away, because with her kn might have suspected, she might have guessed...' (p. 303)

His subsequent in-depth condemnation of Rebecca's character provides more pie has been lacking: it seems to explain Rebecca's harsh treatment of a horse as rela words to the narrator about her being kinder than 'the other one' who threatene asylum. The fact that Maxim accepted Rebecca's proposition to run Manderley a indiscretions, suggests that convention and family name meant more to him at th

> 'She knew I would never stand in a divorce court and give her away, have f flung at us in the newspapers, all the people who belong down here whispe mentioned...' (p. 306)

Class activity

In groups of four or five, note down the narrator's cover story and the ki the night of Rebecca's death. Consider the flaws of the narrator's solutio together to devise a more effective story that might clear Maxim of any i Rebecca's murder.

Both Maxim and the narrator reveal a degree of moral shallowness in light of the death. In Maxim's case, this has been shaped by a bitter, loveless marriage to Re case it has been shaped by the pain of jealousy and self-doubt. However, in vow avoid taking responsibility in law for Rebecca's death, their shared self-interest la

The narrator is wilfully optimistic that her love for Maxim will conquer all. In fact, Maxim's crime covered up is expressed with urgency, even desperation. She bel truth of Rebecca's identity as the corpse on the boat.

> 'We've got to explain it,' I said. 'We've got to think out a way to explain it. someone you don't know. Someone you've never seen before.' (p. 316)

In light of Maxim's objections to the impracticality of this approach, the narrator Rebecca is identified, then Maxim should claim he was ill when he made the offi The narrator also convinces herself that investigators will conclude that Rebecca however, remains unconvinced that this story will suffice.

Maxim and Rebecca

Rebecca's character is roundly assailed by Maxim in this chapter. She was 'vicio through' with 'something about her eyes' (p. 304); she would sneak off to Londo to its hole in the ditch', or 'get hold of one of the workmen, someone from Kerrit (pp. 307–310). Rebecca's nymphomania has also extended to Maxim's brother-i which Maxim interprets as a strategy to bring dishonour upon him at Manderley consciousness and pride about his reputation are the ultimate motives he has fo Rebecca with a pistol in the cottage. The spur seems to have been her affair wit thought of whose presence at Manderley Maxim finds intolerable. When Rebec illegitimate heir to Manderley and promises to be 'the perfect mother' for the be Maxim's tenants, Maxim shoots her dead ostensibly to protect the family line (p.

Theme (AO1)

The 'other woman'

As the narrative of *Rebecca* is largely driven by the narrator's jealousy of her dea marks a turning point regarding the theme of the 'other woman'. Rebecca has p an extent that Maxim's assertion that he never loved his first wife is the only inf She doesn't care about understanding Maxim's shame or guilt, but is delirious in and in the knowledge that the burden of her jealousy has been lifted.

> My heart was light like a feather floating in the air. He had never loved Rebecca. (p. 307)

It is possible to view both the narrator's behaviour in this chapter and at the end of the previous chapter as arising from her prior romantic frustration. Her need to share Maxim's caresses overwhelms her need to understand him.

Characterisation (AO1)

The narrator

The narrator imagines herself to have gained a new-found maturity in the wake of Maxim's confession and explanation of his unsatisfactory marriage to Rebecca. She thinks about similar difficulties faced by shy, overly sensitive people like herself, 'because they could not break out of their own web of shyness and reserve, and in their blindness and folly built up a great distorted wall in front of them that hid the truth' (p. 309). When Maxim rails freely against Rebecca, the narrator wants to help him expel 'the pent-up hatred

Discussion prompt 2
Compare the portrayal of the narrator as a character driven by jealousy with other characters who display jealous behaviour in any text you are reading or have read. Also consider Maxim's explanation of the reasons that led him to ultimately kill Rebecca. Is there also evidence of sexual jealousy on his part?

and disgust and muck of the lost yea
explicitly as Maxim's confidante. Ho
mature insight still incorporates her
When Maxim relates Rebecca's indis
Rebecca's parties at the cottage via h
her cryptic conversations with Ben th
presence.

And I thought of the dark steep path
if a woman stood there behind the t
rustle in the thin night breeze. (p. 3

For the narrator, Rebecca's life still h
cannot relate to the murdered woma
the blow-by-blow physical details of
Rebecca's death allows the narrator to disavow her value as a human being, by su
can be denied justice.

> 'Rebecca is dead,' I said. 'That's what we've got to remember. Rebecca is d
> can't bear witness. She can't harm you any more.' (p. 316)

Chapters Twenty-One to Twenty-Three

Emboldened by Maxim's love, the narrator asserts herself as mistress of Mander
standing up to Mrs Danvers. After Rebecca's boat is raised, the magistrate Colon
Maxim for lunch at Manderley to discuss the upcoming inquest. Observing Frank
knows the details of Rebecca's death, but that Maxim is oblivious to his friend's k

At the inquest the narrator secretly listens to the closing evidence just inside the
see Mrs Danvers and Favell present. The boatbuilder responsible for Rebecca's b
to support his belief that the boat had been scuttled deliberately. While the coro
relationship with Rebecca, the narrator faints, and Maxim comes to her aid, befo
Manderley. Maxim returns and tells his wife that Rebecca's inquest has returned
Rebecca's body will be interred in Manderley's crypt that evening. While Maxim
Favell turns up at Manderley, expressing his contempt for the inquest's verdict.
Favell claims that the jury was bribed and threatens to blackmail Maxim with a n
she died asking Favell to come to the cottage urgently. Maxim phones Colonel Ju
intervene. When the magistrate arrives, Favell accuses Maxim of Rebecca's mur

Chapter Twenty-One

Theme (AO1)

Social class

The theme of social class is brought into sharp focus in this chapter with the inte
staff of Manderley. With her new-found self-confidence, the narrator swiftly set
housemaids to task for not clearing away some dead flowers. She then orders Fr
inform Mrs Danvers that the menu is to be changed, after seeing leftovers from t
prepared. This breaks the direct chain of command between the mistress of the
allowing the narrator to openly express her lack of interest in Rebecca's style of
Danvers queries the discovery of the boat and the body and Maxim's whereabou
her to mind her place. The under-housemaid and housekeeper serve as foils for
of her position as mistress of Manderley.

When Maxim, Frank and Colonel Julyan arrive for lunch with the narrator after ic
share small talk around the table in Frith's presence. The narrator makes explici
barrier to honesty in human relationships.

> We were all thinking of one thing, but because of Frith we had to keep up o
> suppose Frith was thinking about it too, and I thought how much easier it w
> convention and let him join in with us, if he had anything to say. (p. 330)

Only when coffee and cigarettes are served and the servants leave the dining roo
discussion about Rebecca commence.

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Rebecca / The narrator and Maxim

In the narrator's words, with the discovery of the corpse 'Rebecca's power had d
love triangle concocted by the narrator's own imagination is no more. The sourc
the narrator's jealousy of her, and the narrator's sense of inferiority has been va
been revealed as being of questionable character. The narrator is now comforta
Rebecca's ghost had seemingly preserved as her territory, such as the writing de
bedroom in the West Wing.

The narrator regards the ghost's 'banishment' – and the upcoming publicity – as a
alone with Maxim against the world. She cannot even admit allies like Frank and B

> We would face this trouble together, he and I. Captain Searle, and the dive
> Danvers, and Beatrice, and the men and women of Kerrith reading their ne
> now...I would fight for Maxim. I would lie and perjure and swear, I would b

The narrator's confidence in her devotion to Maxim's cause is short-lived, howev
foreboding return with the involvement of the magistrate and the police and the
Rebecca's death. In addition, the narrator's claim to a newfound maturity throu
undermined by her insistent, childlike questioning of the authorities' involvemen
boat. She has sought to simplify her own situation with Maxim and Manderley in
elusive obstacle: Rebecca's ghost. She clearly is still living a daydream, unwilling
difficulties posed by the discovery of Rebecca's corpse. She also takes refuge in i
when she suggests that a salvage team mightn't be able to raise a small pleasure
naïve, and elicits a cool response from her husband.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Theme (AO1) / Language (AO2)

Social class

When Frith brings in the local evening paper with headlines about the discovery, the narrator feels the need to comment on the matter with him. Frith expresses the shock and distress of the household staff at the news, enquires about the inquest, and offers 'to do anything that might help the family' herself to the basic, brief civilities that the difference in social standing demands of language used by the narrator is in her response to Frith's information about M health. Once again, the narrator takes the opportunity to assert her competence

> 'It would be better really if she stayed where she is,' I said. 'It's no use her g
> things if she is ill. Perhaps Alice would tell her that. I can very well manag
> I between us.' (p. 338)

It is possible to observe here how class and power relationships are asserted and conversation. The narrator's tone switches from polite and platitudinous to rath wishes to assert her authority. This combination of measured civility and delega a servant like Frith's loyalty to the de Winters, and that the formal balance of the maintained at all times.

> **Further reading:**
> A detailed theoretical approach to the relationship between power and language analysis of French philosopher Michel Foucault. Among other things, Foucault lo wielding authority over others use language to reinforce their position of domina and their 'betters' in *Rebecca*, an analysis of the relevant conversations may expos by one party to exert control over another.
>
> A relatively accessible introduction to Foucault's ideas is offered in:
> 🕮 Robin Wooffitt, *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: A Comparative and Critical I*

Contextual analysis (AO3)

The newspaper coverage of the de Winters' story finds a historical context in the g sensationalist, tabloid journalism in England in the 1930s. This was first evident in were chosen to attract the widest number of readers. Such stories focused on the scandals and popular gossip. A prominent editor of the period, Hamilton Fyfe, sum

> 'In the hope of securing sensation news editors took to sending reporters t feelings of duchesses whose husbands died ... or husbands of women killed as the bursting of a gun.'[7]

This is echoed in the narrator's assessment of the way in which the discovery in t papers.

> Manderley was news, and so was Maxim. They talked about him as Max de horrible. Each paper made great play of the fact that Rebecca's body had b fancy dress ball, as though there was something deliberate about it. (p. 339)

The shock of the new regarding tabloid journalism is reflected in Maxim 'getting the coverage of the story, and the narrator's insight that 'not one column, but fiv story if known in its entirety (p. 339).

Chapter Twenty-Three

Character relationships (AO1)

The narrator and Frank

While the narrator and Frank are both 'allies' of Maxim in his fight to maintain hi other to be candid about what they know about Maxim's part in Rebecca's death has greater faith in Frank's loyalty than his wife's ability to be discreet. Frank's lo narrator when he drives her back to Manderley on Maxim's orders. Clearly, both stay with her husband as not being to Maxim's advantage, and her anxious beha Frank takes charge of the situation, not even making eye contact with the narrat and drives off. Despite the fact that the narrator understands that 'neither of us insists upon questioning why the inquest is continuing in the same insistent, naïv of Maxim (p. 353). As her behaviour is similar with both men, it suggests her im

7 Hamilton Fyfe, Sixty Years of Fleet Street (London: W. H. Allen, 1949), p. 182.

Characterisation (AO1)

The narrator

The exchange between the narrator and Frank reveals that while the narrator ha behaviour, she is at times lacking basic common sense. She correctly judges Fra 'the usual conventional phrase' as evidence of his worry over Maxim, but fails to (Rebecca's cousin) should be allowed at the inquest and why Maxim might want the courtroom (p. 352). Instead, her imagination slips into overdrive. She imagi asked to give evidence about the night of Rebecca's death and replays the court Maxim being sentenced and facing execution.

When Maxim returns and reveals the verdict of suicide, the narrator still continu until Maxim is forced to divulge every detail queried by the coroner.

Jack Favell

The narrator has already described Favell as a drunk and a rogue when recalling appears drunk at Manderley to confront Maxim about the verdict on Rebecca, a goes, that first impression is verified. Du Maurier strengthens our impression of some vivid indirect characterisation. Favell's actions and movement, swearing and slurred speech, portray his character at odds with the polite world of Manderley.

> He sat down on the edge of the sofa, swinging his legs, that half-smile on his lips...
>
> ... he began to laugh, leaning back on the arm of the sofa...
>
> ... He slid off the arm of the sofa and came towards me, his glass in his hand. (pp. 362–363)

Favell is not surprisingly a hopeless judge of the narrator's character, admiring her for being unfazed by Maxim's moods and the fresh burden of responsibility as mistress of Manderley. He sways and steadies himself, veers sharply between geniality and resentment in talking to Maxim and to cigarettes. When Colonel Julyan arrives at Manderley, Favell is too drunk to c his laugh 'high-pitched, forced, and foolish', and his behaviour alienating the ma

Language and literary technique (AO2)

The humid air and lack of rain in this chapter are metaphorical of the build-up of tension at Manderley during and after the inquest. Both the narrator and Maxim bemoan the lack of rain, and this is another example of the weather being used as a metonym for human emotions. Du Maurier tries to emphasise the sustained, near unbearable tension of the narrator's situation, forced to wait for Maxim's uncertain return, which is compared to the expectation of even a single drop of rain.

> There was no sign of anybody. The hall was dark because of the menace of thunder overhead. I went down and stood on the terrace. There was another burst of thunder. One spot of rain fell on my hand. One spot. No more. (p. 356)

When Maxim returns, during his conversation with the narrator in the library he goes to the window and expresses relief that it is finally going to rain. As they continue talking about the inquest and the interment of Rebecca's body that evening, Maxim expresses increasing agitation that the rain will not break. He tells the narrator that their marriage can be refreshed once the inquest is behind them, before leaving to bury Rebecca. It is only after the narrator imagines Rebecca as dust, with 'no reality any more', that the rain comes down, building up to a torrent and smelling 'of moss and earth and of the black bark of trees' (p. 360).

Chapters Twenty-Four to Twenty-Seven

Favell insists that Ben should be called as a potential witness to support his story might have witnessed Rebecca's murder. Ben is summoned, but denies witnessi Favell then has Mrs Danvers summoned: the housekeeper confirms that Favell a denies that Rebecca loved Favell or any man, or was suicidal; however, she retrie reveals an appointment in London on the day of her death with a Dr Baker. The confirm Rebecca's pregnancy, thus providing Maxim's motive for her murder. Af down, the couple drive to London with Colonel Julyan, followed by Favell in his c records until he remembers Rebecca, who visited him as 'Mrs. Danvers', and wh cancer and could not bear children. This information gives Rebecca a motive for

The relieved couple drive homeward without the others. Maxim phones Frank fr Mrs Danvers has packed and left Manderley after receiving a long-distance call. T insists upon driving back to Manderley through the night. The narrator sleeps in t Rebecca, before moving to the passenger seat. After a while she sees an orange g mistakenly assumes that it is sunrise. As they reach the top of a hill they see Man

Theme (AO1)

Jealousy

The theme of jealousy looms large in the closing chapters of the novel. However who is the chief sufferer. Favell's blackmail attempt is driven by greed but also b Rebecca loved him and was even set to marry him. His confrontation with Maxi jealousy; but an emotional Mrs Danvers angers Favell by revealing that he was th like all other men, thus in her eyes defending her mistress's reputation. Similarly guards her mistress's reputation as someone 'afraid of nothing and no-one' who suicide (p. 386). Tellingly, however, she does reveal that Rebecca's only fear was perhaps most ambiguously, Rebecca is motivated by a type of jealousy in trying t happiness by goading him into shooting her dead. Maxim suggests that his conv been Rebecca's ultimate revenge.

> 'The last supreme bluff. She wanted me to kill her. She foresaw the whole laughed.' (p. 420)

By letting Maxim think that she was pregnant by another man, Rebecca was poss Maxim's own feelings of sexual jealousy. This would fit with Mrs Danvers' assess lovemaking as a game.

Social class

Jack Favell's predicament as would-be blackmailer is made more difficult by his b local area, and in class terms. Favell is self-conscious about his inferior social sta out that Favell has no proof against Maxim for Rebecca's murder, Favell become Julyan's scepticism to class prejudice.

> 'You're going to back de Winter. You won't let him down because you've d
> with you. He's a big name down here.' (p. 373)

Favell makes an ironic analogy between the Manderley set and 'a little trade uni
despite Rebecca's romantic influence over both Frank and Maxim the two men r
arrangement. Subsequent events do suggest that a social arrangement may be i
magistrate and other locals. When Maxim strikes Favell, a 'degrading' act that u
defends Maxim's right to do so, only regretting that the narrator had to witness i
in as a potential witness to Rebecca's death and to confirm his prior knowledge o
many cigarettes as he'd like; and when he fails to recognise Favell or corroborate
reward of 'whatever he fancies' from the kitchen (p. 380). Additionally, Frank ar
believe Maxim guilty: the narrator observes Frank's nervousness as more possibl
death are threatened, as well as Colonel Julyan's 'curious, intent' gazing at Maxi
of the magistrate's growing suspicion of her husband (p. 376).

Favell's behaviour concerning the enquiries into the identity of 'Baker' is further m
sarcastically observes that 'Max doesn't care if his telephone bill is a hundred pou
(p. 387). The implication is that the wealthy can afford to buy their innocence of a
social arrangement again, after Dr Baker confirms Rebecca's illness and motive for
Favell in his capacity as magistrate of Kerrith to stay out of the district or face pros
promises to spread the news of Maxim's alibi throughout the district, in order to m
magistrate even suggests that the couple take a break to Switzerland, as their abse
the affair dies away. Finally, in the restaurant Maxim expresses his belief that July
Rebecca's murder and reassures the narrator that the magistrate will never divulg

Characterisation (AO1)

Rebecca

> ... no matter what tears were shed, what sorrows borne, the peace of Mand
> the loveliness destroyed. (p. 401)

Despite the narrator's premature belief, reflected in the quote above, that Rebe
forever from Manderley, the destruction of the property suggests otherwise. M
Rebecca's avenging angel in committing arson, and this ensures that Maxim and
Rebecca's home. On the drive back to Manderley, the disaster is foreshadowed i
she writes invitations in Rebecca's handwriting and sees Rebecca's image in the

Discussion prompt
Why do you think that Mrs Danvers' responsibility for the burning down of Manderley is never made explicit? In Hitchcock's film version, her part in the arson is vividly portrayed. What is gained or lost in Du Maurier's approach?

