THE MIDDLE MIST: THE MIDDLE GROUND IN THE CANON
A STUDY OF THE POPULAR NOVELS OF
DAPHNE DU MAURIER

A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the School of Humanities.

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For my Parents

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This is to certify that I, Suma S. Rao, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under M. Phil, ordinances of the University of Hyderabad.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was submitted for any degree to any institution.

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Certificate

This is to certify that Suma S. Rao worked under my supervision for the M. Phil, degree in English. Her thesis titled "The Middle Mist: The Middle Ground in the Canon. A Study of the Popular Novels of Daphne du Maurier" represents her own independent work at the University of Hyderabad. This work has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

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Preface

Readers *vs* Critics

The aim of this dissertation is to study the middle space between the 'canon' of fiction and popular fiction, occupied, among hundreds of other authors, by Daphne du Maurier. The popular novels of du Maurier have, apparently, nothing to do with the literary establishment. Her works have hardly received serious critical attention; there are hardly any critical essays or books on her works, only reviews. Yet her "only" other critics have been her millions of readers. The fact that her works have sold in millions, it would seem, works against the approval of the literary establishment. It is possible that in some significant sense this works against the establishment itself, as the argument here hopes to suggest. The critics of the literary establishment have almost never authorized or valued the response, approval, tastes and opinions of popular audiences. Similarly, there is little evidence to suggest that popular audiences care at all for the approval of their favourite authors by the establishment. If they did, popular fiction would never flourish. Alternatively, even more significantly, "serious", "classic", established literature ought to examine its relationship with the despised yet populous world of popular writers, books, and readers.

By the standard of 'classical' literary criticism, it would seem that most of du Maurier's popular novels lack important properties and elements that critics look for, that qualify a work for even temporary inclusion in the 'canon', such as symbolism, ambiguity, imagery, or anything contemplative or thought provoking in subject matter or interpretation of life. Yet Daphne du Maurier's novels have quick to racy, even at times compelling plots, effective settings, memorable characters, and impressive combination of formulae, as well as experiment in genre and story-telling, all particularly singled out for praise by readers and reviewers. If further 'proof of the effectiveness of her fiction were necessary, all these qualities have also been successfully rendered in the film versions of five of her novels and two of her short stories. And even the master narrator Alfred Hitchcock obviously felt the force of narratives like Jamaica

Inn. Rebecca, and "The Birds**. These are obviously also some of the reasons why she has remained a bestselling author for the better part of the twentieth century. In such cases, of appealing as well as quite reasonably enduring works and authors, considering the great spread of personalities which comprises their readership as with du Maurier, it would be presumptuous to insist or maintain that 'classic' qualities are missing. Indeed, the seriousness of her themes also makes it presumptuous to maintain that du Maurier fails to provide 'food for thought' or to make emotional and moral demands upon her readers.

Popular culture, arts and crafts are as old as the 'people'. But emergence of popular culture studies in the last few years has begun to draw the attention of the skeptics within the literary establishment to popular fiction as to other popular phenomena. Such fiction is now beginning to be subjected to as serious a study as so-called "serious", "established" literary texts. Whether du Maurier is everyone's choice of candidacy for such attention hardly matters. But she is most certainly the sort of author who has now begun to challenge the view of the literary establishment on the very idea of canon. For instance, du Maurier's literary career spans the years from 1928 to 1981; she has been a bestselling author since 1931, and continues to be one today. Her novels are beginning to be considered also from specific approaches to literature such as the Marxist (Roger Bromley's "The Gentry, Bourgeois Hegemony and Popular Fiction: Rebecca and Rogue Male", 1981)[1] and Feminist (Alison Light's "Returning to Manderley—Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class", 1984).[2] The most recent and book-length analysis of her novels by Avril Homer and Sue Zlosnick, Daphne du Maurier: Writing. Identity and the Gothic Imagination (1998)[3] shows that her works are not just readable but are indeed also worthy of serious analysis.

Popular culture study has influenced the standards of literary criticism at least in the past couple of decades. The production, publication, reading patterns and the changing uses and values of the mass media and the popular arts are the focus of such study, popular fiction being a part of the material. Besides, the obviously important question, 'what makes a work popular?' has been, and is still being considered seriously

and critically, forcing us to reconsider the categorization of literature into "serious" and "classic", or "popular", "light", "junk", or "pulp", etc. The connotations of the term popular fiction itself have hardly remained constant. Even a bestselling author may eventually, be forgotten. But while he is a bestselling author, or having been one, he may no longer be neglected by literary scholars. And yet the basic derogatory distinction which dictates serious readers' attitude to "popular" fiction has not essentially dismantled itself as, I believe, in some ways it should.

What is provocative, even intriguing, in the whole phenomenon of popular art is the fact that, almost perversely a sort of 'canon' seems to operate within the domain of popular fiction itself, dividing 'good' popular fiction from junk/pulp fiction. Junk/pulp fiction is still scorned even by such critics as have begun to look sympathetically at popular fiction. And even readers—who may read both good and junk fiction—yet do distinguish between them. But the status of 'good' popular fiction is still ambiguous—what kind of value-discrimination goes into such distinctions within the popular domain? How does one begin to distinguish between 'good popular fiction' and 'good serious fiction'? The distinction between 'good popular fiction' and 'good serious fiction' has, it seems never been watertight. And yet it has hardly received serious consideration in critical thought. It is proposed to give such attention to it in the present thesis.

What does one make of 'serious' novels that fade into oblivion or of many a popular novel that graces the bookshelves of even scholars' studies? Further, although we may like to consider serious and popular fiction as arbitrary categories, we seem unable to dispense with the use of these terms or the implicit distinctions—first because people still use them, and second, because we cannot but recognize that the two phenomena are in many ways actually different. Nor can we refuse to think about these distinctions carefully. For popular readership consists of literate people from all social classes, all economic strata, all degrees of education and real life experience, all professions—indeed many serious critics and scholars have themselves practised what we may call popular genres. The example of Dorothy Sayers' murder mysteries, G. K.

Chesterton, and J. I. M. Stewart (who wrote thrillers furtively or at least pseudonymously) and the romances of Erich Segal—a professor of classics at Yale-ought to suffice as examples of the last phenomenon.

Since, essentially, the phenomenon of "popular" art comprises non-literate forms as well, such as country music, dance, ballads and other oral narratives and plastic arts and crafts in all societies, our questions have a seriously extended and universal application beyond fiction also. So these questions and their consideration touch upon a domain far from restricted to literary phenomena.

Any discussion involving popular literature or popular fiction also invariably involves a discussion of the reading public or audience, for it is the readers, and the reading activity that makes a text popular. But how does one take into account the 'popularity' of a work of fiction among large numbers of varied readers across a social order, even across linguistic and cultural boundaries? Who decides whether a novel has literary or aesthetic merit? Moreover, who decides what is 'good' and what is 'not-so-good' or even 'bad'?—literary scholars and critics? Reviewers? Readers? Who decides what is established or serious literature and what is not? Who holds the authority to make or impose such discriminations and judgements? It seems ironic that, although popular fiction is sustained not only by vast numbers of 'common' readers, there are also many serious and sophisticated readers of it, who may hesitate to declare the pleasure they obtain from such reading. This last fact does not merely endorse the approval already given by non-establishment or popular readership and emphasize the questions we have raised here; it also confirms that these questions must be addressed and pursued. Indeed one of the major mistakes of established literary criticism, one might say, apart from devaluation of the entertainment value of extra-canon works, is the devaluation of numerical and other factors concerning popularity. This mistake seems to arise from a deeper source—distortion and minority appropriation of 'value' in literary art. Whether some people have a right to valorize certain kinds of literature is not the issue here; the issue is whether they have the right to devalue "other" kinds of literature and overtly or by implication the readership of such literature.

The battle, or at least stand off, between the literary establishment and popular fiction has been a long one with even ancient critics defending the former, and readers steadfastly and emphatically sustaining the latter. The divide between them and us has always been obvious. There have, of course, always been writers who have questioned the boundaries between literature 'proper' and popular fiction. Nor can we ignore the fact that many a great writer was 'only' a popular writer in his or her own age, or at least for a time—the list includes Shakespeare and Dickens, both now at the core of the established canon, and at least the former still just as 'popular' as ever across societies. Daphne du Maurier is one of those writers whose works question the rigidity the superior attitude implicit in these distinctions. Her novels are good, but presumably not 'good enough' to be considered serious fiction; nor are they 'bad enough' to be thought of as junk/pulp fiction. Works like du Maurier's (other examples include the novels of P.D. James and John le Carre') thus falling into a middle space. This middle space between serious and received or established fiction and junk/pulp fiction has an ambiguous status, does not even possess a literary term to identify its "self. To an extent this explains the kind of neglect it has suffered in discussions of literature even in popular culture studies. These facts are reason enough to believe that attempting to answer the more important questions arising in this context will help throw light on important aspects of literature related to 'value' on the one hand and 'appeal* on the other.

Daphne du Maurier has not impressed the literary establishment as a serious author. But her novels provide considerable evidence of her seriousness to force us to conclude that she never took her readers for granted, never took them lightly. Her novels offered great pleasure to its readers and at the same time were good enough to gain a respectable readership. She in fact became an 'influence' (one of the criteria by which literary criticism judges the value of writers) for she set the stage for several imitators who have followed the formulae of her novels. It seemed to me, therefore, an interesting phenomenon that the 'place' an author of such wide readership, who offered quality reading, should not be more clearly defined and her novels allotted a space that is

less ambiguous. Among other reasons, other important questions that have often repeated themselves during the course of this study such as the following have prompted me to undertake the present discussion. Who decides what is serious or established literature and what is not? Why do we, who do not care for the endorsement or approval of popular fiction by critics, scholars, and reviewers, in fact, do care? Why is it that the critics', scholars' and reviewers' opinions matter and the readers' don't?

Indeed, I would like to state at the outset very clearly that the present study does not mean to construct a case for du Maurier's novels as 'great' literature, or to make a case for her entry into the 'established' canon. Similarly, it does not intend to question existing patterns of value judgement for the sake of questioning them. The distinction once made does, however, acquire tyrannical power, it also tends to kill or force into hiding fresh or open-minded discrimination in evaluation. What is more, it also seems to disallow consideration of its basis. It is this power of conventional distinction that we need to examine, and it is its questionable black-and-white division of books, seemingly beyond doubt regarding its authority or validity that we need to dismantle. Therefore, we focus here on the fact that Daphne du Maurier's novels are 'good' popular fiction, occupying along with the work of many other authors, the crucial middle space which must be a testing ground for distinction itself. Locating, identifying, understanding this middle space in literary discourse, processes that seem to have eluded critical attention, thus becomes a necessary and important task.

The first chapter of the present study deals with the changing meanings of the popular fiction category, including value-loaded connotations of the term, and ways in which we can locate the middle space between serious, received or 'receivable' fiction and junk fiction. Use of certain popular genres and formulae has been an important characteristic of popular fiction. Romances and gothic and historical novels, for instance, which have been the most popular genres, also provide fictional patterns, techniques and devices that du Maurier has successfully used, and that are usually considered formulaic. This chapter will, therefore, also briefly examine formulae that operate in or characterize romances, gothic novels and historical novels in an attempt

to trace du Maurier's techniques and to help us identify her experiments with them in form.

In order to define the space that du Maurier occupies, we shall also need to examine her novels. An attempt at this task has been made at two levels. It considers matters such as the following—despite being broadly classified as gothic romances, how do her novels in fact defy neat generic boundaries? Despite her use of popular genres and formulae, how do the novels defy boundaries between serious and popular fiction? Between 1931 and 1972, Daphne du Maurier wrote sixteen novels, most of which became bestsellers. Nor did du Maurier confine herself, as some popular authors do, to formulaic fiction alone. She also wrote biographies, autobiographies, plays and short stories. Given the focus of this study concerning the middle ground between serious and popular fiction, we cannot include all sixteen novels or her non-fictional works. Therefore, it is important for us to take serious note of the fact that she did practise other forms of writing as well. For the purpose of this study I have chosen six of her novels that provide most emphatic illustrative material for our argument. However, all her novels and some of her popular short stories will be used for comparison and contrast when necessary.

The second chapter examines six of du Maurier's most popular novels. The first section of this chapter examines three novels— Jamaica Inn (1936), Rebecca (1938), and The King's General (1946). Though these novels are written in the tradition of the romance and its sub-genres, du Maurier's treatment of them is "different". The difference between these novels and the traditional romance lies in the centrality of theme. The central theme in a romance is usually the relationship between the hero and heroine. In du Maurier's romances the relationship between the hero and heroine occupies only a fraction of the narrative. The focus shifts to the heroines' preoccupations with various aspects of life and their quest for social and sexual identity. Formulae used in these novels are subverted by this shift in the central theme. Apart from succeeding entertainers, these novels examine femininity against the background of crime, class, and war.

The second section examines three of du Maurier's most popular male romances My Cousin Rachel (1951), The Scapegoat (1957), and The House on the Strand (1969). These novels are written in the tradition of the male romance where the central theme of these novels revolves around the journeys, adventures, escapes and encounters of the protagonists/narrators. Definition of masculinity and self-exploration through class, religion, family, scientific temperament and history are some of the major preoccupations of these novels. Femininity threatens this essentially 'male world'. The first-person narratives in these novels establish du Maurier's ability to create as well as explore the male psyche.

I must hasten to add that the division of the novels into two sections is not based on the assumption of the kind of readership that may seem to have been implied—most of her novels have been considered romances and fit reading only for women. Yet if we take one glance at all her novels, we can see that at least six of her novels have male narrators. We tend to forget the fact that romance was indeed, at one point in literary history, a male genre and it never implied that its readers are men alone. However, present day romances are targeted only at women readers. We also hope to establish that by experimenting with a genre that has been monopolized by women, by being considered an author of romances and by using male narrators in novels which eventually turned out to be bestsellers, du Maurier also effectively dismantles the assumption that the readership of her romances is not gendered. The division of du Maurier's novels in the present thesis is only prompted by convenience—in tracing certain similar themes and patterns in the novels.

Through the analysis of the novels, another argument has also been proposed that—occupying middle to extreme ground as it does—popular fiction requires other methods of analysis, different criteria of value judgement, than those used in traditional criticism of fiction. I have not adopted the usual method of analysis of literary criticism (i.e. analyzing individually the plots, characters, setting, themes, and symbolism, ambiguity, imagery and narrative structure). The intention here is hardly to suggest that

these novels cannot be examined by the conventional method. But to do so would defeat our purpose, for the novels in question are 'good popular' fiction, and moreover they bring into play precisely the verdict of 'consumers' which criticism tends to slight and ignore—and it is our intention to suggest here that criticism should not do this. Du Maurier's novels, on the other hand, will not be considered as serious fiction either—for that would not only necessitate a different task but also force us to participate in the very basis of value judgement which we hope to problematize. Instead we shall attempt to establish that, in order to analyze good popular fiction, one need not follow or conform to conventional methods employed or prescribed by literary criticism. We have attempted, in fact, to blend in the analysis some important aspects, features and strengths of each of these novels, keeping in mind the fundamentally irrefutable fact that they have entertained millions of readers.

Du Maurier has not only been popular in the literary field, but also in cinema. Five novels, Jamaica Inn, Rebecca, Frenchman's Creek. Hungry Hill, The Scapegoat, and two short stories "The Birds" and "Don't Look Now" have been very successfully adapted for films. (Although I have been able to watch two of these films, not all of them were available for viewing and analysis. Hence their exclusion in this dissertation. Also, to consider such a different medium alongside fiction would complicate or diffuse our focus on the crucial idea of the middle space.)

In order to know how du Maurier figured in the popular fiction scene and yet went for decades without serious critical attention, we should also examine the reviews of her works. The third chapter discusses the contemporary reception of du Maurier's novels as revealed in their reviews and, indeed, it attempts to use the reviews as significant determiners of her actual status, as opposed to an automatically dismissive status in the literary discourse. Almost all her works have had considerable readership on both sides of the Atlantic, were also published in America, eliciting reviews in the leading journals and newspapers there. Apart from the reviews from the Times Literary Supplement, however, it has been difficult to obtain reviews from British newspapers or journals. Unavailability of journalistic material even in micro (film/card)

form is the reason for this paucity. Consequently, most reviews that are used for analysis, apart from the ones from the Times Literary Supplement, happen to be from American newspapers and journals, the source for which is The Book Review Digest. Further complicating this problem, these reviews are, extracts from the original reviews. This too limits our analysis of them to some extent. Since they are already extracts and are edited with a purpose, the analysis of review will be done with this limitation in mind. Some obituaries, which discuss a shift in her position as an author, and her works, will also be used as reflection of critical opinion.

The fourth and concluding chapter will attempt to bring together the various questions raised during the course of this study. Most important of these questions will concern definition of the middle ground in criticism and reception, and ways in which the (perfectly tenable) idea of the middle ground alters the other two categories at either extreme of classification—serious fiction and junk/pulp fiction. Since these categories cannot be altogether and finally dismantled by one viewpoint as expressed in the present thesis, how do we integrate them into a general literary discourse? Creating a whole space and critical attitude for another category of fiction would need, of course, more space to attempt anything beyond a definition of the middle ground and indicating what we think qualifies as fiction befitting of this categorization. Although whether we integrate this category into the mainstream literary discourse or not, although some may be unwilling to admit it into the already established literary categories, and how we do it becomes very important. It is hoped, however, that positing such a middle ground will itself throw sufficient light on the black-and-white conventional distinction and encourage some degree of open-mindedness in classification of works along two axes-whatever may be ' artistic success' being at least squarely juxtaposed with 'popular appeal'. Finally, do we allow a body of scholars, critics, and academicians to devalue popular literature and its readers? If we do, then what are the consequences of devaluing the obviously widespread and clearly important functions of literature? An attempt has been made to answer these questions in the final chapter of this thesis. If this work at least succeeds in cogently proposing the existence and importance of the middle ground, it will have achieved its purpose. For there is a middle ground, and it seems to

illuminate the extremes on either side as nothing else can.

Research on popular authors and popular fiction often seems to threaten the framework of conventional English studies. Research proposals on popular fiction have not been accepted without some skepticism and condescension at least by conventional English departments. This research has met with some interesting and varied responses and comments from outside the department where I studied. The department itself, I must add, has more than readily accepted my proposal to work on the middle ground in literature with du Maurier as an example. This thesis is proof enough, it gives me enough satisfaction to state, of the fact that an English department like ours actually encourages research on subjects such as mine, subjects moreover of the student's own choice.

[All relevant references are placed immediately after each chapter.]

Notes to Preface

[1] **Bromley, Roger. "Gentry, Bourgeois, Hegemony and Popular Fiction: Rebecca and Rogue Male." Popular Fiction: Essays in Literature and History. Eds. Peter Humm, Paul Stigant, Peter Widdowson. London and New York: Methuen, 1986.**

[2] **Light, Alison. "Returning to Manderley—Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class." (1984). British Feminist Thought- A Reader Ed. Terry Lovell. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1990.**

[3] **Homer, Avril, Sue Zlosnick. Daphne Du Maurier. Writing Identity and the Gothic Imagination. London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1998.**

Chapter I

The Middle Ground

Popular Fiction, Genre, and Formula

I

Even if one chooses to ignore the impact of Marie Correlli's Sorrows of Satan (1895), which saw sixty-nine editions in twenty-three years,[1] at least one ought to pay attention to the wisdom of what one of the characters in the film "The Gold Diggers" (the 1935 film, one of many of a series) says: "Who are we to laugh at popular music? It is the heartbeat of America." Such wisdom is heard everywhere and yet the lesson is not learnt—that is the reason why among many other students of literature I have chosen to consider the dismissive attitude to the "popular" in the present dissertation. Any attempt at a study of popular fiction may need to begin by defining the term. For the term not only denotes different specific works to different people, but it also has various connotations and a focussed study requires that the term be defined within its own framework. There exist many misconceptions regarding the 'value' or 'worth' of popular fiction even in the minds of readers of it. The weight of the critical category of "classics" is considerable; so many people hesitate to mention popular works they read. On the other hand there are hardly any "standard" histories of popular fiction; they have to be constructed from standard histories of mainstream fiction. Most standard histories on "established" or "canonized" literature, in fact, hardly discuss popular fiction. What they significantly and consistently do offer is the "omission** of popular fiction. This omission serves as a starting point for our own construction of a meaningful history of popular fiction. This process becomes one of re-discovery, re-

assessment, and re-construction of the history of fiction and the historical period in question.

The word popular is, of course, used to mean whatever is liked, desired, and approved by a large number of people. The assumption that what is popular is also Mow* stems from the fact that the word popular and the much misinterpreted word vulgar have been used synonymously. Discussing it in relation to science fiction, Isaac Asimov points out in his essay "By No Means Vulgar" that the Latin words *populus* and *vulgus* both indeed mean 'people'. He suggests that

> In English we have the word 'popular' and the word 'vulgar', both referring to attributes of the people.... You can if you are of democratic mind use the adjectives in a favourable sense and think highly of anything characteristic of the people or if snobbish, you can use the adjectives in an unfavourable sense, and assume that anything that pleases many is bound to be inferior since only a long process of cultivation can raise the level of taste to your own refined pitch.... In our English language, we have differentiated these two meanings, and 'popular' has come to represent the favourable aspects of the general taste, while 'vulgar' represents the unfavourable ones. (Asimov 1978)

Instead of respecting what is characteristic of a large number of people we seem to have come to believe that popular fiction, for instance, is inferior since it is read by a large number of people. The term popular fiction may be loosely used to mean fiction that is popular with a set of readers or an audience. It is, instead, used to mean fiction that is popular in terms of sales and almost certainly 'low' in 'artistic' worth. Most importantly, it is used in opposition to literature', to mean fiction that appeals to the many and not the few, that it makes for and satisfies a 'low' taste, and

even lack of discernment in those who read it, and that it does not possess significant literary or aesthetic merit, being casually written for mercenary motives for casual consumption.

For twentieth-century readers, 'literature' does not mean a body of texts only. It is not as though distinctions between 'literature' and 'popular fiction' originated in the twentieth century either. As part of the literary establishment, as students, we learn or we have been at least implicitly taught to define 'literature' and 'popular fiction* practically as binary opposites. Popular fiction has, consequently, come to mean that which is not 'literature'. In "Marxism and Popular Fiction" (1981) Tony Bennett states that "literature" is now "a central, co-ordinating concept of the discourse of literary criticism, supplying the point of reference in relation to which relationships of difference and similarity within the field of writing are articulated", and all other forms are negatively defined in relation to this concept. Bennett also states that popular fiction is "in fact, a residual concept--the residue which remains once the sphere of literature has been described and accounted for" (p. 238).[2] Literature and popular fiction, on the other hand, actually ought to at least complement each other. In "Popular Literature" (1979) John Hall argues that, "high literature depends on support from the popular base", that "one needs ordinary literature as a background against which to recognize masterpieces when we are lucky enough to have them. A diet of nothing but the classics is intolerable, although it is only by supposing some such standard that the case against popular literature is even made to look plausible" (p. 99).

Behind all such definitions and distinctions lie two major governing concepts— "value" (distinct from 'cost') and "use". These often unnoticed but powerful concepts also contribute to the arbitrariness of the operation of the popular fiction category. The arbitrary step-motherly relationship between serious or classic or received fiction and popular fiction is far from obvious, the historical links being neglected by most people, the exchanges that have occurred between them, and those that still take place, that go unnoticed and the extraordinarily vital to and fro traffic between the two domains seem to have been missed by everyone. Nor are most of us actually able to agree on a

definitive list of works of one type as opposed to the other. Yet no one seems to make a serious enough effort at identifying them. If they did, they would notice many phenomena, among them especially the middle ground. Some popular fictions did, as some do today, possess 'value' that will allow them to fit or be elevated into the framework of literature 'proper'. On the other hand, (funnily enough), efforts are always made to popularize great works of literature by bringing them to the public by means of film and theatre performances, and adaptations cheap and handy editions, prescription as textbooks for school and college students, even lurid jacket pictures scarcely representing the contents. As Michael Hayes argues in "Popular Fiction and Middle Brow Taste" (1993),

> Since questions of value and taste are involved [in any discussion of taste] it is necessary to consider the whole range of factors that might contribute to a fiction being classed as popular. Popular fiction is less a fixed category than a historically contingent relationship between producers, the critical establishment and book readers, mediated through fictional narratives. In other words, popular fiction is a cultural nexus for a historically determined and evolving relationship whose understanding requires us to reflect on the period, the people and the state of book production as well as the books themselves. A corollary of course is that a text having popular use at one time does not therefore necessarily preclude the possibility of it having other uses or values at other times. Yesterday's popular fiction can be today's literature. (pp.77-78)

Given the multiple connotations of terms, movement of works from one to the other category, and the synchronic as well as diachronic relativity of the category itself, one needs to specify the context in which the term is being used such as the period,

the author and the novels in question. The ‘ status* of the particular genre or sub-genre in question may also matter—for instance the upstart new form ‘novel’ as itself deemed to be ‘low’ in eighteenth-century England; this prejudice continued into Victorian times, during which even gender related dismissals took shape: for instance, that the novel should be considered fit reading only for women. In fact it is not unusual even in India for students to hesitate to admit to reading novels when asked what they read in literature. It is also generally accepted that popular fiction is meant ‘merely’ for entertainment and this is one of its chief “uses”. Whatever may be the other important contributions of Plato to critical thinking and cultural or political study, his influence still lives in the near-automatic equation between ‘entertainment’ and 'low' value in works. The Puritans never liked fiction because it was not the truth; it was a pack of lies. However, you do not have to be a Puritan to participate in such ad hoc dismissive attitudes. Indeed, with good reason we may need to invoke Plato's student Aristotle, to legitimize and reinstate entertainment value alongside moral or ‘instructional’ value of books.

A work may be 'valued' differently by readers from different generations depending upon what they ‘use’ it for. In fact a totally unjustified either/or, or mutually exclusive situation, exists regarding entertainment and serious value of reading in society. Such evaluations may vary and/or be borrowed from society by readers depending on their own inclination to certain value judgements. The category of popular fiction has so far served like a waste-paper basket to include all kinds of presumably ephemeral fictions, especially novels that have been popular over a period of time without being accorded recognition by critics. Paradoxically, however, it may take a work years, or even decades to cease being dismissively labeled as popular before it is reluctantly accepted into an established ‘canon’. On the other hand many a novel written with the hope of being considered 'serious' may never be received either into the canon or into popular reading.

Readers of every age construct their own 'readings' and ‘criticisms’ of what they inherit in literature, that which defines literature for them, unless they question

the cumulative definition. What unconsciously governs their readings and criticisms is the inheritance of particular histories and ideologies, and notions of what literature is and should be. Every given period has had its own distinctions between serious and popular fiction, its own prescriptions regarding what should be read and what should not be read. Most importantly, one cannot make a general assessment of the readers' background simply on the grounds that the popular is (has been) a class phenomenon. There has always been an emphasis on observing distinctions and (often-baseless) prescriptions in families and schools regarding 'good' and 'bad' reading. These prescriptions may or may not be carried over to later periods of life but they do work, often rigidly, during a given period. Similarly, the twentieth century has inherited a history and ideological notions regarding literature, its own prescriptions about reading, a canon that is the result of institutionalizing literature. In the context of this study, it is therefore necessary, to examine briefly the background in which du Maurier wrote and published, for this will provide us with some pointers to locate du Maurier as a twentieth-century popular author. We need to consider the background also to examine her novels as possible instances of works that occupy the middle ground and to locate as well as define the middle space between serious and popular fiction.

In The Modern Writer and his World (1953) G. S Fraser surveys each decade of the 1900s till the 1950s. He observes that the early years of this century were the time of transition when du Maurier made her debut as a novelist in 1931. The aftermath of war, loss of imperial power, noticeable attempts at dismantling of gender and class hierarchies rocked British society at the time. The two world wars predictably coincided with a period of creativity and experiment in English literature. Anxieties regarding 'modernism' and the aftermath of the wars characterized the 'modern age'. The publishing industry suffered during the war due to shortage of paper and several novels did not see print until much later. The 1930s faced a new set of problems with the depression and infamous Wall Street slump and the rise of Hitler. Though the popularity of the novel form did in no way diminish, it was poetry and drama that for a time caught critical attention (Fraser:96-185).

There were other factors, too, in all this turmoil. In Women's Writing in English: Britain 1900-1945 (1998) Anthea Trodd analyses women's magazines and the library system that changed reading practices of this century. She notes that the twentieth-century witnessed a boom in fiction and in periodicals which targeted specialized audiences. Writing and publishing had undergone changes in the late nineteenth century and advanced printing and paper production techniques contributed to the rapid rise of the popular press. She observes that the Education Act of 1870, aiming at universal literacy, and periodicals that offered more and more opportunities for writing were the other chief reasons for the rise of the popular press. Apart from this, and not unexpectedly, this period of time also produced a host of bestselling novelists "exemplified by Corelli, who overrode bad reviews and comments on her poor English, dispensed with the services of an agent, and addressed herself directly to the public she was justifiably convinced was listening" (p. 32).

Indeed, in a strange sense this restriction promoted reading. For not only were paperbacks printed on reconstituted paper, they specifically urged each reader to pass on the book to other readers so as to save paper. Trodd also notes that though both the wars imposed restrictions on use of paper, there was an increase in war-time appetite for reading. Several publishing firms moved to specialization, for instance Mills and Boon, who were publishers of general fiction and educational works decided, to concentrate upon a specific genre for larger audience. Their name has become synonymous with romance. Readers bought their romances, their imprint, and not the authors'; thereby causing a shift in the field that was dominated by a few well-known writers. The open access to books, a system used by the Clerkenwell Public Library in 1895, was adopted by other libraries. By the 1930s Boots and W. H. Smith's Library "with their largely female clientele and their context of middle-class shopping, had become synonymous with the middlebrow reading public" (Trodd, 1998:35). The 1930s also saw the rise in twopenny lending libraries catering to the working class readers outside the range of other libraries and these libraries held stock of popular fiction for borrowing. (Indeed, the nineteenth century had itself laid the foundation of some of this change. For the Temperance Movement, for instance, attempted to turn the

'worker' away from drink to reading.) Trodd also observes that "[t]he period between the Wars saw extensive emphasis on wives' home-making abilities" and periodicals such as Homes and Gardens (1919), 'Good Housekeeping' (1922), 'Woman' (1937), aimed at "the new middle-class phenomenon, servantless home, to counsel the housewife on organizing her time, preparing meals and beautifying the home" (Trodd, 1998 p. 15). This phenomenon of publishing fiction and periodicals--both targeting specific kinds of readers with specific kinds and great numbers of writing was perhaps most crucial in changing the reading practices of this century. It was, alas also crucial in gendering the genre of romance exclusively for women.

Meanwhile the novel form witnessed serious experiments on both sides of the Atlantic, in both serious as well as popular kinds of writing. Joyce, Catherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and several others wrote serious experimental novels such as the 'stream of consciousness' novels. The defeated and helpless modern man and woman became the new subject of other serious novelists. Confusions caused by the modern permissive society, and the changing structures of class and gender, and difficult predicaments caused by ' modern sexuality' were the major concerns of authors like Christopher Isherwood, Iris Murdoch, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Olivia Manning, Aldous Huxley, Muriel Spark, Rosamond Lehmann, Doris Lessing, Rose Macaulay, Victoria Sackville-West, Rebecca West and Mary Renault, many of whom were also contemporaries of du Maurier. A kind of ambiguousness exists with writers like Graham Greene who claims that some of his novels are ' entertainment'. This contests, or in his case at least plays with the assumption that serious novels, or at any rate serious novelists cannot entertain. This assumption is supported by various others: that serious novels are meant to enrich our life experience and are meant for contemplation, and that entertainment value is provided by only popular fiction which is assumed incapable of providing any serious fare. Such assumptions not only discriminate between authors and novels but also between their readerships. These distinctions are, further, foregrounded by the 'institution' of literature, which also operates on the basis of the debatable concepts of 'value' and 'use'. Serious literary criticism has, thus, first created a black and white incompatibility between 'value' and

'use'. But for readers without the leisure or the expensive background of higher education, 'use' definitely means instruction coated with entertainment. There can be no doubt at all that, ranked by the criterion of 'use', popular literature will be far superior to 'art [of any kind] for art's sake' including 'serious' literature.

As mentioned earlier, however, experiments in fiction were hardly limited to or the prerogative of serious fiction. Popular authors like Penelope Mortimer, Monica Dickens, Brigid Brophy, Ann Quinn, Christine Brooke-Rose, Daphne du Maurier, Agatha Christie, Mary Stewart, Mary Renault, Elizabeth Bowen, Georgette Heyer, just to name a few, were all experimenting with popular genres, with techniques employed by ' serious' writers, and in turn making these newer sub-genres both more popular and not infrequently more serious as well--detective fiction, family romances, gothic romances, historical romances, thrillers, mystery and adventure novels and romances (i.e., love stories).

If one examines without prejudice the subjects, stylistic achievements, technical skills, the intellectual ability and moral sensibility shown by these and other such writers, one must come to the conclusion that there must be something seriously the matter with the criteria of classification between 'serious' and 'popular'. Indeed, in some cases these writers were more daring, more relevant and more in keeping with the times than many so-called serious writers were. There was a considerable rise in the number of women novelists who seemed to cling to the warmth of human relationships, projecting not only the kind of world that was lost to modern British society but also exploring newer social patterns which were already beginning to form. If one wishes to understand what was happening to the psyche of modern British women Virginia Woolf is far less meaningful than Edith Templeton or Monica Dickens. The Bloomsbury Group may have evinced some of the more *outre* (or at any rate 'subtle') facets of social change. But they were reflected across social class and age by the other women writers. One learns, similarly, as much about the British class system from P. G. Woodhouse and Agatha Christie as from Evelyn Waugh and Angus Wilson. An observation that is also true of British women writers is the one

Resa L. Dudovitz makes about the French and American bestselling authors: "women's entry *en masse* into the novel writing profession in the nineteenth century and their appropriation of the romance form of women's writing has led to widespread contempt not only for women's fiction, but also of romance in general" (Dudowitz, 1990:6). Critics who are uninterested in popular fiction, and particularly in romances by women tend to dismiss them. These romances are considered trivial because they are supposedly designed for 'mere' entertainment and deal with only what the critics at times pejoratively label as "women's concerns". There is definitely a problem in this situation that needs our attention.

Institutionalizing "Literature" by modern methods of higher education and general critical attitudes pushes the common reader further away from what the establishment categorized as ' serious' fiction. Douglas Hewitt in "The Reading Public and the Rise of a Profession" (1988) emphatically states that "all professions are conspiracies against the public"; for instance, commenting on the literary profession he says that it has affected our approach to literature in two ways: "the determination of a canon and the establishment of an appropriate critical approach to individual works" (p. 169). In a course of study, for example, a number of texts which were considered representative of each age were chosen to facilitate the discipline of English studies. Ironically many of these happened to be popular texts of their respective ages, although no one seemed to notice the fact. However, since they were now in a canon they were no longer mere popular texts, but at least pretenders to the status of established fiction. Consequently the status of the authors of such works also changed, for instance, Dickens was an extremely popular author of his time, and published his novels as serials in magazines and journals before publishing them as novels, his readers waiting with hardly controllable eagerness for the next instalment to appear. Each was avidly purchased and brought home by the man of the house, in many cases, who read it aloud to the whole family, including servants, before the fire. In his time he was only a 'popular' author just like any other popular author of today. But then, not many present-day readers can read Dickens' novels as 'popular' texts. Indeed, his novels may not be easy reading outside the discipline of English studies. Difficulties arise because

of changes in language and context and such difficulty has occurred before today's distinctions between serious and popular literature.

Clearly Dickens was a popular writer of quality of whose writing existed for a time in the middle ground between popular and serious literature; he made the shift from the middle ground to classic status rather more quickly and emphatically than most writers do, that is why we tend to forget today that he too was 'only' a popular writer at first.

The literary establishment in many overt and implicit ways certainly succeeded in distancing the common reader from what was 'established' literature. It was generally believed that popular fiction only appealed to people belonging to certain 'lower', illeducated, uncultured classes. Yet actual social facts compel us to ask, what has entertainment to do with class? It is not as if the social, educational, and cultural elite can survive without all kinds of entertainment. Indeed, barring a few forms such as the opera, art hardly allows us to distinguish between people of different classes. In Popular Literature: A History and Guide (1977) Victor E. Neuberg traces popular literary forms since the sixteenth century, which were mainly ballads, chap books, pamphlets and so on. Given the limits of his study, he defined popular literature as "what the unsophisticated reader chose for pleasure. Such a reader may, of course, come from any class in society, although the primary appeal of popular literature has been to the poor--and by the end of eighteenth century, also to the children** (p. 12). Drawing on Dr. Johnson's "Life of Gray", Virginia Woolf says in "The Common Reader" that the common reader, as Dr. Johnson implies, "differs from the critic and the scholar**. The common reader is not educated and, "reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or to correct the opinion of others** (Woolf, 1925:11). Indeed, however, in his "Preface" we see that Johnson readily accepted the 'common[1] reader who merely wanted to read (while the scholar wanted to 'study') literature.

In what is still considered an important and relevant work, in Fiction and the Reading Public (1932) Q. D. Leavis wrote that "[p]oetry and criticism are not read by

the common reader; the drama, in so far as it ever overlapped with literature, is dead, and the novel is the only branch of letters which is now generally supported" (p. 35). According to E R. Leavis and Q. D. Leavis there were only two kinds of novels, literary and non-literary, and the former worthy of close reading and criticism and the latter only for escapist readings, implying that the latter sort of novels was shallow, if not also sensational and transitory. This attitude led to condescension towards popular fiction on the part of those involved in any way with former. Q. D. Leavis is most condescending when she states that the general reading public of the twentieth century "is no longer in touch with the best literature of its own day or of the past", and she is also certain that the fiction of her time does not contain the qualities of what she regards as 'highbrow' fiction, that is, the novels of Dickens or Smollett (p. 235). First of all, both these 'highbrow' novelists might even today be considered ` lowbrow[1], considering the subjects and sensational techniques both chose for their work. But that apart, Q. D. Leavis' criteria too ought to give us (although they did not give her) considerable pause. For paradoxically enough, she selected for her survey and analysis some sixty authors who fulfil the requirements of "[h]aving written 'The novel of the season', [b]eing steady bestsellers over a long period, and [h]aving proportionately large sales for a given public" (p. 40).

Surely these are the same criteria which most 'common' people actually apply to what has come to be contemptuously called 'popular' fiction. Based on the responses of readers to the works of these authors and the responses of the authors themselves to their authorial status, she divided novels into strange categories "highbrow", "middlebrow read as 'literature'", "middlebrow not read as 'literature', but not writing for the lowbrow market", and "absolute bestsellers" (i.e., 'lowbrow' literature) (p. 45). She dismissed middlebrow fiction and absolute bestsellers as commercial, and as having no aesthetic merit. Once again, absolute criteria or criticism such as 'no aesthetic merit' must give us serious pause. The status of highbrow and lowbrow literature and readership were more or less fixed, but it was the status of middlebrow readership that fluctuated. Unconsciously, at least a part of middlebrow writing was read as literature while the rest was not yet lowbrow, since it

was not meant for the lowbrow market. Literary historians trace the origins of middle brow fiction to the rise, or at least consolidation, of the middle classes in the eighteenth century. The middle class public was, it seemed, neither interested in the highbrow literary traditions and conventions nor in the concerns of the working class. They created a literature of their own which portrayed their own power struggles and anxieties. Trodd observes that the concepts of highbrow and lowbrow works and readership were well established by the 1890s "as the perceived, and often gendered, gulf between the elite and popular audiences for books became a matter for wide discussion" (Trodd, 1998:47). She also states that

> By the First World War the idea of the highbrow had coalesced with modernism. The modernist writers perceived themselves as an avant-garde, engaged in experiments communicable to an elite audience only, and alienated from, and rebelling against, the established culture. This necessitated the creation of the additional category of middlebrow to distinguish the outworn products of this established culture from the lowbrow output of mass culture, and to define them as the expression of the bourgeois society within which the avant-garde, existed, and against which they were rebelling. (ibid.)

Apart from being a category that contained works that portrayed the anxieties of the middle class, the middlebrow category also became some sort of dumping ground for the works that belonged to neither the highbrow nor lowbrow categories. Trodd also suggests that the big subscription library, with its largely middle class clientele, was the location of middlebrow activity. Such libraries unwittingly translated class terms into literary categories. Various magazines and journals located the middlebrow reader and tailored their publications to fulfil their demands.

The terms highbrow, lowbrow and middlebrow have now been discarded by many; in any case, the last two were never really common currency. Highbrow literature has transformed itself into elite (also considered 'serious') serious literature, and lowbrow into the junk/pulp/popular literature, while middlebrow literature has been entirely ignored or at most unceremoniously shoved into the popular literature bracket. The term popular fiction/literature has become an umbrella term to accommodate all kinds of writing that was popular, or at any rate not quite acceptable to the critical establishment. Ever since the term middlebrow *faded* away, fiction that was classified as middlebrow has existed in a limbo. One cannot of course equate the term middlebrow with good popular fiction. There is no sort of correspondence between the middlebrow category and the middle ground we have posited. But then there is no other term to distinguish good popular fiction from the junk/pulp fiction in the realm of popular fiction. Keeping within the general viewpoint and terminology of current crit cal terminology, we need a term that identifies and groups more acceptably these kinds of fiction. Good popular fiction then, has to be defined purely negatively, as whatever is not mere junk/pulp and whatever is not yet serious either. We also have to keep in mind that recognizing and concretizing this category does not mean to devalue so called junk or pulp fiction without examining the senses and connotations of such terms. To be able to define the middle space between serious and junk fiction, to be able to concretely define the 'good' popular fiction, we must also consider what popular fiction means to us as twentieth-century readers, just as we must examine whether there is in fact some kind of fiction that merely mercenarily and cynically exploits the reading habits of popular fiction audiences.

Even this brief historical glance will reveal the simple fact that at no time in human history can popular literature have been either absent or insignificant. We need to remember that Shakespeare, the greatest writer in the English language by universal agreement, at first called an 'Upstart Crow', and that Thomas Deloney, not Shakespeare, was the more popular and financially successful author in their day, that Deloney's ballads went round the entire countryside, unlike Shakespeare's plays. Now,

at the end of the twentieth century what does popular fiction mean to us? What does and does not the term popular fiction tell us about itself now in our own age? Though popular fiction has never till now been integrated into mainstream literary studies, it has always been regarded as a separate category; now it has for the first time the opportunity to emerge from the wrong side of the literary moon. It is no more likely to be regarded as a mere residue of literary production. It is now defined and recognized at least by some as an independent category that need not be defined negatively any longer. It is now a category that is being slowly but surely subjected to serious analysis, for whatever it is worth; its value is now being recognized, approved and studied on its own merit. Entertainment has been accepted as a fundamental value, not to be automatically sneered at as a 'low' objective. Both the late twentieth-century audience and such middle ground literature have perhaps the first opportunity to come into the open. For the middle ground has not only always existed inmost art forms, but it has also given rise to forms eventually appropriated by 'high' or serious art and literature without credit being given to the popular domain.

The novel still dominates the popular literature scene, despite the mass appeal of cartoons, comics, short stories, various other kinds of magazine and journal literature. The words novel and fiction are used synonymously by many indicating the popularity of the novel form itself. In the Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (1991) J A. Cuddon defines the popular novel as a novel that has a wide readership; the term often carries pejorative connotations. He classifies historical novels, novels of adventure, thrillers, spy and war novels, novels of sensation, science fiction and romances as popular novels (p. 729). Cuddon's definition suggests that genre is an important aspect in classification of fiction based on 'value'. Novels that belong to the genres mentioned in the above definition have been 'valued' (or rather 'devalued' until now) as sources of entertainment and pleasure.

Daphne du Maurier's novels were clearly valued by readers as entertainment and they still are. Apart from several reviews that her works elicited when they were published, her works are discussed briefly in various contexts, and these will figure in

our analysis of the novels in the next chapter. But her novels have also been occasionally examined from specific literary approaches, most importantly--Marxist [Roger Bromley's essay "The Gentry, Bourgeois Hegemony and Popular Fiction: Rebecca and Rogue Male" (1981)] and Feminist [Alison Light's essay "Returning to Manderley--Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class" (1984)]. Most recently a book-length study of her works by Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnick has appeared titled Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity and The Gothic Imagination (1998). This also shows that despite her image as a popular author in her time and long after, at least a few critics and literary scholars attribute to her works different values also. Her novels, which were dismissively considered just entertainers, are now being 'read' not just as entertainers but also as serious texts. Yet a dismissive attitude to her novels as mere popular novels still continues to work against considering them seriously or attributing some aesthetic merit to them.

The problem actually seems to be this--scholars seem to think that no significant technical skill is required to write entertaining works; or that, in any case, such skill as may perhaps be required is necessarily insignificant. Indeed, one may reverse this attitude and the resulting criterion and ask--what is the value of works that fail to please the many, to provide what perfectly normal human beings in all societies require, for instance interesting stories that provide change from the dreary or difficult or narrow circumscribed life which is the lot of the bulk of humanity, or moral and other considerations that actually matter to most people? Why should Ulysses. Finnegan's Wake, To the Lighthouse be valued at all as they are only read by an insignificant proportion of readership? In fact one seems to lose sight of other writers whose names sometimes occur in critical discourse but who in fact may occupy the same middle ground, being read by millions and yet not accorded a 'classic' or 'serious' status--for instance, Arnold Bennett and W. Somerset Maugham. This sort of inquiry has not vexed criticism or critical activity. But clearly it ought to have done so. It is not as if popular fiction didn't exist in the earlier centuries, and it is not as if there was nothing in literature to entertain our ancestors. If we ask what it is that was or is popular among a large number of people in terms of entertainment value then and

now, the answer will be more or less the same--suspense, mystery, fantasy, adventure, horror, sentiment, action drama and humour.

It is quite possible that what we now call 'serious' novels of Dickens might have entertained his readers with the above elements, which they certainly do contain; it is only because historical significance, use and value of these novels have changed that we, as 'modern' twentieth-century readers cannot read them as entertain. Terms such as conventions, traditions or patterns have some respectability since they are associated with serious fiction or established literature. Whereas terms such as 'action', 'sensation', or 'thrill' have no more literary respectability than the term formula. Apart from its constant use, the term formula seems to suggest 'low' quality work since it is also assumed that formula-based work lacks creative merit. This automatic equation that formulaic works are 'low' quality works leads to the more or less accepted criterion for deciding the canon of popular fiction. When it appears, formula and genre combine to offer quality reading then it constitutes 'good popular fiction', and when they combine to ofler cheap thrills, it constitutes 'junk or pulp fiction'.

Although we consider popular fiction as a large and single category, not only are sub-genric distinctions both observed and maintained within it but a canon seems to operate within it alas, dividing popular fiction further into two categories--`good popular fiction' and junk/pulp fiction. Though we are aware of this divide, we seem to ignore it, and allow consolidation of both kinds of fiction into one category to occur. Ironically enough, 'good popular fiction' may, in time, be allowed entry into established or serious fiction, but the position of junk/pulp fiction remains the same. While one end of the popular fiction canon is flexible the other is rigid. Junk/pulp fiction is scorned even by those critics who have themselves begun to consider popular fiction worthy of some critical attention. Yet it is perhaps numerically the largest category in terms of books, writers and readers. Junk/pulp fiction is in fact and by general agreement the kind of fiction that merely exploits mercenarily and cynically the reading habits of popular fiction readers. Readers themselves who may read both good and junk/pulp fiction do distinguish between them. Most of these fictions are designed

to offer cheap thrills and some of them even offer vicarious sensual even pornographic pleasures as well as pandering to the desire for sensationalism and violence. This, however, should not lead to automatic devaluation of this category, but it has. For such fiction is blatant about exploitation of formulae and somewhat doubtful opportunities to 'entertain'. Indeed, one cannot avoid moral criteria in this case--because 'entertain' really means 'pander' here.

We have already observed that the rise of various publishing houses during the post-war period led to the capture of a large share of the literary market by junk/pulp fiction writers. Publishing houses required writers in huge numbers for their fiction series and this led to a boom in the number of writers as well as books. The impact on middlebrow fiction was drastic and led to the combining of both middlebrow and lowbrow into one category. Works that are good popular fiction are bestowed with some mobility since at lest some of them are at least temporarily allowed into the domain of established fiction. Yet it never passes into the junk/pulp domain. It occupies some sort of undefined ambiguous space that may be called the middle ground, for such writing is 'good' enough to refer to it as 'good popular fiction*. However, its mobility between the serious fiction and popular category does not define it in any specific terms. Despite being widely read and popularized further through cinema, then, why is it that fictions that fall into this category do not figure in any literary critical discourse? We also have to ask ourselves why we feel that these fictions should figure in a literary discourse when they are sustained by a majority readership? The answer is implied in the third question. How can one neglect what a majority of the readers read? Nor can one neglect the large numbers of authors themselves who write such fictions, for there is usually sufficient evidence of 'seriousness' in their works. Don't these fictions, authors, and readers occupy a considerable amount of space in the literary universe? Several writers occupy this middle ground between serious and junk fiction but they do not even find mention in any literary histories. Such treatment requires study, because it is patently questionable.

If on rare occasions they do appear in critical or historical discourse, they are

categorized as "mere purveyors of easy dreams"; du Maurier is herself at times also classified as one of them ("Popular Literature", 1981:283). This ambiguity has unfortunately led to the neglect of interesting and creative writers and their often provocative (nor merely titillating) works. Many of these works certainly deserve consideration for their chief characteristic--they defy the boundaries between serious or established fiction and popular fiction by being both simultaneously. Such fictions defy the boundaries or rather question the black and white distinctions between serious and popular fiction because they combine the characteristics of both serious and junk/pulp fiction, the pace, action, sensationalism, and apparently unambiguous narrative of popular fiction and the sense of structure and intensity of serious fiction as well as themes that provoke thought.

If we observe the usage of the term "bestseller" by established critics we may begin to see that the fact that du Maurier's novels have been bestsellers may have worked against the possibility of her obtaining the stamp of approval of literary scholars and critics. But what are bestsellers? How do, or better, should we define them? Bestsellers are, in the literal sense those novels that are commercially very successful with a particular set of audience at a particular time or over a period of time. Du Maurier's works have been bestsellers since their first publication. They also been published in numerous paperback editions. Even Penguin publications, which is at times a symbol of 'quality' fiction have published most of her works. The primary reading list for this dissertation itself comprises of novels that have been published by various publications-- Gollancz (who first published all her works), Penguin, Arrow, Pan and Pocket Books--the first two being 'serious' publishers.

It is also generally believed that popular fictions are market products, often appearing with the bestseller tag on their very jackets. The economics of advertising, publishing, circulation, pricing, and sales-figures does not, indeed, approve serious fiction in such ways. Yet serious fictions are also market products in their own way. We must also keep in mind that only popular fictions need not be bestsellers. Serious fictions can, though only rarely, also be bestsellers. The assumption that popular

fictions are market 'products' derives form large sales. Indeed, in the introduction to Popular Fictions: Essays in Literature and History (1986), Humm, Stigant, and Widdowson posh that fictions are not made popular "simply by audience response". They are consciously geared by authors, publishers and film-makers, and these people have a "heightened sense of market, demand and taste". Therefore, whatever they create is unfortunately called a "product". Such products are placed at the opposite extreme form 'serious' or "non-popular fiction" in terms of production and market (p. 8). Such a view reinforces the assumption that serious fiction does not 'sell' as much as popular fiction and that good 'sales' are a negative achievement. The audience response is much more of a deciding commercial factor where bestsellers are concerned. For instance, the most popular legendary detective Sherlock Holmes 'died' at the Reichenbach falls in 1894, in his struggle with Moriarty; he had to come alive in 1903 by popular demand. This phenomenon only clearly indicates that the audience response is not just "simple" but can also be demanding. Audience response decides whether a work of fiction survives, becomes a bestseller or a classic for all times.

The bestseller tag automatically means to some a majority's choices are not worth considering seriously. For it is believed that not only are popular fictions intellectually and imaginatively un-demanding but also lacking in technical skill. As John Sutherland remarks "[t]he bestness which is not respected is that of selling" (Sutherland, 1981:3). Ironically we can propose that bestsellers should be considered seriously precisely because they outsell their "serious" counterparts. In Principles of Literary Criticism as early as 1928, I. A. Richards argues that "[b]est-sellers in all the arts, exemplifying as they do the most general levels of attitude development, are worthy of very close study. No theory of criticism is satisfactory to explain their wide appeal and give clear reasons why those who disdain them are not necessarily snobs" (p. 159). It is not often that one finds a serious and respected critic venturing as far as Richard.

It is true that many bestselling novels do not outlast the time they are published. It is also true that novels with genuine aesthetic merit, even when not quite considered

'classic', remain bestsellers for a long time. Bestsellers receive wide acceptance because they relevantly reflect their times, never mind how 'seriously', or fulfil some desire or aspiration of their readers. A study of all the bestsellers of a given period of time will reveal that they provide great variety, both in their concerns and subject matter as well as in treatment given to them. For between bestselling literature and 'classics' there is, of course, a real (if unacknowledged) continuity, even though it may not be always worth noticing the kinship between good fictions and exploitative fictions. These bestsellers give us a picture of the changing concerns, attitudes, and reading patterns of a given period. This is also true of bestsellers of a single author written over a period of time. In fact du Maurier's bestsellers record questions of class, gender, war, changing frameworks of social institutions such as family, property, decaying British aristocracy, notions of history and science.

Sometimes the tag of the bestseller is used by the publisher himself as an advertising gimmic. Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnick, in recent essay "Extremely Valuable Property: The Marketing of Rebecca" (1998), survey the publishing scene behind the novel.[3] They examine the publishers* first reception, reaction, and marketing of the novel, as well as the specific case of later paperback editions of Rebecca. They also analyze the politics of hardback and paperback publishing and du Maurier's slightly fluctuating status as a popular woman author. They examine in detail the appearance of the novel published in series (Simplified English Series, Twentieth Century Classics. Heinmann Guided Reader Series etc.,); they also examine marketing and publishing strategies in the USA and the rise in sales figures due to the popularity of the Hitchcock film "Rebecca" and vice versa. The phenomenal success of this one novel was exploited by her publisher in promoting her forthcoming novels. Before the publication of one of her works du Maurier wrote to her friend Oriel Malet: "I wrote to Victor (Gollancz) to beg him not to advertise me as Best-selling, because nowadays it puts people off, and has almost become something to be ashamed of (though God knows why inverted snobbery), but I'm sure he won't take notice" (Malet, 1957:88). Much as she had feared, she was always advertised as a bestselling author. This seems to have prejudiced the reviewers and critics against her.