> And I saw then that she was sitting on a
> table in her bedroom, and Maxim was b
> hair in his hands, and as he brushed it h
> thick rope. It twisted like a snake, and h
> hands and smiled at Rebecca and put it

Rebecca's ghost would have remained
Maxim and his new wife to ever exper
Indeed, the dream suggests that had M
the couple would have faced danger a
vengeful spirit.

Language and literary technique / Theme (AO2/AO1)

Du Maurier's metaphorical use of fire and water in *Rebecca* is useful in differenti
between Rebecca and the narrator. Rebecca's jealousy – culminating in her ghos
Mrs Danvers – is a fire that remains unextinguished, driven by self-belief and pas
and desire for revenge are powerful enough to take charge of at least two eleme
rises from submergence in water to avenge Maxim and her successor in his marr

Conversely, the narrator's jealousy springs from self-doubt and the uncertainty bo
Even at the very end of the novel, as they drive to the hilltop overlooking Lanyon,
the flames against the sky to be at first the sunrise rising in the West, and then th
that the burning of Manderley could be an act of revenge has never occurred to h
sensed the possibility of some such retribution after hearing of Mrs Danvers' disa

Ultimately, Du Maurier's treatment of the theme of jealousy has to condemn all
narrator has colluded with Maxim in the concealment of Rebecca's murder (and
of her unborn child) and retribution comes in the loss of any hope of a future pa

Class activity

Split up into groups of four or five. Select a character apiece from the n
summary. Now enter the relevant information about them under bullet
following: their purpose within the plot, relationship to other characters
theme of the novel.

	The Narrator	Maxim	Mrs Danvers	Frank Crawley	Rebe
Purpose in the plot					
Relationship to other characters					
Illustration of theme					

Characterisation: Key Characters

The narrator (Mrs de Winter)

The narrative occurs in the memory of the second Mrs de Winter, who is also its protagonist. As narrator, she remains nameless throughout the novel, and we are given very limited insight into her past before meeting Maxim in Monte Carlo. The dual narrative function leads to the presentation of two distinct characters: the narrator is a slightly forlorn middle-aged woman, living in exile with her husband and remembering her past at Manderley; the protagonist is an insecure and naïve young woman without a family, who is given over to daydreaming, fantasies and feelings of persecution. As Mrs Van Hopper's paid travelling companion, however, the protagonist still recognises the absurdity and iniquity of her position and the advantages to Maxim's offer of marriage and life at Manderley.

Little girl lost

Given that the protagonist/narrator is revealed to have a flawed character and is denied a full identity by her namelessness, she comes to be largely defined in terms of what she desires, which is a loving married life with Maxim. Being unworldly, she has unrealistic expectations of marriage: she is tak over breakfast ('Not at breakfast, not like this') and his suggestion of a registry m church affair (p. 58). It is life at Manderley that completely destabilises her, how of its daily operations from Mrs Danvers, nor inspire Maxim out of his staid routi environment, the narrator's judgement of others is distorted and her self-confid Maxim's moodiness and aloofness, and the various testimonials she hears about Crawley, lead the narrator to conclude that her husband still loves his first wife. servants judge her unfavourably. However, the fact that both her in-laws and M disposed towards her, should at least give her a hint that Rebecca was not indisp impression of Frank suggests that she is a welcome replacement for Rebecca.

> ... I turned to the agent, a colourless, rather thin man with a prominent Ad read relief as he looked upon me. I wondered why, but I had no time to thi

More encouraging still should have been Beatrice's remarks about the improvem months earlier, and her aside to the narrator, 'I suppose we've got you to thank f that Maxim's sister sees his new wife as a tonic. Unfortunately, the narrator is to Maxim to interpret these signals positively. Maxim's apparent tension at the me in fact, as we learn later, it is the recollection of the period after Rebecca's death that causes his tension.

When the narrator later unburdens herself to Frank about her marriage woes, Fra herself inferior to Rebecca, remarking that she has 'qualities that are just as impor The fact that the narrator is a welcome successor to Rebecca could not be made clea has kindness, sincerity and modesty, but she fails to infer from his words that Rebecc

The narrator's 'lost' quality at Manderley is recognised by Maxim, who explicitly Wonderland. He suggests several times that she attend the Fancy Dress Ball in t he is just treating her like a child. She cannot know the real concern behind his l curiosity and vivid imagination – qualities she shares with Lewis Carroll's charact would prefer to stay hidden. Her strange, distracted performance at the dinner *is* Rebecca, alarms Maxim: as he says, 'You had a twist to your mouth and a flash the right sort of knowledge' (p. 226). Maxim seems to be suggesting that in orde must not remind him of Rebecca.

However, the narrator interprets the growing problems in her marriage quite dif misjudgement involving the costume for the ball, she believes her marriage is ov to Rebecca.

> The fact that I loved him in a sick, hurt, desperate way, like a child or a dog the sort of love he needed. He wanted something else that I could not give before. (p. 260)

Mad love

Maxim's confession to Rebecca's murder, the first of the novel's two major plot upon the narrator's character. Even before he discloses his hatred of Rebecca, th have to be together 'with no secrets, no shadows' (p. 300). The fact that they al fate creates the bond with Maxim that she has craved; and the reader may concl fine. However it is his disclosure that he hated Rebecca that convinces the narra at all costs ('I would lie and perjure and swear, I would blaspheme and pray' (p. 3 in the details of Maxim's story or his sense of shame: that he did not love Rebec her love does seem to veer a little into madness, when she wishes that she coul implicating Maxim and prays that Dr Baker, as Rebecca's suspected abortionist, i attitude towards Rebecca's true fate, both as cancer sufferer and murder victim,

Looking back from near middle age to the early stages of her relationship with M towards how she behaved remains ambiguous. On the one hand, she attributes fever of first love' and expresses satisfaction that it cannot return. On the other deception that she and Maxim perpetrated about Rebecca's death would be eas adult mind can lie with untroubled conscience and a gay composure' (p. 37). Alt middle age together seems to lack passion, the reader cannot conclude that the Maxim has diminished with the years.

A woman of simple tastes

The narrator is essentially at home among the middle classes, as is revealed on t Maxim on returning from their honeymoon. The prospect of living at Manderley have a normal marriage. She recalls her wish to delay arriving at Manderley and of the friendly villages en route.

> I wanted to draw up at some wayside inn and stay there, in a coffee-room, b wanted to be a traveller on the road, a bride in love with her husband. Not for the first time, the wife of Maxim de Winter. (p. 69)

The narrator's wish to live a normal life without the burden of social expectation *Rebecca*. At the scene of the steamer's accident, she identifies with the young c the cliffs. She imagines their days out on the beach eating potted-meat sandwic at their modest lodgings. Driving back from London with Maxim after meeting w restaurant, and the narrator experiences the 'quiet and happy and friendly' envi deprived (p. 421).

The narrator has relatively simple tastes and pursues modest pleasures at Mand afternoon tea and walking the dog. Her identity crisis at Manderley is aggravate things in life, which she observed as companion to Mrs Van Hopper: the narrator upper-class country lady at Manderley. Her unfashionable dress sense is dispara and, more gently, by Beatrice. However, her attitude towards dates with Americ shop girls and usherettes, reveals a strain of lower-middle-class snobbery. In sh shaped by her social class, she is not defined by it. This is also true of Maxim, w class: the desire not to be defined by class may in fact be the basis of their comp conclusion, the narrator is more like her husband in caring little what impression is truly entwined with his own.

The narrator as a 'Gothic' character

Much of the narrative reveals the narrator's emotionally and psychologically complex responses to adverse situations. These situations are specifically related to the uncomfortable new environment of Manderley and the spectre of Rebecca. The novel's 'supernatural' episodes rely on the narrator's heightened imagination, and on the psychological tension being sustainable in order to convince the reader, albeit temporarily. Therefore, when she looks back down towards the beach after investigating the dark boathouse and having a rather unnerving encounter with Ben, we can believe in her sense of a supernatural presence such as Rebecca's ghost.

> It was as though someone waited down there, in the little garden where the watched and listened. (p. 175)

It is the narrator's heightened imagination that shapes her as a 'Gothic' characte the feelings of dread – or even terror – that the Gothic novel tries to awaken in t

Class activity

In groups of four or five, research background online about the literary s 'Female Gothic'. Consider to what extent *Rebecca* conforms to the conven

Maxim de Winter

The narrator's first impression of Maxim has him resembling the Byronic hero, or 'Gentleman Unknown' in her own words (p. 15). Secretive and moody, with an offhand charm and intense gaze, Maxim sparks the young woman's fascination from the outset. When they get to know one another, first at breakfast and then on the drives around Monte Carlo, he reveals a sensitive, intuitive side, that allows the narrator to open up to him: for example, she finds, to her surprise, that she can share her 'secret property', the story of her father's life and death (p. 25). However, as the name 'Maxim' may be intended to suggest, he is also authoritative, even authoritarian. He insists upon taking the narrator out driving, despite her initial protests. He also proves a skilled manipulator, taking control of the narrator's potentially awkward severance from Mrs Van Hopper's employment.

Master of the house

When the couple arrive at Manderley, the reader observes Maxim in a different context, that of someone dedicated to the daily operations of a large household. However, he does not seem to be entirely in control of matters. The staff reception for the narrator arranged by Mrs Danvers is contrary to his wishes and, we assume, his instructions. The extent of Maxim's input in daily operations is also unclear: his agent Crawley handles the books; Rebecca kept m appointments and visits to the house; Mrs Danvers and Frith run the household e interest at all in the reintroduction of the prestigious Manderley Fancy Dress Ball figure at Manderley, and when he is with the narrator he often seems detached o mystery is preserved even in a domestic situation.

Man in a mask

Maxim's mysterious, 'Gothic' quality is important, because it makes his murder c reader would struggle to accept his culpability if he really seemed no more than a married man. The fact that he is struggling to disguise a terrible truth is hinted a rejection of the role-playing at the ball. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he is a narrator implicitly recognises by 'the white mask of his face' (p. 240). Maxim's se in disguise resurfaces again while the de Winters are discussing the Fancy Dress B

Julyan and Frank. Frank voices the opinion that the 'desire to dress up in some s
people (p. 330). Maxim suggests, in that case, he must be 'very inhuman', to wh
Frank's point that a desire to look different is as natural in adults as children. In
to have a successful, happy life with his new wife after Rebecca, is the disguise i

However, this pattern of deceit predates Rebecca's murder. It has its origins in h
'come here to Manderley, throw the place open, entertain, have our marriage sp
century' (p. 306). Despite sacrificing his pride and honour for the sake of the fam
situation to develop with Rebecca where these very qualities would inevitably re
and potentially destroying – his family's reputation.

Impulsive Gothic hero or cold-blooded killer?

Ultimately, though, the reader does not judge Maxim on his initial lack of judgem
concealment of a cold-blooded murder. When he confronts Rebecca at the cotta
revolver and clearly has a plan in place to get rid of the body. Although his claim
Favell is not out of the question, the extent to which he demonises the 'devil' Reb
that the greater part of his hatred is still reserved for his ex-wife. The reader mus
remark to the narrator about not killing Rebecca in the hills above Monte Carlo af
before him. It is possible that the thought of murdering his wife underwent a per
early moment in their marriage. His remark to the narrator about having forgotte
there was so much blood', also suggests both an element of premeditation and m
is entitled to wonder whether Rebecca's murder was premeditated.

The jealous lover

Maxim's character is clearly significant regarding the theme of jealousy. Rebecca's
the trigger works because it plays on both his pride in his family name and sexual j
Favell's son inheriting Manderley is too much for him to take. However, there is lit
support Favell's assertion that Maxim was 'playing Othello' when he killed his wife
unquestioningly accepts Maxim's explanation that it is Rebecca's betrayal of their
Manderley should be beyond reproach) that drives him to murder. She does not q
could arouse sexual jealousy in Maxim by threatening him with a son and heir fron
there is no evidence in the narrator's recollection of Maxim's behaviour to suggest
moody and melancholic. This is tellingly evident just before his confession, in resp
they start their relationship afresh: 'We're not meant for happiness, you and I' (p. 2
fatalistic outlook about love, and not the words of someone prone to be carried av

A life in exile

The 'Byronic hero' of the Monte Carlo chapters is entirely unrecognisable in the e
the narrative present. In fact, the narrator presents Maxim as emotionally damag
companionship. Maxim is 'wonderfully patient and never complains', and yet 'wil
cigarette, not bothering to extinguish them' and talk excitedly about nothing whe
and Rebecca torment him (p. 5). In fact, the relationship that the narrator origina
that of a nursemaid 'putting eau-de-Cologne on his head', seems to resemble the
appears to have succumbed to neurosis in his later years, the 'glowing stubs [of ci
reminder of the fire and Rebecca (p. 5). Losing his beloved Manderley so dramati
Maxim can bear. In that sense, his wistful regret that Rebecca might have eventu

Rebecca de Winter: The mystery girl

The spirit of Rebecca is, in unison with her earthly representative Mrs Danvers, th
Rebecca is no longer alive, we can only judge her according to the narrator's reco
and opinions of other characters. To Frank Crawley she was incomparably beauti
Manderley she seemed the glamorous mistress of a grand house with a flair for c
was sinister and threatening; to Mrs Danvers she was a proud, fearless, and cruel
devotion; to Favell she was the perfect companion in his dissolute world of fast ca
Maxim she was 'the devil', immoral, manipulative and duplicitous. This variety of
is presented in the memory of her successor, whose fear and jealous hatred of Re
being objective. The reader might also judge that the narrator's irrational jealous
the other characters' perspectives, as none among them seems entirely trustwort

Also, this type of narrative cannot include written evidence from Rebecca herself reveal her personality. Instead Rebecca's presence is evoked through things that personal interpretation. For example, the narrator seems to dwell upon the long which she interprets as indicating confidence and artistry. This 'introduction' to R being evoked in other ways. In the following example, the 'R' is a monogram on finds in the pocket of Rebecca's mackintosh. The handkerchief retains signs of its smudge of lipstick, and 'the vanished scent upon the handkerchief was the same the azaleas in the Happy Valley' (p. 133). The narrator observes that the mackint broader than me about the shoulders, for I had found it big and overlong' (pp. 13 effects help flesh out her personality for the narrator and the reader.

Beauty with a cruel streak

It is safe for the reader to assume that Rebecca was beautiful and capable of eas Danvers also support Maxim's assertion about Rebecca's menacing dark side. Th young Rebecca dug her spurs into the side of a spirited horse to control it, leavin froth and blood' (p. 273). Ben's account possibly supports Maxim's claim that Re contemptuous about the staff at Manderley and the county's residents. Maxim knew how she laughed at them behind their backs, jeered at them, mimicked the have Ben sectioned has a similarly contemptuous tone.

> 'You don't know me, do you?' she said. 'You've never seen me here, and yo looking at me through the windows here I'll have you put in the asylum,' sh that would you? They're cruel to people in the asylum.' (p. 174)

From what we learn about Ben, such a threat seems unnecessary and cruel. Perh vindictive enough to threaten Maxim with an illegitimate heir. However, a mode whether it is possible to pass judgement on Rebecca. Today, she could not be co promiscuity, or for judging men unworthy of her love as Mrs Danvers claims. Re appraised separately from her violent end.

As a character only imagined by the narrator or recalled from the memories of o sense of development with the first Mrs de Winter. With the loss of Manderley, former wife has defeated him is one possible interpretation of the novel's conclu belief that she has escaped Rebecca, now no more than dust, is equally relevant

Mrs Danvers: The Gothic villain

Mrs Danvers is the novel's living antagonist and its Gothic villain. Her death-like appearance can almost be said to symbolise the dead Rebecca's presence on earth. With this in mind, at one point in the narrative Du Maurier tries to have the two women speak as one. This is in the following excerpt where the narrator angrily accuses the housekeeper of adding to Maxim's suffering over Rebecca.

> She shook herself clear of me, the angry colour flooded her dead white face suffering?' she said, 'he's never cared about mine. How do you think I've l her place, walk in her footsteps, touch the things that were hers?' (p. 271)

Rebecca's spirit could be speaking through Mrs Danvers at this moment, express resentment at Maxim's new marriage, an event she may have hoped to thwart. treat the two characters as one. For example, Mrs Danvers' obsessive devotion characteristic that would seem pathetic to someone as selfish as Rebecca; and th distinction between Mrs Danvers, 'a living breathing woman' to whom she can s whom she cannot (p. 269).

However, there is no doubt that Mrs Danvers is the novel's most obviously 'Gothi appearance suggests the decay of the recently deceased. Her skull's face and hol characteristics evoking death, but Du Maurier also describes her more particularly housekeeper is exhibiting Rebecca's belongings in the West Wing bedroom, the n

> I could see how tightly the skin was stretched across her face, showing the little patches of yellow beneath her ears. (p. 192).

This description suggests someone diseased, and even inhuman. However, Mrs D crucial actor in the novel's plot. She establishes a hostile and sinister atmospher spying and untimely appearances which disturb the narrator; for example, when t figure of the housekeeper observes the narrator from the West Wing bedroom w controls all the vantage points in the house she knows so well and, taken alongsi narrator, this contributes to the latter's sense of alienation at Manderley. The na housekeeper has control of Manderley's interior space becomes most acute in th the end of Chapter Eighteen. Mrs Danvers, playing upon the narrator's evident l young woman into jumping to her death. Her words and manner are calculating

> Don't be afraid ... I won't push you. I won't stand by you. You can jump of y use of your staying here at Manderley? You're not happy. Mr. de Winter d much for you to live for, is there? (p. 276)

Given Mrs Danvers grief and disturbed behaviour preceding this moment – 'ravin her long fingers twisting and tearing the black stuff of her dress' (p. 272) – the re psychosis makes her also Rebecca's victim, albeit one of bad character.