II

Popular fictions have been considered in our century as specific genre products largely because of the changes in the publishing industry. As we have already discussed, during the post-war period various publishers began targeting readers with specific kinds of fiction. Publishing houses introduced series which led to the large-scale production of certain generic fictions such as romance, gothic, mystery and detective fiction. In Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature (1984) Janice A. Radway records that, troubled by the variability in the sales of mystery series, Gerald Goss (publisher of Ace Books) recalled the consistent reprint success of du Maurier's Rebecca Radway says that: "wondering whether its long standing popularity indicated that it struck a universal chord in female readers, [Goss] attempted to locate previously published titles resembling du Maurier's novels which he hoped to issue in a 'gothic series" (31).

It is just as true that popular genres that follow certain conventions have been handed over from one generation to another—a 'critical' force—the existence of which established literary study has never acknowledged. Repeated use of these conventions in popular fiction has given rise to the term formula, perhaps one of the terms most despised by the literary establishment. By formula is meant a set of motifs, devices, conventions, or patterns used repeatedly. The feeling is that popular writers spend little energy in reworking them differently in each novel. As suggested earlier the term formula, presumably out of artistic laziness and a desire to exploit commercial potential, therefore, automatically seems to suggest 'low' quality work. We must also note that authors of serious fiction also use certain motifs, images and symbols as well as other narrative techniques which they rework in their novels—for, indeed, literature is a cumulative art, each author learning his trade from the works of other authors. In fact, copying 'master works' is a standard part of apprenticeship in other arts such as painting.

If a device or technique 'works' (often by some chance of history) to lift a work out of the popular category and into that of 'serious' literature, people forget the use of 'formulae' in it. Writers whom we now consider serious, for instance Shakespeare, whose plays we now 'study' for their serious themes and subjects, used popular devices such as romantic escapades, mistaken identities, duels, comic situations, disguises, spirits and ghosts besides several other devices. The teaching of Shakespeare, for instance, revels in this fact, long and often tedious lectures being delivered on his use of dramatic devices, even borrowed devices. The same devices have been used by other dramatists and authors over the centuries. When we 'study' a Shakespeare play or any other 'serious' works of authors we never use the term formula. It is a fact that most authors pick and choose from the already existing devices or formula. So why is formula a dirty word?

If formulaic popular fiction has been popular with readers then is there something wrong with the fictions? There is something certainly wrong with our approach towards these fictions. Literary establishement equates formula with low-quality work but the importance of formula in popular literature has also been acknowledged by popular culture critics; its existence justified and defended. John G. Cawelti's definition of formula in relation to popular arts and culture is now one of the most frequently quoted and accepted definitions in popular culture studies "a conventional system for structuring cultural products** (Cawelti, 1969:72). He argues that unlike myth, the cultural nature of a formula is limited in its framework and this limitation also adds to its specific nature. Yet formulae are important because they represent "syntheses of several important cultural functions which, in modern cultures have been taken over by the popular arts" (ibid., 73). Cawelti also states that social or cultural ritual is one important dimension of a formula. A formula contains a pattern known to everyone and therefore reaches and appeals to a wide audience. Cawelti also defines formulae as principles for selection of certain plots, characters, and settings and so on. Most importantly, he proposes that formulae are narrative structures with "dimensions of a collective ritual, game and dream"; this proposal not merely underlines the historical dimension of literature by also implies an active participation of readers in

the narrative process itself (ibid., 74).

Instead of attacking popular fictions wholesale for repeated and exploitative, use of formulae, therefore, we must consider the reasons for the popularity of formulaic patterns among the 'people'. Humm, Stigant and Widdowson state that "[o]nly when we reject the notion of 'popular fiction' as topical content and 'literature' as timeless form can we begin properly to interpret its historical significance. That is why it is important to avoid a dismissive critical condescension in the use of terms like 'formula' and 'stereotype'" (19S6: 6). Formula becomes a dirty word because use of set formulae is believed to be monotonous and lacking in creativity. But the challenge for authors who do use formulae is to use them as creatively and innovatively as possible and of course give their readers an absorbing reading experience: because readers who look for entertainment are not easy to please. To think otherwise is to dismiss millions of intelligent and down-to earth readers as un-discriminating. This, indeed, has been the gravest misconception entertained by literary elites everywhere, yet it is simply untenable. It takes considerable skill to entertain readers. Readers always look for variety and this explains the existence of so many varieties of fictions practised down the ages. If we believe that readers look for, possess the ability to discern variety how can we fail to explain the huge expanse of formulaic literature?

A variety of generic formulae also offers scope for experiment. That is one fundamental reason why formulae seldom lose their appeal with common readers and popular authors. If popular fiction follows a particular formula or a set pattern that captures the readers' imagination successfully then it also means that popular fiction acknowledges, reflects and respects popular tastes, fancies, imagination, attitudes, and interests. Readers also look for familiar patterns which they can easily identify and identify with. This is the second fundamental reason for the predominance of formulaic literature in all societies--popular literature seems to satisfy, specifically in *its* formulaic nature, a specific yet universal need of un-lesiured people all over he world--witness the song and dance patterns of any society, which contain both formulae and repetition. The very 'commonality' of this kind of literature simultaneously reassures readers of their

own social reality and lets them know that what they read is only fiction. John Cawelti's study of formulaic literature Adventure. Mystery and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture (1976) is based on the assumption that formulae in literature affirm existing interests and attitudes by presenting an imaginary world aligned with the same (Cawelti, 1976). Social realities find their representations in formulaic popular fictions and also influence them in turn.

Since one of the chief 'uses' of popular fiction is entertainment,--since for unlesiured people sources of entertainment are not a matter of progressive refinement in technique but continual confirmation of pattern, these realities are frequently sensationalized, dramatized, and worked up to create an effect in popular fiction. If dramatizing or sensationalizing reality can provide entertainment to readers what is wrong with it, given the *raison d'etre* if such entertainment. Alison Light argues that we must consider popular fictions as perhaps mediated restatements of social reality. Light also argues that we need to "examine how literary texts might function as imaginative constructions and interpretations" (Light, 1984:326). She also suggests that

> we need discussions that are not afraid of the fact that literature is a source of pleasure, passion *and* [Light's emphasis] entertainment. This is not because pleasure can then explain away politics, as if it were a panacea existing outside of social and historical constraints. Rather it is precisely because pleasure is experienced by men and women within and despite those constraints. (ibid.)

Popular authors who use formulae seldom like to abandon them for fear of reader's disinterest and rejection. And the case of even Charles Dickens being forced by his readers to provide a happy ending for Great Expectations (1860) is too well known to retail here. In this sense one might say that readers make specific demands and have

certain expectations of writers. Fiction also becomes, it must be acknowledged, a kind of platform for exploring their fantasies. That way lies the clearly 'escapist' domain of popular literature. Yet success in never guaranteed. For instance, in Mrs. de Winter in Rebecca du Maurier created a popular fiction reader who tries to use the language of the fiction she reads (words like "ripping", "topping"). But this experiment foils. Mrs. de Winter also compares herself with the heroines of the novels she reads (heroines of the novels looked beautiful when they cried while her own face was all blotched up; heroes proposed marriage to heroines on their knees while her own situation was quite the opposite). However, Mrs. de Winter is also a typical reader whose "novel" fantasies are dismantled by and by. This also in some sense draws a line between reality and fantasy not just for Mrs. de Winter but also the kind of readers she represents. I believe we can unhesitatingly draw certain conclusions at this point--first, that certainly we are bound to distinguish between merely exploitative and undemanding popular fiction and demanding popular fiction that uses formulae; second, that the readership of popular fiction cannot be dismissed as undiscerning; and third, that use of formulae does not necessarily amount to cheapness, that the function of formulae is too serious a phenomenon to be dismissed out of hand.

III

Since du Maurier blends various genres and their formulae in her novels it is necessary to briefly examine some background of the genres and the formulae she experiments with. Du Maurier's novels are written in the tradition of romance, mainly falling into its sub-genres--the family romance or family saga, historical romance, and the gothic romance. Elements of mystery, adventure and fantasy are, therefore, inevitably blended into these romances Now, romance has been probably the most successful and popular of genres in literature The section on "Popular Literature" in the Encyclopedia Britannica (1981) records that "romance probably has the longest and fullest tradition in popular fiction** (p 804) Much before it became popular as an alternate form of prose

fiction, it was a popular genre in poetry. It has its origins in ballads and songs and folklore, performed verbally by itinerant artists, whose renderings were again popular forms of entertainment Romance was once a very masculine genre and this aspect is often overlooked in most current discussions of it because for twentieth century readers romance has become "women's reading". Male romances of earlier ages examined the initiation of a young hero into the adult male/masculine world, for instance, the medieval romance of quest With the rise of prose fiction this became, most typically an adventure story or a 'growth' story—mostly variations of the *Bildungsroman*. For instance one of the most popular themes of the past tow centuries, beginning with Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe has been that of a poor young boy growing up with the sole ambition of success in the adult world. For instance, many of Dickens' novels explore this theme. Search for social, political and class identities and definition of masculinity were also the most frequently explored themes. Adventures, escapades, journeys and struggle for power and class position characterized these romances. A compelling sense of atmosphere and setting and exploration of the setting were the most common devices that symbolized self-exploration and definition. The male romance was a popular genre among the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the Victorian age. For instance, one of the most remarkable Victorian novels, Wuthering Heights (1847), dwells almost entirely on the progress in life of H eat hc l iff. There can hardly be any doubt regarding the kind of readership that novels of atmosphere and adventure enjoyed generally, or regarding the techniques employed by 'popular' writers like Wilkie Collins and 'canonized' writers like Sir Walter Scott or Emily Bronte. The appeal of these romances was hardly restricted to male readership alone.

It is interesting to note how present day romances have come to target only female readership. In part we must notice that the modern romance or romantic novel bears no resemblance whatsoever to its origins (the male romance). Today, for most popular fiction readers, romances mean love stories such as Mills and Boon or Harlequin or Silhouette romances. These romances are considered representative only of women's reading. Consequently, other sub-types of romance (such as those written by Mary Stewart, or Daphne du Maurier) are fallaciously excluded from

discussion. Novels published by publishing houses purveying today's female romance follow the ancient formula for instance, a--rich man meets a poor, naive girl, their courtship, misunderstandings, reconciliation and marriage. Summarizing the narrative structure of an "ideal romance" Janice A. Radway lists thirteen actions or formulae embedded in the structure of a romance; her list can be paraphrased as follows. The first action is the "destruction of the heroine's social identity", followed by her antagonistic reaction to the "aristocratic male", to which the male in turn responds "ambiguously". This is followed by the heroine's interpretation of his behaviour as "a purely sexual interest in her", to which the heroine reacts with "anger or coldness". The hero "retaliates by punishing the heroine" and they are "physically and/or emotionally separated". This is followed by the hero's tender treatment of the heroine to which she "responds warmly". The heroine then re-interprets "the ambiguous behaviour" as a result of "previous hurt". The hero then openly declares his love and faithful commitment to her with the supreme act of tenderness and then the heroine responds "sexually and emotionally", and finally "her identity is restored" (Radway, 1984:134). These actions were listed after studying many example of romance and why women like to read them. Most of the sample readings were borrowed from the Mills and Boon, Harlequin, and Silhouette romances. The same formula has worked in novels like Jane Eyre (1847), and Gone with the Wind (1936), which have been considered the best of romances. In fact du Maurier does use this formula in her most famous novel Rebecca (1938).

A close look at the structures and formulae of romances reveals that women are indeed defined within domestic spheres. In reality women have been and are defined almost exclusively within domestic spheres all over the world until very recent times. It is not as if romances invent love and domestic activities; they 'borrow[1] from both reality, and dreams and aspirations of people. The central theme of a romance is always (and inevitably) the relationship between the hero and heroine. We do find elaborate descriptions of houses, gardens, food, clothes, courtship, misunderstandings, reconciliations etc., in romances. Romances usually begin with courtship and end in marriage. The heroine is a social and sexual subordinate to the hero and always wishes

to change her status by marrying into the upper class. This and the peaceful and they-lived-happily-ever-after ending are surely not only popular fantasies of readers but also genuine aspirations. This is also because reality is not always happily-ever-after for everyone. Such representations provide the much needed escape and wish-fulfilment.

Analyzing post war women's fiction "Writing Fictions: Femininity and the 1950s" (1986) light points out that in British society novel writing has been "a unique and deeply pleasurable resource for (predominantly) bourgeois women in the last two hundred years". She also states that the wars that occurred had changed the ideologies of family life and the new ideologies "sought to re-situate women firmly back within traditional roles" (p. 141). According to her, the novel has been successfully used especially by middle class women, as a space to "imagine and re-cast the concerns of their gendered existence, romantic love, sexual relations, marriage, family and property" (p. 143). She argues that the novel has provided not only writers but also readers with a "culture where they mostly exist in the imaginary representations of men" (pp. 147-148). Radway posits that romance fiction as readers experience is "compensatory literature" (Radway, 1984:35).

Radway's survey is based on the most generally believed assumption that target readers of romances are women. Her inference is that women who read romances are participating in a collectively elaborated female fantasy", which ends with the hero's declaration of his undying love to the heroine. Radway also concludes, "passivity is at the heart of the romance" (ibid., p. 97). The heroine need not do anything constructive other than being the object of the hero's attention. This is not only a favourite fantasy but also provides romantic escape to its women readers (therefore compensatory in nature). The portrayal of femininity within certain spheres in romances has changed over the years, for instance, during the wars women struggling for equality; the post-war women aware of their capacity to earn and perform dual roles, and portrayal of career-oriented, independent women during and after 1960s. Despite these outward social changes one aspect has remained constant to the present day--the heroines' craving for love and marriage for emotional and social security. No amount of alternate, feminist

writings have been able to change this aspect from representation in romances. As mentioned earlier this provides readers with escape. Though readers may read for escape they are also consciously aware of the fact that their escape ends when their reading of the romance ends. The illusion is hardly permanent, and rarely does it make a reader lose sight of the hard realities of their actual existence.

In her article "Mills and Boon Meets Feminism" Ann Rosalind Jones observes that "[t]he politics of gender have already become a politics of the genre" (p. 216). Jones is also voicing the major objection feminists take to the stock kinds of romances in their representation of the heroine as a passive object. But feminists have failed to explain why women readers do not find this representation offensive and why such romances have been able to provide escapes and wish-fulfilment to millions without noticeably distorting reality. Although feminists have come up with alternate writings to counter these kinds of romances they have not been able to explain the outstanding success of not merely romances in terms of sales and female readership but also in terms of replenishment of powers of resistance in readers. Repeated assertions that romances are written by women for women seem to have been accepted without much dispute. And such a phenomenon ought to give up pause in accepting dismissive classification of popular writing as 'low' and merely escapist literature.

However, du Maurier's romances use much besides formulae so they cannot be considered only love stories. They are far more complex. Love and courtship between the hero and heroine occupies only a fraction of the narratives. Gradually, not just the heroines, but also her heroes become preoccupied with defining their social and sexual identities. It is interesting to note how du Maurier constructs her heroes and heroines in the conventional fashion and yet through them raises complex and relevant issues. Although an analysis of her novels follow only after we have considered that they are primarily entertainers, it is important to note that automatic classification of fiction is at best a hazardous business.

Let us now consider the sub-genres of romance with which du Maurier

experiments. The family saga or the family romance contains stock devices. It is usually the story of one family, usually belonging to the aristocracy that owns a family property and enterprise, or a family of humble origins which is catapulted into fame and money. The story is usually long, if not in fact spread over several novels, recording the struggles and survival of at least four or five generations. The common devices include: prodigal sons and daughters who bring about the downfall of the family and disappoint the parents; ambitious sons and daughters who bring hope to the parents by inheriting family talents and passion for family trade; stoic parents who either survive degeneration of the family or crumble quickly; wicked aunts and uncles and family feuds threatening to usurp family property and break family ties; difficulties arising from debts and accidents that threaten the family business; the family legacy usually being a passion for a certain art or trade; and also the usual births, illnesses, marriages, broken hearts, separations, reunions and deaths are all faithfully recorded in a family romance. Du Maurier's first novel The Loving Spirit (1931) was a family saga, the story of four generations of a ship-building family set in Plyn, a small Cornish coastal village. Hungry Hill (1943) is the story of five generations of the Brodrick family, which owns copper mines at Hungry Hill in Ireland. Du Maurier has followed the formula of the family saga in such novels without much experiment in these novels.

History gives authors ready-made incidents, characters and plots that are interesting. There is also the common assumption often called the 'Golden Age' that the past was rich and glorious and this perhaps adds to the popular appeal of the genre of historical romance. In The Historical Romance (1993) Helen Hughes observes that the historical romance a "predominantly a woman's genre** in British fiction (p.3) like other genres it also uses certain stock conventions. Tracing formulae that have been used in the historical romances over the centuries Hughes suggests

> The basic kit units which are used to make up the plots of the historical romance are the stock situations and character-types which can be found in book after book rearranged or redeployed, demonstrating minor differences

> of detail but with an essential structural identity. This of course is to say that the genre is dependent on formulae as other popular fiction is. (Hughes, 1993:13)

Hughes posits that there is a pattern, for instance, in the behaviour of heroines in that they resist and try to "overthrow masculine power" but succumb to it in the end, and this pattern is conventional and "traditionally romantic" (p. 15). Gender stereotypes are very much part of the formulae of the historical romance. The commanding and courageous hero usually belongs to an aristocratic background, leads an important political mission, is a natural leader and it is his prerogative to lead other men. Masculine activity is almost always in the public sphere and is the main fount of positive values whereas the heroines are always the "carers", the most frequently used motif in this connection being the heroine tending an injured hero.

In du Maurier's The King's General (1946) was a blend of fact and fiction and so was Mary Anne (1954) which was based on the life of du Maurier's great-great grandmother Mary Anne Clarke, a famous courtesan and mistress of Frederick, Duke of York, son of George III. The Glass Blowers (1963) is based on the struggles of her own glass-blowing French ancestors during the French Revolution. Du Maurier makes use of real historical events like the Civil War, the trial of Mary Anne Clarke, and the peasants' revolt respectively in each of these novels and hence we categorize them as historical novels But what of those novels like Frenchman's Creek (1946), which are set in the past and yet do not reveal any exact time-setting? Horse-drawn carriages, pirates, wigs as a current fashion, titled ladies and gentlemen all suggest a vague Restoration setting. In fact novels like Jamaica Inn (1936) and My Cousin Rachel (1951) are also set in the past and also characterized by horse-drawn carriages, candle-lit mansions and so on but are not considered historical romances Du Maurier has, moreover, used present day language in all these novels and yet has been successful in creating the atmosphere of the past This also raises the oft-debated question—do we consider only those novels as historical romances which indicate a specific historical period? How do we categorize novels such as Jamaica Inn and My Cousin Rachel, in that case? This problem brings

within focus the difficulty in categorizing du Maurier's novels in specific categories.

One novel that very obviously transcends neat and obvious generic boundaries is The House on the Strand (1969). It is a blend of gothic romance, science fiction, and historical romance. Time travel, which is among the most common formulae of science fiction, is used in this novel. As a result of this time travel, the characters in the present are transported back to the past, as remote as the fourteenth century. Proof (which may also be fictive but is convincing enough) of the past events and existence of the characters (of the past) is provided by various documents within the novel (du Maurier has also acknowledged the research involved in writing this novel in her preface). At the outset, it is a male romance exploring time travel with its basic formulaic elements. The mixture of genres in this novel makes it difficult for us to fit it into any specific category. Indeed, what is the category of other 'into the past' novels like Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper (1881) or A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889)?

The gothic is another genre that predominantly figures in du Maurier's novels. The gothic novel as such evolved, flourished and declined during the eighteenth century and was revived again in the twentieth century. Stock gothic conventions have undergone changes over the centuries. In Gothic (1996) Fred Botting traces various stock devices used in the gothic novel since eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century they included were spectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, incest, inherited curses, evil aristocrats, monks and nuns, fainting heroines and bandits. Fathers, scientists, husbands, madmen, criminals, and monstrous doubles signifying evil were added to the list in the nineteenth century. Gothic landscapes changed from wild mountains, forests, castles, graveyards, and abbeys to an old mansion with its dark passages, ruined as well as ruinous surroundings. Ruins became a significant motif creating an atmosphere of awe, fear, melancholy and sadness and figure prominently in du Maurier's novels.

Botting also states that certain anxieties reflected by these gothic texts varied

according to changing circumstances like "political revolution, industrialization, urbanization, shifts in domestic organization and scientific discovery" (p 3). The Gothic novel came under heavy attack when it appeared during the second half of the eighteenth century for its depiction of subverted sexual propriety and manners. By the end of the eighteenth century, feminization of reading practices and publishing marked the beginning of changes in the genre itself. Gothic texts were accused of tempting, upsetting feminine sensibilities by highlighting selfishness, vice, and sexual perversions (women and men with voracious sexual appetites and homosexual streaks).

During the nineteenth century the genre was transformed to accommodate the "[r]omantic ideal of individuality, imaginative consciousness and creation" (p. 10). The family became threatening, uncanny, strange and haunting in these novels. As science and psychology found their way into literature or began to influence it they explained certain phenomena that were considered as supernatural. Madness, incest, and other kinds of 'strange' behaviour were explained by the sciences and what were considered supernatural occurrences were explained by the sciences. Then the stock devices of gothic fiction became alter egos, psychological disorder, bizarre scientific experiments, and as a result, science fiction and utopian/dystopian fiction branching out of the gothic and becoming more popular than the traditional gothic novel.

Though tales of terror and horror had always fascinated people, the popularity of the gothic novel steadily declined by the end of the nineteenth century. Most of du Maurier's bestselling novels were considered gothic romances, and they helped to revive interest in the genre in the early part of this century. Though her romances contained the traditional formula of the romantic love story, gothic elements also dominated all her novels. They are abundant in Jamaica Inn (1935) and Rebecca (1938). Du Maurier also used gothic atmosphere, ruins, uncanny resemblances, doubles, and the effeminate male in her novels. Du Maurier's novels with male protagonists/narrators, Mv Cousin Rachel (1951), The Scapegoat (1957) and The Flight of the Falcon (1965), are also romances and adventures with dominant gothic elements. Some of her gothic heroes have fragmented identities and are very vulnerable. Intense

male-bonding that excludes femininity also is found in these novels. Although homosexuality exists as an alternative it never culminates in an overt physical relationship. Uncanny resemblances, look-alikes signifying evil, the feminine as sinister, mysterious deaths and illnesses, hysteria, madness and violence are the stock devices found in these novels. For du Maurier setting is in no way subordinate to the plot but crucial to the plot itself. Descriptions of landscape, huge mansions and other structures suggesting decay, and effectively integrated descriptions of strange and haunting atmosphere are the strengths of her novels. In the six novels discussed as examples in the following chapters we can see that the setting is integral to the plot itself.

Du Maurier not only followed stock conventions and formulae of the popular genres but also successfully established certain formulae, which are imitated even today, and this seems to have worked against the approval of her works by scholars and critics of the literary establishment. Her fiction has been politely dismissed as formulaic and her skills in combining various generic elements and their formulae overlooked. Jane S. Bakerman suggests that "certainly it is no disgrace either to establish or to follow a popular, even beloved literary formula. Du Maurier has done both" (Bakerman, 1985:12-13). Du Maurier's actual success despite neglect or dismissal, however, raises central questions for our consideration--since she has succeeded, vastly read and has been seriously imitated, and since her work definitely provokes moral and social assessments of human concerns, the du Maurier work cannot be dismissed as 'junk'. That forces us to consider the propositions that there is a continuum along which literary works are ranged, with 'classics' and 'junk' merely exemplifying the extremes, and that there is a significant 'middle ground* demanding most serious attention.

Notes to Chapter I

1 This novel is a fitting example of the popular phenomenon. It has one of the most amazing publishing records. It was first published in 1895 and saw nine editions in the same year. The next year 1896 saw as many as twenty-two editions. In 1897 it saw four editions and three in 1898 and nearly two or three editions every succeeding year till 1918. There might be many more since then. This clearly indicates the extent of popularity of the novel. It ought to draw our attention to the phenomenon itself. (Correlli, Mary. Sorrows of Satan. (1895). 63 Edn. London: Methuen & Co Ltd. 1918.)

2 We must also Note Bennett's definition: "[i]n the absence of a better alternative, then I use the term 'popular fiction* for the reason of economy, and mean by *it* that massive, exceedingly heterogeneous, body of texts which is conveniently defined as a residue in relation to 'literature proper' an which is not normally encompassed within the purview of criticism." ("Marxism and Popular fiction", p.256). We have not been able to discard definitions of this kind, though popular fiction is no more a residual concept and is considered as an independent entity.

3 All further references to the novel will be from the Pan edition. Du Maurier Daphne. Rebecca. London: Pan Books Ltd. 1975.

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Chapter II

The Popular Novels of Daphne du Manner

The Loving Spirit: Her first novel, which gave promise of the romantic masterpieces that were to follow.

Rebecca: Her triumphant novel that ranks with Jane Evre and Gone With the Wind.

Jamaica Inn: The world of the Bronte's transferred to the Cornwall of the early nineteenth century.

Frenchman's Creek: Set in restoration times, this story of love and piracy is romance at its best.

Mv Cousin Rachel: A superb study of that cancer of human mind--suspicion.

The Parasites: Has all the du Maurier magnetism. Reveals vistas of a vanished Europe throbbing with old gaiety.

[Penguin advertisements of du Maurier's novels, Jamaica Inn 1972 edition, and The House on the Strand 1971 edition]

We may or may not agree with the advertisements above. Nevertheless, they give us considerable pause to examine their claims. Their aim may be to advertise du Maurier's works, but how they do it is interesting. They suggest that du Maurier has indeed written masterpieces, especially romances. The publisher adds to these advertisements "superb study", "triumphant", "romance at its best" which indicate that her works are already successful and quality reading. One of them even suggests that the novel has du Maurier's "magnetism". They even suggest the kind of authors she may be grouped with. Their appeal is to readers who may or may not have read all her works.