Similarly, Mrs Danvers' implied involvement in the burning down of Manderley, i can be interpreted in light of a slavish devotion to her dead mistress. Her defenc blackmail attempt in Chapter Twenty-Four has a similar unnerving passion as her in Rebecca's room. However, it is when she understands why Favell is blackmail malicious nature gains the potential for criminality. The narrator identifies this p hatred mixed, and then conviction' in the housekeeper's expression, in her gaze Clearly the housekeeper's loyalty to Rebecca turns to determination to avenge h can explain her subsequent disappearance from Manderley and its destruction b proof that Mrs Danvers is the culprit.

Frank Crawley: Maxim's right-hand man

Frank represents a reassuring presence for the narrator while she is at Manderley marriage difficulties and sense of inferiority to Rebecca. As Maxim's agent, he is a In addition, as the narrative develops it seems that he may have some knowledge Rebecca's death. However, Frank's loyalty to Maxim is unwavering. It transpires Maxim's help in stopping the amorous attentions of Rebecca, and so he was only

The scene in Chapter Twenty-Four where Frank diligently retrieves Dr Baker's de believe Maxim guilty of anything, as revelations about Rebecca's medical history Rebecca's murder by her husband. Conversely, Frank's desire to pay off Favell a readiness to collude in a cover-up. The reader is left to draw their own conclusio events and motivations for action.

Frank's character is also notable in relation to the novel's theme of social class. He a modest car. As an employee of Maxim's, he is not born into the privileged world natural affinity with Frank seems to be partly based upon his relative approachabil

Jack Favell

Jack Favell is Rebecca's dissolute and cocky cousin. He also appears to have know
have entered into a sexual relationship with her in adulthood. In Chapter Twenty
compatibility as worthy of a successful marriage.

> 'Always tremendous pals. Liked the same things, the same people. Laughed
> suppose I was fonder of Rebecca than anyone else in the world. And she wa

Given Mrs Danvers' rejection of Favell's claim that Rebecca loved him, it is tempting
drunken sentimentality. However, Favell's suspicions about Rebecca's murder seem
by sheer greed. His selfish and ignorant attitude to the news about Rebecca's cance
have been contagious, proves that his feelings for Rebecca are as shallow as his cha

Beatrice Lacy

Beatrice, Maxim's older sister, is a principled if sometimes indiscreet upper-class
towards the narrator in trying to help her adapt to marriage and the lifestyle of t
encouraging her to take up riding and introducing her to Maxim's grandmother.
Rebecca had an affair with Beatrice's husband Giles, which perhaps explains Bea
replacement. However, Beatrice is trapped by her class background and lacks tru
in her family. Her regard for the de Winter name almost certainly prevents her s
Rebecca and Favell with her new sister-in-law. Similarly, in her phone call to the
Rebecca's death, Beatrice insists that Maxim tries to get the suicide verdict quas
him. Du Maurier even has Beatrice frame Rebecca's death in the language of cla
the sabotage to Rebecca's boat was 'just the sort of thing a Communist would do'
off, Maxim and the narrator hold each other close and ignore Beatrice's follow-o
liability and that it is best to ignore her for the time being.

Ben

Ben, the son of a former member of staff at Manderley, is a beachcomber with le
in the novel is almost that of an *idiot savant*, one who poses riddles in the narrat
Rebecca. During their first meeting he seeks assurances that 'she [Rebecca] won
asserts 'I never said nothing, did I' (p. 127). Although the narrator doesn't under
provides the reader with enough clues to indicate a mysterious 'she' with somet
to the narrator that Ben 'makes out he's worse than he is' also directs the reader
significance in Ben's words (p. 128).

At their next meeting on the beach, Ben reveals more about a 'tall and dark' wom
him in an asylum for watching her through the cottage window (p. 174). The narr
seriously, but it is clear that he has been using the cottage freely to borrow things
steamer's accident in Chapter Nineteen, Ben explicitly contrasts its fate with Rebe

> 'She'll break up bit by bit,' he said, 'she'll not sink like a stone like the little
> her up by now, haven't they?' he said. (p. 290)

The narrator still doesn't follow Ben's train of thought, but by this point in the na

Clearly Ben has been keeping the secret about Rebecca, and to this extent the na
For this reason, Ben's testimony at Manderley about Favell's visits to the cottage
having seen Favell, but his words to Frank about fearing the asylum indicate that
keeping him in check. He also denies having seen Maxim arrive at the cottage to
the same reason: Colonel Julyan remarks that Ben has appeared 'scared stiff' wh
Ultimately, despite Ben's apparent simplicity, the reader cannot conclude that hi

Colonel Julyan

Colonel Julyan, the magistrate at Kerrith, represents the establishment in *Rebecca*. As such his role is significant in relation to the theme of social class. His main concern in dealing with the allegations against Maxim seems to be to uphold the pecking order in the county. From the outset of the discovery of Rebecca's body, his sympathies lie with Maxim and the narrator, and principally Mrs de Winter, in whom he confides 'I do feel for you and your husband most acutely' (p. 328). He upbraids Favell for his drunken behaviour, seems quietly jubilant when Ben's t quizzes Mrs Danvers in depth about Rebecca's itinerary on the day of her death, i Rebecca might have been suicidal. He clearly suspects that Maxim killed Rebecca but when the doctor provides a motive for Rebecca's suicide, he enables the cove 'certain powers that will prove effective' should he turn up in the county again (p Baker's, Julyan effectively recites the explanation of Rebecca's death to the de W suicide motive around Kerrith and the county. He even suggests that the couple h story is news. In this way public scrutiny and gossip can be minimised, and the so Julyan and his ilk can be maintained.

Mrs Van Hopper

The narrator's wealthy employer, with her ravioli-splattered chin and her discard cream, is a vivid caricature of the loud and uncultured American abroad in the O character is also significant to the narrative development, as she both feeds the casts doubt on the value of her testimony. For example, Mrs Van Hopper is ofte exaggeration: when she states 'I wonder what my life would be today, if Mrs Van the narrator fails to give full weight to Maxim's dominant role in their courtship (the narrator during their time in the hotel anyway? Wouldn't he have spoken to alone due to Mrs Van Hopper's illness? The narrator's appraisal of Mrs Van Hop one hand, the older woman is an obstacle, an antagonistic symbolic mother who dread of her life being mapped out by Mrs Van Hopper's itinerary is a major mot acceptance of Maxim's proposal. However, in their parting scene Mrs Van Hopp little figure I should not see again', whose 'barbed words' of warning about the n account of the narrator's 'new confidence' (pp.64–66). In effect, by the end of th novel, Mrs Van Hopper's malign influence upon the narrator doesn't seem to hav

Character Relationships

Maxim and Rebecca

Maxim's relationship with Rebecca seems to have been based upon a Faustian p will help advance the reputation of Manderley as Maxim's wife in return for livin from the house. According to Maxim, it is Rebecca's unwillingness to honour the eventual fatal showdown at the cottage.

A problem the reader faces in considering Maxim's appraisal of the marriage, is that it is filtered through the memory of the narrator who is entirely preoccupied with her own failure to see the truth about Rebecca. However, Maxim's words are highly melodramatic: he suggests that his sanity had been jeopardised by 'living with the devil', and recalls how Rebecca had stood on the mountainside in Monaco 'tearing a flower to bits in her hands' in a theatrical ultimatum about their marriage. Maxim also divulges that he had thoughts of killing Rebecca on the precipice, which 'would have been so easy' (p. 305). The reader must consider the possibility that Maxim's demonisation of his late wife may be primarily the product of his violent antipathy towards her.

Context
Faust, aka
Faustus. Th
of medieva
Western li
music. It is
astrologer
bargain fo
infinite kn
famous tre
Goethe's e
Christophe
tragedy ***Th***
and Death

According to Maxim's testimony, he was prepared to live for a decade with a wo
for the sake of his family home and reputation. However, he also reveals that he
making the great improvements that Rebecca made to the house and grounds. A
loves Manderley, his love seems to have been of the personal, sentimental kind: h
open its doors to the public, and under his watch it may very well have sunk into
gain from his words is that in certain important respects Maxim is a weak man, a
woman whose affairs with other men may have reflected her contempt for her h

Mrs Danvers and Rebecca

Mrs Danvers has 'had the care' of Rebecca since the latter's childhood, and the tw
272). However, Mrs Danvers' devotion seems to have been based on living vicario
social aptitude, her devil-may-care sportsmanship and her sexual conquests. Mrs D
ruthlessly efficient as the head housekeeper at Manderley, and she owes her posit
ex-mistress's loyalty.

However, it emerges in the course of the narrative (at least, according to the nar
Danvers has not really understood the relationship between Maxim and Rebecca
haunted by Rebecca's vengeful ghost on account of his remarrying. This delusion
otherwise aberrant nature of Mrs Danvers' feelings for Rebecca, most notably he
such as her nightdress, in the state they were on the night she died. Similarly, M
one could ever get the better of Rebecca and that Maxim cannot help but still lov
testimony about her murder. It is probable that the housekeeper's assessment o
by her own eccentricity and her sentimental attachment to Rebecca as a child. M
'the sea was too strong for her [Rebecca]', but the notion that she might have be
housekeeper's mind (p. 273). During Favell's blackmail attempt, she is clearly sh
Rebecca's murder is revealed to her.

If it is possible to conclude one thing from the above, it is that Mrs Danvers was n
The younger woman may have provided some inspiration and excitement for the
but this is hard to assess; if Mrs Danvers' apparent rejection of the world of men
supposed contempt of the opposite sex, with whom 'she [only] had a right to am
Danvers gained by knowing Rebecca (p. 382)? The net effect of what we learn ab
relationship is that it leaves Rebecca more unknowable than ever.

The narrator and Maxim

In Chapter Six of the novel, after Maxim's proposal of marriage, the narrator reca
possible relationship, one of which has involved nursing him back to health. Whe
later in their lives in exile, the narrator's daydream seems to have predicted the f
bed-ridden hospital patient, with even some indication of losing his faculties.

> He is wonderfully patient and never complains, not even when he rememb
> rather more than he would have me know. (p. 5)

The couple are content to be together, leading a dull, routine-led life in small hot
recognised by friends and acquaintances from England. They are seeking to min
guilt about Rebecca's murder and the loss of Manderley. Yet, if the narrator can
face even reading aloud an article on wood pigeons, the reader must question w
overcome the guilt at the source of their suffering (p. 7).

8 Maxim's unease and ultimate failure in his patriarchal role as master of Manderley may be compatible with a more general trait amon
Light represent 'a modern masculinity no longer entirely at ease with itself'. See: Alison Light, Forever England: Femininity, Literature a
York: Routledge, 1991), p. 169.

For most of the ensuing narrative, the relationship between the couple is marked
general sense of incompatibility. In Monte Carlo Maxim is by turns detached and
absorbed and naïve narrator is nonetheless astute enough to recognise that there
Maxim's proposal, and that she doesn't belong in Maxim's world. This will turn o
Maxim will be banished from English polite society after Manderley is destroyed.

It is fair to conclude that the narrator marries Maxim for three reasons: to be free o
Hopper; as a response to Maxim's kindness and the fact that he has made her feel a
Carlo; and the prospect of living at Manderley, the great house that she bought a po
motivation that seems the deepest, as the narrator believes her marriage will be th
had when she bought the postcard. The thought of just seeing Manderley fills the n

> He wanted to show me Manderley ... My mind ran riot then, figures came be
> picture... (p. 59)

Taking into consideration how Manderley is a priority for both Maxim and the na
Rebecca, having exercised control at Manderley both in life and in spirit, is the ob
must be destroyed. The couple cannot have a life together otherwise.

The marriage is at first not that dissimilar to what it will eventually become in the
domesticity, with much of the narrative taken up with descriptions of Manderley.
With the exception of Maxim's at first inexplicable outbursts, their married life se
change occurs when Rebecca's murder is revealed and the couple enter into their
The narrator describes her surge of passion after the initial shock of Maxim's disc

> My hands were cold no longer. They were clammy, warm. I felt a wave of c
> throat. My cheeks were burning hot. (p. 301)

The knowledge that Maxim will depend on her for his very liberty spurs the narra
act to date. She has to reassure Maxim that she loves him and will stand by him,

> I went and knelt beside him. He sat very still for a moment. I took his hand
> looked into his eyes. 'I love you,' I whispered, 'I love you. Will you believe m

It is Maxim's crime that truly unites the couple, and they become in effect bonde
the narrator's heightened passion become more striking: she wishes the blackma
book or play where 'we should have shot Favell, hidden his body in a cupboard' (p
romantic image of Maxim bidding her farewell from a departing ship, 'a fraction o
seconds' (p. 390). Her flights of imagination are now focused on Maxim instead o
restaurant after the visit to Dr Baker and the revelation of Rebecca's illness, the n
homelier type, even encouraging Maxim not to worry about Mrs Danvers' disapp
This seems to predict the style of companionship the couple can expect in future

Ultimately, however, the narrator will never 'learn bit by bit to control the house'
Manderley is burnt to the ground. The narrator's nightmare about Rebecca en ro
original Mrs de Winter, in that respect, is the victor.

Maxim and Frank

When the narrator first meets Frank Crawley, he is evidently relieved at Maxim's cho
learn much later in the narrative that Rebecca attempted to seduce Frank, and that
in the matter. Clearly, Frank recognises that the narrator is no destructive sexual pre
that he prioritises. He clearly sees his destiny and his happiness as dependent upon
later that 'none of us want to bring back the past, … and it's up to you, you know, to

In contemporary parlance, Frank has Maxim's back. In conversation, he only tells th
needs to know, which explains his reluctance to talk about Rebecca. In his role as a
run the estate without involving the narrator, as when they arrange the Fancy Dres
want her to assume control of household affairs the way Rebecca did. Nonetheless
marriage on track. He supports the narrator at the ball after Maxim's reaction to th
and explain Maxim's disappearance the following morning. Frank is also shocked a
narrator tells him by phone that her marriage to Maxim is a mistake as he still loves
as he does, Frank also realises how his friend's behaviour would strike the narrator

In the crisis after Rebecca's corpse is discovered, Frank remains generally cool-head
Colonel Julyan he appears overly anxious to explain Maxim's 'very natural' mistake
corpse as Rebecca's (p. 332). He also betrays some anxiety when he drives the narr
inquest at Lanyon. However, we never know for sure whether, as the narrator beli
Rebecca's murder. In this respect Frank's character remains ambiguous. He seems
suggests they consider Favell's blackmail demands, but by diligently retrieving Dr Ba
revealing a possible motive for Rebecca's murder: an extra-marital pregnancy. How
urges Frank to track down the doctor, and there is a moment of hesitation before F

Ultimately, Frank offers Maxim the type of reliable support that no one else can
Colonel Julyan also assists the de Winters beyond the call of duty. It is Frank who
the disappearance of Mrs Danvers, after having tried unsuccessfully to delay her
London the narrator is complacent that all troubles lie behind them, but Maxim
instincts and heads home.

The de Winters and Beatrice

If one character relationship unites the de Winters aside from their attitude to Rebe
Lacy as a well-meaning nuisance. It is not entirely fair. Maxim's sister has been abl
with Rebecca in a dignified manner, and seeks to protect the narrator from any fall
This is most evident in the support she offers the narrator regarding the matter of t
the narrator's late appearance concocted between Giles, Frank and herself for the e
claims also to have reassured Maxim that his wife was not playing a cruel prank to s
is correct to observe that Beatrice doesn't understand the younger woman's lack of
attend the ball in another dress. Her lack of tact also creates small barriers betwee
Maxim recoils at her candour about his health when she first visits the newly married couple, while the narrator dreads the thought of a raucous Christmas spent at the Lacys'. Beatrice's last words in the narrative confirm the couple's feeling that her lack of tact and insight, as well as her 'breeding', can be a liability. Beatrice phones Manderley, beside herself at the report of the suicide verdict on Rebecca, as it is 'so bad for the family', even resorting to an absurd theory that Rebecca's boat must have been sabotaged by a communist tramp (p. 398). After Beatrice is cut off, Maxim and the narrator ignore the inevitable follow-up call, holding one another, neither wishing for nor needing Beatrice's offers of assistance.

Class activity

Consider the character relationships in the novel, and make a list of them
positive' to 'least positive', and give your evidence for your categorisation
about how Du Maurier portrays character relationships in general in *Rebe*

Genre

***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA A (AO3), exploring how literary texts may be informed by different inter*

Rebecca can be located within the canon of Gothic fiction, with a romance eleme such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Conversely, Lisa Tuttle has identified *R* modern Gothic romance that became popular in the 1960s and 1970s:[9] popular ti *Shuttered Room* (1966), *The House That Fear Built* (1966) by Cassandra Knye and Eden. *Rebecca* includes many of the most recognisable trappings of Gothic literat its precursors and influential upon the modern Gothic romance. These include a labyrinthine layout, apparent supernatural occurrences, family secrets, dead bodi villainy, and an eponymous character who haunts the narrative as though she is a

Gothic literature is also marked by an ambiguity of moral message, and the diffic terms of their actions. Maxim and the narrator are presented as acting under th (Rebecca's murder and the discovery of her corpse) and under the emotional pre love any more or less destructive than Jane and Rochester's, or Catherine and He

Specifically in relation to its narrator, *Rebecca* can also be read as a coming-of-age drama, or *Bildungsroman,* albeit one re-enacted in her memory. Such novels are concerned with young protagonists who acquire maturity through often difficult experiences. James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*[10] is arguably the most famous example of this in the English language, but many German authors have written famous works in this genre. However, in keeping with the Gothic character of *Rebecca*, the reader might be left questioning the moral value of the narrator's development. From an apparently innocent young woman, has she become someone who can sanction or even carry out murder? Relatedly, the novel can also be sub-categor Gothic', a term used in connection with the works of the Brontë sisters. These n explorations of relationships between men and women, with Gothic trappings su

Key Term
Gothic fiction
Genre of writing that originated in the eighteenth century and is characterised by a preoccupation with literary elements such as mystery, fraught and ill-fated romantic or familial relationships, large and remote houses and sinister, secretive characters.

Rebecca can also be considered a suspenseful, psychological novel with a 'ghost story' element, not dissimilar to Henry James' Gothic novella, *The Turn of the Screw.*[11] The 'suspense' element in *Rebecca* is supplied by her dramatic and fearful imagination, and the mystery and hidden motives she ascribes to Maxim ar wonders with the narrator what harm th times menacing characters are capable o story' element is again the product of the fixation upon Rebecca's ongoing influenc

Essential elements of Gothic Fiction

- Sense of foreboding
- Remote or isolated setting
- Hero and villain characters
- References to death and decay
- Dreams and visions
- Supernatural occurences
- Heroines in peril
- Intensity of emotion
- Dramatic events

Conte
The pop modern 1960s o the Can Harlequ genres concent

9 David Pringle (ed.), St James Guide to Horror, Ghost and Gothic Writers (Detroit: St James Press, 1998), p. 69.

10 James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916).

11 Henry James, The Turn of the Screw (London: Heinemann, 1898).

Rebecca and Jane Eyre

Du Maurier's novel invites immediate comparison with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane E* stylistic and thematic similarities, are narrated by the female protagonists and ar fiction written by female authors. Points on which the two novels are similar an

Points of similarity

- Both narratives are told in the first person and the past tense. Both authors allow the narrators to share their detailed feelings and thoughts at the time
- Both protagonists undergo a great deal of introspection on the subject of na
- Both protagonists are insecure about their looks, and doubt that they are w
- Shared themes of Gothic fiction, most notably a romantic relationship threa past, and the use of the supernatural to lend the story suspense.
- In both novels, the 'supernatural' events are revealed to have a practical ex
- Similarity in storylines, particularly concerning the role of the mysterious fo provides the major twists in the plots.
- Rebecca and Bertha are both archetypes of liberated women who defy soci order.
- The romantic relationships involve older men with complicated pasts and yo lower social class who are both orphans. However, neither woman is an ob
- Maxim and Rochester cannot countenance divorce from Rebecca and Berth damage their family name and standing in the community.
- Both novels are set in large country houses. Additionally, Thornfield and Ma fire at the conclusion of both narratives.
- Bertha Mason and Mrs Danvers are both 'madwomen', seemingly driven ov confinement.
- Both novels use suicide as a plot line – Bertha in *Jane Eyre* and Rebecca in *R* the central romantic relationships in both novels.

Points of difference

- *Rebecca* has a cyclical narrative, whereas *Jane Eyre* has a narrative that is or
- Jane Eyre behaves according to her conscience upon learning of Rochester's narrator's loyalty to Maxim is strengthened after the details of Rebecca's m
- The narrator in *Rebecca* is driven for much of the story by her jealousy of he considered an unreliable narrator to varying degrees. Jane Eyre does not di aberration, and is arguably the more reliable and sympathetic character.
- *Jane Eyre* incorporates the title character's childhood into the narrative, wh experiences from her early twenties, with only fleeting childhood reminisce
- Rochester's character is redeemed by his injuries, while the loss of Manderl and living in exile, thus serving as punishment for Rebecca's murder.

Contextual Informati

Rebecca's literary legacy

Du Maurier's novel has left its ow two sequels: Susan Hill's Mrs de W Rebecca's Tale *(2001). There is a 1960s,* The Other Rebecca *(1996)*

12 Charlotte Brontë (as Currer Bell), Jane Eyre (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1847).

Themes

***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA Assessm the novel's major themes and how these contribute to the reader's overall inte*

Exile

The question about the de Winters' exile remains to what extent is it voluntary o escape from punishment or persecution?

On the one hand, it is clearly linked to the de Winters' forced withdrawal from th whose Happy Valley is a miniature reflection of paradise. However, the couple a fire, and their retreat to a Mediterranean island is not fully explained. If Colonel anything to go by, their future in the county would not have been compromised magistrate planned to take steps to protect them from malicious rumour and go

At the start of Chapter Two, the narrator suggests that their prolonged exile is of

> We can never go back again, that much is certain. The past is still too close tried to forget and put behind us would stir again... (p. 5)

Although the crisis caused by Rebecca's case is over, the original advice given by aren't there to be talked about, the talk dies' seems to have been taken to an ex

The theme of exile is also applicable to Rebecca's presence at Manderley, literally s Reviens' ('I return') written on the buoy in the harbour. The words foreshadow the quest for revenge, when Mrs Danvers tells the narrator 'she's still mistress here, ev

More generally, the position of Manderley itself as an idealised home relegates a to the status of exiles. In this respect, Rebecca's 'exile' also extends to her cousi whose underhand visit to Mrs Danvers infuriates Maxim; not that this prevents F execute his plan of blackmail. Ben has also been threatened with exile to an asyl Giles avoid Manderley for a time when Rebecca is alive, after the latter's seducti of Favell, these are sympathetic characters whose potential exclusion from Man place does not deserve its good reputation.

Social class

The theme of social class is prominent in *Rebecca*. One broad interpretation of th climactic destruction of Manderley is a metaphor for the decline of the aristocrac arrangements it produced. By the novel's conclusion, Maxim certainly seems dim avoid friends and acquaintances in foreign hotels; conversely, the narrator ends u that at the outset of her story with Mrs Van Hopper, as she is leading an itinerant However, the narrator's shifting and variable attitude to class allows for a more c

Early in the Monte Carlo section of the narrative, the narrator highlights the sign Hopper's employment by reflecting: 'I wonder what my life would be today, if M snob' (p. 12). This is a revealing statement, because the narrator knows that her upon upward mobility. Maxim is at his most manipulative when reinforcing this Hopper in her attempt to lend him the narrator's services as his valet with 'a gho At their first breakfast together, Maxim is keen to discourage conversation abou his social 'importance': he insists that the narrator calls him Maxim as his family proposal scene that he wants to show her Manderley. In this way, he skilfully na between them while keeping the young woman's obvious interest in Manderley

On returning to England as Maxim's wife, the narrator longs to be part of the frien to Manderley. Her trepidation at the prospect of her life among the upper classes her time at Manderley. Maxim, from his position of privilege, believes that being to worry about; however, the class expectations of others, staff and guests, cause difficulty. The sympathetic Beatrice makes a telling point about the narrator's clo didn't spend some time in London buying a new wardrobe. The handmaid Alice's chemise causes the narrator to pay more attention to her under-linen, and at one that she is more like a 'between-maid' than the mistress of a grand house: such c classification of a domestic servant in itself suggests that the narrator is acutely cla manage the household routine or to exercise her newfound class superiority irrita neither understands nor cares about the issues of identity and alienation caused b

The narrator is clearly deeply affected by her sense of 'not belonging', most nota dress. When Beatrice tries to coax her into returning to the ball, she attributes h breeding (p. 245).

> I felt I had forfeited her sympathy by my refusal to go down. I had shown t She had not understood. She belonged to another breed of men and women had guts, the women of her race. (p. 245)

The narrator fully realises that she is out of her element in social terms. However, she retains a detached perspective on the foibles of the upper classes, such as Beatrice and Grandmother de Winter's conversation about horses and dogs, which are of greater interest to the country set than people. Like the idea of the ball, the interest in horses recalls the pursuits of the Victorian upper classes, and this suggests that the de Winters themselves are anachronistic. The routine nature of the visit to the ailing old woman, something undertaken through a sense of duty, i the narrator identifies with those of the de Winters' class. The preposterous attrib malicious communist vagrant is only the most obvious manifestation of Beatrice's

Recalling the ball, the narrator suggests that class relations are both absurd and y British society, when she describes the ritual of observing the national anthem: 't though wiped clean by a sponge' at the sound of the preliminary drum roll (p. 25 ritual as by the largely anonymous guests who shake her hand and offer return i leave. This stands in stark contrast to the narrator's feelings at the beach when s young son, and admits that 'I wished I could lose my own identity and join them'

Ultimately, however, the narrator is apt to be seduced by the trappings of wealth Manderley. After returning from the beach she realises 'with a funny feeling of b was my home, I belonged there, and Manderley belonged to me' (p. 291). After corpse, her sense of ownership begins to extend to the household staff, who she the narrator still questions the stratification of human relations within Manderle and to discuss the inquest into Rebecca's death, they have to wait until Frith leav meal before discussing it. The narrator reflects 'how much easier it would be if w him join in with us, if he had anything to say' (p. 330). Later, she does listen to Fr death, but merely out of politeness. The narrator's attitude to class and wealth p other inconsistencies in her character.

The relationship between Mrs Danvers and Jack Favell also invites a critique of so Danvers, the ever efficient and loyal housekeeper, paradoxically admires Favell a rebellion and resents the narrator for usurping her mistress's place. We learn th of the navy for indiscipline. The narrator states that he made her feel 'like a barr that his charm would succeed with shop assistants and cinema usherettes (p. 18 the narrator's own possibly unconscious class prejudices.

Ultimately, the narrator is implicated alongside the network of local influential p
her determination to preserve Maxim de Winter's reputation despite his crime.
that Maxim would be protected 'because you've dined with him, and he's dined
as Maxim is sure that Julyan is aware of his guilt of Rebecca's murder (p. 373). T
steer clear of Manderley and the county, and without the vengeful hand of Mrs D
certainly have returned to their life of privilege and status.

Love through the ages

The initial breakfast meeting between Maxim and the narrator shows an emotio
to make a connection with an impressionable young woman. As presented by th
within the context of an older man's need for a young wife. The question which
narrative, is whether Maxim's initial courtship is primarily a social requirement o

Maxim shows an interest in her work, compliments her upon her 'lovely and unu
family, and tries to inject some humour into their conversation (p. 25). The narra
sympathetic brother figure; he, in turn is clearly attracted to her youthful innoce
older doesn't meet with his approval. However, the subtext to the conversation
asks her whether she has ever considered her future, and how precarious her rel
might be. In telling the narrator that she has made a mistake by seeking employ
implying she can alter the future course of her life, Maxim boosts her self-esteem
romantic outings in the car.

The narrator, for her part, finds her new association glamorous and exciting, and
moment of their time together. On the hillside she observes how distracted he i
quick to accept his strange behaviour as a momentary lapse when he apologises.
emotions by sharing intricate details about the grounds of Manderley, knowing t
This pattern of behaviour will recur later after he confesses to Rebecca's murder
emotional response from the narrator by demonstrating passion on the one han
will not be able to love him any more on the other. In short, given the reader's u
objectivity, the possibility that Maxim could be manipulating her emotionally at t
vulnerable has to be considered.

Discussion prompt 1
Is the de Winters' relationship comparable to others with an age gap that you have read about in your studies? In what ways does it differ?

The narrator describes her feelings for Ma
unconditional. Her brief recap of their Eur
as a changed man from the secretive and i
Carlo, 'more tender than I had dreamed, y
happy ways' (p. 76). However, we see no e
Manderley as Maxim returns to his 'orderl
estate. The narrator's tolerance of this situ
reader, especially when she acknowledges
patronising affection towards her that she
first century reader would find the narrato
indicative of a dysfunctional, unequal relationship. Maxim's paranoid outbursts,
occasions where his dark secret is touched upon, reinforces that impression. An
accuses Maxim of marrying her because she is dull and safe and unlikely to attra

> His face was dark and queer, and his voice was rough, not his voice at all.
> ... 'What do you know about any gossip down here?' he said.
> 'I don't,' I said, scared by the way he looked at me.
> ... 'It was not a particularly attractive thing to say, was it?' he said.
> 'No,' I said. 'No, it was rude, hateful.' (pp. 162–163)

This attempt to scare his young wife is calculated bullying, but Maxim also revea
between them, suggesting that she might be happier with someone of her own a
explain her love to Maxim, he doesn't seem to listen, even suggesting that life at
appearance. The relationship at this stage is marked by confusion, suspicion and
principally to blame.

What brings the couple closer together – closer to the point of mutual dependen
and the lovers' conspiracy which the narrator sets in motion by stating the need
Rebecca's body. Coming immediately after his confession, however, Maxim's su
onset of passion towards his young wife after a honeymoon abroad and three m
desperate, murmuring my name' – is sure to arouse the reader's suspicions abou
passionate embraces and Maxim's self-portrayal as Rebecca's victim are bound t
wife driven to despair by the thought of her husband's rejection. In fact, the rea
Maxim's behaviour is entirely selfish even if he is pessimistic about Rebecca's mu
with possible trial and execution for Rebecca's murder, Maxim's display of affect
signal his need for an heir to ensure that Manderley remains in the de Winters' n

In the event, the narrator's devotion to Maxim knows few, if any, moral boundari
reject Maxim, as Jane does Rochester in *Jane Eyre* after the dark secret of Bertha'
have overwhelmed the narrator's already imperfect capacity for rational thought. Certainly, the clarity of thought behind her suggestions for the cover-up is questionable: her idea that Maxim should explain his original misidentification of Rebecca's corpse on grounds of illness, and her explanation for the boat capsizing are weak. Love notwithstanding, it's also possible to attribute the narrator's suggestions, and Maxim's indifferent response to them, to her immaturity and the age gap within the marriage.

Contextual Information

*Maxim's manipulative side, his mo
bullying of the narrator, may sugg
with a Bluebeard-type character. C
century French folk tale 'Bluebeard
brutish nobleman who murdered h
attempted to escape such a fate. Al
proves to be a very different chara
sinister behaviour towards his you
about Rebecca may suggest that th
one of Bluebeard's wives. The narr
the death is in stark contrast to the*

The 'other woman'

The theme of the 'other woman' dominates *Rebecca* from the moment that the n
dedication from Maxim's book of poems. Du Maurier strives to make the presen
possible. Perhaps Rebecca's spirit is unknowingly felt by the narrator when she m
hand' seems to come to life when the narrator is holding it. By showing the narr
Danvers denies Maxim that opportunity, taking the romance out of the new Mrs

In the library, seated in Rebecca's chair, the narrator feels Rebecca's presence w
head against her knee. Jasper is anticipating the sugar lump that Rebecca used t
awareness of Rebecca increases further when she observes the expertly chosen d
guest records in the morning room, and recognises her own inadequacy in mana
narrator feels Rebecca's presence more intimately when she finds that she has b
while walking in Manderley's grounds; she then discovers Rebecca's monogramm
with smudges of lipstick and a scent of azaleas. By showing Rebecca's abiding in
barrier to the narrator's confidence as its mistress, Du Maurier makes Rebecca's
the narrator and more credible for the reader.

As the 'other woman' Rebecca becomes the narrator's unhealthy obsession, bec
undermines the narrator's sense of identity as 'Mrs de Winter'. She resists comp
visitors, but is desperate to learn more about her 'rival' from Frank Crawley, who
converse on the subject merely spurs her on. It seems, however, that this 'other
good at Manderley that the narrator assumed. Why else would Frank suggest th
and Manderley a better future?

However, the narrator remains trapped by an imagined past where Rebecca is st
she explores Rebecca's bedroom in the West Wing, it seems to belong to a living
untouched and bed made up. Already fixated upon Rebecca's ongoing influence
imagines she is actually still alive.

> For one desperate moment I thought that something had happened to my b
> into Time, and looking upon the room as it used to be, before she died ... In
> would come back into the room, sit down before the looking-glass at her dr
> tune, reach for her comb and run it through her hair. If she sat there I sho
> glass and she would see me too, standing like this by the door. Nothing hap
> there, waiting for something to happen. (p. 186)

When Mrs Danvers arrives, she confounds the narrator further by sharing her ow
lingering presence and, in her sinister manner, wonders aloud whether Rebecca
narrator and Maxim together. Sick with worry at the thought of this, the narrato
room and lie down on her bed. Clearly, the narrator's naïvety and proneness to
Mrs Danvers' evocation of Rebecca's spirit affects the narrator later in Chapter S
sound of the sea in the gallery as she prepares to face the guests at the ball.

However, Rebecca's 'ghost' only seems real to the narrator as long as Maxim lov
ball, and with Maxim's apparent rejection of her, that the narrator's sense of the
acute: she reconfigures Rebecca's features in detail, and imagines the intonation
moved well beyond mere curiosity about Rebecca to the stage where she feels h
and she needs to physically recognise her mortal enemy.

> I knew her figure now, the long slim legs, the small and narrow feet. Her sh
> the capable clever hands. Hands that could steer a boat, could hold a horse
> I could guess her laughter and her smile. (p. 262)

After Maxim's revelation that he never loved Rebecca, her power over the narrator
Well, almost. The narrator's gruesome dream about Rebecca's revenge and Maxim
Danvers' sudden disappearance from Manderley leave the reader to wonder if the

Class activity

Consider the description of Rebecca that the narrator presents in the qu
find any references to Rebecca elsewhere in the narrative that support th

Jealousy

The theme of jealousy complements that of the 'other woman' in *Rebecca*. It ha the narrative when the narrator dwells on the inscription 'Max from Rebecca' in jealousy influences many of the novel's characters. The narrator is jealous of Reb loves her; Rebecca is jealous of Maxim, or at least his future happiness without h love for Rebecca, is certainly suffering sexual jealousy as a result of her affairs at his need to confront her with Favell at the cottage on the night of the murder; M and possibly jealous of the narrator for usurping Rebecca's role at Manderley, a housekeeper has taken vicarious pleasure; and Jack Favell is jealous of Maxim fo Rebecca. In addition, Mrs Van Hopper's reaction to the news of Maxim's marria hint of jealous resentment towards her young companion.

The second plot twist in *Rebecca*, that of Rebecca's deception about Maxim's ille theme of jealousy and how it underlies the interactions of the main characters in Maxim with a threat to his lineage and the future ownership of Manderley. Max resorted to aggressive emotional blackmail, pitting Maxim's desire for a son and preserve the de Winters' tenure at Manderley.