Such advertising is not very uncommon in the popular fiction domain. In fact such advertisements are not uncommon to the entire domain of popular arts itself. The audience is familiar with such advertisements, publicity, and propaganda of popular art. One of the reasons for the wide appeal of popular art is the predictability in the audience's engagement with it. For instance, one of the forms of oral narratives "harikatha" in Southern India is such a phenomenon. Stories narrated through this form are more or less known to the audience. It is quite possible that the performers are also known to them. Yet it is one of the most popular forms of oral narration. With such predictability, what sort of entertainment can it offer? However, performances change with every individual performer. Every performer recycles material, characters, episodes, and emphasis. Performers often include current local references in their narratives. Most important is the changes rung in the narrative technique. Similar is the case with formulaic popular fiction. Formulae are certainly predictable. Readers are, in fact, trained by their earlier readings to expect or predict "what next?" in a novel. In a way, their reactions are also predictable. In order to elicit these such reactions, popular fictions have always relied on swift action and racy plots, characters whom readers can identify with or clearly admire or wonder at, melodrama which demands subjective reactions which ranging from laughter to tears, descriptions ranging from mundane activity (which is sometimes highly dramatized or sensationalized), unnatural happenings, a compelling sense of atmosphere and setting, and, most importantly a happy ending. For instance, horrors appeal to readers precisely because they thrill them with extraordinary occurrences. One can only confirm that readers like to scare themselves and derive pleasure out of doing so. Formula also makes readers[1] engagement with the novel easy. Participation and reaction are spontaneous and more or less immediate. One cannot dismiss the reactions of a popular reader as cheap, although it is agreed by general consensus that the reactions of a junk/pulp fiction reader are not always really significant or valuable even to him.

Yet all kinds of fictions perform more functions than merely entertaining. We have already seen (Ch. I) that popular fictions relevantly reflect their times in terms of

reading patterns and tastes and even readers* concerns. We have suggested that the defining characteristic of work such as du Maurier's, that occupy the middle ground is that they defy the black-and-white distinctions between serious and popular fiction. We have also suggested that such works indeed combine characteristics of both serious and popular fictions. Conventional critical analysis tends to ignore and often dismiss popular novels on the grounds that they lack literary skills worth noticing and are far too easy to read. Du Maurier has been considered by many only a popular author and her novels mere entertainers. It is necessary for us to address the second 'charge', before we proceed to establish that her novels do not lack 'serious' or 'classic' qualities. We have also suggested that in order to analyze popular fiction one need not follow conventional methods of analysis, individually taking stock of plots, characters, themes, symbolism and so on. Instead, we require an approach that not only examines the entertainment "value" of these novels but also "what else" these novels have to offer besides literary and aesthetic merit. Although popular are primarily entertainers, we shall find that the better they are the more demands they make on their readers apart from providing entertainment, escape from life's drudging and wish-fulfilment.

The nearly universal appeal of du Maurier's novels lies in the responses they dependably elicit. The first-person narrative dominates her fiction and tends to create a response by inviting the reader directly into the narrative itself. She combines several characters' lives, thereby making her plots complex. She effectively excites readers' simple curiosity to know 'what happens next?' make her plots racy She shocks readers with unexpected twists in her plots. This gives her novels an enticing unpredictability. Du Maurier also locates her narratives in vivid descriptions which create at times a heady sense of atmosphere. Gothic settings, or otherwise bold backdrops of action become complex symbols of socio-economic and cultural facts. Most popular authors prefer to adhere to formulae that are popular with the readers and du Maurier is no exception. But du Maurier almost never simply uses a formula. Even routine reading of the novels reveals that she also subverts established formulae and creates effective patterns of her own. We also have to note that, being popular bestsellers of their time (and long after), du Maurier's novels reflect their times. Far more substantially and provocatively than the

term 'popular' normally suggests.

In this chapter, therefore, we shall discuss six of du Maurier's most popular bestselling romances so as to bring out the qualities we have noted above. The first section will discuss Jamaica Inn (1936),[1] Rebecca (1938),[2] and The King's General (1946).[3] These novels fall within the tradition of romance and yet they meaningfully, explore the nature of femininity, crime, class, sexual and social identity. The heroine of Jamaica Inn, for instance, Mary Yellan, comes to live with her aunt and uncle at Jamaica Inn only to discover that her uncle is a drunkard and a criminal and the Inn a center of his activities. Thus a trying and testing predicament presented to her. The heroine/narrator of Rebecca marries the rich and famous Maxim de Winter and comes to Manderley, the family property, only to discover that the spirit of Maxim's first wife Rebecca haunts it, as it begins to haunt her too. The beautiful but crippled Honor Harris, the heroine/narrator of The King's General, meets her lover after fifteen years in Menabilly, a Royalist mansion, but has to bear the burden of its secrets too. Heroines of these novels initially appear and behave according to formula—they are young, innocent, and naive. They are, however, also to be doubly oppressed by being subordinates to the heroes, and by the oppressive gothic setting, crime, villains, and vamps. Du Maurier follows the formulaic pattern only for a part of her narratives. We discover that her heroines are preoccupied with their own concerns and struggles for the most part and we become absorbed in their preoccupation. Formulae are thus subverted, heroes taking a back seat and endings appearing unexpected, sudden and abrupt.

Suspense, crime, action and romance are the chief ingredients of Jamaica Inn. Du Maurier fully exploits the conventions of a gothic romance and thriller. The atmosphere of the Inn is mysterious, strange and haunting. The heroine is trapped. Crimes are committed there ranging from horse stealing and smuggling, to murder and ship-

wrecking. The criminals are eventually brought to justice and in the end the hero rescues the heroine from the villains. Du Maurier is successful in maintaining suspense regarding who the real villain is, until the very end and the revelation comes as a shock. Around Bolven Tor, between Bodmin and Launceston, Brown Willy and the Cheesewring, on a lonely highway stands Jamaica Inn. On a rainy night, Mary Yellan, an orphan (another conventional element) arrives from Helford to live at the Inn with her aunt Patience and uncle Joss Merlyn. She finds the Inn a spooky, haunted place. Mary, who had expected to see it full of custom, is rather frightened by its stillness. The animal-like appearance of Joss, the frailty of aunt Patience and the ragged appearance of both, shakes her. It seems to her that Joss has the strength of a horse; with his stooping shoulders with his head sunk between them he resembles a "giant gorilla", and his fists are large as hams (JI, P 33). The Inn itself is a large and rambling place, neglected, its rooms unused.

With a beginning that is thus mysterious and intriguing the plot unfolds gradually as Mary discovers the real activities that happen at the Inn. She hears strange sounds and is warned by Patience to keep her eyes, ears ands mouth shut. To her horror, Mary is strangely attracted to Joss but her attraction is darkly clouded by her fear and awe of him. Into such a scenario enters the chauvinist hero Jem Merlyn, brother of Joss, who thinks that the Inn is no place for a woman. While Joss is violent, Jem sweeps Mary off her feet with his gentleness. Mary, however, suspects that Jem is part of the sinister activities of his brother and cannot accept the fact that she has fallen in love with a thief. She is also trapped at the Inn because of her loyalty to her aunt. However, Mary is a young woman of character. More than her loyalty to her aunt and her love for Jem, therefore, it is her drive to see justice done that keeps her at the Inn.

Action comes really alive when crime is unveiled in its various brutal forms to Mary. First she sees the stripping and whipping of an idiot boy. Then she sees Joss and his men smuggle their loot at night. She is thoroughly shattered when she is made to witness the actual wrecking. She is assaulted by one of Joss's men at the shore, although Joss saves her fromreal damage. As the atmosphere becomes more and more oppressive, Mary finds solace in the vicar of Altarnun Francis Davey. She hopes that with his help

she can corner Joss and his men some day. Then, however, comes the totally unexpected twist in plot with the double murder of Joss and Patience. Mary has nowhere left to go now so she accepts the hospitality of the vicar. At the vicar's she discovers certain drawings, grotesque caricatures of his profession—in them members of the congregation have sheep's faces with idiotic expressions and the vicar's own face is that of a wolf laughing at the flock. Indeed it turns out, he could not have produced a better picture of himself.[4] In the character vicar du Maurier has created a case of the perfect mask or disguise. For it is not until the very end that the mask is ripped off and we realize that he is indeed the master criminal who controlled Joss and his men. Then there is the final action—a chase over the moors when the vicar tries to leave town taking Mary, as hostage, and is shot down. With all the conflicts thus resolved, the novel ends with Mary's decision to live with Jem who has turned out to be quite different from these frighteningly criminal characters.

The Inn in Jamaica Inn thus proves to be an ironic socio-cultural symbol. For the Inn is supposed to represent hospitality. Manderley in Rebecca is just the opposite. While Jamaica Inn thrills its readers with its mystery and crime, Manderley becomes their Wonderland packed with romance and mystery, of the luxury and opulence of aristocracy that readers often wish to experience at least vicariously. Yet the novel begins with a description of Manderley which is just as haunting

> Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me.... Nature had come into her own again and, little by little, in her stealthy, insidious way had encroached upon the drive with long, tenacious fingers.... Time could not wreck the perfect symmetry of those walls, nor the site itself, a jewel in the hollow of a hand.... A cloud, hitherto unseen, came upon the moon, and hovered an instant like a dark horse before a face. The illusion went with it, and the lights in the

> windows were extinguished, I looked upon a desolate shell, soulless at last.... The house was a sepulchre, our fear suffering lay buried in the ruins. There would be no resurrection.... We could not talk of Manderley, I would not tell my dream. For Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more. (R p 5-8)

One of the most commonly used formulae in a romance is the older, rich, famous but patronizing hero who sweeps the naive and innocent heroine off her feet in a whirlwind courtship that ends in marriage.[5] One would expect du Maurier to use this formula. But this novel begins after the heroine and hero are already married. The story is narrated, instead in flashback, which is a technique du Maurier exploits to the fullest, and is successful in creating the feeling of nostalgia, for this picture of aristocracy was already part of the past as post-war readers very well knew.

We never come to know the heroine's name, and we can easily see why she is denied this simple symbol of identity. The narrator/protagonist of the novel is working as a paid companion to Mrs. Van Hopper when she first meets Maxim de Winter in Monte Carlo. She is told that he owns the famous property Manderley and is now mourning the death of his wife Rebecca. She has not been much exposed to male company and is very naive when she is meets Maxim. After a whirlwind courtship Maxim decides that he wants to marry her and proposes to her in not a very ordinary fashion. "I'm asking you to marry me, you little fool," (R. p 56) he tells her as a matter of feet, which the inexperienced girl thinks is a very "original" and apparently irresistible proposal. "Instead of being companion to Mrs. Van Hopper you become mine, and your duties will be almost exactly the same**, he says as if marriage is equal to paid companionship (R p 61). But she cannot at the time see the irony.

Now, as the new Mrs. de Winter the girl is all excited at the prospect of being the mistress of Manderley. But to her dismay she finds that the spirit of Rebecca haunts her home and marriage. She knows that her own middle class upbringing is inadequate to

run Manderley. She is constantly reminded that unlike her Rebecca was the perfect woman--beautiful, accomplished and unquestionably the mistress of Manderley. She is so overwhelmed by the dominantly lingering spirit of Rebecca that she wants to be and tries hard to become like her. She believes that Maxim still loves Rebecca, is still mourning her death and does not love her. She wants to be as loved as Rebecca and at the same time wants to be rid of her constant presence. Mrs. Danvers, the housekeeper and Rebecca's personal maid, is the gothic vamp who aggravates her predicament. For she intimidates her at every opportunity. Most of the narrative focusses on the heroine's fears regarding her marriage, her feelings of inferiority and self-pity and her envy of Rebecca. There is also the beautiful Manderley with its luxurious interiors and gardens and the sea which, she spends most of her time exploring, yet which she can never possess as her predecessor had.

During the first three-fourths of the narrative du Maurier builds the image of Rebecca as the perfect woman. However, then she dismantles it with a flourish, giving the plot a completely unexpected twist. It is only right that along with the spirit of Rebecca her body should also rise from the sea to haunt Maxim too. The finding of Rebecca's boat and her body gives rise considerable local gossip. "Rebecca has won," eventually declares a defeated Maxim to his new wife (R p.277). He tells her that he had never really loved Rebecca and had killed her when she threatened him with an heir—a child who was not his own. Suspense mounts to its highest pitch when Maxim is brought to the routine inquest. By now the readers are sufficiently convinced that Rebecca deserved to die and sympathize with the de Winters. The magistrate decides that Rebecca had committed suicide, and Maxim is free. The appearance of Jack Favell, however, who is Rebecca's cousin with Rebecca's last letter gives the plot yet another twist leading us to another surprise. Now we learn Rebecca had been suffering from cancer and also had a malformation in the uterus. This provides the police with evidence to prove that Rebecca had enough cause for suicide. A final and just as unexpected twist in the plot awaits us. When Maxim and his second wife return home from London, a burning Manderley confronts them.

Romance, nostalgia and suspense are the chief ingredients of The King's General too. For a reading audience that was just recovering from the World Wars was able to recognize in this novel a record of their own experience. However, this tale is set in another war and we encounter here a historical setting. In 1653, long after the Civil War, the narrator/protagonist of the novel Honor Harris decides to write the story of her past. She meets Richard Grenvile on her eighteenth birthday and falls in love with him. Richard's sister Gartred is married to Honor's brother Kit, flirts with another of her brothers, Robin, and after Kit's death leaves the Harris family. Honor detests Gartred and her feelings are duly returned. A few days before her wedding Honor is crippled in an accident. Unable to consider herself the same person as before her accident, she refuses to see Richard. He leaves her to marry another woman. Fifteen years later, the Civil war brings Sir Richard, now the King's General in the East, and Honor together. Honor has moved to Menabilly, the home of her sister and brother-in-law Jonathan Rashleigh, a Royalist. Sir Richard happens to be in Cornwall with his troops and this gives Honor and Richard an opportunity to meet frequently.

Menabilly, the huge mansion with seventy odd rooms and long and dark passages, is also a symbol--a shelter, a refuge for many during the war. She discovers that the barred room next to hers has a secret chamber with a secret entrance to it. This secret chamber, in keeping with conventions of both Gothic and Historical romance, is crucial to the plot of the novel. Sir Richard leaves his son Dick in Honor's care and she hides him in this chamber when the Parliament supporters besiege Menabilly. It is, however, much later that Honor has to bear the burden of the final secret. How the war affects Cornwall, Honor and her family and other Royalists occupies the rest of the narrative. She describes how their food is rationed, how they are under constant observation and their freedom around the house is also restricted and finally how the Parliament supporters strip Menabilly of all its possessions. Besides this, the hatred between Gartred and Honor, Robin's thwarted love for Gartred, Dick's hatred for his father, the thwarted love of Honor and Sir Richard, strategies of war and romance, conspiracies, the hunt for Dick and Sir Richard, all add to the drama in the novel.

When his party are defeated, Sir Richard escapes to France along with other Royalists, leaving behind several others to face imprisonment and even worse consequences. Four years later the Royalists return from France in disguise and plan another uprising. Honor is anxious about the impact of this uprising. It fails and, sure enough, the Royalists have to flee once more. Dick, Sir Richard's son, betrays his father's plans to the enemy, thus tarnishing the Grenvile image forever. However, Richard does manage to escape. The secret chamber in turn becomes Dick's tomb and none but Sir Richard and Honor share the secret. The novel ends with Honor's plan to return to her brother.

A combination of crime thriller and gothic romance in Jamaica Inn entertains us. Du Maurier combines the thrill of suspense and thrills of a gothic environment. For here we find a young damsel trapped in a sinister place which is a spooky place that seems to hold cause for fear in every corner, crimes that terrify (murder, wrecking). It also conforms to the simple faith of readers everywhere that criminals should be punished. Du Maurier very effectively exploits the most popular belief of readers that good must triumph over evil, and she also provides the happy ending most readers expect when the hero saves the heroine. In Rebecca du Maurier exploits fully the favourite "rags to riches" fantasy of common readers by celebrating Manderley. Roger Bromley suggests that Rebecca can be classified as "escapist fiction" for it does not refer to the economic crisis of its time. But he also suggests that this novel does raise and explore the nature and crisis of its time in another way by examining the "shifting nature of class composition and hegemony" in "personalized terms** (Bromley, 1986:151-152). Readers of The King's General on the other hand were able to identify with her representation of the aftermath of World War. The British audience of 1946, affected by the impact of war, were able to appreciate the same in the historically distanced Civil War scenario and weaknesses in characters who belonged to a distant past, suspicion, hatred, jealousy, selfishness, love, loss, anguish, ruthlessness and, of course, the thirst for as well as cut-and-thrust of power.

We can see, therefore, that the same devices that she uses to entertain, du Maurier

also succeeds in raising complex and relevant issues. In these three novels du Maurier has examined female sexuality against crime, class and war respectively--all of which were also major concerns in literature and theatre in her time. These concerns were not the prerogative of 'serious' fiction only. Du Maurier's novels are proof enough that popular fiction also reflected the concerns of its times and, as in the case of her work, did so very seriously, genuinely evaluating cases of moral significance. The setting of these novels--Jamaica Inn, Manderley and Menabilly are not only instruments for creation of stock senses of horror, fantasy and nostalgia but they are also the battlegrounds where the social, sexual and class identity of the heroines must be asserted.

Jamaica Inn, as we have seen, becomes indeed an ironic symbol that poses moral, physical and sexual threats to Mary. In Jamaica Inn Du Maurier has created a place that completely chokes her heroine, instead of providing her with security she had hoped for. It becomes a consuming threat instead. When Mary first comes to the Inn, she expects the Inn to be full of custom and Patience and Joss flourishing as host and hostess, perhaps even as 'lady' and 'gentleman' in local society. Instead the Inn houses smuggling ring. The Inn is, thus, isolated from civilization and yet threatens the social fabric by providing shelter to criminals. Surrounded by the silence of the moors and tors of granite, Mary finds the stillness of the landscape itself becoming oppressive. The Inn also complements the violent personality of Joss. For from him she receives the first ever threat to her awakening sexuality. As soon as she first enters the Inn Joss twists her wrists, runs his finger across her mouth and tells her that he can have her whenever he wants to, qualifying his threat by the doubtful assurance that he won't. He tells her that had he been younger, he would have courted her, won her and ridden away with her to glory (JJ p 189). He also tells her that had she been a man she would have had to become a companion in his nefarious activities. Yet he is also a little in awe of her because she threatens to bring the law to him if he harms her or her aunt. It is because Mary has the courage to fight Joss and invite both moral and sexual responses from Joss that she matters, and not Patience. Moreover, this is also the method by which she refuses to conform to the stock formula of a suffering, passive heroine, and therefore du Maurier succeeds in creating the serious conflict between evil and good that has made Jamaica Inn

an all-time bestseller.

For a moment it will be, therefore, worthwhile to see the narrative touches by which du Maurier creates her effects. It is only the death of Joss and Patience that shuts her out of the Inn. The description of Mary stumbling in the darkness, feeling completely choked by its stench of evil, is one of the most compelling descriptions in the novel--

> Death had come upon the house tonight, and its brooding spirit still hovered in the air. She felt now that this was what Jamaica Inn had always waited for and feared. The damp walls, the creaking boards, the whispers in the air, and the footsteps that had no name: these were the warnings of a house that had felt itself long threatened. Mary shivered; and she knew that the quality of this silence had origin in far-off buried and forgotten things.... She dreaded panic... the wild stumble of groping feet and hands that beat the air of [the] passage.... she knew that it might force its way upon her, close in and stifle her. Her fingers might lose their sense of grip and touch, and the candle might fall from her hands. Then she would be covered by the darkness. (JI, p. 219)

We do not know what happens to the Inn in the end, for neither Mary nor Jem inherit it. The Inn, which could have been a social and financial asset if it were to become hers, is lost to Mary so she has to seek shelter elsewhere. Although for a long time she trusts the vicar, she has been uneasy about him since their first meeting because of his appearance--he is an albino. She thinks of him as some kind of "freak**, with his gentle effeminate voice and white hair. While Joss seems animal-like to her, the vicar resembles a bird: "[h]e looked like a bird. Crouched in his seat, with his black cape--coat blown out by the wind, his arms like wings** (JI, P 97). Nor does Mary realize that she is a potential threat to him. With her courage and determination to bring the law to the Inn,

she surprises Joss, Jem and also the vicar.

With Joss as a constant threat, her love for Jem a dilemma, and the vicar's puzzling silence, which she attributes to disbelief, she has no alternative but to rely on herself. The presence of Patience hardly matters, for her identity has been nullified long ago. The real battle therefore occurs mainly between Mary's awakening femininity and the brutal worid of criminal masculinity around her. In the end she does turn towards Jem. But while Joss has aroused raw passions in her, Jem confuses her with his patronizing behaviour. When she accidentally runs into his cottage on one of her walks, he asks her to cook for him. Mary's "feminine" instincts of cleanliness and order are aroused at the sight of the dirt and squalor in his cottage. Jem believes that "there's two things that women ought to do by instinct, and cooking is one of 'em" (JI, p. 105). He takes her out to the fair and kisses her. This completely unnerves her. For she expects Jem to be as brutal as Joss. She suspects that Jem is part of Joss's activities and therefore she does not want to accept that she is in love with him. However, with the vicar's mask ripped off, perspective of Jem also changes. She would not have been able to accept that she had fallen in love with a thief, but she is left with no illusions of any kind after she discovers the truth.

Crime finds representation in various forms in this novel. Why a crime novels entertains readers is a difficult question to answer. It is a fact that they do entertain. For the more serious class of crime novels does not simply dramatize events—it also explores the morality of crime in various contexts. Jamaica Inn is one such novel. What happens when femininity enters the brutal world of crime which is, as here, decidedly masculine? More than the crimes themselves the motives behind them clearly interest du Maurier. The vicar's hatred of mankind is rather obscure--whether *it* stems from the fact that he is an albino, whether his anger is directed purely towards religion, we never know. Crime is however, his means of revenge against mankind. He has chosen to hide himself in the garb of his pastoral profession. But the this juxtaposition in him of these two aspects of man is too strong to be missed. In contrast, Joss, the seemingly brutal and violent man, is in reality only a helpless tool—controlled by the vicar. He is only a puppet who has no

motive of his own for his crimes. Nor does he possess the courage or the strength of spirit to fight his way out of the vicar's grip. Yet he has a conscience that troubles him and makes him a complex character. Although he seems physically powerful, he has a weakness for drink. Yet once he is drunk he is haunted by his evil deeds. Indeed, on one such occasion, he tells Mary,

> I've killed men with my own hands, trampled them underwater, beaten them with rocks and stones.... but when I'm drunk I see them in my dreams; I see their white-green faces staring at me, with their eyes half eaten by fish; and some of them are torn, with the flesh hanging on their bones in ribbons and some of them have seaweed in their hair...they drowned because we smashed them with rocks and stones* they drowned because they couldn't stand. (JI p.118)

Poverty perhaps compels the rest of the men who follow Joss's orders. However, when we examine du Maurier's description of their grotesque actions we see a somewhat different picture:

> They ran like madmen hither and thither upon the beach, yelling and screaming, demented and inhuman. They waded waist-deep into the breakers, careless of danger, all caution spent.... They were animals fighting and snarling over lengths of splintered wood; they stripped, some of them, and ran naked in the cold December night.... They chattered and squabbled like monkeys, tearing things from one another.... when the first body was washed ashore, mercifully spent and gone, they clustered around it, diving amongst the remains questing, groping hands, picking it clean as a bone, and when they had stripped it bare, tearing

> even at the smashed fingers in search of rings.... They robbed haphazard, each man for himself, crazy they were and drunk, mazed with their success they had not planned. (JI p 169)

Clearly, du Marnier here involves criminal motivation beyond mere helplessness. What turns these men into beasts? Poverty alone cannot be sufficient reason to compel them into such wilfully grotesque activity. Cruelty and greed appear to be inherent in their nature, like that of the vicar. For Jem, in serious contrast, horse-stealing is an adventure; fooling people is a game. Yet, it is Jem who tells Mary that crime runs in the genes of the Merlyn family and he and Joss are simply following the family tradition. However, he does draw a line at thieving and does not involve himself in Joss's blood-curdling activities. For Mary, therefore, for a long time his personality presents a moral as well as a physical dilemma since she is trapped in an essentially masculine space with her emotions repelled by one character and attracted by the other.

The battle within is somewhat similar for Mrs. de Winter—only she has to struggle with crime in a setting totally opposite to the Inn. Manderley, a stately mansion famous throughout England is only a picture on a picture to the heroine till she meets Maxim. Manderley has been her fantasy land, "[a] thing of grace and beauty exquisite and faultless" and lovelier even than she had ever dreamed of (JI, p. 70). The change in her status from a mere paid companion to the mistress of such a magnificent place is too sudden and overwhelming for her. She observes every little thing at Manderley with awe. Everything comes to her as a challenge—the mansion itself, the library, the morning room, the stairs, the corridors, passages, furniture, paintings, flowers, food, servants, and most importantly Rebecca's room. After the initial euphoria of the wedding and honeymoon, she becomes increasingly preoccupied with the 'furniture' of her troubled and confused personality Slowly Maxim fades into the background, as Manderley, Rebecca and her own activities begin to occupy her thoughts.

Manderley is at least as powerful socio-cultural symbol as Jamaica Inn. Du

Maurier constructs Rebecca and the second Mrs. de Winter as opposites to examine what a setting like Manderley actually represents--aristocracy, patriarchy and the power that its ownership brings. While Rebecca challenges it, the heroine is oppressed by it. She feels that she is more like a pet dog rather than a wife: "[i]'m being like Jasper [the dog] now, leaning against him [Maxim]. He pats me now and again, when he remembers, and I'm pleased, I get closer to him for a moment. He likes me the way I like Jasper" (R, p108). She knows that she is socially and in every other way a total misfit at Manderley and is afraid of even the servants because she feels that they compare her with Rebecca and laugh at her. This fear is magnified by her own inevitabley damaging comparison between herself and Rebecca. She does not ride, hunt or socialize as Rebecca used to but only sketches. She has no personal maid, as befits a lady. She in fact identifies herself more with the servants. Once she catches a housemaid examining her underclothes and decides to order new ones for herself. However, once a new girl as ignorant and innocent as herself is installed as her personal maid, she decides not to buy them because it seems "such a waste buying new underclothes for Clarice" (R p 143). It seems she considered buying them for fear of her servants' scorn.

The second Mrs. de Winter thus believes that Maxim and Rebecca have had a perfect marriage, unlike her severely inadequate one. She always, therefore, wrongly interprets Maxim's behaviour and believes that he still loves Rebecca. At the same time, she identifies Rebecca as a role-model and wants to be like her. A lot of confusion has to do with names For we are told that the second Mrs. de Winter has a "lovely and unusual name" yet, we never do come to know what it is— no one calls her by her Christian name. Rebecca's name, therefore, assumes magical power. This literal anonymity foregrounds the fact that she has no real identity and whatever remains of it is overshadowed by Rebecca She is overwhelmed when she first says Rebecca's name aloud: "1 had said the word Rebecca aloud. It was a tremendous relief It was as though I had taken a purge and rid myself of an intolerable pain. Rebecca I had said it aloud" (R, p 131). The magic is, however, too powerful for such a device. At one point she even imagines that she is Rebecca (R, p 209).

With her "prominent cheek-bones and great, hollow eyes [that] gave her skull's face, parchment-white set on a skeleton's frame" Mrs. Danvers the housekeeper is the typical gothic vamp (R, p 72). She has been Rebecca's personal maid and loved her a great deal. She resents the second Mrs. de Winter for taking Rebecca's place. She intimidates her every opportunity, slowly driving her to the edge of self-doubt and hysteria. Mrs. Danvers shows Mrs. de Winter Rebecca's room, Rebecca's clothes, brushes, slippers, forcing her to touch and feel Rebecca's things, which only depresses her more and deprives her of even a semblance of self-assurance. It is not common for merely formulaic fiction to achieve the depth of characterization that du Maurier achieves here.

The fancy dress ball which forms an important event in the narrative is an event that neighbours, friends and acquaintances insist upon for their own amusement. It is their only means of access to Manderley and their sole opportunity being a part of it; the only way they can let their fancies run wild. It is also crucial to the heroine, for she unconsciously attempts to imitate Rebecca's presence at the ball and fails miserably. This time her sense of defeat is much deeper than before because she fails not only in replicating Rebecca's behaviour but also in taking her place before such a wide audience. When Maxim orders her to change her costume, her confidence is also destroyed. It is only later that Maxim's sister, Beatrice, tells her that Rebecca had worn the same costume in the previous year's ball. She realizes that Mrs. Danvers played this foul trick on her on purpose. Her sense of defeat becomes complete when Mrs. Danvers urges her to commit suicide: "[s]he's [Rebecca] still the mistress here, even if she's dead. She is the real Mrs de Winter, not you. It's you that's the shadow and the ghost... Why don't you go?" (R p 257) Mrs. Danvers claims that Maxim has not been happy with her, his new wife, that he cannot forget Rebecca, and that Manderley does not need her. She pushes Mrs. de Winter to the edge of the window, urging her to jump, to her death.

Thus the new Mrs. de Winter is the passive, middle class woman oppressed by Manderley. Because of her incompetence in confronting or exorcizing the ghost of Rebecca, she never manages to assert her authority over Manderley and perform the

duties of running it. Rebecca, on the other hand, challenges both the patriarchy and aristocracy that Manderley symbolized. She had come from an equally affluent background as Maxim's and had the "breeding, brains and beauty" (R, p.284) to assert herself. She was also an excellent domestic organizer who planned the menus effectively, chose valuables and paintings for the house, gave orders to the servants impressively and organized the annual fancy dress ball in a way that made Manderley famous. Maxim admits to his new wife that "[t]he beauty of Manderley that you see today, the Manderley that people talk about and photograph and paint, it's all due to her, to Rebecca" (R p.287). But being an excellent domestic organizer does not absolve her of her sins. Rebecca challenged patriarchy only through her adultery. Maxim's superior position as a husband had thus been altered. She had become more powerful as the mistress of Manderley, which in turn threatened Maxim's aristocratic position as the owner of Manderley. Rebecca's murder was, therefore, motivated by both her own behaviour and Maxim's insecurity and fear.

She threatened Maxim with having conceived an heir to Manderley which was not his, therefore, she had to be killed. Maxim valued Manderley above all else and is unable to bear to see its name tarnished with gossip. He is helpless as long as Rebecca continues to live. This is the reason why Bromley suggests that, "since Rebecca, who came from a reasonably wealthy family, has to bear the aristocratic legacy by bestowing an heir was, in reality a profligate, an adulteress who couldn't give Maxim an heir to Manderley, Maxim, a displaced aristocrat renewed himself by associating himself with someone of a subordinate class" (Bromley, 1986 156) Whether we accept Bromley's reading or not, it becomes quite clear from all this that Rebecca is a serious analysis of class distinctions and their psychological and moral power over people. More than Rebecca's adultery it was her aggressive sexuality and contempt for men that were her crimes. As Mrs Danvers reveals to a dazed audience: "[s]he was not in love with anyone. She despised all men ... Love-making was a game with her, only a game.... It made her laugh..." (R p 356). She laughed at all the men she knew. Maxim recollects that she was smiling when he shot her

> She turned around and faced me, smiling, one hand in her pocket, the other holding her cigarette. When I killed her she was smiling still I fired at her heart The bullet passed right through. She did not fell at once. She stood there. Looking at me, that slow smile on her face, her eyes wide open. (R p 203)

But Rebecca alters Maxim's social position forever. Although the inquest declares 'suicide', in his own conscience he remains a murderer for the rest of his life. Comparing Rebecca with Jane Eyre, Daphne Watson argues that "the actual text enables du Maurier to permit Rebecca a kind of ultimate victory not granted to poor unfortunate Bertha, [Rochester's wife in Jane Eyre] who has quite receded from memory by the end of Bronte's novel" (Watson, 1995:20). Manderley is as much cause for Rebecca's murder as her adultery. Maxim and his second wife are displaced, somewhere in the Mediterranean, keeping a hotel. The malformation in Rebecca's uterus, about which they find out much later, suggests that she could never have given Maxim an heir. But the novel also suggests that Maxim and his second wife are also apparently childless. This is, perhaps, the price Maxim pays for the murder of Rebecca--never to have what he valued most. That the phantoms of Manderley haunt both Maxim and the new Mrs. de Winter is suggested by the opening of the novel itself.

Menabilly in The King's General leaves Honor also with such phantoms to contend with It also becomes a powerful socio-political symbol as the narrative grows. Du Maurier does not merely indicate such growth in the value of her settings. She constructs the settings effectively so that they acquire the value. Her settings are not decorative, they are powerfully functional devices Here it assumes a complex function in the study of the Civil War ethos For it does it work unidimensionally. It makes a political statement by supporting the Royalists, and by being one of the centers of Royalist war strategies It also acts as a refuge for those people who are displaced from their own homes due to the war. Finally it also becomes the tomb of a brave young man whose hatred overrode loyalty to the throne and his father.

Though Honor was once an innocent, young and beautiful maid, during the greater part of the narrative we see her crippled. Sir Richard is a brave and loyal soldier and leads a public mission. But he is also arrogant and ruthless, a faithless lover, a cruel husband and father. Although Honor loves him, she is also highly critical of his faults. Although there is a brief mention of their courtship and secret meetings, for the most part they are separated. The narrative focusses on the war instead. In a merely formulaic romance, the war could have remained a mere backdrop. Indeed, du Maurier insists on her reader's making a choice--if he wants a routine romance, a mere pastime, he had better look elsewhere for it. For after Honor has briefly recalled her courtship and accident, she warns her readers: "[i]f anyone therefore thinks that a cripple makes an indifferent heroine to a tale, now is the time to close these pages and desist from reading. For you will never see me wed to the man I love, nor become the mother of his children" (TKG. p 55). Though Honor and Richard meet after fifteen long years they still love each other. But they are both seriously altered, and Richard for worse. Honor says "I knew my Richard too well to believe he lived a life of austerity simply because he loved me" (TKG, p 121). So she refuses Richard's offer of marriage for she realizes that the novelty in their relationship would wear off and he would soon be tired of her. Standard romance heroines are not expected to forego such opportunities. But du Maurier's characters reach deeper within themselves for moral discernment and refuse to exist as flat or superficial types. She says, "I lacked humility. Though sixteen years of discipline had taught me to accept crippledom and become used to it, I was too proud to share the stigma of it with my lover" (TKG. p 203). Although Richard claims her attention with his frequent visits, it is the war and its repercussions that occupy her thoughts.

When Menabilly is under siege and Honor is busy hiding Dick from the Parliament troops, their food is rationed, and they are always under vigilance. She records how people around her contributed to the cause of the war. The gentlemen took stock of their weapons and wealth waiting for their turn to contribute when the time came Women were not idle either; they tore strips of bed-linen into bandages, and stored food for fear of siege But what really hurts Honor is that those people who had been friends

for generations suddenly turn enemies when their loyalties change. There is no more trust between people. Meanwhile, she has to contend with the prying Gartred who has also sought shelter at Menabilly. When the Parliament troops strip Menabilly of all *its* precious possessions Honor is as much hurt as the Rashleigh's who own it. Menabilly is no more a place fit for living and all those who sought refuge there have to leave. Honor's home at Lanrest is wrecked beyond repair too. She has to move to her brother's place. She has thus become "another of the vast number of people, turned wanderer through war, and must swallow pride and be grateful for hospitality, from whatever direction it might come" (TKG, p 183).

As Honor leaves Menabilly after the war, she observes that "[t]he aftermath of war was not a pleasant sight to the beholder" (TKG, p 185). The countryside is devastated—the fields, orchards and mansions are in ruins. The Cornishmen have taken the revenge against the rebel prisoners, "[t]here were may of them still lying in the ditches, with dust and flies upon them. Some without hands and feet, some hanging downwards from the trees. And there were stragglers who had died upon the road.... stripped of their clothing and left for the hungry dogs to lick" (ibid.). There is no hope of restoration of property and the loss is colossal. Poverty and sickness, which have already destroyed many lives, hit Cornwall now. Many are rendered homeless and die of starvation. The most pathetic state is that of the wounded and disabled soldiers "who, half-naked and half-starved, roamed the villages, begging for charity" (TKG, P 268). Not many romances aimed at undemanding entertainment bother about making such assessment of a phenomenon like war.

Another major character, Richard, is a soldier first and foremost. He is as merciless with his friends as with enemies. Despite his ruthlessness men flock to join him, because he has a strength of character. Jealousy, struggle for power, pride, betrayal, and loyalty all form a part of the soldiers' lives When Honor learns that there is to be an uprising she is worried about the consequences: "[m]en shouting, fighting, dying.... wounded men dragging themselves into hedges, there to die unattended.... All the old anxiety, the old strain and terror.... The bloody stench of war" *(TKG* p 298). One can

well imagine the impact that this novel had. For the post-war British readers had only recently gone through the same agony and anxiety during their time. In other words, this tale brings us vividly the actions and reactions of both those who fight away from home and those who have their own 'battles' to fight at home. Such psychological analysis usually qualifies a novel for inclusion among 'serious' novels.

The setting of the battles at home, Menabilly, is the hiding place for Royalists who return in disguise. The battles waged inside Menabilly, both personal and political, stem as much from pent-up hatred and resentment as from romantic feelings. Robin's thwarted love for Gartred, his hatred for Richard and his own helplessness all drive him to wound Gartred, marring her beauty so that she can never trade in it again. Retribution is part of the story too. Gartred is punished for knowingly crippling Honor, for hurting Robin and for her adultery. Dick's betrayal of his father's plans to the enemies is the result all the pent up hatred--for his father and the war itself. He sees no purpose in the war, "men killing one another for no purpose, save to spill blood. Always to spill blood" (TKG. p 283). This emotional outburst would very well draw sympathetic response form the post-war British reader of the 1940s. One can hardly ask for stronger proof of the relevance of this novel at its time.

When the moment of the final escape comes for Sir Richard and Dick who are hiding in the secret chamber, Dick does not escape. Sir Richard sends Honor a note saying,"[t]he least of the Grenvile's chose his own method of escape" (TKG, p 345). Richard and Honor share this secret but it is Honor whom it affects. Richard is in Holland with his daughter and we do not know whether it haunts him. Honor can never go back to Menabilly for the secret of the secret chamber haunts her. Many a common mid-twentieth century England had to live through similar experiences. Therefore, we would not be wrong to seek an explanation of the popularity of du Maurier's novel in its power to evoke as well as distance the recent horrors of the second World War.

Curiously, while most romances celebrate class positions, the du Maurier novels end with a serious questioning of the class structure. In Jamaica Inn, Jem brings to Mary the awareness that they are classless. Mary loathes Joss* cronies who came to the Inn;

they are mostly vagrants, poachers, thieves, cattle-stealers, and gypsies, dirty and -ill-kept, with matted hair, and broken nails". She hates the "stale drink smell, and the reek of tobacco, and the foul atmosphere of crowded unwashed bodies, she felt [feels]a physical disgust rise up within her" (JJ,p 43). She does not belong to their world. It is probably the same for Jem because he draws a line at thieving. When the honor of the vicar's duplicity is over, Mary lives with the family of squire Bassats; they suggest that she live with them as a companion and care for their children. However, Mary is very uncomfortable because she does not belong to their class. She hates being the object of curiosity for their guests and visitors. She respects the Bassats and is grateful to them but she cannot feel any genuine affection for them, because they are "another race, another class" (JJ, p 262). Jem invites her to share her life with him. He is a compulsive wanderer and makes her aware that people like themselves belong nowhere. He tells Mary: "[d]on't be a damned fool Mary.... can you see me drinking tea with the squire and dancing his children on my knee? I don't belong to this class, neither do you" (JJ, p 266). Jem does not want to belong anywhere or adopt a trade for a lifetime. Mary knows that there will not be the security of a settled home for her with him. She entertains no illusions about marriage and class when she accepts Jem.

In Rebecca the beautiful and aristocratic Manderley is destroyed, just like much of the fabric of aristocracy of its time. Whatever Manderley stood for falls into gradual decay without an heir. Maxim and his second wife are displaced physically, living somewhere in the Mediterranean, and they are also obliged to accept an occupation that is not typical, keeping a hotel There is no return to Manderley for them--it is closed to Mrs. de Winter as a social and economic Udder. Menabilly in The King's General is stripped of all its finery and becomes almost unfit to live. Like Manderley, there is also no hope of its restoration. It had been a refuge to many who were rendered homeless by the war, including Honor. Therefore, however, it also remains a painful remainder of Dick whose hatred for his father and war overrode his own instinct for survival. Though Menabilly is still inhabited by her sister's family, Honor never goes there. The secret chamber, now Dick's grave, haunts her.

It may seem that du Maurier has faithfully followed the formulae of romance and its sub-genres such as love-story, or historical romance. However, it ought to be abundantly clear by now that she does not follow form slavishly. These romances are far more complex than run of the mill love stories. Indeed, in several, there is hardly any space for love between the hero and heroine to develop. The heroines are preoccupied with their own genuinely serious concerns. Mary is preoccupied, for instance, with seeing justice done. Mrs. de Winter is preoccupied with Rebecca and Honor with war. Du Maurier's heroes are not merely macho, her heroines are not defined by the typical domestic space, and most importantly there are no happy endings in any of these novels. In all these cases, acceptance of the heroes Jem, Maxim and Richard by the respective heroines too comes only after their battles are over. At first Mary's conscience does not allow her to accept Jem, who he is a thief. She does not like the fact that Jem does, in fact, define her as the weaker sex, arouses 'feminine' instincts in her and thinks that women are fit to cook and clean. Yet Mary accepts Jem only after he does the redeeming act of informing the law about Joss and his plans to leave town; she is ready to accept him only after she finds out that Jem found the necessary clue to implicate the vicar for the murder of Joss and Patience.

Let us now turn to a few other themes or patterns worth noting in these three novels In Rebecca the marriage of Maxim and his second wife is not really a happy one. The second Mrs de Winter constantly misinterprets Maxim's behaviour. However, Maxim is no hero—he is old enough to be her father and above all a murderer. Maxim accuses her of being aloof, shy and awkward with him, running away from him and keeping to herself. When he is away from Manderley, she is happy to be on her own and relieved that she need not behave like a lady. All along she has believed Maxim to be mourning Rebecca, resented being the ' second* Mrs de Winter. She is driven by the need to be needed, loved, and appreciated by Maxim, but that does not happen till the end. She accepts Maxim fully only after she learns the truth that Maxim had not loved Rebecca. It is also her only chance to save her own marriage. She supports him by sharing the burden of his secret and keeping the truth form the law. During the inquest, she promptly faints in the courtroom. In the end we see that Maxim has come to depend

on her. Mrs. de Winter escapes domestic duties at Manderley not only tfg^use she afraid but also because she is incapable of performing them. She escapes domesticit altogether in the end by living in a hoteL

When Honor refuses to see Richard after her accident, he changes for the worse. But after years of separation, what does an amorous Richard find in a middle-age cripple? Honor is emotionally stronger and her crippledom has made her wiser than him. Richard can talk and share his anxieties only with her and none else. He fails in persuading her to marry him. Yet she saves Dick's life and Richard's as well. It is Honor who rushes to help him when he is arrested for disloyalty towards the throne. She seeks audience with the Prince and begs him to let Richard flee to France. She also eventually helps him flee to Holland after the uprising fails. She loves Richard with all his faults yet refuses to be bound by marriage and domesticity. Du Maurier's heroines are noteworthy, thus, because their hearts do not cloud their senses; their preoccupations are many, not merely romantic; and they reveal depth of character which too is untypical of romance. The convention of a happy ending is similarly also broken in these novels, unless perhaps we consider the ending of Jamaica Inn a happy one. The endings of Rebecca and The King's General are abrupt, leaving readers desiring more. Rebecca ends with the burning of Manderley and The King's General with Honor's loneliness after Richard escapes. Both these novels, however, are narrated in the flashback and their beginnings reveal that Mrs. de Winter and Honor have been left with memories of the past, thus anticipating the conclusion. Such serious reversal of conventional devices, or denial of readers' expectations should, perhaps, force us the opposite of the question we have considered so far. Instead of asking what the du Maurier novels contain beyond the conventional romance type, we should ask—how have such serious and uncharacteristic romances become so overwhelmingly popular? It is hoped that our present discussion will have begun to suggest that neither the ability of some popular writers nor the ability of their readership can be cast into a mould.

Du Maurier successfully creates an atmosphere of doom, fantasy and nostalgia and at the same time dismantles the standard expectations of readership. The Inn does

not frighten Mary anymore; once she realizes her position as a woman and as a member of society. Her life at the Inn and the vicar's true nature teaches her not to trust her instincts and feelings gullibly about any one. Mrs. de Winter's "Wonderland" is also effectively destroyed and so is her innocence. Once she realizes the truth about Rebecca, she gains confidence enough to order Mrs. Danvers. She also becomes aware that Maxim does not treat her like a pet dog anymore because she has herself grown into a mature woman. The war brings more than trauma to Honor. She realizes that she does not wish to be bound by domestic ties with Richard. The war leaves behind devastation and pain and very few happy moments. Routine rescues, routine conversions of heart, routine panting desire for the man once designated 'hero'—none of these obtain in du Maurier's fiction.

Villains, vamps and negative role models are eliminated or punished. This may seem to be driven by a simple sense of the typical romance form, but it is more complex. Most popular authors adhere to the simple belief of readers that the good character should be rewarded and the evil punished. In du Maurier's novels, however, justice is not a mere formula. Rebecca and Gartred Grenvile are sexually aggressive and threaten male sexuality and power and therefore are negative role models for women. Honor describes Gartred as a beautiful flower full of poison. Gartred used to bait men with her beauty and had use only for their wealth. So Gartred's punishment is far more complex than Rebecca's because she has to live with her marred beauty. Rebecca pays with her life—cold-blooded murder is not the end one envisages as punishment for the paragon of sophistication and beauty; but that is what she gets—and apparently the readers approve. Yet Gartred's punishment for driving Honor to her crippledom is also a much more severe punishment than Rebecca's Joss, for all his apparent physical strength is murdered. At least Joss and Jem do their dirty work openly or knowing first what their transgression is, while the vicar and Maxim hide themselves behind masks, fooling people. The punishment they receive is, appropriately, far more severe and humiliating. The vicar is hunted down by the law like an animal, while Maxim loses what he values most. Thus we find that in the three novels we have examined so far du Maurier modifies the formulae of romance severely and stretches the form for purposes which can only be

described by the conventional term of approval as 'serious'. That she dares to stretch or even tear the standard fabric of romance is a high compliment to her readership. Similarly, that millions have read and continue to read these novels pays a compliment to du Maurier that severely question the customary classification between 'serious' and 'popular' fiction.

II

Along with formulae du Maurier also manipulated male and female aspirations, dreams and fantasies. But does this mean that her readerships is definitely and exclusively gendered? We have been accustomed to think that novels about women (until recently, mostly romances) are meant for women and novels about men the general fun of them being some kind of adventures are for men. Are these fictions really meant to be gender exclusive? The readership of certain forms such as 'westerns' or cowboy novels is till almost exclusively male. Similarly the late twentieth century may boast of reading which is not gendered, yet ironically enough romances have been en-gendered, exclusively for women during the past three decades on an unprecedented scale. What was once a very masculine genre in theme and subject, romance, is now a decidedly feminine one. Despite being an author of romances, she never restricted herself to what may be dubbed as "women's writing" Nor has her readership been restricted to women. Her second no\el itself I'll Never be Young Again (1932) was a bold attempt to examine a permissive post-war British society through a young male protagonist/narrator. She was to follow this trend in many more novels to come Extending our initial arguements, therefore, regarding her place somewhere between the so-called 'serious' and so-called 'junk' popular domains, here we shall examine three of du Maurier's most popular male romances- My Cousin Rachel (1951),[6] The Scapegoat (1957).[7] The House on the Strand (1969) [8] Indeed, these novels are hardly meant for an exclusively male readership. They indicate, in fact, du Maurier's ability to write for, to attract a mixed audi

The narrator of My Cousin Rachel Philip Ashley is brought up by his cousin

Ambrose Ashley to be his heir. On a holiday abroad, the middle-aged Ambrose meets and marries Rachel. Ambrose, however, dies a mysterious death and Philip becomes master of all the property. He invites Rachel to stay with him and soon fells in love with her. When he falls ill, he suspects Rachel of poisoning him. Was Rachel innocent or was she a scheming murderess? The mystery remains intriguingly unsolved. The Scapegoat, on the other hand, is definitely an adventure. John, a bored and lonely university lecturer on a holiday tour in Le Mans, meets his look-alike, the French count Jean de Gue. Jean drugs John, exchanges his clothes and dumps him in a hotel. When John wakes up, he finds himself forced to assume the role of Jean de Gue. Overnight he has become his double. Jean's family consists of a bedridden mother addicted to morphine, a pregnant wife, an eleven year-old daughter, a religious sister, a neglected brother and sister-in-law who is also one of Jean's mistresses. There is also the family business, a glass foundry that is on the verge of bankruptcy. What does John do?

One of the oldest formulae of science fiction is time travel. In fact, in a sense it is a formula much older than the genre of science fiction itself. When one goes into the past and the past comes alive, such travel also becomes a historical novel. Each "trip" into the fascinating past becomes an adventure. The narrator of The House on the Strand Richard Young, is vacationing in his friend Magnus's cottage at Kilmarth. Magnus is a scientist and Richard volunteers to test a drug for him. This drug transports Richard into the fourteenth century. Gradually, Richard is drawn into the web of the past and his present is reduced to something that has to be outwardly endured. On a "trip" under the influence of this drug Magnus himself dies in a gruesome accident. It is too late for Richard to realize the dreadful after effects of the drug?

Mystery, humour (a sort of comedy of errors arising form mistaken identity) and adventure could have dominated these novels. Merely formulaic treatment might hate made them a little frivolous. However, Du Maurier introduces got hic devices such as uncanny resemblances, hysteria, doubles and the overwhelming sense of doom for serious psychological examination of her characters, which changes the tone of these novels. My Cousin Rachel night have been merely an intriguing mystery. The

Scapegoat might have become a hilarious comedy and The House on the Strand only a fantasy with a vague scientific whiff. Granted that these novels do in feet belong to mystery, comedy and science fiction, they are also a good deal more. Seriously modifying the tradition of the male romance, these novels explore certain common themes. The narrators are fragmented identities, in search of personal, religious, social, political, sexual, and class affiliations that might help to define or complete their "selves", provide them with some sense of security. Strange encounters, difficult situations, escapes, and journeys characterize their process of seeking self-discovery. Intense male-bonding characterizes these novels, despite at times quite strong inclusion of the feminine. Even though homosexuality exists as an alternative, it is never concretized into a physical relationship. Masculinity is, instead, examined in experience of vulnerability and duality in the protagonists. There is a compelling presence of "the other" in all these novels which is crucial to the plots of these novels as well. In My Cousin Rachel, for instance, we have a young and impressionable narrator Philip, whose emerging sense of sexuality and identity are threatened by the constant memory of his cousin Ambrose Ashley. John's resemblance to Jean de Gue threatens to engulf his already disturbed identity in The Scapegoat In The House on the Strand Richard believes that the world of the past is better than the present; yet the men who lead him to the past not only complicate his life but also leave him helpless.

Suspense too is at the heart of these novels and du Maurier is successful in sustaining it till the end without indulging in any sort of sensationalism. She keeps the reader guessing the truth about Rachel till the end—a truth that is never revealed. One can laugh at John's stupidity for thinking that he could take Jean's place Yet he has no choice in the matter And, ironically, he has himself initially set off from England because he was fed up with his own existence If he could manage as Jean de Gue for a week, why not for good? But du Maurier puts an abrupt end to all escapes When John makes mistakes we are allowed a laugh (though rarely) yet we are as anxious as him to know what next? Readers are as absorbed and curious about what will come next when Richard goes on a "trip". The men's problems are not merely the usual heroic challenges; they absorb into the normal adventure pattern the very cores of the protagonists*

personality.

The plot of My Cousin Rachel is set in motion by Philip's uncanny resemblance to Ambrose, and their complete ignorance regarding how to deal with women. Ambrose is "shy and mistrustful of women", hence the absence of maids in his house. Philip and Ambrose are content in each other's company and are hardly ever exposed to women. On a long holiday in Italy, however, Ambrose meets his distant relative Rachel and marries her. Philip becomes jealous and sees Rachel is as a threat to the hitherto exclusively masculine atmosphere of the house. However, the real threat comes only when his godfather Nick Kendall suggests that Philip make other arrangements to live, since Ambrose may have children to succeed him. However, Philip had been trained by Ambrose to be his heir, consequently he has never had the opportunity of thinking about any other alternatives. He is, therefore, confused, angry, hurt and jealous of Rachel.

For some time to start with, Ambrose sounds happy and content in his letters form Italy. The letters become alarming by and by when he beings to hint at his mysterious illness, Rachel's extravagance and his doubts regarding her friendship with Signor Rainaldi Nick Kendall suggests to Philip that Ambrose's illness, it is hinted, may be hereditary and that Philip must go to Italy. Philip arrives too late only to find Ambrose dead and Rachel away from her villa He returns to Cornwall, lonely and hurt, and slowly begins to assume the role of being master of the property. When Rachel eventually turns up in Cornwall, Philip is forced to invite her to the house Gradually, he starts to forget his suspicions, anger, and jealousy and inexorably falls in love with her. However, he continues to be torn between his love for Rachel and the suspicion that Ambrose's letters have created regarding her motives and her role in Ambrose's death. He sufficiently in love, however, to resent the intimacy between Rachel and her friend Signor Rainaldi Although he has made a generous provision for Rachel from the estate, he never questions his own right to the property Yet he transfers all the property to Rachel and, the night before his twenty-fifth birthday, gives her all the documents and family jewels, and makes love to her. When he asks her to marry him, though, Rachel turns him down. Louise points out to him that he has been tricked and that Rachel has lost no time in

understanding Philip's clause. Philip has inserted a clause in the will to the effect that if Rachel were to marry again, all the property would revert back to him. When he begins to sulk and misbehave, she asserts her authority for the first time, telling him that the house belongs to her now. At this point Philip begins to panic.

When he himself falls ill he begins to wonder as Ambrose himself had wondered. Is Rachel trying to poison him? Readers are also haunted by this question. Philip asks for Louise's help. He lets Rachel go to the sunken garden without warning her of the potential danger of the place, and indeed just as she has driven her to desperate thoughts, he succeeds in driving her to her death. Lousie and Philip search her room and find poisonous laburnum seeds in her drawer, but nothing more to accuse her of poisoning him. Ambrose's letters, Rachel's overdrawn bank allowance; Nick Kendall's warning to Philip regarding the gossip he heard about Rachel; her refusal to marry Philip; her haste in clarifying the clause in Philip's document; laburnum seeds in her room, and the spilling of the tisana she had brewed for Philip—all these suggest Rachel's guilt. But Louise warns Philip that he is being hasty and the mere presence of laburnum seeds is not enough evidence. By then, however, it is too late. When Philip rushes to the sunken gardens he finds Rachel dying This is not a novel of neat and expected resolutions. The mysteries in this novel are not cleared. Ambrose's death remains a mystery. Whether Rachel was the angel she seemed at times or a scheming murderess remains a greater mystery still Philip's retrospective right at the beginning of the novel tells us that he carries the burden of Rachel's death. Or shall we say murder? His punishment is, therefore, to carry the burden of the guilt of murder without ever knowing the truth about Rachel The novel has despite 'cheating' its readership of expected answers, became a bestseller. There can be little doubt but that its readers were obviously up to the extra burden du Maurier placed on them with her study in psychology. Here, in other words, is an example that suggests that all bestsellers need not be junk.