> 'You would enjoy it, wouldn't you, seeing my son lying in his pram under t leap-frog on the lawn, catching butterflies in the Happy Valley? It would g your life, wouldn't it, Max, to watch my son grow bigger day by day, and to this would be his?' (p. 313)

Maxim's dramatic reaction to the threat proves that Rebecca is a practised mani emotions. It is also possible to include Favell among those manipulated, as his b marry invites open scorn from her confidante Mrs Danvers. There is also the ma arrange an urgent meeting with Favell at the cottage on the night of the murder. Maxim's motive for murdering Rebecca, he clearly does not *know* the purpose b the reader, however, that Rebecca would have wanted Favell at the cottage to le emotional blackmail with Maxim.

Discussion prompt 2
Discuss Jack Favell's role in the novel. To what extent does he conform to your idea of an archetypal literary villain?

The plot twist that develops from Favell's blackmail attempt also illuminates Maxim feelings for the narrator. Favell, like Rebe manages to provoke Maxim into an act o violence, when he insinuates that Frank Crawley will provide the narrator with a 'fraternal arm' when Maxim is sentenced death (p. 376). This shows Maxim experi sexual jealousy, but also demonstrates th cares for his wife's honour. Perhaps this indicates to the reader that unlike Fave and indeed the narrator for much of the story – Maxim's sense of honour prever from entirely succumbing to jealousy concerning those he loves.

Attitudes and Values

***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the A Objective (AO3), exploring contexts in which literary texts are writ*

Social class

As the daughter of a wealthy and renowned Arts family who was married to an a social attitudes are unlikely to have been clear-cut. This is borne out by the narra it presents a challenge to the established order of Manderley and the de Winters of contention. Do Rebecca, Danvers and Favell 'triumph' with the destruction of just creatures of malice and resentment, capable of only the most hollow of victo

Just as there is no clear answer to this question, nor can we presume Du Maurier' narrator and Maxim. It is presumptuous to equate Du Maurier with her nameles particularly as the author considered her novel very objectively to be a study in j Browning has stated that Rebecca and the narrator were developed from dual at character: Rebecca from Du Maurier's love of sailing and country pursuits, and th shyness and reclusive, home-loving tendencies.[13] That being the case, the reade narrator's aversion to the intrusive guests and cronyism associated with life at M generally – reflects the author's own attitude to such things.

Marriage

If we accept the possibility of a parallel between Du Maurier and her nameless n author's slightly diffident attitude towards marriage. When the narrator tells Ma men marry' and struggles to explain why that might be, she is rejecting the conce and expected life choice for a young woman (p. 57). Conversely, she also finds M proposal bewildering and disappointing, having a young girl's fantasy of suitors f moonlight. However, despite this, the narrator doesn't seem to really feel the ro imagining how other people might judge the news of the marriage.

> Romantic, that was the word I had tried to remember coming up in the lift. That was what people would say. It was all very sudden and romantic. (p. 6

Clearly, the narrator wishes to reflect with objectivity on her youthful confusion a the later stage of her marriage to Maxim is dictated by routine and privation, it is major factor in the marriage.

Exter
Discuss
values
marria

The values of the upper classes also shape the subject of marriage in *Rebecca*. Maxim's 'bargain' with his first wife, to turn a blind eye to her romantic assignations in London in return for her input in running Manderley, can be seen as expedient. The estate takes precedence over love and emotional honesty. However, Maxim's very reasons for marrying Rebecca in the first place are shown to be flawed. The foundations of the marriage are those prized by the upper-class esta grandmother, who advises him that Rebecca fits the perfect formula for a wife.

> '"She's got the three things that matter in a wife," she told me: "breeding, believed her, or forced myself to believe her. But all the time I had a seed o mind. There was something about her eyes...' (p. 304)

13 'Daphne du Maurier always said her novel Rebecca was a study in jealousy.' The Telegraph online, 17th August 2013, Christian House < http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10248724/Daphne-du-Maurier-always-said-her-novel-Rebecca-was-a-study-in-

Maxim expresses some satisfaction that he was able to keep his side of the barga
'something about her eyes'. And this seems to be the template for his marriage
deal to protect one another throughout the inquest and, according to the narrat
leaving England never to return is what binds them together in exile. The marria
being dependent upon one another.

Maxim and the narrator's marriage is ultimately made to seem worth protecting
against it (Rebecca in spirit, Mrs Danvers and Jack Favell) or judging it with hostil
unsympathetic or reprehensible. The conclusion to be drawn from Du Maurier's
understand a marriage but the two people in it.

Comparative reading:
Discuss the role of nature in another text you have studied. How does it affect cha

Town and country

The narrator's attitude towards life in the countryside is more positive than her e
areas. She has negative memories from her childhood in London of the sound of
doesn't seem to enjoy anything about her time in Monte Carlo until Maxim takes
visit to Kerrith for Maxim's inquest, she seems entirely out of sorts, requiring the
the courthouse. Conversely, she longs to be part of the village life she witnesses
when she reaches the estate she seems most at ease on the grounds or down at

In addition, Du Maurier's narrative tends to cast the town or city in a negative ligh
living city types. Maxim tells the narrator of Rebecca 'driving to London, streakin
like an animal to its hole in the ditch, coming back here at the end of the week, af
(p. 307). Favell is out partying into the small hours when Rebecca's final summon
the de Winters and Colonel Julyan visit Dr Baker in London, the narrator finds the

> There was a smell of waste-paper, and orange peel, and feet, and burnt drie
> slowly, and taxis crawled. I felt as though my coat and skirt were sticking t
> pricked my skin. (p. 405)

The slow process of getting through London seems to exhaust all and sundry. Dr
décor also draw criticism from the visitors, as though people in the city put less t
than those in the country.

Colonel Julyan's warning to Favell is couched in terms that suggest the latter's m
urban lifestyle.

> Blackmail is not much of a profession, Mr Favell. And we know how to deal
> world, strange though it may seem to you. (p. 416)

The magistrate's words articulate a sense of 'them and us' in the contemporary B
between city and country dwellers, a division that still exists to this day. He also
likely to be marked by conservative social attitudes and a concerted response to
country districts' (p. 417). Du Maurier was a private person, and these words ma
for her. However, she knew such districts well, and her own preference for coun
influence upon unfavourable attitudes towards towns and cities in *Rebecca.*

Structure, Form and Language

Structure

> ***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate
> Assessment Objective (AO2), considering the organisation of
> narrative and how this might shape the reader's interpretati*

Rebecca is structured as a circular or cyclical narrative. The narrative begins in th
taken through the past events that have led the narrator and Maxim into their se

The structure of the novel can also be subdivided into sections to reflect the dra
can be listed under the following event descriptors: 1. Initial situation 2. Conflic
Climax 6. Denouement 7. Conclusion. These events do not have to occur strictl
layout shows how the novel's events are ordered.

Exile and Monte Carlo

1. [**Initial situation: exile and remembering Monte Carlo**] *The couple me*
   Manderley while asleep in the hotel in which she and Maxim are living,
   story of how they met in Monte Carlo. Their whirlwind romance frees th
   and misery of being Mrs Van Hopper's paid companion. Although more
   than Maxim, the narrator has a life of comfort and prestige waiting for

Manderley and mystery of Rebecca

2. [**Conflict: Rebecca**] *The narrator's jealousy.* The narrator's disquiet about
   roots in Monte Carlo when she sees Rebecca's dedication in Maxim's boo
   with her scissors. This seems to stem from the narrator's unease that Ma
   in love with her despite his proposal. However, in the unfamiliar milieu
   conscious narrator imagines that everyone is comparing her unfavoura
   have been universally admired. The hostile presence of the death-like M
   and Rebecca's most loyal ally, makes Rebecca's presence at Manderley s
   narrator, undermining her confidence still further.
3. [**Complication: the narrator's costume for the ball**] *The narrator attem*
   unwitting choice of Rebecca's costume, maliciously prompted by Mrs Da
   paranoid reaction to the sight of it, seems to be the first sure sign of a c
   episode is highly ironic, as having tried to free herself from her unhealt
   Rebecca by staging the ball, the narrator ends up feeling even more hau
   After the episode, the narrator believes her marriage has no future.
4. [**Climax: the narrator's confrontation with Mrs Danvers**] *The narrato*
   light of the affair about the costume, the tensions within the household
   narrator confronts an increasingly deranged Mrs Danvers in Rebecca's l
   manages to manipulate the narrator's own self-doubt about her future a
   know that he is still tormented by his love for Rebecca. The housekeepe
   narrator to jump to her death from the bedroom window, in order to sp
   pretending to love her and herself the pain of a love unrequited.

Manderley and Rebecca revealed

5. [**Suspense: Maxim's admission and the narrator's complicity**] *Will th* discovery of Rebecca's body, Maxim's admission to Rebecca's murder co godsend to the narrator. Believing now that Rebecca was unworthy of a importantly, that Maxim hated her, the narrator can focus upon being a This involves colluding with her husband in whatever cover story will k suspense of the story lies in the narrator's own perception of the events beyond that can threaten Maxim's liberty.
6. [**Denouement: Favell's blackmail attempt**] *A disputed suicide.* After the suicide verdict on Rebecca's death, Favell's attempted blackmail leads th Julyan to London and Dr Baker, who reveals that Rebecca had terminal c Winters with supporting evidence for Rebecca's suicide. Rebecca's final explained by him as a deliberate, vindictive provocation to commit mur happiness with another woman at Manderley, and to spare her the furth with her illness.
7. [**Conclusion: Manderley in flames**] *Rebecca's revenge.* When Maxim's ph Mrs Danvers has disappeared from Manderley with her possessions, the Manderley only to discover it aflame in the distance. Although never ex assume Mrs Danvers' involvement, possibly with the help of Jack Favell beforehand. However, Mrs Danvers had departed Manderley through its finale lends itself to other interpretation. Was the fire a supernatural ac spirit of Rebecca? And what happened to the other household staff? The Manderley at the start of the novel are lacking in any detail about the ca are only concerned with its consequences for Maxim and herself.

The structure of *Rebecca* as shown above has events in this order:

1. Initial situation
2. Conflict
3. Complication
4. Climax
5. Suspense
6. Denouement
7. Conclusion

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The element of suspense follows the climax to the conflict, a variation to the logical succession of events.

Key Term
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The beginning and conclusion of the novel involve before-and-after perspectives on the fire at Manderley, thereby privileging this as the central narrative event. The chronological structure of the novel is also noteworthy. As well as the narrative taking the form of a flashback, the narrative present occurs a full generation after the main events of the story: the protagonist is entering middle age and looking back to her early twenties. This reflects the novel's thematic interest in love through the ages, and how and why it might endure in the face of extreme adversity.

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Comparative reading:
Have you identified a chronological structure of note in any other novels you have

Form: Narrative voice

***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA Assessm how the reader's interpretation of literary texts can be shaped by the type of n and the author's manipulation of different perspectives through which the nar*

Extended essay question 1
Discuss the effectiveness of Du Maurier's narrative strategy in *Rebecca*.

Rebecca is narrated in the first per Maurier uses free indirect narratio remember her detailed feelings an took place. It is noteworthy that t shared with another character or c written down as a memoir.

The protagonist, therefore, while having a limited point of view, would not seem there is no one to lie *to*. The question remains, however, whether she should be narrator, as she appears to be deceiving herself, principally by her inability to ob Indeed it is not clear, given how uncritical she is of Maxim, why she cannot share with him. Does she have reason to expect his hostile reaction, or does she feel t Rebecca in detail? Whatever the case, after reading the whole story, it is hard to outset that 'we have no secrets now from one another' (p. 6). The reader would wife who can forgive her husband for committing murder might not question too her, and whether his own account of Rebecca's behaviour is justified.

Exposing flaws in the narrator's perception or judgement is not the only reason D free indirect narration. The narrator's limited point of view also suits the Gothic suspense are essential to a successful plot. The sense of a supernatural presence experiences at Manderley is always explicable in natural terms, but it is effective she is going through. An example of this is when she opens a door in the musty, the beach where Rebecca was killed.

> There was another door at the end of the room, and I went to it, and opene little afraid, for I had that odd, uneasy feeling that I might come upon some no wish to see. Something that might harm me, that might be horrible. (p.

Of course, had the narrator been on the premises six months earlier, she might h over Rebecca's corpse. That is the natural explanation for her acute perception said, the narrator's highly strung personality has already been evident in a not di standing outside the door of the morning room with her new in-laws inside, with uncertainty' (p. 103). The narrative voice in *Rebecca* allows for both the narrator explanations for what she perceives as supernatural occurrences.

Language

> ***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA Assessm*
> *exploring cultural contexts in which literary texts are written and received. Ho*
> *AQA Assessment Objective (AO4), exploring possible connections across litera*

Rebecca contains symbolism, figurative language and allusions that illuminate th
preoccupations.

Symbolism

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Rhododendrons and the colour red
The vivid red rhododendrons are a powerful symbol of Rebecca's presence at Manderley. On the long winding driveway to the house they seem to the narrator like menacing guardians of the property.

> ... monsters, rearing to the sky, massed like a battalion, too beautiful I thought, too powerful; they were not plants at all. (p. 72).

When the narrator is inside the house in the morning room the rhododendrons a
her from outside, as though they are keeping watch on visitors to one of Rebecca'
are like some sinister omniscient force. However, the colour red is a common m
denote passion, infidelity (as in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne) and d
is also the colour of spilled blood, and all of the aforementioned meanings and th
Rebecca and symbolised in the rhododendrons. Finally, the colour red lingers in
novel's end, the fire at Manderley lighting up the horizon 'with crimson, like a sp

The two dogs
The two dogs can be seen to symbolise the division of loyalties that the narrator
Manderley. The younger dog, Jasper, is friendly and playful, although 'deliberate
for walks to the beach by the narrator (p. 170). However, he has learnt to be loy
in the household is the narrator's personal maid, Clarice. When he comes and la
knee in the library, it is because he thinks that she will give him a sugar lump as R
Jasper is a comfort to the narrator, the way she responds to the dog's affection p
parallel to how Maxim responds to her own.

The older dog, who is blind and who is never given a name, remains strikingly alo
uninterested in the narrator as Mrs Danvers is hostile. However, the dog's lack o
because it brings to her mind yet again Rebecca's lingering presence.

> He [Frank] did not notice, every day, as I did, the blind gaze of the old dog i
> who lifted its head when it heard my footstep, the footstep of a woman, an
> head again, because I was not the one she sought. (p. 154)

Such small details, which the narrator recognises as 'meaningless and stupid in th
links to Rebecca's recent past as the successful mistress of Manderley.

Rebecca's signature
Rebecca's 'curious, slanting hand' is possibly the most powerful remnant of her i
narrator seems so unnerved when she first encounters it in Maxim's book of poe
out the page and burns it in a wastepaper bin. She is 'shocked' and 'startled' to s
the morning room at Manderley (p. 94). The signature is the most powerful asse
the tall sloping 'R' that reflects her dominant personality as mistress of the house.

However, it is the manner in which the signature and handwriting is applied to the
revealing. There is impatience, even violence in the act, which hints at the turbule

Rebecca's impatience is recognisable in the careless dash of ink on the page oppos
poetry book; and she also seems to be attacking the very paper itself with the pen

> That bold, slanting hand, stabbing the white paper, the symbol of herself, s
> How many times she must have written to him thus, in how many varied moo

The fact that the term 'white paper' is used may be significant, as this expression covers legislative documents, including marriage certificates. Rebecca's handwriting throws light upon her animosity towards Maxim and possibly marriage itself. Perhaps she is striking out against authority, against the woman's place in the patriarchal world that *Man*derley, even in its very name, would seem to represent. Within that context, Rebecca's writing may indicate a dangerous, transgressive personality.

The Cupid figurine and the books

The expensive china figurine is Rebecca's wedding present and a romantic reminder of her time with Maxim. When the narrator breaks it in the morning room by clumsily stacking *her* wedding present, the heavy art books sent by Beatrice, alongside it, there are a number of symbolic interpretations the reader can make. Firstly, the broken figurine may symbolise Maxim and Rebecca's broken marriage. The toppling books symbolise the narrator having, by chance and acci
Maxim's affections: the narrator's quiet bookishness is now preferred to Rebecc
accident also symbolises the turbulence ahead in their relationship until they rea
be forgotten. Finally, the books with their prints of great art works (i.e. imitation
and deception that the couple will engage in to cover up the circumstances of Re

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Discussion prompt 2
Why do you think Rebecca installed the satyr statue on the lawn?

The satyr statue

The statue on the lawn is not unrelated to the Cupid figurine, in that it is associated with Rebecca (who had it installed) and symbolises her libidinous sexuality. The narrator does not like the statue and plans to have it removed before fate intervenes.

The postcard

The postcard of Manderley that the narrator bought as a teenager is a symbol of an idealised future. The narrator describes it as 'a premonition, a blank step into the future' (p. 59). A life at Manderley is attained with Maxim, before being lost, and the postcard's symbolic value reverts to that of something unattainable. In fact, the meaning of the postcard is transformed from the symbolic back to the literal. After the fire, Manderley has become a memory of a faraway place that can never be reached, just as a postcard can present a historical scene or place that no longer exists.

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Motif and Metaphor

A common motif in Gothic fiction is that of the isolated victim, tormented by an evil persecutor or persecutors. In *Rebecca*, the narrator is tormented by the real or imagined spirit of Rebecca and by her demented, earthly sidekick, Mrs Danvers. Another relevant Gothic motif is the Byronic hero, Maxim in *Rebecca*. This is a character with dark secrets, who often behaves in a fashion his lover finds inexplicable and troubling, but who is redeemed in her eyes by his ruthless charm and manipulative intelligence. A third Gothic motif central to *Rebecca* is the setting of a grand country house, a mansion or castle, surrounded by dramatic scenery, which metaphorically represents the hero's dark and mysterious past. The narrative contains several metaphors that serve the above motifs.