In The Scapegoat (1957) du Maurier uses the most common device of mistaken identity and forced impersonation. John, a bored and lonely university lecturer, on a holiday tour in Le Mans meets his look-alike, Count Jean de Gue who effects an identity

exchange. When John wakes up, he finds himself forced to assume the role of Jean de Gue, and he is relentlessly drawn into the family and their problems. Although he despises Jean for running away form his problems, he himself begins to care for the family, attempts to restore the decayed family ties. Conveniently for him, Jean's wife dies leaving behind a fortune through the marriage settlement, which offers a way solve the financial difficulties involving the glass foundry. By this time John has come to love the family and does not want to leave when Jean comes to claim it back. Therefore here follows a confrontation at gun-point and John is forced to leave. In a week's brief space in England, impersonating John Jean has managed to wreck John's career, and even sold his house. John has to leave St. Grilles forever with nowhere to go and without anyone in the family suspecting his true identity, except Bela, another of Jean's mistresses.

Unlike Philip and Ambrose in My Cousin Rachel. John and Jean de Gue are each other's opposites despite uncannily similar appearance. While John has no one to belong to, Jean has a family, but he thinks it a liability. John is touring France, visiting places of historical significance and making notes for his lectures. He is a foreigner in a foreign country and years of teaching French history seems ironic to him because he feels like an outsider, an observer but never one of "them". A sense of failure overwhelms him and he decides to seek solace at the Abbaye La Grande Trappe monastery near Le Mans. In the true tradition of romance, a chance encounter with Jean and Jean's exchange of identities gives him the opportunity to make a personal, intimate contact with people and assume different responsible roles. It becomes a serious affair, indeed, because this involvement becomes an intriguing and challenging entanglement.

Instead of plunging into a racy action-filled narrative, however, we begin to find ourselves drawn into John's inner conflicts For instance. John is upset and even frightened at first but when he drives Jean's car beading for the chateau, he feels he can do anything and still get away with it for he is now only playing a part, he is not John anymore but Jean de Gue and feels for the first time in his life free to do as he pleases Yet, the sudden prospect of facing a family about whom he knew nothing of fills him with panic But then he realizes that, Jean's reckless and unpredictable personality is of

great help. John could say and do anything he pleased and the family would merely think he was drunk as usual. This also fills him with a sense of power "the sensation was indescribable.... but now that I had passed the test of speaking to de Gue's family, embracing them, even, and still they had sensed nothing unusual, the feeling of power was overwhelming. I could, if I chose, do incalculable harm to these people whom I did not know—injure them, upset their fives" (TS, p37). There is nothing merely comical about John's situation, for he begins to discover various facets about himself that he had never known or even suspected. The situation thus allows du Maurier to explore in depth the fascinating personality of an intellectual professional whose state of knowledge does not, however, include his own self.

Like other romances, the hero here too must face many trials. Fir instance, John also has various roles to perform. Each of his roles comes to him as a challenge but turns morbid soon enough. When he meets Jean's mother for the first time he is shocked. Madame la Comtesse is "a massive elderly woman, her flesh sagging in a hundred lines, but her eyes, her nose, her mouth so astonishingly and horribly like my own that for one wild moment I believed after all Jean de Gue had come up here before me and was masquerading as a final jest" (TS. p 40) John is instantly caught in the role of her son, "like a fly trapped in a great spider's web, yet at the same time fascinating because of the likeness, another facet of the self, but elderly, female, and grotesque" (ibid). Next comes his role as a husband When he realizes that Francoise is Jean's wife, he is shaken. Fortunately, she is pregnant and be does not have to be intimate with her. John is unnerved to such an extent that he locks himself in the bathroom and reflects thus. "[h]ow he [Jean] would laugh if he could see me now, a farcical figure with the pyjamas over my arm, hiding in a bathroom, with his wife in bed in the room next door This was a situation that evoked screams of delight in the theatre, and I thought how very close to humour must disgust and horror always be" CCS, p 51) Next comes his confrontation with Jean's, now his, brother Paul There has been nothing but bitterness between Jean and Paul, as John discovers without great difficulty Paul's wife Renee is also one of Jean's mistresses and when she confronts John when he is alone and makes a pass at him, he can hardly perform as Jean Instead, he is repulsed by her assertive sexuality and his

contempt for Jean multiplies. Then there is his role as father. Jean's daughter Mary-Noel is devoted to her father and John feels rather guilty about inadvertently cheating her. She quickly notices the change in him (his nails and smell) but does not realize mat this is a different man. She asks no questions but only demands attention and love, which makes John's role even more difficult to sustain. Her religious fanaticism strikes John as unusual for her age. And in no time at all he is deep enough into this relationship for his new life to assume meaning. But John's biggest shock comes when he learns that Jean's sister Blanche hasn't even spoken to him for fifteen years. Blanche has fanatically turned to religion for solace and escape from her sorrow. For as John slowly learns, Jean had murdered Blanche's fiancee in his thirst for power and ownership. Since then, there has been nothing but silence between brother and sister. John feels that with this act, Jean had failed as a human being: "Jean de Gue had failed. He was a greater failure than I.... It was not a jest, but a confession of defeat** (IS, P 66). Jean had run away because he realized that he had failed. The knowledge, however, hardly makes John's forced charade easier for him. The jest goes too far when John begins to think that he *is* Jean. He wonders why he cares for the family at all.

This role-playing is not over yet. There remain to be explored his roles as businessman and landlord. For John also has to assume the role of the owner of the glass foundry. He gets to see the life of the workers* at the foundry. Old Julie's poverty and frankness give him a different perspective of life—that with poverty goes a knowledge of life that people like him and those at the chateau are devoid of After he witnesses the poor living conditions at the workers quarters, his feeling of power and exhilaration at outwitting these people changes to shame. He begins to regret this exchange of identity because he feels the guilt deeply as Jean never had He wishes Jean were a different man because he does not want to repeat Jean's mistakes Though he feels contempt for Jean, he has, apparently, no scruples against having an affair with Jean's mistress Bela. In fact the case is different—for she is a considerable fascinating personality, has measured Jean's shallowness and has the power to plumb to the depths of John's predicament

The 'problems' of Jean, on the other hand begin to sort themselves out, by

accident as when Francoise dies in a freak accident, solving the financial problems of the foundry through the marriage settlement. But John's participation is significant. His effort to pull the mother out of her morphine addiction and reinstate her as the head of the family. Paul and his wife are given a chance to go abroad and get orders for the foundry. Blanche breaks her silence and is ready to take care of the foundry. With everything thus comfortably settled, John looks forward to a peaceful life ahead with the daughter. But his adventure has to end For Jean decides to come back. John by this time does not want to leave and decides to kill Jean. His decision to kill takes him by surprise because it is one other facet of himself he had never known. But, Jean proves too clever for him and John has to leave. John, other words, is not allowed a 'happy ever after* ending by du Maurier. His real problems are within him and role-switching cannot let him escape.

While John is thus busy mending the lives of the family at the chateau, Jean has had little difficulty in entering John's domain, impersonating him even more decisively, disposing off John's belongings—his job, his flat and money. When after being ousted from Jean's life John realizes that he is left with nothing he is shattered--for he realizes that those were the very things that defined him as a person—his job, his money, his flat and furniture "I did not exist", he says when he realizes that he is left with nothing with which to define himself (TS. p 309). When they exchange clothes for the last time, John feels a loss of self "[w]hich one of us was real? Who lived, and who had died?" (TS. p 317) The final slap in the face comes when Jean whistles to the dog who recognizes him—the only part of his pseudo-identity John had not been able to control or come to possess While the entire family is deceived by John, the dog is not. However, Bela too knows that John is not Jean When he goes to her before leaving, she tells him that she knew the difference when they made love John decides to go to the monastery to begin from the beginning all over again Unlike many a shattered personality in life and literature, he does not even have any pieces of his personality left to pick up. And yet he has known himself while masquerading as another

John is successful in living Jean's life for a week There are several sticky situations that John has to face that are funny in a sense beyond laughter, because he

knows nothing about what he is about to face. His first *faux paus* is the distribution of gifts at dinner and his ignorance of what the packages contained. Next, John does not know how to shoot, but Jean enjoyed it, did it well, and in fact the grand *chasse* was a famous event at St Gilles. Although John escapes shooting by deliberately burning his hand, he ends up making a fool of himself with too much drink. One situation nearly puts him in a spot when he is required to donate blood at the hospital for Francoise. He refuses since be is not a universal donor like Jean. A burdensome guilt is eased from his conscience when the doctor informs him that Francoise did not die due to his refusal to donate blood. Once again, even in terms of the inherent humour of the situation, The Scapegoat escapes the shallowness of most such narratives, provides an edge to the situation that lifts them out of mere charade into a sobering analysis of what constitutes a personality.

The House on the Strand is a novel that also raises multiple questions--regarding time, history and scientific temperament. Richard Young is vacationing in his friend Magnus's cottage at Kilmarth The drug Magnus has concocted takes Richard back into the past—to the fourteenth century, where he can only see and hear, but cannot touch. On his first "trip" he is led by Roger, a fourteenth century character, who also becomes a sort of guide to him When Richard tries to touch one of the characters, he is jerked back to reality with vertigo and nausea for after-effects. When he tests the drug for the second time, the passage to the past is so smooth that he wonders if time could be "all-dimensional—yesterday, today, tomorrow running concurrently in ceaseless repetition?" (THS. p 46) He also feels a sense of elation and Magnus warns him that this might be a sign of addiction The third "trip" is rather disturbing for he witnesses the gruesome poisoning of one of the characters Confusion between the two worlds sets in, and Richard is apprehensive and also angry with Magnus for being unsure of the reactions of the time-drug "[h]e had suspected something was wrong, and now I could tell him what it was Neither exhilaration [n]or depression, but confusion of thought The merging of two worlds" (THS. p 83)

Magnus and Richard both refer to historical records to verify that the people they

come across in the fourteenth century actually existed. Yet their approaches to the experiment are different—for Magnus, it is only an experiment but, for Richard the experience becomes too personaL When Magnus informs that the monkey he was testing the drug on died, Richard is upset. Magnus has in fact killed the monkey to work on its brain cells. Richard retorts that he is "appalled at the risk you [Magnus] are taking with *my* brain!" Magnus only says that Richard's brain can take more punishment. Richard realizes that Magnus is "scientific, unemotional, it did not really concern him who was broken in the process so long as what he was attempting to prove was proved successfully; whereas I was already caught up in the mesh of history** (THS. p 98). But what is Magnus trying to prove by this experiment? Once Richard gets use to the transition in time, he feels bound by the past. He begins to wonder where it might lead him finally. He begins to believe that there is

> no past, no present, no future. Every thing living is part of the whole. We are all bound, one to the other, through time and eternity, and, our senses once opened. As mine had been opened by the drug, to a new understanding of his world and mine, fusion would take place, there would be no separation, there would be no death.... This would be the ultimate meaning of the experiment, surely, that by moving about in time death was destroyed (THS p 183)

As Richard becomes more and more obsessed with his trips, he also feels more and more confused between the two worlds Each time he becomes a witness to the grave happenings in the past, he is shaken For instance, when he is a witness to a gruesome murder He is disinterested in his wife and stepsons who join him for the vacation in the present and wants to escape into the past frequently. Meanwhile, Magnus accidentally dies and Richard is deeply disturbed He knows that he now has free access to the drug. The temptation proves too great He ignores the various changes in his body—his bloodshot eye, excessive perspiration and sudden numbness in the arms. The drug (as the drug does with Stevenson's Jekyll) begins to affect him fundamentally Once the

transition occurs without the drug and when he comes out of it he finds himself in the middle of strangling his wife Vita. The doctor is called in, and Richard is sedated He wonders how much he has told the doctor under sedation and what his analysis would be. Richard is unaware of the dreadful after-effects of the drug. The last "trip" also coincides with Roger's death. Richard is left with the possibility of paralysis. His escape from the present-or perhaps addiction to the past and speculation regarding the nature of time—has to end.

The blend of genres may seem somewhat odd. Magnus's experiment with a drug that makes time-travel possible is one of the most ancient fantasies of science. The narrative of fourteenth century experiences that comes alive with all the elements of a historical romance and Richard's adventure, escape and self-discovery belong to a male romance. One does not realize the boundaries of the genres because the transition from one to the other seems natural. What is most impressive in this experiment first of all is that a writer often dismissed by many as a romance writer is capable of making such a bold experiment, of adding dimensions to the 'old' romance form by the exploration of time-travel. Equally impressive is the fact that her science-fantasy does not exploit modern technology—many a science fiction novel ends up being boring techno-science. Here du Maurier clearly wishes to explore the philosophical dimensions of time and of our 'standard' notions of it just as much as she wishes to explore the psychological anchoring of a personality in its own time and place which gives it an identity. The 'myth' of seeking after knowledge, too, is old But clearly du Maurier could not have been more 'serious' in her writing than she is in this strange but disturbing experiment.

Du Maurier's settings tend to become gothic in all these novels, the action lending as much atmosphere to the setting the setting does to action The estates and house in My Cousin Rachel define Philip's identity as an heir to Ambrose Possession and ownership of Ambrose's property is important to him because it defines him. Ambrose probably wanted an heir of his own and had made a will giving Rachel everything he owned when she was with child. Rachel tells Philip that Ambrose had lost faith in her after she miscarried Philip knows that after Ambrose's death everything ought to belong to him,

"...the whole living entity of the house was mine and mine alone** (MCR, p 51). Philip believes that he can control Rachel's sexuality, and own her. This faith and his sexual attraction for her makes him hand over his own inheritance to her. Rachel not only threatens his dependence on the property but also his surrendered sexuality. Philip realizes he has been tricked when Lousie points out to him that Rachel lost no time in understanding the clause in his will. His fear, suspicion, anger, jealousy, helplessness, rejection all culminate in what we can effectively call Rachel's murder. Though he knows, that the bridge over the sunken garden is unsafe, he lets her go to it without sufficient warning. Just as Rebecca was a threat to Manderley and had to be destroyed, Rachel also had to be done away with, for had she lived, she would not have married Philip and the property wouldn't have reverted back to him. The house has become haunted by the dominant personality of Rachel, the garden by her death, both reflecting the inner state of Philip's personality.

The chateau of Jean de Gue in The Scapegoat is filled with suspicion, intrigue, hatred, jealousy, resentment, and unhappiness. The child Marie-Noel has a better vision of things when she says, "[t]he *verrerie* [glass foundry] is a happy place. It is chateau that is full of ghosts" (TS. p 229) Bela the mistress too has a healthy and normal outlook—so her small house in town does not only provide comfort, but also a significant contrast to the darker psychological setting at the chateau The chateau and the glass foundry at St Gilles are an alien territory to John, but the ruined surroundings of the foundry bring him close to the facts of life and facets of Jean's character, and more significantly his own The whole family is waiting, simultaneously and perversely, for the birth of a son and Francoise's death (which does happen accidentally) The foundry is neglected and in a state of decay it is also the cause of murder of Kfaurice Duval who threatens Jean's position as owner and heir In many ways, therefore, mystery and vague to real threats characterize the setting of The Scapegoat The few exceptions—for instance, Marie-Noel's room where John behaves playfully, and Bell's house—only serve to heighten the modern gothic of the setting Clearly, du Maurier's craft does not shelter behind conventions of historical romance alone

Tn The House on the Strand setting becomes even more markedly confusing and bizarre by the combination of dark experiments, and actual historical ambience. Richard explores the landscape around Kilmarth—Tywardeath, Pohnear, Polkerris, Treesmill—in his attempt to reconstruct the landscape of the past that he encounters during his "trips" into the past. The fourteenth century is a strange enough setting for modern readers anyhow. Although these landscapes seem harmless they do pose a threat to both Magnus and Richard. Under the influence of the drug, both Magnus and Richard nm the risk of falling from the cliffs, being run over by vehicles, or being drowned in the sea because the present actuality is shut from their senses. Indeed, on several of his time-trips Richard is jerked back to reality and saved from being run over by vehicles. But eventually Magnus does die in gruesome accident when be collides with a passing train on his "trip". The cottage itself has its links with history. Richard contemplates that this may be one of the reasons for the "trips" leading him to various corners of the cottage, especially the basement that is also Magnus's lab which Richard calls "Bluebeard's chamber". For it is full of specimens—with rows of bottles and solutions, skeletons of animals, animals preserved in chemical solutions with their flesh bleached pale. Indeed, to the reasonably strong gothic touch is added a touch of the grotesque here:

> Most were hard to distinguish—for all I knew they could have been kittens in embryo form, or even rats The two specimens I recognized were the monkey's head, the smooth skull perfectly preserved, the bald pate of a tiny unborn child with eyes closed A second monkey's head from which the brain had been removed .. pickled and brown There were other jars and other bottles that held fungi, plants and grasses, grotesquely shaped, with spreading tentacles and curling leaves (THS. p 28)

With Magnus's death the lab b no longer important and Richard sweeps its contents and buries them. But Magnus has left the cotuge for Richard in his wilL This binds him to the cottage and memories of Magnus's parents and Magnus himself And the time-travel

experiments with their traumas and confusions only bind Richard closer, more sinisterly, to this setting.

Another important aspect of these novels that strongly distinguishes them from the usual notion of romance is the treatment of women. None of them seems to correspond to the stock types, each has her distinct identity even when she may not be particularly likeable. Indeed, du Maurier's women in these novels—whether they are old and cranky mothers, or wilful daughters or even mistresses—confront the male heroes with disturbing challenges and pose serious questions that unsettle their identities. Like most male romances, femininity does not seem to exist only at the core of the lives of the protagonists. Attraction of women—Ambrose' and Philip's for Rachel, John's for Bela and Richard's for Isolda—comes from their strange or foreign personalities and from the fact that most of these women are not within their grasp. Ambrose and Philip hardly know any other women except the Pascoes and Louise until each encounters Rachel. Rachel tells Philip that marriage came as a revelation to Ambrose and very late in life; he is hardly able to handle it well for he knows nothing about women. Philip is not threatened by any of the women he has known before because they do not threaten his position as Ambrose's heir. But Rachel has an immediate impact because she does. Both Ambrose and Philip are drawn to her for almost the same reasons—she is elusive, beautiful and a foreigner. Philip begins to define femininity only from to his proximity to Rachel When Rachel asks him to define femininity, he says, "I don't know anything about the subject All I know is that I like looking at you, and I don't like looking at Mrs Pascoe" (MCR, p 112) Rachel represents to Philip femininity with all its beauty and grace Rachel, thus, has seriously unsettling effect upon the hero.

John's relationships with the women in the chateau is very different from both Philip's and Jean's. John feels compassion for the mother, pity and kindness for Francoisc, repulsion for Renee and shock and guilt for Blanche Jean sees his mother as egotistical and monstrous, Francoise he tolerates only for her money; Renee is loved only for her loots without brains, and Blanche represents only repression and frustration. However, both John and Jean find Bela a welcome solace and distraction from the life at

the chateau because she never questions or reprimands. She is 'foreign* to them in that she never makes demands and is also because she is a foreigner, a Hungarian. Richard is attracted to Isolda because she is so remote and totally inaccessible to him became she belongs to the past which he cannot touch. Richard's own wife Vita is he considers an impediment to his "trips".

The intense male-bonding in these novels, thus, is unsettled by women. This experience also threatens the identity and individuality of these heroes. In a traditional male romance, the heroes become stronger and wiser at the end of the novel But vulnerability seems to be a common characteristic of all the three heroes. There is also a duality in the characters of these heroes—they lead two lives simultaneously or are poised between them most precariously. Clearly du Maurier's concerns here coincide with those of 'classic' modern fiction and literature in general.

Philip and Ambrose who are comfortable with each other do not need any other company to complete the pattern of their lives. Philip's only genuine ambition is to be like Ambrose He wonders, after the latter's death, whether his spirit had left his body and taken possession of his, for he finds himself "repeating his own mistakes, caught the same disease once more and perished twice" (MCR p 8). He realizes that because of this likeness "there came defeat" (ibid). Philip not only wants to resemble Ambrose but also consciously imitates him When he hears of Rachel's arrival in Cornwall, be moves into Ambrose's room, in an act that also symbolizes his transition from heir to master. He also wants to take the place of Ambrose in Rachel's life, this desire motivates all his further moves He wants to live his life for Ambrose in some strangely compelling show of loyalty, which leads to a division within his own personality. Ambrose's letters have had the same effect, more than rekindling his suspicions regarding Rachel and stifling his own identity What comes to Philip, therefore, as a final rebuff if Rachel's death in his arms "[s]he opened her eyes, and looked at me At first, I think in pain, then in bewilderment Then finally, so 1 thought, in recognition. Yet 1 was in error, even then. She called me Ambrose I went on holding her hand till she died" (MCR p 302)

Like du Maurier's other heroes who are all far more realistically represented in their confusions and crises, Philip too has always been vulnerable to his excessive dependence on and imitation of Ambrose, and to Rachel because she threatens his two core concerns, inheritance and sexuality. Initially Philip is averse to the idea of marriage. It is only his growing obsession, his drive to possess, that urges him to contemplate marriage. Even in this state of mind he resembles Ambrose. When Rachel refuses to marry him, he cynically observes: "neither for him, nor for me, could there ever be another woman, or another wife" (MCR, p 251). We are told that Rachel is the only woman Philip ever made love to: "[s]he was my first and last" (MCR, p 229). After Rachel's death, Philip's existence amounts to nothing. Thus we can see that far from the stock motives of providing sensation and titillation, du Maurier's motive is inherently new and contemporary—to define, without the constraints of convention and stereotype, what being male amounts to.

Thus masculine identity crises—in the face of peculiarly masculine preoccupation with intellectuality, authority, control and sexuality as defining characteristic—becomes a seriously and deeply explored matter in these novels. In The Scapegoat however, there is little preoccupation with sexuality in John's make up, while in Jean*s personality power and sexuality dominate. John and Jean are also bound together, like Philip and Ambrose, at first because of their likeness and later by a genuine exchange of personality on John's part (Jean has always retained control of the situation—that is his villainy in the novel) We might even be tempted to think, as John at times is, that they are two facets of the same person Once John assumes the role of Jean du Gue, however, he leads a dual life that constantly highlights the differences He feels that his identity is merged with Jean's, "whose inner substance was part of my [his] nature, part of my [his] secret self" (TS, p 119), yet all his reactions and instincts are different Along with Jean's identity John is also at risk of having to assume Jean's sexual identity We know nothing of John's previous life, although his intense sense of failure tells us that he has not had much of a love life or family life either Jean's family gives him an opportunity to play the family man. However, though he is Jean to those around him, he interacts with them as John. While he is repulsed by Renee he is attracted to Bela on account of some innate

sympathy. That is why he feels comforted in her company: "I wondered why the gift of another man's mistress should prove such an antidote to strain" fTS. p145). And that is also why he feels insecure when he learns that Bela has discovered that he is not Jean when they made love. When he has to leave, as at the start of the novel, John is left with a blank future and no identity, the new John had "no substance, no flesh, no bloods, but was born of feeling, that could not die, and it was fike a flame, contained in the body's shell" (TS, p 316). He decides to go back to religion to give him some direction. He has discovered or confirmed within him a great void, and learned that neither borrowed roles nor lack of identity is tolerable.

Another important kind of dominance—subordination pattern is explored in The House on the Strand Richard and Magnus have been close friends for several years. Yet their relationship is not mutually balanced. Magnus has a hold over Richard—something that Richard cannot explain and Vita cannot understand Magnus always saps Richard and every time they met Richard feels like a pricked balloon. Vita's friends believe that Magnus is gay and is attracted to Richard, which shows how difficult it is *to* make stock explanations fit the facts of a case. The cottage, Magnus's legacy to Richard, binds him further to the memories of their friendship. Richard also feels a close bond with Roger: "Roger was my keeper, I was his"; however, this bond slides into more several speculation "[t]here was no past, no present, no future . . We are all bound one to the other, through time and eternity" (THS. p 183) Richard has a family But he does not love them In his state of confusion, grief, and surprise at inheriting the cottage from Magnus, Richard completely neglects his family too He also leads two lives—the life of an intruder into the past and a disinterested and irresponsible husband in his present

There is of course his urge to go on "trips" of his own The reality in which he finds himself strangling his wife is as far from scientific experiment and historical exploration as can be Indeed, this novel, with the other two, explores the phenomenon of 'footlesseness', an outward urge that seems to unsettle males, makes them insecure in any environment, leaves them puzzled about the 'heart of darkness' that is unfathomed within their selves This analysis by du Maurier is only emphasized by what Richard believes to be the doctor's stereotypical verdict

> The sense of anti-climax was absolute: the purge had been very thorough. And still I did not know how much I had told him. Doubtless a hotch-potch of everything I had ever thought or done since the age of three, and like all doctors with leanings towards psycho-analysis, he had put it together and summed up as the usual sort of misfit with homosexual leanings who had suffered from birth with a mother complex, a stepfather complex, an aversion to copulation with my widowed wife, and a repressed desire to hit the hay with a blonde who had never existed except in my own imagination. (THS. p 293)

It ought to be genuinely clear by now that to assign du Maurier a special place merely within light-hearted, unprovocatively popular domain of romance, will be a serious error of judgement. Du Maurier and other authors and works consigned tot he waste basket by many a 'serious' critic, are phenomena that demand different approach, a classification that creates a bracket within which considerable fiction like theirs has to be placed, but that also reveals the serious inadequacies of black and white categorization of literary works

Our discussion will be incomplete if we exclude other novels that explore similar themes I'll Never Be Young Again (1932).[9] The Parasites (1949), [10] The Flight of the Falcon (1965)[11] are also serious enough explorations of both questions and paradoxes regarding male and female sexuality and identity, which stood starkly exposed against the post-war condition of British and European society An apparently permissive post-war society is a common subject in these novels Du Maurier. however, again challenges in these novels both her classification as a merely ' popular' romancer and the superficial analyses which are possible in works that follow genre formulae slavishly Not often does one find, for instance, the sort of refusal to accept easy solutions—such as explanation by homosexuality—as in du Maurier' s novels.

The narrator of I'll Never Be Young Again, Dick, is the son of a famous English poet. His identity is so overshadowed by his father's fame that he runs away from home after his final act of defiance—the thrusting of quasi-pornographic writings at his father. Dick is rescued from committing suicide by an older and wiser Jake. Dick has been emotionally rejected by his parents and Jake seems to become a father-figure. The first half of the novel explores Dick's relationship with Jake and their sea voyages and trips to the mountains. The intense bonding between them never actually culminates in a concrete homosexual relationship, yet it excludes the feminine. Dick is repulsed by heterosexuality. His casual fling on board with an American woman revolts him. As in the earlier novels we considered before, du Maurier does not allow her male protagonist the luxury of nestling comfortably into such a relationship. She does not provide her heroes the luxury of calling off their struggle to refuse their identities. That is why, after Jake's death, Dick settles down in Paris and occupies himself with odd jobs for a while and must confront what he has been trying to escape. He finds some measure of contentment in the company of Hesta, who sacrifices her ambition to be a musician to live with Dick But when he makes love to Hesta, he sees Jake's face looking down upon him in horror. Although he lives with Hesta, he still finds heterosexuality repulsive. In the extra-sexual domain, he thinks Hesta's frankness regarding her sexual desires disgusting Dick's ambition is to establish his own identity as a writer, free of his father's shadow He does not want to marry Hesta for he fears that marriage would interfere with his writing He does write a play and a novel which is rejected by his father's publisher Yet even before he has had a chance to propose Hesta, she also deserts him for another man His failure as a writer, desertion by Hesta and his father's death bring him back to England where he finally settles down with a job, a routine revolving around work, devoid of either homosexual or heterosexual relationships. I'll Never Be Young Again, thus, explores one more alternative for fleeing males, merely existing in a world from which 'youthful' crises are excluded altogether and one must become 'old' before one's time Other equally bold subjects appear in du Maurier's novels as well.

The Parasites also explores hypocrisy regarding sexuality In fact, it is just as bold

and frank a study of the confused post-war British society. The subject of permissiveness and sexual self-awareness among women explored by du Maurier here, was becoming a feature of post-war British society. In The Parasites, Niall and Maria are brother and sister only through the marriage of one of their parents. Between them develops an 'incestuous' relationship. Maria has become aware of her sexuality in her teens and has been initiated into the act of sex by her mother's friend; and Niall, as a youth, has been initiated into sex by one of his father's friend's who is as old as his mother. Maria, when grown-up, has married and has children. Yet none of these alters her incestuous relationship with Niall. She is an actress and Niall is a composer, in their own creative worlds both are successful. It is not profession which they explore as mark of identity. They are unable to manage without each other, yet they interfere with each other's lives, suck the sap form each other in a liaison that is far from healthy for themselves. Their love and dependence on each other is almost parasitic When Maria's husband tells them that they are parasites, therefore, they are forced to look back into the past Their present is in a state of confusion and depression. Maria is desolate when her husband announces that he wants a divorce. Niall's decision to commit suicide in the end remains unresolved. Yet there is plenty of cause for it in this confusion. Du Maurier's decision to attempt an exploration into one of the most provocative of subjects in most cultures also defines for us her refusal to function within formal conventions or to pander to readership expectations by churning out a series of clone-like bestsellers

The theme of homosexuality occurs in some other novels of du Maurier. Incest or homosexuality have never been new to any society, only their overt expressions in public art forms such as literature and painting have been considered scandalous This theme has been controversial both before and during our own time Some of du Maurier's contemporaries such as Forster and Mary Renault also explored homosexuality (although Forster 'chickened out* when it came to publication of Maurice) Male-bonding is strong in most of du Maurier's novels though the relationships are not exactly homosexual However, she did publish a short story "Ganymede" (1959)[12] which dealt with a middle* aged man who is dismissed from his job for being gay. On a vacation he is attracted to a young waiter whom he calls his Ganymede After the death of this waiter in an accident,

he is attracted to another young waiter who reminds him of the dead boy. The story is at least reminiscent of other works like Thomas Mann's Tristan. Du Maurier herself explored such contemporary subjects in other novels as well as, for instance The Flight of the Falcon. However, enough has been shown thus far in our analysis to argue against a dismissive attitude to du Maurier as a 'bestselling' author.

We have suggested in this chapter that du Maurier not only used conventional forms and formulae, but also experimented with them. Her persistent subversion itself is a bold experiment in serious exploration of popular forms. The formal complexity in her work is as unimpressive as the seriousness of her analysis. We have also suggested that the credit for her achievement is shared by her readership. For they give up standard expectation such as stereotypical characters and happy endings. They have followed her serious subversive analyses in great numbers over several decades. They encounter, and obviously read with sympathy and sensitivity, the progress of her characters through difficulty and adventure which refuse to endorse escapism, irresponsibility, superficiality, sensationalism, smooth passage and easy rewards. Loss and confusion, fear and loneliness, deprivation and denial do not in du Maurier's work merely lead to palliatives Her novels and stories once the stranglehold of the 'popular* or 'bestseller* tags is loosened, reveal to us both subject and craft worthy of being located distinctly in a domain never before named by established or popular literary criticism—a middle ground between both where easy reckoning is impossible, where types are dismantled, as are substantive types of theme

It may, therefore, become far more difficult than we imagine to assess the ingredients that add up to entertainment in du Maurier's novels What is certain is that they do Part of our inability to deal with writers like du Maurier comes from the hold literary establishment has on the prerogative to classify Our training within the establishment does not equip us to analyze at least such entertainers. With an author like du Maurier who combines more than one genre, making it difficult to dissect her work formally, our methods of analysis are further challenged Bakerman suggests that, "[b]ecause du Maurier is chiefly a storyteller and not a philosopher, dramatic action dominates theme" in some of her novels (Bakerman, 1985 23) Dramatic action is

certainly available in plenty in du Maurier's novels. However, it is evident that she explores a variety of themes in her novels which no one who thinks of her as merely a 'popular' writer would even suspect. Approaching her work via the 'blurb', for instance can only give us the totally erroneous impression that there is probably no need for introspection or analysis when we read the novels. Yet du Maurier has been able to deal with complex issues and still reach a wide reading public. And the time has come, it is suggested in the present study, to stop denying the existence of works which straddle both the 'serious' and 'popular* domains; that the time has come for us to realize that to dismiss them as junk would at least be a grave injustice even if for obscure reasons we are unwilling to include them in our 'classical canon*. And especially as we posit the existence of a separate middle domain where such works abide far far longer than many that are hailed as 'serious' and yet quickly disappear from the memory of readers.

Notes to Chapter II

Jamaica Inn hereafter cited as JI in parenthesis when preceding a page reference Du Maurier, Daphne. Jamaica Inn 1936 Harmondsworth Penguin, 1972

[2] Rebecca. hereafter cited as R in parenthesis when preceding a page reference. Du Maurier, Daphne Rebecca 1938 London Pan, 1975

[3] *The* King's General. hereafter citedas TKG in parenthesis when precedinga page reference Du Maurier, Daphne. The King's General 1946 Harmondsworth. Penguin, 1972

[4] Du Mauner's short story "The Blue Lenses" (1959), has to be mentioned in the context of the vicar's paintings The protagonist of the story Marda West, after an operation, sees everyone around her tilth animal heads Her own face is intact when she looks into the mirror This strange experience gives her an insight nto the true nature of the people around her and when she is operated upon once again she is back to normal Only, when she *looks* at herself in the mirror she sees the head of a doe, bent and ready for sacrifice Mary's situation is act very different in this novel.

[5]This pattern is what Janice Radway calls the ideal structure of romance (see rfia^*if 1) One can see the same structure working through this novel. The relationship between Maxim and the girl can be seen through the same pattern.

[6] My Cousin Rachel fc*^ra^fr cited as MCR in parenthesis when preceding a page reference. Du Maurier, Daphne. My Cousin Rachel. 1951. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

[7] The Scapegoat, hereafter cited as TS in parenthesis when preceding a page reference. Du Maurier, Daphne, The Scapegoat. 1957. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

* The House on the Strand, hereafter cited as THS in parenthesis when preceding a pace reference. Du Maurier, Daphne. The House on the Strand. 1969. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.

[9] Du Maurier, Daphne. I'll Never Be Young Again. 1932. London: Arrow, 1994.

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Chapter III

Reviews of du Manner
Reception and Criticism

"Have you read this latest novel?"
"Yes"
"So, tell me what you think about it."
"Oh, I don't know what to think about it yet I'm waiting for the reviews."
(Anon).

It is customary to accord 'established* status to a work or author only after scholarly criticism has had the opportunity to accept or dismiss it. In itself this is at least presumptuous For writers rarely write for critics Readers' acceptance ought, therefore, to become at least an alternative to scholarly opinion And representing such opinion, review literature ought to be considered criticism. It will not be incorrect to maintain that Fiction, in the recent times fiction has been popularized by reviews in newspapers and magazines, articles in literary journals and periodicals, interviews of authors on radio and television, theatre and film adaptations, literary workshops and seminars Much of this attention, however, both makes and reflects popular judgement We have seem in the previous chapter that one cannot generalize regarding whether such judgement is discriminating or sound enough. Du Maurier's works have received much popular attention and judgement Her works have been also extraordinarily popular with readers She has received attention from the media because several of her works have been successfully rendered in films [1] Rebecca has been, perhaps, subject to most attention This novel has been translated into twenty languages in as many years It has been adapted for theatre, opera and television Sequels have also been written to this novel [2] Some of du Maurier's novels have also appeared in serialized form in magazines Film, television, theatre and opera are open to a much wider audience Adaptations of Rebecca in all these forms also suggest that the novel has reached so

wide an audience that ignoring its merit will amount to terrible arrogance.

Though the literary establishment has had hardly anything to do with her works, they have been reviewed by numerous newspapers and journals. Reviews are also the 'first' (and at times courageous criticisms) criticisms and determine to a great extent how a piece of fiction is received by a set of readers. Reviews also function as watchdogs when new writers make their debut. Reviewers, including du Manner's, usually belong to the literary establishment, or established authors themselves, or full-time reviewers employed by newspapers and journals. Some of them are anonymous, while others are most influential names. It will be fair to say that by and large reviews represent immediate and short-lived evaluation. Review literature, unlike what is usually called 'criticism', reflects both assessment and anticipation of the reception of a work.

Generally reviews concentrate, among other things, on the writing skills of the author, structure and pace of the novel, characterization, contemporary relevance, language, readability and 'appeal' to particular audiences. Reviews also compare the author and work in question with others both contemporary and from the past, in an attempt to establish the individual contribution of the author and work in question as also to place it in some sort of category. Indeed, the majority of readers in popular journals and newspapers particularly look for a 'label' by which they can recognize the type These are aspects of reviews that particularly influence reception. Reviews/reviewers keep in mind readers who are reasonably well read in the relevant genre or sub-genre, target readers of such fiction, the afTordability of the work, and members of the public who read and discuss reviews Criticism in these reviews may be positive or negative, or balanced but rarely does a review fail to make some fort of recommendation As reviews are 'first reactions', there is always the danger of a reviewer becoming personal, making scathing attacks on a particular author, or remarks in favour of the author even if the author deserves neither In general, this entire spectrum of reviewing—from subjective to objective, pertinent to irrelevant, focused to comparative, fair to unfair, genre based and (re)commendatory—has come du Maurier's

way for many long decades.

Apart from reviews of du Maurier's work in The Times literary Supplement.[3] most of the reviews used in this chapter are from the American newspapers and journals, the source of information regarding many of these reviews being The Book Review Digest.[4] Reviews that have been borrowed from The Book Review Digest are themselves extracts from original reviews. This poses some limitations upon taking at face value. Thus this review literature comes mainly from across the Atlantic The reason for this lop-sided selection is the non-availability of most British reviews of du Maurier's works in India. Reviews of her non-fictional works, plays and short stories, will also be discussed in this chapter in addition to reviews of the novels. It is hoped that this reasonably widespread sample of opinion will help us assess the general reception of all her works and allow us to contextualize her fiction. On the other hand the fact that Americans were target readers of American reviews hardly matters because du Maurier's novels have been bestsellers on both sides of the Atlantic, as in many other countries including India

Now, reviews are rarely considered 'critical material*. Since other kinds of 'critical material' on du Maurier's works is scarce (despite her great readership), these reviews must suffice for us as indicators of material, opinion or at any rate indicate such direction as criticism may have taken And of course they do reveal the contemporary reception of her works We already know that du Maurier readership has unequivocally approved of her work Keeping this in mind, we can examine reviews of her works as 'actual' determiners and/or indicators of her status in the popular literary discourse We may be tempted to ask how much we can gather from reviews alone But reviews (including obituary notices) caa and do reveal a great deal of information. What do the reviews examine in du Maurier' s works? What do they ignore? What do the reviews consciously look for in her works? What kind of an author do they generally consider du Maurier? What standards of judgement seem to emerge from this attention? Once she is branded a particular kind of author, do the succeeding reviews continue to express the same opinion? What skills of du Maurier do

the reviews tend to recognize and commend? What do the reviews praise and criticize du Maurier for? Do they notice any artistic maturity or growth in moving from one work to another? How do they welcome or criticize anything different from her supposedly 'normal' or 'usual' writing or form stereotypes of forms? Do they comment on the readership she has enjoyed? Such questions will be used here as guidelines to examine the otherwise limited critical material. Reviews of each of her novels will be examined in the order of publication. This will help us trace any shifts in opinion and reception of her works.

Reviews across four decades 'from 1931 to 1972* that figure in our discussion reveal the contemporary reception of her works. Indeed, we may extend this reception by two whole decades. For obituaries that were published immediately after her death in 1989 reveal only a slight change in her position as a popular author. The source of these obituaries is the Contemporary Literary Criticism Year Book.[3] We cannot claim that all her works are masterpieces or were equally readily accepted by readers and reviewers. By choosing six of her novels for detailed analysis and discussion we have also made a clear statement of the standard of evaluation we have used so far in our proposal that *some* popular works possess qualities that clearly justify our positing a middle ground or category. Similarly reviewers also consider some of her works as "touchstones", as the standard against which her other works are received Some of the reviews praise her works Some of her works, on the other hand, have been reviewed in a conventional manner and also dismissed accordingly However, some of the reviews consider her works within the conventionally narrow limitations (of popular reading) and suggest that they be received and read accordingly Our own effort through this study has been not only to locate the middle ground between serious and popular fiction, but also locate du Maurier's particular position in this middle ground 'canon' (if canon is the term to use)

When du Maurier published her first novel The Loving Spirit in 1931, her publisher made much of it. She was launched with a great deal of publicity The Times Literary Supplement (1931) review was quite encouraging. It complimented her

on the narrative, which, according to the review, flows smoothly. However, it did criticize her drawing of characters as lacking in distinction (p. 174}. The New Statesman and Nation (1931) also complimented du Maurier on "a fine sense of structure", and stated that the novel would provoke "a high standard of judgement" (BRD 1932:298). The review in Outlook (1931) on the other hand complained that the theme, the drama, the passion that du Maurier intends to create in this novel "fells flat", and does not move the reader. But the review credited "reality" to a few scenes and characters fBRD. 1932:298). Reviewing the novel for Saturday Review (1931), H C Harwood opines that du Maurier is "an author obviously possessing aad enjoying a love of romantic fiction*[1] fBRD. 1932:299). Saturday Review of Literature (1931) pointed out that this novel "is in the romantic tradition" and that it is "a modern novel in its realistic presentation of its material in its objective attitude towards its own subjectivism". This review observes that the novel offers "intriguing potentialities as a first novel" (BRD, 1932: 299). It observes that du Maurier combined contemporary narrative style with the nineteenth century eye for detail Though du Maurier was not branded as a particular kind of author, her leanings towards romantic fiction were certainly pointed out by the early reviews

The reception of her second novel I'll Never Be Young Again (1932), was neither enthusiastic nor discouraging. This novel was a serious comment on "modern" male sexuality and identity, as we have already teen in the previous chapter. The review in TLS praised du Maurier for her dialogues and imagination and said that they are "occasionally reminiscent of an admired contemporary or two", but did not mention who these contemporaries are The review also remarks that the narrative moves at a good pace (1932 348) The review in Books (1932) analyses how du Maurier constructs the character of Dick and his growth from adolescence to a troubled maturity It points out that the novel has the power to analyze and also that even without such analysis it would still be "an absorbing romance" (p 6). The novel was particularly noticed for the portrayal of the protagonist/narrator Dick as convincing enough to move readers by Chicago Daily Tribune (1932 10). L. A. G Strong (who reviewed more than one novel of du Maurier) reviewing this for Spectator (1932X

prophesied that

> If Miss du Maurier develops on the fines of the first part of her novel, she will be a portent, a blend of Marie Corelli and Hall Caine. If, as I fervently hope, the second part keeps uppermost, there b no saying what she may become. In any case, I have a feeling that a very great number of people are going to be deeply interested and influenced by her future work. (BRD, 1933:278)

This review makes a comparison of du Maurier with a popular author like Marie Corelli It is quite clear that the reviewer does not want du Maurier to join the group of best sell ing' authors because he believes that she has the ability to achieve more. This review is crucial to our arguement in the present thesis. For it places du Maurier on the boundary (if not already within the border-land or middle ground) between what the reviewer feels is popular best sell ing fiction, and serious fiction This review recognizes her capacity for both kinds of writing but also hopes that she does not limit herself to only one kind of writing. The novel was also heavily criticized as "an incredibly youthful book" by the review in Commonwealth (1932) Indeed, it suggested the novel was unworthy of appearing in print, the word "youthful" apparently implying that the novel was too raw, too immature for publication (BRD. 1933 278)

I'll Never Be Young Again did not become a bestseller like the previous novel The reception of du Maurier's third novel The Progress of Julius (1933X however, resembled that of the first novel—neither enthusiastic nor discouraging. The novel is about Julius Levy's rise from rags to riches Ruthless and greedy, Julius cares for no one and nothing but money and power At fifty, Julius experiences a sudden impact from his daughter's youth, beauty, grace, and learning La Gabriel Julius sees a stronger will than his own. His wife Rachel feels tie an intruder between father and daughter and commits suicide Julius becomes more and more obsessed with Gabriel

Unable cope with her suitors and friends, unable to share her with anyone, Julius arranges a boating trip and strangles Gabriel when she is swimming. He degenerates into a lonely old man and dies of a stroke. According to TLS review, there is not a single lovable character in the novel, and the readers can only pity the characters. This is, however, the only review that compliments du Maurier for handling a hard theme competently. The review also notes that the novel is "never flagging in movement" (1933:246). There are other interesting opinions too. For instance, Anne Armstrong in Saturday Review (1933) noted that du Maurier has "advanced in technique" (BRD, 1934:270) Reviewers noticed her writing skills from the beginning. A constant reference to her skills as a writer is one aspect of the reviews of du Maurier's work.

A review in Forum (1933) noticed that "*[a]s usual* [emphasis mine] there is an element of the morbid and the macabre in Miss du Maurier's new novel** (BRD. 1934.270). How the element of macabre was used in her novels and short stones also became a constant topic for observation and comment by reviewers. Most reviews of this novel concentrate on the characterization of the protagonist, Julius. New Statesman and Nation (19331 even prophesied that this novel was "likely to become a bestseller" despite the fact that the "effect of the book is *literary*" [emphasis mine] (BRD, 1934 270) The novel, however, did not become a bestseller. But this review also seemed to highlight our main issue in our study here—the relationship between the 'literary' and 'popular' domains It did also seem to reinforce the popular belief of its time that a bestseller lacked literary skills and a 'literary* book could not become t bestseller

After one bestselhng romance The Loving Spirit, and the fairly lukewarm reception of her second and third novels I'll Never be Young Again The Progress of Julius. du Maurier's attempt at 'serious' writing was not quite enthusiastically received Her position appeared to be in the no man's land, which we attempted to define in the first two chapters of the present thesis When she first experimented with serious themes her works were received won some skepticism if not outright dismissal Reviewing The Progress of Julius Graham Greene sounded very acidic in the

This image was reinforced by the phenomenal success of Rebecca (1938). With Rebecca, du Maurier was also recognized as the skilful story-teller she almost always was—'spinner of yarns' became almost a title the reviews awarded to her. Yet the apparent paradox—how can a bestseller be serious and realistic?—also found expression in such approving r emails M. F. Brown, reviewing Rebecca for the New York Times (1938) wrote—"[a]lmost *a class by herself* [emphasis mine], Daphne du Maurier' s special forte becomes increasingly established: the ability to tell a good story and people it with a twinkling •reality*** (p.7). John Patton endorses this point in his review where he states that "the style of telling her story is suited to her plot". He also compliments du Maurier for the intensity, atmosphere and "a heady beauty** in her writing (1938.3). V. S. Pritchett observes even more forcefully that "[m]any a better novelist would give his eyes to be able to tell a story as Miss du Maurier does, to make it move at such a pace and to go with such mastery from surprise to surprise**; and with an allusion to Hollywood he says that "the twists [in the plot] are perfect** (Christian Science Monitor. 1938 12). All such reviews highlight the fact that du Maurier was a good story-teller, a view that is never really contested by her other reviews. She is rarely compared unfavourably to other authors in the art of story-telling, and du Maurier remains unchallenged, as she is "a class by herself*

Reviewing Rebecca for the Spectator (19381 Kate O'Brien says, "Rebecca if a Charlotte Bronte story minus Charlotte Bronte" (BRD. 1938 276) Whether this is a favourable or an unfavourable comparison cannot be figured out from the extract, although one suspects it is uncomplimentary The paradox of reception, thus, perpetuates itself when she writes 'wholly' serious novels, du Maurier cannot become 'popular', yet when she writes serious stuff in an entertaining manner she cannot rise to the standard set by Emily Bronte The review in TLS (1938), however, does draw attention to other aspects of the novel It says

> Rebecca is a lowbrow story with a muddlebrow finish. As such it squares with a formula for novel-writing that yields hand tome results several times a year *If one*

chooses to read the book in a critical fashion—but only a tiresome reviewer is likely to do that it becomes mm obligation to take off one's hat to Miss dm Manner for the skill and assurance with which she sustains m highly improbable fiction [emphasis mine]— It is fair, no doubt, to call this type of fiction "dope". *But it is mo good pretending that everybody would read Tolstoy or Proust if there were no dope literature* [emphasis mine]. (p.517)

It is this last remark that one would consider exceptionally honest and taken in *its* entirety, this TLS review comes close to suggesting the existence of the honourable middle ground that we have posited between 'serious* or high-brow and 'popular' or low-brow fiction This review is crucial to our arguement. It suggests that an attempt to look at the novel in conventionally 'serious' way would be "tiresome", that a diflerent approach is needed to the task of assessing books like this. This has figured in our arguements in the earlier chapters Dope implies escape, dope creates a world of illusion and make-believe as does escapist fiction and hence the analogy is appropriate within limits This does not mean that due to its heady effect, this kind of fiction can explain away flaws in itself Nor does it follow that a novel that provides much needed escape to large numbers of readers must be despised In fact we must consider that reading it is compulsive enough for readers to experience genuine pleasure The review also states that "dope literature" is as necessary as serious literature—like the works of Proust and Tolstoy Most importantly the review suggests that these two kinds of literature must naturally co-exist, for not every reader would read only serious literature

The tone of the review, even as * seems to brand this novel as "dope literature", is not derogatory Instead, by recognizing and classifying a particular kind of fiction it also assumes a legitimate space for it m the literary domain Far more importantly, it

shadow the rest of her works and make it difficult, for the few suggestions that did appear regarding the need of a middle ground, to be defined usefully or adequately.

Frenchman's Creek (1941), was the "unfortunate" novel that followed after the success of Jamaica Inn, and Rebecca. Lady Dona St. Columb, wife of Sir Harry and mother of two children, is an impulsive woman. Bored with her London life she flees to Sir Harry's neglected old Cornish mansion. She falls in love with a pirate and is drawn into a world of danger and adventure. But her liaiason is interrupted as the noose of the law tightens around them. This novel provides a romantic escape and easy to criticize through conventional critical approaches. It contains all the elements that would appeal to 'popular' readership—romance, fantasy, adventure, crime, drama and mystery. Indeed a look at conventional reviews shows that this novel was so dismissed. And yet notice what C. H. Bishop noted in a review in Commonwealth (1942), that "Frenchman's Creek may thrill idle dowagers and romantic adolescents... *And after all, that is quite a public!*" [emphasis mine] (BRD, 1942:224). The New Republican (1942) in contrast is rather caustic: "[t]he story of the titled lady and the naughty daring pirate has the consistency of skimmed milk and the kick of a poached egg" (BED, 1942:224). Another review by Clifton Fadiman in New Yorker (1942) is also sarcastic: "[t]his lushly nonsensical story of a bored English Noblewoman who fell in love with an Errol Flynn French pirate is written by a female Sabatini" (BRD. 1942:224). The allusions to Hollywood cannot be missed, for Errol Flynn was a Hollywood superstar. Nor can the reference to Rafael Sabatini was famous for his swashbuckling romances be dismissed out of hand. Clearly, many a reviewer was capable of perceiving that large appeal of du Maurier's work and unable to reconcile it with his prejudice against such appeal.

Another case of being typed occurs in du Maurier's career. It illustrates the possibility that success in one genre makes it difficult for an artist's work in other genres to be accepted. After Jamaica Inn and Rebecca were made into successful films, the novels that followed were criticized as having been written with films in mind. George Dangerfield, writing for the Saturday Review of Literature (1942) on Frenchman's

Creek gays that "[i]t is difTicult not to suppose that this book was written with an eye to the movies. It has about it an atmosphere of contrivance and concoction". He also comments that, whatever their literary worth might have been, Jamaica Inn and Rebecca were "first class thrillers", but, "Frenchman's Creek is not first class and it is only a thriller" (BRD. 1942:224). However, helpfully for our present study, there are reviews that approach this novel differently. Harold Brighouse opines that the novel is a "romantic entertainment of day-dream imagining". He also states that this novel "believes in itself, and a reader believes in it as, for the play's while and no longer, he believed in Anthony Hope's Lady Ursula" (Manchester Guardian. 1942:3). This review recognizes the capacity of the novel to offer absorbing entertainment, not merely escape to its readers. It suggests that it has the capacity to sustain the desire for escape in its reading. The escape which maybe thought temporary, is surely real enough.

The review "Pirates and Lovers" (1941) offers other possibilities of critical evaluation. For it credited Frenchman's Creek with "ease, charm, a certain finish". According to this review the "tone of voice" overshadows all other aspects of the novel. The "ring of innocent assurance", and "the extra-romantic make-believe" are aspects that have supposedly done the trick. It also states that "[a]nalysis does not help", reinforcing the idea that one need not analyze escapist fiction, and this kind of fiction calls for some kind of "willing suspension of disbelief. The review, therefore, unfortunately concludes with the dope analogy and yet redeem itself by the remark that follows: "[l]ike Rebecca, Frenchman's Creek is dope, though of an inferior sort. *But an element of dope enters into all fiction, the best included*" [emphasis mine] (TLS. 1941:457). The dope analogy that has already been discussed in relation to Rebecca is extended to fiction in general by this review, a concession that only misses by a hair's breadth the idea that indeed a special case scenario exists around such works, that other kinds of importance are possible besides those 'valued' by critical opinion. On one hand thus we have the conventional criticism which completely dismisses this novel and if we participate in it we would also dismiss it. But on the other hand, the approach makes some room for novels such as Frenchman's Creek to exist.