The isolated victim

On arrival at the grand house, the narrator describes feeling like a victim of an un
me as though they were the watching crowd about the block, and I the victim wi
(p. 74). The path through the woods that connects the house to the cottage and
the dangerous secret, that of Rebecca's murder, that connects the two areas of t
experiences 'a sudden unaccountable desire to run … as though someone waited
the cottage, while the overgrown path seems intent on tripping her up or blockin

The Gothic hero

The motif of the Gothic hero is served by the metaphor of the medieval 'Gentlen
the narrator's first impression of Maxim in Monte Carlo (p. 15). However, Maxin
first taste of romantic excitement: he is emotionally manipulative and dominant
His mysterious charm even allows her to forgive a moment of genuine peril when
the precipice overlooking the principality. For a moment he appears 'not norma
younger companion (p. 15). Dangerous and mysterious, Maxim wins the narrato

The mysterious house

The narrator's attempts to find her way around the labyrinthine interior of Manc
indicators of Rebecca's presence and, by association, Maxim's dark secret. While
with her in-laws, she ventures around the interior of the house in confusion, unti
and looks into an unused room in pitch blackness. The narrator imagines the roo
suggestive of secrets only half buried.

> It might be too that the curtain had not been drawn from the window since
> and if one crossed there now and pulled them aside, opening the creaking s
> had been imprisoned behind them for many months, would fall to the carpe
> forgotten pin... (p. 100)

The mention of the dead moth and pin metaphorically foreshadows the revelatio
supposedly buried for months, and Maxim's admission about the gun that he use

The narrator's later investigation of the West Wing, and Rebecca's bedroom, unc
Rebecca's room metaphorically represents the lady's very presence, with her nig
nightdress case, bedsheets and wardrobe all perfectly preserved by Mrs Danvers
at Manderley extends well beyond her bedroom. Her presence is so pervasive, t
a metaphor for it. After having a copy of Caroline de Winter's dress made for the
the stunned reaction from the guests already assembled, and Maxim's angry asto
effectively recreated Rebecca's final appearance at the ball before her death, as

> 'It was what Rebecca did at the last fancy dress ball at Manderley. Identical.
> dress. You stood there on the stairs, and for one ghastly moment I thought..'

The narrator, in attempting to assert her identity amidst all the reminders of Reb
reminder herself.

Finally, the Manderley estate is both a metaphorical paradise and a metaphorica
narrator. The metaphor for paradise is the Happy Valley, where the couple enjoy
The house itself, though, is a metaphorical prison. Maxim is trapped with the me
de Winters are both haunted by Rebecca's vengeful spirit, albeit for different rea
the events entirely in these terms, the house's destruction at least frees the cou

Other examples of metaphor:

The stranded ship

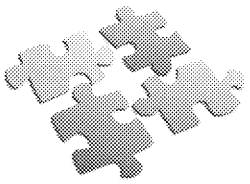
The stranded ship which draws the curiosity of locals and day trippers alike can b
foreshadow the local and wider media scrutiny of Maxim's marriage to Rebecca,
rescue operation. The oppressive attention, the rumour-mongering and the con
experience finds a parallel with the fuss and commotion as the rescue of the ship

> She lay at an awkward angle, her stern tilted, and there were a number of r
> round her. The life-boat was standing off. I saw someone stand up in her a
> megaphone. I could not hear what he was saying. (pp. 282–283)

The harbour master and Lloyds' agent who stand overseeing the operation fores
representatives of the law at Rebecca's inquest.

Jigsaw pieces

The narrator uses the metaphor of the pieces of a jigsaw to convey how all the m



place after his revelations and confession about Rebecca.
detachment suddenly make perfect sense to her; his aver
the result of what took place with Rebecca there; and Ma
costume is explicable in terms of his guilt and fear that his
everyone. Most importantly, perhaps, the jigsaw pieces u
the narrator has of Rebecca into a coherent whole.

Metonymy

The elements

Fire and water are employed as metonyms standing for the two faces of jealousy apparent in *Rebecca* and the narrator respectively. Rebecca's jealousy is fiery and vindictive, and culminates in the burning of Manderley by her living surrogate Mrs Danvers. In the narrator's case, the jealousy that flows from her uncertainty about Rebecca and insecurity about Maxim's love, is more subtly associated with the changing state of water. Rebecca's fate has bee
remains a mystery to the narrator, her secrets kept hidden by the water. In Chap
through the woods after watching the sinking ship from the cliffs, the narrator se
communicating its dark secret to her.

> The sea was so calm that when it broke upon the shingle in the cove it was
> still. I turned once more to the steep path through the woods, my legs relu
> strange sense of foreboding in my heart. (p. 290)

Earlier in the novel, the narrator contemplates the deceptive tranquillity and the
standing at the harbour. Her interest in the water stems from her obsession wit
Rebecca's small boat facing a sudden change of current when it rounded the hea
board, and how Rebecca 'would wipe spray out of her eyes and hair'(p. 171). He
part of the narrator's internal drama concerning Rebecca. It is as though the nar
re-enact her predecessor's drowning.

The weather

Another example of metonymy (one known originally as 'pathetic fallacy') is evident in Rebecca. This involves the use of the weather to suggest a character's feelings or a more general atmosphere or turn of events. For example, a description of the weather is used to reflect the narrator's feelings at Beatrice's mention of how different she is to Rebecca.

> And we came out on to the steps and found the sun had gone behind a bank
> falling, and Robert was hurrying across the lawn to bring in the chairs. (p. 1

The cloud and rain anticipate the effect Rebecca's ghost will have on the narrato
sharp contrast to the 'drowsy, peaceful' afternoon the narrator enjoys with Max
their guests.

Another example of the weather as a metonym occurs during the inquest into Re
narrator is awaiting Maxim's return from Kerrith. She contemplates the grounds
agitated anticipation is suggested by the weather.

> There was not a breath of wind. The leaves hung listless on the trees, waiti
> The jagged lightning split the sky. Another rumble in the distance. No rai
> corridor and listened. (p. 356)

It is as though the narrator's tension will be relieved when the rain falls. It begins to fall after Rebecca's body is interred by Maxim, Frank and Colonel Julyan that evening. This suggests that when the narrator is sure Rebecca is 'only dust', her anxiety is relieved, albeit temporarily.

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Extended metaphor

Nature

A striking use of extended metaphor in *Rebecca* can be seen in the anthropomor
Manderley's gardens to an army. The nettles are 'the vanguard of the army' 'cho
sentinels … with crumpled heads' (p. 3); the trees by the driveway threaten the v
fingers'; trees 'thrust themselves out of the quiet earth' to crowd the visitor mer
extends to Manderley and its immediate garden, which 'had obeyed the jungle la
(p. 2). The plants are defeated soldiers who are unable to retain their discipline.

Allusions

There are several allusions to history, literature, art and philosophy in Du Maurie
passing relevance to the situations or characteristics of the novel's characters, su
with Maxim or 'Madame de Pompadour' with Beatrice. Below is a list of some e

Historical references

- King Ethelred the Unready (p. 16)
- Judas Iscariot (p. 37)
- Jezebel (p. 38)
- Joan of Arc (p. 111; p.230)
- Madame de Pompadour (p. 230)
- Marie Antoinette (p. 250)
- Nell Gwyn (p. 250)

Literature and philosophy

- Francis Thompson, 'The Hound of Heaven' (p. 35)
- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (p. 227, p. 230)
- William Shakespeare, *Othello* (p. 367)

Fine art

- Henry Raeburn (p. 227)

Music

- 'Destiny Waltz' (p. 253)
- 'The Blue Danube' (p. 253)
- 'The Merry Widow' (p. 253)
- 'Auld Lang Syne' (p. 255)
- 'God Save the King' (p. 255)

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Tone

> ***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA Ass*
> *exploring how the reader's interpretation of literary texts can be shaped b*
> *an author employs, and the techniques an author uses to manipulate the*

The tone of *Rebecca* shifts during the course of the narrative. There are often qu
individual chapters.

The early chapters of the novel have a nostalgic tone, as the narrator thinks of al
left behind in England. Updates on sports in England and developments in the co
still attached to their homeland. An article on wood pigeons in *Field* magazine b
of hot summer afternoons she spent at Manderley, out and about in the grounds
article too much for him, and the narrator vows to 'in future keep the things that
dream she has of Manderley, however, leads her to the philosophical conclusion
be positive heart-warming ones.

> There would be no resurrection. When I thought of Manderley in my waking
> should think of it as it might have been, could I have lived there without fear.

This realisation of the need to adapt to changes also applies to her transient life
emphasis is on living in the moment, but recognising that 'we are different, chan
each experience in a different place (p. 49). This narrative tone is significant for
it reveals the development in her maturity from her younger self. She has learnt
difficult circumstances.

A contrast can be drawn with the lightly comic tone of the narrative in places, wh
youthful ineptitude at adapting to the household routine and social obligations o
the property, a child from the lodge runs out and stares at her, causing her near
first breakfast, she apologises to Frith for her tardiness, before stumbling and fal
room. The ensuing events border on farce, as she interrupts the maids making u
creep downstairs again. The narrator is embarrassed at drawing the servants' at
library and resorts to absurd subterfuge in pursuit of a box of matches to light th
the dining room again.

> ... there was a box of matches on the sideboard, as I expected. I crossed the
> them up, and as I did so Frith came back into the room. I tried to cram the
> but I saw him glance at my hand in surprise. (p. 91)

The tone of Chapter Eight then shifts when the narrator describes the morning ro
choice of furnishing and decorations. This variation of tone juxtaposes the narra
recognition of Rebecca's proficiency as mistress of Manderley.

During the ball in Chapter Fourteen, the tone of the narrative is by turns esoteric
the fact that there was too much going on for the already shell-shocked narrator
whirl round 'like marionettes twisting and turning on a piece of string', while Lad
'erotic' hybrid of Marie Antoinette and Nell Gwyn, and Beatrice's veil keeps slipp
forehead' (pp. 250–251). The social pretensions of the occasion surface when a
narrator to 'come and dine at the Palace', leaving her hostess to wonder whether
(p. 253). The narrator has an ironic dig at the guests' remote-controlled displays o
observance when the band plays the national anthem: 'the smiles left our faces as
(p. 255). This near fantastical chapter stands in sharp contrast to the despair of th
the matter of Rebecca's costume.

Many of the scenes involving Mrs Danvers and the narrator have a sinister tone. I gaunt appearance and unpleasant manner to convey it. This sinister tone is deve Eighteen, which culminates in the close encounter at the open bedroom window confront Danvers about her malicious advice on the costume, she sees the house indistinct' figure watching her from Rebecca's bedroom window (p. 269). The na thrown off guard when she finds that Mrs Danvers has been crying. The housek without looking at the narrator, and condemns her for marrying Maxim. Her odd the constant opening and shutting of her hand against her dress. When she turn mannerisms and words become more contemptuous. The narrator objects but t becomes more dramatic, as she is 'raving like a mad woman, a fanatic, her long f black stuff of her dress' (p. 272). The sinister tone builds in menace. Danvers' re become more extreme in their devotion, their celebration of Rebecca's cruelty a mimics the narrator's demand that she should go to her room in a demented fas narrator and changing the tone of her voice, gently goading, almost lulling her in loveless marriage.

Mrs Danvers doesn't care, of course, *how* the narrator leaves Manderley.

> I backed away from her towards the window, my old fear and horror rising arm and held it like a vice. (p. 276)

Mrs Danvers is able to exploit the fear, the horror and the acute self-doubt that her in a voice, now no louder than a whisper, to the open window and the very e of the distress rockets forces the narrator to snap out of it, which saves her life.

Du Maurier's versatile manipulation of narrative tone befits a novel that challenges our certainty on a wide range of important subjects. Can good and evil be easily divided? Are truths always more valuable than lies? Can a woman's actions (or a man's) be predicted or interpreted by gender? What is the value of marriage in relation to love? The shifts in tone serve the author's narrative technique of juxtaposition, and our perspective on events is itself liable to shift accordingly.

Contextual Analysis

> ***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA Assessm*
> *assessing the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts*

The narrative present of the novel is the late-interim period between the two wo narrative action is related in flashback, taking place some twenty years earlier. T liberalism that originated in the Edwardian era, principally in its questioning of cl family and gender roles. However, the world of *Rebecca* is still one where the ar seen in the fawning of Mrs Van Hopper after Maxim in Monte Carlo, the allure M for visitors from the county, and the way in which the local establishment (repre and Colonel Julyan) eagerly protects the de Winters' interests.

Had *Rebecca* been *written* some decades earlier, however, it is possible that the Maxim would not have taken the same form. The narrative asks us to feel sympa wife, who while presented as viciously amoral and promiscuous, is more memor rather dull female narrator. Even when Alfred Hitchcock came to direct his film question of Laurence Olivier's Maxim being presented as a murderer; Rebecca's accident instead. However, despite the more contentious aspects of character a modernist work of fiction. It can be more readily analysed in literary contexts th For example, it can be read as a variation upon the Cinderella story, with Maxim beneficiary instead of a fairy godmother. More significantly, as a twentieth cent more to *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights* than contemporary trends in literature.

The context of the novel's production is also interesting. Much of it was written with her husband Tom Browning, a high-ranking army officer. It is probable that drew on Du Maurier herself, her husband and his previous fiancée.[14] The theme the fact that Lieut. General Browning had been previously engaged to a raven-h whom Du Maurier suspected her husband still loved, but who would kill herself World War II. If Jan Ricardo was indeed the model for Rebecca, then the narrato Du Maurier herself.

The setting of the novel was also of personal relevance to Du Maurier. Manderle become the Du Maurier home on the Cornish coast.[15] Du Maurier had moved fr twenty-two, and knew and admired Menabilly at the time of writing *Rebecca*. Ru folklore, vast moorland and a coastline ill-reputed for smuggling and shipwrecks, Gothic fiction, and it features in several of Du Maurier's other works, most notab

The use of Monte Carlo as a setting for the narrator and Maxim's love affair is relevant to *Rebecca*'s 'Cinderella' storyline as the principality is often considered a playground for the rich and famous.[16] As a paid companion of no social standing herself, the narrator would only be likely to meet a wealthy suitor in such a location. After Maxim confesses to Rebecca's murder, he tells the narrator that the poisoning of his relationship with Rebecca had its origins in the hills above Monte Carlo. It was there that Rebecca first revealed her many indiscretions and effectively blackmailed Maxim into maintaining a sham marriage.

14 'How Daphne du Maurier wrote Rebecca.' The Telegraph online, 19th April 2008, Matthew Dennison. < http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ wrote-Rebecca.html > 9th April 2017.

15 Daphne Du Maurier, Enchanted Cornwall (London: Michael Joseph 1989, pp. 128–129)

16 Several works of fiction set in Monte Carlo attempt to see through its veneer of glamour and easy living. A notable example is Graham concerns a businessman who is forced to gamble to pay for his honeymoon in the principality, and consequently grows apart from his even in Monte Carlo.

Feminist Literary Criticism

***Note**: The following section is included primarily to illustrate the AQA Ass exploring how literary texts may be informed by different interpretations.*

The portrayal of women in Rebecca

Feminism is the women's movement for political, social, educational and econon literary critique on *Rebecca* would focus mainly on how women are portrayed by are marginalised in a social or political sense.

The narrator

Clearly, the novel's protagonist raises problematic issues from a feminist viewpoin name, and thus an independent identity. When she takes breakfast with Maxim, s reader) her name. When he compliments her on it being 'lovely and unusual', she lovely and unusual person' (p. 25). This suggests that her identity is entirely define first, that with her father, and when she becomes Mrs de Winter, by her husband. identity, the narrator is only an extension of the men in her life. This is a theme ce

Her chattel-like relationship to Mrs Van Hopper sees her as socially marginalised, compares to a transaction in an 'Eastern slave market' (p. 25). During her subseq though, she doesn't really seem to have been set free. The narrator recalls 'echo questions of the past and future, content with the little glory of the living presen only reveals a lack of understanding of what romantic love is supposed to be; it a negation of her personality, which she only seems to regret at Manderley when s affection towards her resemble her own towards Jasper the dog.

These feelings of inferiority to Maxim and Rebecca, and the internal struggle this provokes a feminist interpretation of *Rebecca*. Maxim's insensitive treatment of h treating her as a child or losing his temper, causes her to feel alienated and alone to the text, Sally Beauman characterises Maxim as a double murderer, who, in ad murder, 'murders' the narrator at a psychological level 'by slower, more insidious creates the conditions that nurture the narrator's identity crisis and full-blown ob

Her feelings of inferiority are also reinforced at Manderley by the between-maid w undergarments, and by Mrs Danvers who wishes to deprive her of the need for ar However, her perception of Rebecca as more glamorous, sophisticated and capab overriding humiliation. There is no doubt that the narrator is envious of Rebecca in Rebecca's room nearly as much as Mrs Danvers does. To become Maxim's wife properly, Rebecca's legacy must be discredited, destroyed, most importantly in th

Her resolution to support Maxim after his confession is strengthened when this h Rebecca, the narrator has no reason to feel jealous and inferior. However, Maxi made her seem older, even though greater maturity is what he really needs from Maxim's expression of regret may stem from this greater maturity making the na less easy to bully and control. However, once the air has cleared about Rebecca, young wife, the intimacy between them becomes more natural and more authen proper couple. The final irony, however, is that back in the narrative present the greater self-confidence in middle age is due to Maxim's dependence upon her.

17 Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (London: Virago 2003), p. 439.

Rebecca

The discussion about Rebecca that emerges during Maxim's confession focuses p
his main concern being that her promiscuousness would be revealed in the divor
revealing comments about her come from Mrs Danvers, who reveals that Rebec
'only a game' to humiliate the opposite sex. Jack Favell is prominent among her

> 'She laughed at you like she did at the rest. I've known her come back and
> rock with laughter at the lot of you.' (p. 382)

This describes someone who enjoys playing mind games and being in control, an
for getting back at men as she sees fit. It does not imply a 'scarlet' or 'fallen' wo
wallowing in decadence for the thrill of it. Relatedly, Rebecca doesn't seem to h
behaviour, flaunting it to Maxim (during her honeymoon, no less!) and flaunting
relatives like Frank and Giles. There is also Maxim's assertion that 'She was not e
me things I shall never repeat to a living soul', which implies some form of unspe
serves to keep the reader guessing (pp. 304–305). From a feminist perspective, h
while Rebecca is unpleasant and vindictive, her greatest lust is for rebelling again
Maxim and Manderley so obviously represent. It is also obviously true that she m
manipulating him into keeping up a sham marriage, and that he probably undere
was a woman. According to one possible reading, Rebecca survives three deaths
drowning – to take her vengeance as a restless spirit on Maxim.[18] From this pers
novel's Gothic heroine.

Rebecca's toughness is alluded to at several points in the novel. She was a skille
even aggressive, horsewoman. Mrs Danvers tells the narrator how Rebecca's ref
viciously tame a spirited horse of her father's when she was a girl.

> I can see her now, with her hair flying out behind her, slashing at him, dra
> into his side, and when she got off his back he was trembling all over, full o
> teach him, won't it, Danny?' she said, and walked off to wash her hands as

The tough, harsh aspect of Rebecca's character would have challenged a contem
the story of the horse suggests both a masculine cruelty and a female's dominati
stallion in this instance taking the place of a man. Rebecca's gender identificatio
described as fluid, a reality inherent in Maxim's image of her 'as a boy with a fac

The housekeeper's reminiscence of the riding incident also forms an extremely i
Mrs Danvers and Rebecca. It suggests that Danvers may have encouraged Rebecca to behave as ruthlessly as she herself would have done, if only she had been born into Rebecca's class with her young mistress's beauty and brains. Having lived vicariously through Rebecca, the latter's death leaves Mrs Danvers facing the same identity crisis as the narrator is facing in her marriage. In other words, of the three major female characters, Rebecca may be the only one with a strong, distinct identity, not reliant on other people. Even Maxim loses his heritage, and thus his identity, with the destruction of Manderley.

18 Horner and Zlosnik extend the triple killing idea to suggest a parallel between Rebecca and a female vampire, stating 'the plot's exces
cancer; she drowned) echoes the folk belief that vampires must be 'killed' three times.' Horner, Avril and Sue Zlosnik. 'Daphne Du Mau
Body Matters: Feminism, Textuality, Corporeality, edited by Avril Horner and Angela Keane (Manchester & New York: Manchester Uni

Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism

> ***Note**: The following section is included to illustrate the AQA Objective* *is shaped in the text. More specifically, it offers an illustration of how* *may be considered as an author's means of character development an* *attain a deeper understanding of characters (and notably the gaps in* *character) with reference to this theory. This section also illustrates th* *Objective (AO5), exploring how literary texts may be informed by diffe*

It is possible to analyse *Rebecca* using psychoanalytic theory. The reading techniques initially developed by Sigmund Freud to interpret his patients' dreams can be used when reading literature to seek out the underlying motivations of the author or to analyse the narrative content. An application of some relevant psychoanalytic concepts to key narrative events is provided here.

Discussion
Discuss Mrs Da
and whether s
'earthly vessel

The unconscious mind: conscious and subconscious beha

> I would think of the blown lilac, and the Happy Valley. These things were p
> dissolved. They were memories that cannot hurt. All this I resolved in my

The recollection of the dream that begins *Rebecca* reveals much about what motivates the narrator at a subconscious level. She passes with supernatural ability through the locked gates and surveys the estate gone to ruin, the house at its centre burned out. However, she is willingly tricked by moonlight in her dream into believing 'that the house was not an empty shell but lived and breathed as it had lived before' (p. 3). As becomes clearer from her amazingly detailed recollections of Manderley in the following chapters, her inner desire is still to be mistress of Manderley alongside Maxim. In Chapter Two, to take a brief example, the associations of wood pigeons in a written article sets off the narrator's intricate daydream about the birds 'fluttering above my head' when out in the grounds of Manderley (p. 6). The lengthier recollections of her Manderley period that follow combine conscious, concrete details with unconscious daydreams and flights of imagination that sometimes suggest supernatural events. In this respect, a large part of the narrative may be approached as a psychological f

Key
The
The
men
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verb

Class activity
Discuss the supernatural or fantastical elements within *Rebecca*, and whet
explicable in practical terms. Does Du Maurier strike the right balance in
elements? What impact would greater use of the supernatural have on the

Defence mechanisms

The narrator (Electra complex, Cinderella complex, defence mechanisms, the re

Electra complex

The narrator's relationship with a much older man conjures up comparisons to the father–daughter relationship. *Rebecca* can be interpreted as a feminine family romance with the female protagonist acting out an Electra complex. Under this schema, the narrator is the female child falling in love with the father figure (Maxim) and wishing to 'destroy' the mother figure. It can be argued that in *Rebecca* this antipathy to the mother figure has three separate stages: the narrator's leaving Mrs Van Hopper, her psychological battle with Mrs Danvers and Rebecca or Rebecca's ghost.

The father–daughter relationship is evoked by Beatrice at their first meeting over lunch, when she describes the narrator as 'an absolute child' (p. 107). This phrase carries the connotation of absolute dependence upon the adult, Maxim, who is a symbolic father. The narrator needs Maxim to conform to the i she has previously loved, her real father, whom she describes earlier as her 'secr Maxim the symbolic father reinforces her child status when he tells her 'It's a pit He also explicitly equates his role as husband to that of a father who wants to pr should not know.

> 'A husband is not so very different from a father after all. There is a certai you not to have ... And now eat up your peaches, and don't ask me any mor in the corner.' (pp. 226–227)

Contextual Information

The Electra complex

Theory formulated by Carl Jung, to complement Freud's Oedipus complex. This refers to a girl's sexual desire for her father, and her view of her mother as an obstacle to be removed (i.e. killed).

Under the schema of the Elec symbolic mother who the nar the symbolic father is the 'app Van Hopper (p. 110). As a sha who has not nurtured the nar Hopper provided an obstacle now overcome. However, the mother figures to be overcom the symbolic father can be rec Rebecca (or her spirit). For as not Maxim's ideal lover, but t narrator-child will be in torme

Cinderella complex

The 'Cinderella Complex' is a psychological disorder whereby a young woman of limited or no means seeks a relationship with an older man of means or status, without which she feels worthless.[19] This equates to a woman's fear of her own independence. The narrator expresses her belief that her marriage to Maxim and time at Manderley are somehow pre-ordained by her purchase of a postcard of the grand house as a teenager. After Maxim's proposal, what eventually excites the narrator about the possibility of the marriage to Maxim is that 'He wanted to show me Manderley', precious words that she feels the need to repeat (p. 59).

> My mind ran riot then, figures came before me and picture after picture... (p. 59).

19 Colette Dowling, The Cinderella Complex: Women's Hidden Fear of Independence (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981).

The narrator has no money, no family and no home, and is clearly anxious about
asks her about her future, one without the dreadful Mrs Van Hopper, she still im

> I thought of the type of boarding-house that answers the advertisement and gives temporary shelter, and then I saw myself, useless sketch-book in hand, without qualifications of any kind, stammering replies to stern employment agents. (p. 29)

Her social standing is clearly a source of anxiety that a marriage to a wealthy man can relieve. As events progress in *Rebecca*, and Maxim reveals himself as Rebecca's murderer, the narrator's desire to be with Maxim becomes more pronounced. She commits herself to what would seem a dysfunctional relationship rather than facing an uncertain future alone.

Class activity

Research the main plot points of *Cinderella.* Discuss to what extent the na
and *Rebecca*'s plot conform to or deviate from the fairy tale?

Defence mechanism: identification

Her feelings of inferiority to Rebecca lead the narrator to imitate her, specifically
competence in running the household affairs. The fiasco over the fancy dress co
narrator wishes to prove that she can handle a large event like the ball. The cho
be more independent like Rebecca, and not to sheepishly follow Maxim's sugges
in-Wonderland. Of course, the identification with Rebecca goes too far, with tra

The return of the repressed

The 'ghosts' from Manderley pursue the narrator into exile, in the form of dreams and daydreams. Even though she insists that she and Maxim have left Manderley behind them, the narrative itself stands as proof to the contrary. It reveals the narrator's unconscious desire to still be mistress of Manderley, to have the life she envisaged with Maxim there when 'Rebecca could not hurt us' (p. 421). This desire, though still disguised, cannot stay repressed. Her detailed, often painful narrative to herself is her way of escaping her unfulfilling life in exile. It is the return to Manderley the narrator cannot otherwise make.

Key Term

Defence mechanisms

These are the ego's constructs to counter feelings of anxiety. We are unconscious of them and they can affect how we judge situations. Different types of defence mechanism are: *repression, denial, projection, regression, rationalisation, intellectualisation, and displacement.*

Maxim (Defence mechanism

Defence mechanism: regression

Maxim's humiliation by Rebecca, both s
regress to primitive aggression and mur
that have built up since their honeymoo
threatens Maxim with the most painful
an illegitimate heir that would ultimate
Manderley. Rebecca's death is the outc
mechanism ensures, in order to preserv
Manderley.

Defence mechanism: denial

Maxim's performance in court sees him
crime, such as the misidentification of R
drilled in the planking of Rebecca's boa
circumstances of Rebecca's death, Max
one of shock.

> 'It was shock enough to learn that I made a mistake in identification over t
> learn that my late wife was not only drowned in the cabin of her boat, but t
> boat with the deliberate intent of letting in the water so that the boat shou
> that I should be shocked?' (p. 348)

Of course, Maxim could just be putting on an act. However, the discovery of Reb
and his unburdening of his guilt to his wife is his way of dealing with the tension
possible consequences.

Contextual Information

Key defence mechanisms

Identification – The ego's self-identification or imitation with regards to an
more successful at satisfying their own needs and desires.

Repression – The ego's method to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts

Projection – An individual's attribution of their own prohibited thoughts, feeli

Displacement – The selection of a substituted target for an uncomfortable e

Denial – The blocking out of difficult events from one's experience.

Regression – A stress-induced jump back in psychological time which can re
behaviour.

Rationalisation – An alteration of the facts to make a difficult occurrence n
lie or excuse themselves habitually do this unconsciously.

Rebecca (Narcissistic personality disorder)

Narcissistic personality disorder

Maxim's description of Rebecca paints a wholly unfavourable portrait of her. Rebecca's self-love seems to be so pronounced that she cannot love or respect another human being. Her marriage to Maxim certainly doesn't seem to involve her loving him; rather it would seem to be a means of fulfilling her sense of self-importance by finding a social position befitting what Maxim's grandmother terms her 'breeding, brains and beauty' (p. 304). Rebecca would seem to exhibit the characteristics of someone suffering from narcissistic personality disorder (NPD).

Rebecca's background is illuminating in this context. Mrs Danvers, having had care of Rebecca with seemingly little parental interference, seems to have reinfo
self-regard and headstrong instincts by championing her manipulative behaviour
year-old Rebecca, 'You were born into this world to take what you could out of it'
live by in light of a lack of parental guidance and affection (p. 272). Lacking love
narcissism manifests itself in adulthood in her moulding her character in accorda
such as parties, sailing and riding, and sexual liaisons with men.

Key signs of NPD displayed by Rebecca

1. Power-seeking behaviour (her marriage to Maxim, and subsequent attem
2. Seeking constant admiration from others (male friends, hosting parties a
3. No empathy with the feelings and wishes of others (sexual pursuit of Fra
   general behaviour).
4. Envy of others (Maxim's background and patriarchal dominance) and des
   (affairs to make Maxim jealous, determination to make Manderley 'the m
   the country' (Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, p. 305)).
5. Arrogant, self-perception of being unique, even among powerful people (
   transformation of Manderley and its grounds, her belief that she and Ma
   luckiest, happiest, handsomest, couple in all England' (Du Maurier, *Rebec*
6. Calculating nature (her story of the illegitimate child to provoke Maxim's
   intended to deprive her husband of his status and future happiness).

From Maxim's testimony, Rebecca also has a tendency towards attention seeking, self-dramatisation and disproportionate behaviour. On the Monte Carlo hillside, she tears a flower to pieces while proposing her bargain with Maxim; she flares up 'using every filthy word in her particular vocabulary' when accused of sexually harassing Frank (p. 308); during her showdown with Maxim, she behaves theatrically, stretching her arms above her head, pacing around the room, sitting on a table and swinging her legs. She is presented as the type of person who tries to bend another to her will by her very physical presence and her mannerisms.

Mrs Danvers (Id, ego, superego, Defence mechanisms)

Id, ego, superego

Mrs Danvers character can be appraised in terms of Freud's three stages of personality development: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. Danvers is presented as a highly competent housekeeper, which suggests a well-functioning ego as this is the orderly, decision-making aspect of the personality. She is also manipulative, as the costume affair and window scene demonstrate. This again suggests a functioning ego, but a dysfunctional superego, as vindictiveness triumphs over conscience.

She also may be considered a 'symbolic mother' to Rebecca in place of her real m
by Danvers or Maxim. Mrs Danvers has a strong sense of belonging to Rebecca, a
to the narrator reveals the maternal pride she felt in Rebecca's beauty and indep
was alive. However, Rebecca's death has clearly damaged Mrs Danvers' persona
personality was initially flawed.

This becomes most evident in Chapter Eighteen. More than merely feeling angry
narrator's replacement, Mrs Danvers defends her 'daughter' by denying Maxim's
that he still loves Rebecca, and attempting to coax the demoralised narrator into
bedroom window. This is despite earlier claiming that she no longer has any rea
short, she is acting both without rationality (*ego*) and without conscience (*superc*
terms her actions are at the level of the impulsive *id*.

Du Maurier presents a woman out of control in terms of behavioural tics that the
opens and closes her hand against her dress compulsively, and after describing R
manner suggests some sort of neurotic or psychotic episode.

> She broke off, her mouth working strangely, and dragging at the corners. S
> harshly, her mouth open and her eyes dry. (p. 273)

After learning of Favell's murder allegation against Maxim, and then about the d
terminal condition from Favell, the blind hatred for Rebecca's enemies unleashe
Danvers to burn down Ma

However, Mrs Danvers *do*
own conscience. Evidence
Danvers' preservation of R
not steal her former mistr
wishes to preserve the roo
Similarly, she stays in her p
Perhaps her conscience le
was not a good 'mother' t
destruction of Manderley,
id at one level, is also to sa
Danvers' mind the house b
have killed Rebecca and co

Contextual Information

Freud's 3 stages of personality development

1. **Id** – the infantile stage of thought processes, which are focused on immediate gratification of desires (maximum pleasure, minimum pain).
2. **Ego** – the rational stage of thought processes, where thought involves consideration of cause and effect relationships, and the power of empirical deduction.
3. **Superego** – the conscience.

Comparisons with Other T

Questions

1. Compare and contrast the obstacles to love through the ages in *Rebecca* an in a different period.

2. Explore representations of men or women struggling with difficult romantic other text from a different period.

3. Explore the relationship between civilisation and nature in *Rebecca* and one studied. Is there evidence that the civilisation versus nature debate has alte

4. Discuss the interaction of different classes in *Rebecca* and another novel tha influence of historical context or cultural values and attitudes towards class

Practice Essay Questio

Questions

1. Discuss from the perspective of a twenty-first century reader to what exten sexual relations held by Rebecca and the narrator affect their relative moral example, does the narrator's complicity in the cover-up seem more or less i seem more inevitable, and Maxim's actions more excusable?

2. Consider the narrator's first impression of Maxim as 'medieval in some stra Gentleman Unknown' from a portrait (p. 15). Discuss the extent to which M quality manifests itself in the novel. What about Maxim challenges the narr

3. Assess the view that neither the narrator nor Maxim has the qualities of her

4. Discuss the thematic relevance of perception and imagination in *Rebecca*: w sights, etc.

Suggested Answers: Discussion an

This section considers some examples of ideas that students might consider in completin

Chapter Analysis

Chapter One

Discussion prompt

Students might wish to consider whether the narrator's arrival at Manderley seems like a might be. What might this say about the narrator's image of herself, for example, or her

Class activity

The sublime' refers to the aesthetic response elicited by terror or horror in Gothic fiction and repelled. Students should note the narrator's feelings of fear or horror about the co the author has managed to capture these feelings.

Comparative reading

Students should compare and contrast the use of 'supernatural' elements to create susp opportunity to have a wider discussion about the use of flora/fauna symbolism in *Jane E*

Chapter Three

Discussion prompt

Students might wish to focus upon the concept from popular culture of 'The Ugly Americ parallels with characters from any narrative who behave badly or inappropriately when a

Class activity

Ethelred's reign was marked by the treachery of his noblemen and military ignominy of l Denmark in 1016. His reign can, therefore, be seen as a low point in British military histo having contributed to a 'New World' takeover of Old England. The reference may imply a tinted and uninformed view of the 'Old World' and Maxim's noble heritage, or that the h be unready for her type of New World 'invasion'.

Chapter Five

Comparative reading

An obvious comparison would be Jane Eyre's relationship with Rochester. However, psy nineteenth century has had a major influence on *Rebecca*, and a discussion of the theme reveals differences in the depiction of the two relationships.

Discussion prompt

Clearly Maxim is bossy and manipulative as well as being attentive. Discussion of a mode being less one-sided and there being more variation in what the couple does.

Chapter Six

Class activity 1

This activity involves a contextual analysis of the contemporary public's interest in the liv especially their households. Students can discuss what such postcards suggest about Bri addendum the students might wish to check if Menabilly, Du Maurier's family home on w a postcard devoted to it.

Discussion prompt

One possible interpretation is that the references to food support the narrator's homelin However, the recollection of meals in detail also supports the narrator's assertion that sm 'something indefinable, a moment of our lives, a thought, a mood' (p. 49). The students has a particular relevance in this context.

Class activity 2

The reference suggests that the narrator has never actually met any young Americans, as artificial. Possible origins for this description are faces on theatrical posters or actors in m

Discussion prompt
Mrs Van Hopper's barbed comment suggests that the narrator has been working overtim
monetary motive. Students might examine the narrator's interest in Manderley and any
Monte Carlo chapters to argue for or against this viewpoint.

Chapter Seven

Class activity
Students can focus on texts such as *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Brideshead Revisit*
Gothic setting could include large, isolated country houses with complex, mysterious layo
some kind of mystery attached to it, dark woods and dramatic weather.

Chapter Eight

Discussion prompt
Students may wish to frame this discussion in terms of what it reveals about Maxim's cla
However, they should also consider whether he is offering his wife subtle directions conc
housekeeper. If so, what are they? Is he giving out a mixed message about Mrs Danvers?

Chapter Nine

Class activity 1
This should take the form of an overhead plan. The activity is intended to give the stude
difficulty in finding her way around Manderley.

Class activity 2
Students can make a table containing details of which one of the elements is referenced,
is associated with the reference. A short summary interpreting the association of the ch
also be included.

Chapter Ten

Discussion prompt
Students should analyse the relevant passages of text to find evidence to support Maxim
seems evident, the question of what reason Maxim might have to say this about Ben mig

Class activity
Romantic relationships in the Gothic novel may be seen as trying to induce strong emoti
may be characterised by lust, betrayal or jealousy and may culminate in tragedy.

Chapter Eleven

Comparative reading
With reference again to *Jane Eyre*, students may wish to consider the roles of Rebecca ar
rebellious archetypes of women in literature. The protagonists' differing responses to th
should also be considered. Any relevant text on the curriculum is acceptable.

Class activity
Du Maurier deals with different class sensibilities in *Rebecca*, and one of the more positi
between the narrator and Frank Crawley. Students may wish to consider whether this ca
of down-to-earth middle-class attitudes rather than the pretensions and superficiality of
activity, students may also wish to take account of the fact that Du Maurier (like the narr
private person, a 'homebody' averse to large social gatherings.

Chapter Twelve

Comparative reading
The theme of jealousy or the role of secrecy may be good starting points for this activity.
(from *Othello* to *Wuthering Heights*, *Brighton Rock* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?)
relationships for the purpose of comparison.

Chapter Thirteen

Class activity
Examples that evoke Rebecca's drowning include the description of the buoy in the harb
associated thought that a boat would sit there untroubled in the shallow water. Also, th
boarding and descending the boat from the harbour side, retracing Rebecca's movemen
bad weather could present for someone in charge of a small boat. Students may wish to
mentally recreate the conditions that allegedly contributed to Rebecca's death.

Chapter Fourteen

Discussion prompt

Mrs Danvers' intimate presentation of Rebecca's unwashed clothing in Chapter Fourteen bedroom do suggest an unusually close attachment on the housekeeper's part. Similarly Favell in Chapter Twenty-Four that Rebecca 'despised all men' and merely used them for display of passion on the housekeeper's part, which might suggest the older woman's un However, Mrs Danvers has tended to Rebecca from childhood and her recollections of Re promiscuousness and ruthless streak suggest a servant living vicariously through her mis

Chapter Fifteen

Discussion prompt

There are several clues that Rebecca and Beatrice were not close, before Maxim finally r wife had taken Giles as one of her sexual conquests. Beatrice does not talk at any length she wishes to be sympathetic and welcoming to the narrator. At their first meeting at M shows any misgivings about Maxim's new wife or displays any loyalty towards her prede narrator a goodbye kiss and tells her 'you are so very different from Rebecca' (p. 118) the considered a negative. It is not until Chapter Seventeen that we get a clear hint that the terms. Beatrice's tell-tale remark is made after the narrator unwittingly appears at the b there on the stairs, and for one ghastly moment I thought…' (p. 242). Beatrice is too pro inference can clearly be taken that she did not like Rebecca.

Chapter Sixteen

Class activity

The narrator's attitudes and values are not consistent in the novel. She is averse to the k Hopper, and the scene at the beach where she identifies with the ordinary married coup days out at the seaside, suggest that the everyday aspects of British cultural life suit her. any signs of class pretension that emerge in the narrator while she is at Manderley.

Chapter Seventeen

Discussion prompt

Basically, the narrator is lost in a strange and unfamiliar world at Manderley, like Alice. H that the narrator asks a lot of question that Maxim thinks she shouldn't be asking, again

Chapter Eighteen

Discussion prompt

Students may wish to discuss this within the context of 'patriarchy', whereby ideas of ge behaviour and females with feminine behaviour, and where neurotic or emotional behav In terms of Mrs Danvers' devotion to Rebecca and her lack of a family or romantic relatic reference to literature of the modernist period – an excellent example being Virginia Wo gender and sexuality are considered quite fluid concepts.

Class activity

Mrs Danvers' repetition of phrases to mock the narrator, her compulsive hand gestures a strange facial expressions are key examples. Students should also consider the dramatic way she changes from angrily raging at the narrator to manipulating her in a soft voice, w also a powerful, controlling personality.

Chapter Nineteen

Discussion prompt

Students may wish to consider firstly why Maxim has such antipathy towards the socialit Manderley. Is it because they remind him of Rebecca's time there? Is it because he does himself, or face questions about the past? Does he fear that the narrator will come to en like Rebecca as a result? Regarding his assistance to those involved with the sea rescue, this as a duty attached to his social status, and a way of keeping the family name respect may wish to argue that, conversely, he is exercising a democratic spirit by reaching outsi interacting with the sailors and locals.

Chapter Twenty

Class activity

Students should focus on obviously weak explanations, and offer alternatives. Weakness failure to consider Maxim's point that Rebecca's things, such as jewellery, will still be in t body rots or not is thus immaterial. She also seems to forget that Mrs Danvers saw Max idea that Maxim was too 'ill' to earlier identify his dead wife correctly lacks credibility.

Discussion prompt 1

Students can discuss the narrator's focus upon Maxim's revelation that he did not love R proclaims that the other things he says are of no importance to her. Some of the rather indicate that her recollection of his words is unlikely to be verbatim. Students may also Maxim's dialogue seems out of character.

Discussion prompt 2

Students can contrast the psychological portrait of a jealous woman in *Rebecca* with that Maxim's behaviour and his justification for it against more dramatic portrayal of jealousy Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*.

Chapter Twenty-three

Discussion prompt 1

Comparing the importance of the different places in the narrative where Favell appears conclusion on this. Favell does, however, play a role in the two major plot twists: Rebecc the cottage armed, to 'scare' Favell, who he assumed would be with Rebecca; and the re Baker, which is the direct result of Favell's attempted blackmail of Maxim.

Discussion Prompt 2

This suggests that Rebecca's presence at Manderley is more substantial, even in some se wishes. Students should also consider that the grounds of Manderley were Rebecca's do taste' as Maxim phrases it, and her spirit is preserved in the flora and woodland (p. 307).

Chapters Twenty-four to Twenty-seven

Discussion prompt

One possible explanation is that Mrs Danvers' involvement would weaken the impressio command of the elements, is the real avenger. There is also the curious anomaly that th Manderley before the fire, as Frank and Frith couldn't find her. Maxim also says that the woods' which suggests a communion with nature and Rebecca's spirit (p. 422).

Whole-text Analysis

Characterisation: Key Characters

Discussion prompt

The namelessness symbolises the narrator's lack of identity. The question of identity ca viewpoint, within the context of gender, or in terms of the narrator's class identification. paid companion, she does not belong to her employer's class, and yet is treated disdainf staff at the hotels they visit. Her marriage to Maxim makes her officially a member of up with the expectations and requirements of that role.

Class activity

Students should familiarise themselves with the conventions of the sub-genre, and asses classification. They should also consider whether such a classification is too restrictive, a feminist viewpoint.

Character Relationships

Class activity

The emphasis for students here should be upon the author's perceived attitude towards example, do friends, family or romantic relationships tend to be portrayed more or less p Maurier?

Themes

Discussion prompt 1

Students need not focus upon a romantic relationship, although obviously the novel's pa
developed here.

Class activity

Students should focus upon the descriptions of Rebecca offered by Maxim and Mrs Danv
consider what attributes of Rebecca are emphasised in each description. However, the n
Rebecca – mainly inferred from articles of clothing and the décor at Manderley – are also
evidence of any contradictions.

Discussion prompt 2

Students should clarify the meaning of 'literary archetype' at the outset, as something or
literary texts. In considering Favell as a villain with a 'black, filthy record', students shoul
Maxim's failed blackmail notwithstanding, there is no suggestion in *Rebecca* that he has
Students may refer to famous literary villains, such as Iago in *Othello*, or Sikes in *Oliver Tw*
archetype. They may then wish to discuss whether or not a label other than 'villain' bett

Attitudes and Values

Extended Essay Question

Students should focus on the narrator's discomfort with her new social status after marr
servants' attitude towards her, and why Maxim's life at Manderley sees him acting so dif
key point of discussion is why Maxim is comfortable marrying outside his class. Students
the narrator's behaviour and attitudes that are related to social class, for example, in her
any other characters.

Comparative reading

Students may wish to consider how character attitudes are shaped by a life in proximity t
dramatic on account of the rural or remote setting? What types of storylines do the stud
such settings?

Structure, Form and Language

Comparative reading

Students may find it productive to compare *Rebecca* with another narrative incorporatin
have a cyclical structure. This may lead to a discussion about how effectively the cyclical

Extended Essay Question 1

The student should focus upon the fact that the narrator is recalling her memories, and t
in the novel. A discussion of 'the unreliable narrator' is one of a number of ideas that ca

Discussion prompt 1

Students may want to consider the common focal points of rebellion (family, school, societ
anything, Rebecca could be said to be rebelling against. This discussion should also conside
feminist perspective, as indicating someone unwilling to live in accordance with the gende

Extended Essay Question 2

Students can consider *Rebecca* as an example of a narrative that resists easy categorisati
story? A coming-of-age narrative? A crime story? A romance? A mystery? Students ca
possible definitions proves inadequate for *Rebecca* and any other suitable text.

Discussion prompt 2

The meaning of the satyr, as a god of revelry and fertility, complements Rebecca's own b
Mrs Danvers. Students should also consider the location of the statue, on a small lawn o
close to the house. Is this significant?

Discussion prompt 3

Students should take account of the fact that this technique is associated with nineteent
the novels of Thomas Hardy, and would have been out of place among the development
They should also consider whether, given the narrator's fairly comprehensive self-exami
the narrative events, this added illustration of meaning has another purpose in the nove

Class activity
Students can consider whether these references reveal something about the class attitud
characters, or about British culture more broadly. They should also discuss figurative ass
reference and a particular character, such as Alice-in-Wonderland and the narrator.

Contextual Analysis

Discussion prompt
Students should consider if there is an argument that romance is likely to blossom betwe
exotic location, and whether the relationship in question is dependent upon such circum
comparison is *A Room with a View*.

Literary Approaches

Discussion prompt 1
A starting point for students is the use of descriptions for Mrs Danvers that suggest a dea
hollow eyes, yellowed skin, etc.). In addition, her departure from Manderley through the
be still infused with Rebecca's presence, might suggest some supernatural connection to

Class activity 1
Students might want to focus upon the argument that the narrator's imagination of wha
can be shared by the reader. The psychological power of the novel would be severely di
supernatural events, as the narrative focal point would no longer be the narrator's jealou
conclude that some narrative events – such as Manderley's destruction – are not explain

Class activity 2
A main difference that students may want to consider is that unlike Cinderella, the narra
ideal woman. It is also fair to say that Maxim is no Prince Charming. The ideal marriage
without Manderley.

Discussion prompt 2
Students may wish to consider if there is any case for considering Rebecca a strong role m
focus of the discussion should be upon the narrator's loyalty to Maxim.

Comparisons with Other Texts

Question 1
Students should identify what the obstacles to love are in their texts and discuss these w
periods in which the texts are set and were written. Relevant discussions should focus u
period or the novel's genre.

Question 2
Students can examine whether men and women struggle equally in difficult relationship
to be stronger? How does their suffering manifest itself in the narrative? Are notions of
challenged by the way these characters behave? Does the genre of the text or the perio
the depiction of difficult relationships?

Question 3
Students can consider different contexts for the civilisation/nature debate. These might
particular place, and how that place might have altered since their childhood; an interro
focusing upon the dystopian idea of social and technological developments as destructiv
values among residents of town and country; or a discussion of the metaphorical functio

Question 4
Students may focus on shifting attitudes to class across different eras, or in different typ
novel's historical context can then be assessed regarding the shaping of character attitud
discussions can focus upon racial and national identity, class, gender, culture, historical p

Practice Essay Questions

Question 1
Students should consider the focus given to Rebecca's infidelity by Maxim, and that given Mrs Danvers. Would a modern reader see her as a trophy wife rebelling against being M bad parenting? Students should also consider the motivations for covering up Rebecca's spare Maxim jail but also to strengthen her credentials as a loyal wife and thus one fittin principal motive for the murder is to protect Manderley and the de Winter name, which evading justice. Do such motivations seem credible to someone reading *Rebecca* today?

Question 2
Students should focus on the details of this introductory description, which indicate Max detachment. They can then develop these ideas using suitable excerpts from the text, a character's development into someone reliant upon his wife, Frank and the local establis discussions might focus upon class, gender, historical period or the novel's genre.

Question 3
As this is a Gothic romance, in answering this question, students should consider the qua a literary archetype who defies social convention and is marginalised by a society as a co whether Maxim and the narrator can be conceived of in this way at the novel's conclusio of themselves. Alternatively, students can discuss whether their relationship should be v and mutual respect, and whether or not the concept of heroism is applicable at all. They genre and predominant narrative tone, and identify whether traditional male 'heroic' qu treatment. Relevant discussions might focus upon gender, historical period and the nov

Question 4
Students should consider how their perception of events in the narrative is guided by the respects may be unreliable. The reader's interpretation of the story depends upon what true. Students should also consider the fine line established between the narrator's psyc occurrence in the novel, and make a case for or against there being convincing examples consider the narrative as an act of memory and say whether *Rebecca* is enlightening on t memory works.

Glossary of Key Terms

Anachronistic	appearing to belong to an earlier era.
Antagonist	literary character who is the protagonist's chief ac
Anthropomorphism	a technique where human characteristics are ascri fictional beings.
Archetype	a character, symbol, theme or situation that recurs a universal meaning within narratives. Character a inexperienced youth', 'the villain'; archetypal situa climax'; archetypal themes include 'the contest be
Bildungsroman	literary genre of German origin in which a young p to grow spiritually, intellectually and morally and b
Byronic hero	a variation on the Romantic hero with its origins in *Pilgrimage*. The Byronic hero is a figure of mystery sexual attractiveness to women intrigued by his co
Circular narrative	a narrative that presents a type of closure at the st events in a story that have occurred earlier.
Climax	the culmination of a set of events in a story.
Conflict	in a literary work, this is a clash between forces in between characters, or the conflicting wishes with
Defence mechanisms	defence mechanisms are the ego's constructs to co are unconscious of them and they can affect how w types of defence mechanism include: repression, d rationalisation, intellectualisation, and displaceme
Denouement	the final revelation of the plot in a story.
Direct internal dialogue	this refers to a character thinking thoughts exactly technique generally employs the first person; how employed to represent the thoughts of other peop
Extended metaphor	a metaphor that is developed over the course of a p
Female Gothic	writing done by women in the Gothic tradition of l
Fetish	an obsessive interest in something which may be s
Feudal system	the medieval system of land tenancy being exchan lord or squire. The term 'feudal' is also used to de
Foreshadowing	an author's inclusion of hints which may suggest w a narrative.
Gender	the characteristics associated with masculinity and differentiated from each other.
Gothic fiction	genre of writing originating in the eighteenth cent preoccupation with literary elements such as myst romantic or familial relationships, large and remot characters.
Gothic romance	sub-genre of Romance fiction wherein mysterious a central love story.
Id, ego, superego	Freud's three stages of personality development, c thought and conscience respectively.
Idiot savant	someone whose apparent simplicity, even mental wisdom or knowledge about something.
Impresario	someone who promotes and finances events in the
Indirect characterisation	the role of elements including speech, actions, and fictional character.

Ironic	refers to something happening in an unexpected w
Juxtaposition	the positioning of two things in a text next to one a
Maxim	a phrase summarising a law or first principle of bel
Metaphor	a figure of speech in which one thing is stated to b association or similarity of meaning between the t
Metaphysical	this pertains to an understanding of the meaning o
Metonymy	a type of metaphor where one word is used to rep for 'dejection').
Motif	a recurring literary element (e.g. image, object, wo throughout a novel which underlines a theme and cohesion.
Narrative irony	a variation between two narrative events, or a con juxtaposing two or more characters.
Nemesis	a term originating in the literature of Ancient Gree that an individual finds very difficult to defeat.
Novella	a short novel that is too lengthy to be classified as
Pathetic fallacy	a type of personification of nature in literary writin
Patriarchal	refers to a system ordered to privilege men.
Plot twist	an unexpected change in the momentum or event
Protagonist	the main character in a work of literature.
Romantic hero	a character archetype in literature who rejects soc their idea of themselves.
Satyr	a god of the forest from Greek mythology – part m associated with the God of fertility, Pan.
Symbolism	in literature, the use of a literary element (e.g. cha meaning in itself, but can also have a larger meani
Tenor	the essential quality of language used (e.g. whethe or impolite).
The Cinderella complex	a psychological disorder whereby a young woman relationship with an older man of means or status, worthless.
The Electra complex	in psychoanalysis, the Electra complex is a girl's se view of her mother as an obstacle to be removed (
The literary present	this involves the use of the present tense to allude part of a summary.
The return of the repressed	Freud's phrase to describe neurotic symptoms in a thoughts or feelings forbidden by the ego express
The sublime	this refers to the aesthetic response elicited by ter wherein the reader is both thrilled and repelled.
The unconscious mind	thoughts, memories and motivations that we are u affect our behaviour. Freud believed that the unco repress because they are traumatic for us or social things can surface in dreams or verbal slips of the t

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