Hungry Hill (1943) was moderately received. Though the novel had many faults, reviewers credited du Maurier with her unfailing narrative skills. But one review that deserves to be mentioned here is by William Du Bois, according to whom the writer of this novel deserved a place in the "long gallery** of novelists who have been writing multiple-generation novels for centuries. fofew York Times. 1943:7). It was also made into a film and du Maurier herself collaborated in writing the screenplay for the film.[6] The novel The King's General published in 1946 was in fact branded as potential film-material. Margaret Williamson comments in her review,

> Somebody has blundered with regard to The King's General and it could have been the author. For this is primarily a motion picture, and only secondly a novel. Miss du Maurier seems to have sent it forth with her gaze firmly fixed upon Hollywood. It will be a gorgeous motion picture.... It is quite shamelessly designed for the screen. (Christian Science Monitor 1946:18)

We are bound to see what exactly is considered "wrong" in such cases. Mason Wade in Commonwealth (1946) has no doubt that "the formula is to the popular taste." He also states: "[i]t is a pity that Miss du Maurier's real talents for the telling of tales, the creation of character, and evocation of the colorful past of the beloved Cornwall should be devoted to essentially cheap and vulgar entertainments." He also states with certainty that this novel "positively demands technicolor" (BED, 1946:232). This review also reinforces the assumption that those novels that are written to popular taste are cheap and vulgar and does not approve of du Maurier writing to popular taste. It seems that the critics and reviewers were more obsessed with the fact that her works were adapted for films than du Maurier herself. There is no indication anywhere that we can discover that du Maurier was fascinated by the films based on her novels. In fact it was just the opposite. Du Maurier was unhappy with the way Hitchcock filmed

Jamaica Inn and Rebecca.[7] And in any case all these 'critics' seem ambivalent about her craft, for very nearly all of them say or imply that du Maurier' s ability demands compliment

One review by Edward Weeks. in Atlantic (1946). compliments du Maurier for the relevance of The King's General as being written "pensively and accompanied by that feeling of loss which must today be sharpened in any sensitive Englishwoman who surveys the present and remembers the past" (BRD, 1946:232); another review in contrast accuses du Maurier of doing just that calculatedly, describing the novel as "[e]ssentially a piece of escapism". It claims that it is as carefully thought out and as neatly calculated to suit the post war mood as anything on the market at the moment" (Saturday Review of Literature, 1946:232). The novel obviously appealed to the post-war audience because it dealt with war and its aftermath. And as we have seem in the previous chapter it was set in the Civil War of the 1600s, thus providing a distance between readers and their recent horrifying experience.

Historicity is another point of attack in du Maurier's novels Frenchman's Creek is attacked for a "vague sense of setting"; the focus of attack in The King's General is its language. Reviewers complain that the novel gives little indication or sense of its period, even though clearly du Maurier has made an effort to research the history of the Civil War ("The Fighting Grenvilles," 1946:161). One significant review by Hamilton Basso in New Yorker (1946) suggests that though du Maurier has a sharp sense of character and the ability to evoke an atmosphere of old houses there is something wrong in the novel. He states, "[t]he wrongness, I think, is the same wrongness I have found in practically every modern historical novel that has come my way—the old, fallacious theory that the first duty of an author is to be interesting" (BRD. 1946:232). Basso seems to suggest that in an attempt to become interesting authors like du Maurier, despite their skill and talent, seem to neglect other aspects of the novel. Basso is perhaps also suggesting that this might prevent the author from paying equal attention to what he/she intends to convey or provide through the novel. Indeed, it may be suggested in response that the essential difference between history and

historical fiction is that the latter is interesting.

The complaint that du Maurier is unhistorical recurs in relation to another of her novels, Mary Anne (1954). This novel was a blend of fact and fiction based on the real life story of du Maurier's great-great grandmother Mary Anne Clarke, a famous courtesan, mistress of Frederick, Duke of York, son of George III. The review of this novel in TLS (1954) states that there is something very "unhistorical" about du Maurier's writing. There is a flow of constant slang and modern language which corrupts the atmosphere of the novel and also 'nullifies' the research that must have gone into the writing of this novel. This review also mentions Thackeray's "feat" in Henry Esmond where he admitted no word or phrase that was not of the period he was representing in the novel; clearly by this criterion du Maurier's attempt fails in this historical novel (TLS. 1954:309). We might be tempted here to make the second oft-debated response that surely a historical novel can be written in modern language and still bring to its reader a flavour of that period. Authors are expected to use the language of the period represented in the novel. It may be commendable if an author uses the language of the period represented in the novel. However, it is also possible that by using contemporary language the author might not be able to create the desired effect and appeal to a different and wider audience.

The Parasites (1949), again, faced an ambiguous reception. It was a comment on the decaying British aristocracy, the shallow lives of famous people, the emptiness within that threatens them and their sexual identity. The Delaneys are a famous family associated with theatre and music. The eldest daughter Maria, an actress, wife and mother of two children, has an incestuous relationship with her half-brother Niall, who is himself a well-known composer. Reviewers did not give this novel a better welcome than I'll Never be Young Again. The Progress of Julius. Jane Voiles, who reviewed it for the San Francisco Chronicle (1950), positively believes that du Maurier's "admirers will be happy to see her abandon social tragi-comedy and go back to narrating the adventures of general's daughters and lady pirates" (BRD, 1950:263) obviously referring to her bestselling novels Frenchman's Creek and The King's General. The reviewer

seems to suggest that du Maurier should confine herself to writing popular novels. She also seems to take it upon herself to express the same opinion for the readers too by hinting that du Maurier's readers might feel relieved if she confines herself to writing certain kinds of novels alone.

Reviewing this novel for Commonwealth (1950) C. H. Weiss complains that "[f]or an author with Miss du Manner's flair for creating a mood and telling a tale, it is about the dullest concoction of neurosis and sex this side of Hollywood" (BED, 1950:263). Elizabeth Jenkins opines that "[t]he late Sir Gerald du Maurier would appear in a worthless part, and the audience dared not blink so long as he was on the stage. Miss du Maurier uses equally poor material and establishes the same instantaneous, gripping contact with her audience" (Manchester Guardian, 1949:4). The reviewer does not have much of an opinion of the novel itself, but believes that du Maurier has enough talent to grip her audience though she uses poor material for her novel.

Du Maurier continued to be recognized as a master- storyteller through out her career and this was once more affirmed in the reviews of Mv Cousin Rachel (1951). The review in TLS is worth notice:

> Miss du Maurier's continued success leaves one gasping with admiration. *My Cousin Rachel—spiritual cousin to Rebecca-is pure formula: ingredients one femme fatale, one sinister Italian, two impressionable males a mysterious death, a pinch of period flavour and Cornwall* [emphasis mine]. The plot is wholly artless.... However, most readers will be unable to resist the temptation to read to the end and judge for themselves. (1951:561)

This review outlines the formula of the novel itself. Though a formulaic novel

may suffer from predictability, according to this review with a du Maurier novel it is not so. Though this novel obviously uses formulae like her other novels, readers cannot resist reading it, and this ability to compel readers to read her probably explains the continued success and popularity of her novels also. In a review in New York Times (1952), John Barkham rather simple-mindedly posits that du Maurier is "a storyteller whose sole aim is to bewitch and beguile" (BED, 1952:269). Another review by an anonymous reviewer in Kirkus (1951) also states that du Maurier is "a gifted craftsman and spinner of yarns" and "excels herself in this aspect of writing (BRD. 1952:268). We notice that very few reviewers seem even willing to attempt evaluation of these novels in the basis of the difficult and relevant subject matter of many, which is new, contemporary and provocative.

Never tired of dragging films into the reviews of her novels, reviewers discuss this adaptation at times in doubtful ways. John Raymond says a few unsavoury things about My Cousin Rachel in his review in New Statesman and Nation (1951): "slick, effective, utterly mechanical, the book is a triumphant and uncanny example of the way in which a piece of writing can be emasculated by unconsciously 'having it arranged' for another medium. Close-ups, fade-ins, sequences by candlelight or long shots from the terrace—it has all been taken care of (1952:269). What probably irked the reviewers was that du Maurier did nothing to defend her position as a popular author. Nor did she react in print, to the producers, and directors or critics, who looked at every forthcoming work of hers as potential film-material or objected to its adaptability.

L. A. G. Strong, who reviewed this novel for Spectator (1951), comments with sarcasm that "Miss du Maurier has reached that happy state when it can no longer matter to her what any reviewer says... Miss du Maurier deserves her enormous public. Any professional writer will salute the skill that sets Rachel moving--and sigh to see so many marks of the writer's indifference to her readers" (BRD. 1952:269). However, there is scarcely any evidence that readers agreed with the view of Strong as self-appointed representative.

The Scapegoat (1957) was another bestseller made into a film. This novel was complimented for its flawless technique by Anthony Boucher in his review in New York Times (1957). He also prophesied that the novel "is sure to be a 'mystery novel plus'. But it is its qualities as a mystery that should cause the season's most irresistible turning of pages" (BED, 1957:269). That du Maurier bewitches her readers by a smooth and compelling narrative is suggested or acknowledged by review after review. Vernon Johnson in his review hints that it is difficult to remain detached from the novel because du Maurier shows such skill and expertise in characterization and plot construction (Manchester Guardian. 1957:4). Other reviews prophesy that the novel might become a bestseller--for instance, one review opines that du Maurier is at her peak performance in this novel (Kirkus, 1956); and another suggests that the novel was sure to become popular (Saturday Review 1957). William Hogan in San Francisco Chronicle (1957) states that The Scapegoat is "[a] full-length, highly complex novel that Miss du Maurier prevents from becoming utter nonsense through sheer craftsmanship" (p. 23). We have already observed that the novel could have turned into a trifle also. E. F. Walbridge in Library Journal (1957), observes that the tone of the novel is "heavily moralistic". The reviewer observes that the tone and an "indecisive ending, may interfere with some readers enjoyment" (BRD. 1957:269). We have already seen that the abrupt and indecisive endings are constant features in du Maurier's novels. Readers who look for a definite happy or tragic ending may be disappointed. But whether such endings in fact detracted from the attraction of her novels to be strongly answered in the negative.

The Glass Blowers (1963) and The Flight of the Falcon (1965) were neither dismissed out of hand nor received with extraordinary enthusiasm. Reviewing The Glass Blowers. TLS with some justice opined that there are "many people with a taste for good solid historical fiction in which realistic lives are presented against a realistic background, and it is to these, rather than to devotees of cloak-and-dagger, that The Glass Blowers will appeal" (1963:269). After the accusation that du Maurier's historical novels are unhistorical, this was the only novel that seems to have been regarded as

commendably realistic. Ironically however, this novel did not figure in the list of du Maurier's bestsellers. The House on the Strand (1969), as we have already suggested in the previous chapter, was a successful combination of genres--science fiction, historical romance and gothic romance. The Christian Science Monitor (1969) review by E. D. C. said: "I couldn't put it down. What higher praise can a reviewer give?.... Neither straight science fiction nor historical fiction would have done so well.... the combination is greater than the parts, and she tells a good story" (1969:11).

In a letter to her friend Oriel Malet Daphne du Maurier wrote that when she sent this novel to the magazines for publication, it was turned down: "no mags seem to want it, which is certainly a blow. They all say they found the story compulsive reading, but not really right for their "*women readers*"(du Maurier's emphasis) (1969:225). Though the novel became a bestseller, the reaction of the magazines seems to indicate that du Maurier's romances only were thought fit reading for women. The reaction and attitude of the magazines also strangely indicate and even endorse and reinforce the idea that adventure and science fiction novels are not meant for women. Since du Maurier was considered a writer of romances, and her readers were assumed to be women, her experiment with a different genre which was believed to address men or what was thought as potential reading only for men was not encouraged by the magazines. When her novel The Flight of the Falcon (1965) was serialized by the famous magazine Good Housekeeping, with its middle class women, it had to be edited and parts of it rewritten. The Flight of the Falcon was probably considered not exactly "women's material" and therefore the magazine insisted on changes. These two instances of interference from publishers show that it is not just reviews that influence public opinion, but also magazines and their ideologies even when their operations may be, as in this case, hidden from the public. However, none of these reviews has been able to adversely affect the reception and sales of du Maurier's works. Her novels, whether first serialized or not, have continued to sell in millions.

Du Maurier's last novel, Rule Britannia (1972) was, in contrast, a disastrous failure. Critics as well as many readers have never understood why she wrote that

novel. Union with America was seen* in this novel as the only sensible alternative to Britain's bankruptcy. Marines from America land in Poldrea Bay, Cornwall to consolidate USUK. Mad, world-famous actress (now seventy nine-year-old), rules a house of six adopted boys and a granddaughter. With her acid tongue, Mad urges her neighbours to play tricks on the troops. Egged on by a mysterious beachcomber Taffy, Mad, her boys and the locals finally oust the U.S. marines from the bay. A review of this novel in Economist (1972) was more than sarcastic. It said, "Miss du Maurier still writes like a major novelist even while thinking like a Little Noddy. But her theme is the decay of Britain's traditional values, and perhaps the fact that Gollancz presumes it profitable to publish this particular rubbish unconsciously proves her point" (BED, 1973:331). This review suggests that (for whatever reasons) a major novelist like du Maurier should not have written a work like this. And perhaps here is a case of a writer worthy of being placed in the middle ground as we have suggested, may write a novel or two the slide in the opposite direction towards doubtful to junk quality.

So far we have reviewed the available criticism and the reception of du Maurier's novels. We shall now discuss the reception of her other writings--short stories, non-fiction and plays. This will help us assess the general reception of her works. Du Maurier's short stories met with enthusiastic receptions. The Apple Tree (American title Kiss Me Again StrangerV a collection of short stories, was published in 1953. The element of the macabre is much stronger in these stories than in the novels. Reviewing this for New York Herald Tribune Sylvia Bakerman wrote that "the volume offers absorbing rather than oppressive reading because chiefly one's intellect is engaged: the emotional content remains subordinate" (BRD. 1953:275). For the first time there is a mention of her works being intellectually rather than emotionally engaging.

Du Maurier also wrote two plays, September Tide (1949) and The Years Between (1955). These received lukewarm receptions, although it is hardly common for drama to be received enthusiastically. They were neither dismissed nor praised and made little difference to her image as a novelist. Du Maurier had published non-fiction

as well, beginning with a biography of her father, Gerald: A Portrait (1934), which was reasonably successful. This was later followed by a series of biographies and non-fiction--The Du Mauriers in 1937, The Infernal World of Branwell Bronte in 1961, The Golden Lads in 1976 and The Winding Stair: Francis Bacon. His Rise and Fall in 1977.

Though these biographies were received moderately cordially reviewers have considered du Maurier primarily as a novelist. Reviewing The Infernal World of Branwell Bronte for Saturday Review (1961) Phyllis Bentley says that "Miss du Maurier both gains and loses as a biographer by her qualities as a novelist" (BRD, 1961:378). This was a backhanded compliment to du Maurier as a novelist. Other reviewers wondered at her choice of subjects for her non-fiction and people for biographies. There must have been some skepticism regarding these works but has not been expressed in stronger terms clearly. Instead, her skills as a novelist have been highlighted by the reviews of these works.

Du Maurier has been reviewed by an entire spectrum of reviewers—authors, professional reviewers, critics and anonymous reviewers. This also proves that her works were never ignored by at least a section of the literary establishment. How far these reviews influenced readers, we cannot say, but at least these reviews certainly have not succeeded in dissuading readers from reading her works. For nearly all of them seem to have found fault with du Maurier for the wrong reasons, just as they have consistently suffered from their own bracketing of her as 'merely popular' for the wrong reasons as well. The reviews are very clear about the fact that du Maurier is a popular author, and primarily a novelist who writes to popular taste. From her first novel onwards her leanings towards romantic fiction have been pointed out. The reviews applaud her skills as a storyteller and "spinner of yarns" becomes a title given to her. They clearly indicate that she uses formulae and because she uses commoner fantasy and daydream material for her novels, she has an enormous reading public, which misses the mark to a significant extent as we have seen in the previous chapter. Some reviews indicate that she restrict herself to writing popular novels alone. Yet, the reviewers also recognize her

potential as a serious writer. One of them L. A. G. Strong (review of I'll Never Be Young Again, 1932) hopes that she will develop her skills as a serious writer. But the overall reception of her serious works has been lukewarm. She was, all the same, compared with established authors tike Stevenson, Masefiled and Charlotte Bronte who also conducted ironically a good deal of experimentation within established forms. The only popular authors she is compared with are Marie Corelli, Hall Caine and Rafael Sabatini. These comparisons are restricted to either her characterization, her atmosphere, or her plot. We must note that she is not compared with any of her other contemporaries.

The reviews constantly accuse her of writing her novels with an eye to the movies. But her novels no more resemble a film script than do the novels of Charles Dickens. And, besides, what if she did write with the movies in mind? It neither automatically reduces the quality of her prose, nor does it make her novels any less readable, nor has it prevented them from appealing to phenomenal numbers of readers. Some reviews address our central issue directly. They suggest that a critical reading of du Maurier's novels would be tiresome. Popular novels of du Maurier's kind require unconventional analysis. They must be approached differently. These reviews recognize that her novels can offer readers escape and entertainment; but most of them also end up paying at least a left-handed compliment to du Maurier's power as novelist. By using the dope analogy, they intend to dismissively classify her as merely popular, but by noticing her skills and grumbling about her serious subjects they clearly indicate the need to think of her as a ‘ serious' writer.

We also have to keep in mind the functions and limitations of these reviews, for reviews could not have analyzed in detail any of her works. The function of reviews is to introduce a newly published book to a set of readers. Given their limitations, these reviews have contributed in locating du Maurier in the literary discourse--in an ambiguous, amphibian, or ‘middle ground’ as we have proposed space--where she has the potential for both serious and popular kinds of writing, but strictly belonged to neither. The situation is summed up by their seesawing between "good but not good enough" and “a class by herself.

Du Maurier died in 1989. She had a long literary career from 1931 to 1987. In her time she was generally considered a successful popular author. This opinion has not changed much over the years. Yet, in her time her works lent themselves to different literary approaches [Alison Light (1984), Jane S. Bakerman (198S) and Roger Bromley (1986)]. The obituaries published immediately after her death reveal two different opinions—that affirms the commonly held attitude that du Maurier is only a popular author, and, that she defied the black-and-white distinctions between literature and popular fiction.

The Times obituary said that "within her limits" (obviously as a popular author) du Maurier was quite successful. The obituary also said that she was a skilful storyteller and also had a flair for creating an atmosphere and maintaining suspense. It also said that she was "never afraid either of purple passage or the melodramatic situation." It also says that though in retrospect, her novels lack conviction, they actually commanded the respect and attention of readers during the course of reading. It says that what was fundamental to her qualities as a novelist was the fact that "she trafficked in dreams, dreams of a kind that seem to be inherent in the unconscious minds of many women, indeed of many men" (CLCYB, 1990:285-286). Sarah Booth Conroy in The Washington Post (1989) says that du Maurier "led enchanted readers into a dream world, endowing them with fantastic abilities to become spectres/spectators in strange lives, and for the space of her tales, to dwell in wonderfully wayward places" (CLCYB. 1990:287).

Both the above obituaries draw our attention to the fact that du Maurier used those elements that were popular with common readers, which was the reason for the universal appeal of her works. Whatever her literary worth might have been her novels were successful in capturing readers' attention during the course of reading itself. One obituary, however, considers du Maurier as an author who defied the boundaries between serious literature and popular fiction. In her obituary in The Sunday Times (London, 1989) titled "Queen of Menacing Romance" Margaret Forster wrote: "[w]ho

could blame Daphne du Maurier for not wanting her novels to be called romantic when that once grand term has become so debased?" This also supports our arguement in the earlier chapters that the entire category of romance has become 'debased* or uselessly, indiscriminately extended in the twentieth-century. Margaret Forster also observed that when the Betty Trask Prize was inaugurated for "the best novel of a romantic or traditional nature", the general consensus of opinion revealed only two role models— Jane Evre. and Rebecca, (1989: 286).

Margaret Forster also opines that du Maurier is not to be despised just because she repeatedly became a bestseller: "[i]f all our bestsellers were of her excellence then there would be no need to deplore their existence, and the silly snobbery existing between "pulp" fiction and literary fiction would vanish" (ibid., p. 287). Bestsellers like du Maurier's that offer quality reading need not be despised for they might very well be instrumental in bridging the gaping gulf between literary and pulp fiction. Forster indeed, puts her finger on one way of identifying the problem we have attempted to address:

> No other popular novel of our century has ever had quite the emotional impact of Rebecca and *no other popular novelist has so triumphantly defied classification as Daphne du Maurier. She satisfied all the questionable criteria of popular fiction and yet satisfied too the exacting requirements of "real" literature, something very few novelists ever do* [emphasis mine]. (ibid. p 286)

This supports our main arguement in this thesis. It also helps us consider (if not accept) this as the defining characteristic of the ambiguous middle ground space between serious fiction and junk/pulp fiction. It also hints at a possible function that authors like du Maurier might perform apart from entertaining, namely forming a bridge between serious fiction and junk/pulp fiction, thereby making snobbery difficult.

The reviews and obituaries indeed must suffice as critical material in the near absence of other critical assessments of du Maurier's works. Indeed as some reviews suggest, du Mauri ex's fiction need not be approached through traditonal critical approaches. Yet if one chooses to do so, one may agree with Margaret Forster's opinion, that du Maurier's novels indeed defy the boundaries between literature and popular fiction. We have here proposed, however, a more general approach not just to du Maurier's work but also to rationalizing the indiscriminately polarized and mutually exclusive approach that established scholars and critics have high-handedly taken for well over two hundred years of fiction in English. It is suggested in the present study that political, social and literary snobbery, indicative of unjustified elitism, need not plague the literary domain, provided a middle ground is recognized.

Notes to Chapter HI

[1] Popularity has its banes. The phenomenal popularity of Rebecca was followed by an accusation of plagiarism. In her biography of du Manner, Margaret Forster records that "there was no mention of alleged plagiarism until the Hitchcock film of 1940 had been such a success. The literary executors of one Edwina L. Macdonald sued Daphne du Maurier, her publishers in the USA, Doubleday Doran & Co., Selznick International Pictures Inc., and David O. Selznick United Artists, on the grounds that Rebecca allegedly plagiarized a story firs published in Oct 1924 in 'Heall's International Magazine* under the title I Planned to Murder My Husband and which then appeared as a novel called Blind Windows published in 1927" (Forster, 1993: 218-219). However, the case was dropped in 1948 with costs to the defendants.

[2] Margaret Forster records that du Maurier received proofs of romantic novels with "pleas for endorsemenr well after thirty years of writing Rebecca. Forster also records that du Maurier continually received letters from someone or the other that he/she was writing a sequel to Rebecca (Forster, 1993:391). Du Maurier herself wrote an epilogue to one of the sequels, Rebecca's Story (1976), written by Lady Antonia Fraser for Harpers and Queen. But later du Maurier became wary of such sequels.

[3] The Times Literary Supplement [hereafter cited as TLS in the text, and in parenthesis when preceding a page reference.]

[4] The Book Review Digest. [hereafter cited as BRD in parenthesis when preceding a page reference.] Gen. Eds. Marion A. Knight, Mertie James, Dorothy Brown. 16 vols. New York: The H W Wilson Company, 1931-1973.

[5] Contemporary Literary Criticism Year fiook. [hereafter cited as CLCYB in parenthesis when preceding a page reference.] Contemporary Literary Criticism Year Book. Ed. Roger Matuz. Vol.59. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Inc., 1990.

[6] Du Maurier herself collaborated with Terence Young and Francis Crowdry in writing the script of the film in 1947.

[7] The film "Rebecca" made by Hitchcock starred the famous Laurence Olivier as Maxim, Joan Faontaine as Mrs. De Winter, Judith Anderson as Mrs. Danvers and George Sanders as Jack Favell. The film was produced by David O. Selznick, producer of "Gone With the Wind". In one of his letters Selznick says, " I think we have two major things to sell...the great popularity of the book and the fact that the picture is the very next production of the maker of "Gone with the Wind" (Memo from David O. Selznick. David O. Selznick. Behlmer, Rudy. Ed., New York: The Viking Press, 1972. P.286). Selznick was also very apprehensive regarding du Manner's reception of the film. Her asked his secretary to write to her to forewarn her, "I don't want her to think that we are imbiciles when she sees this change—which is that Maxim actually did not kill Rebecca" (p.287, ibid.,). He also says that the censor would have rejected the story where a murderer goes free. "Rebecca" won the Critic's award for the best picture of the year, the Academy Award, and the Variety Poll of the biggest box-office picture of the year. Selznick also records that they had made so much profit from "Gone with the Wind" and "Rebecca** that the only way to retain profit was to liquidate Selznick International (ibid.,). The advertising stunt relying on the popularity of the book by by Selznick seems to have done a lot of good for the film. This also shows how media exploits the popularity of fiction. There are several other instaces where the popularity of the novels have been hyped in their film adaptations.

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Chapter IV

From Middle Mist to Middle Ground

-Two billion copies of her books in print."
Blurb of The Man in the Brown Suit- Agatha Christie.

We began our discussion of popular fiction by considering its treatment by 'established' critics and scholars. In some ways, such great numbers operate in the field of popular fiction that it need pay no heed at all to their opinion. Yet writers themselves have often desired to be taken more seriously and every now and then a work of popular fiction comes along which also forces us to re-consider the apparently unbridgeable gulf between ‘ serious* and 'popular' fiction. On the other hand it will hardly do to dismiss this desire of the popular domain to see this gulf disappear; on the other hand the standard attitude of established critics and scholars does seem to matter and cannot be simply ignored. Efforts to suggest that absolutely any work of fiction is as good as the another are also bound to fail. The most sold author of Shakespeare's age was in fact the popular ballad writer Thomas Deloney, not Shakespeare; equally undeniable is the fact that most sold authors, like Agatha Christie for instance, are not exactly Shakespeare despite their own significant contribution to sensitive means of human entertainment. A kind of deadlock seems to have occurred in this debate. There seemed, however, one meaningful way to loosen it, to counter the tendencies that create the gulf--to show, without decrying the ‘greatness’ of Shakespeare or Dickens, and without claiming that James Hadley Chase is as good a writer as them, a relationship does exist among all works of literature regardless of the 'success' of any particular work. Not an

affinity, not merely a similarity, but in fact a family relationship. The present study has been an attempt to perform this task.

Without denying the fact of value judgement, which is found on both sides of the gulf, therefore, it seems possible to reveal the family relationship. Consider an author, the present study has proposed, whose work resembles 'serious' writing in too many ways for us to ignore the similarity; and, besides, an author, who has an equally considerable claim on the opposite side, who is undeniably popular. Where do we 'place' such an author? It seems clear, having posed our situation and central question in this manner, that exclusive distinctions can be frontally countered or challenged by consideration of such an author. Daphne du Maurier was an obvious case in point. There are many who lie between the 'serious' and the despised popular extremes—for instance, Dorothy Sayers, H. E. Bates, Mary Renault, John Wyndham, to cite only a few names that represent a considerable variety of genre, readership, craftsmanship. Consideration of such an author, we proposed will close the gulf so that we are able to perceive the continuity--for they all practice the same craft of telling stories, the same formal devices, the same medium; they all concern the same human society and issues and predicaments that plague individual members of it, as do 'serious' writers and works. Moreover, these are authors whom establishment criticism has not been able to dismiss out of hand even as popular approval has strongly endorsed the value of their work. They, like our case in point du Maurier, will amply reveal that not a distinction of kind but one of degree exists here, not an unbridgeable gulf but rather arguably different degrees of 'success' in the domains—the variable success of craft and provocative power of the one hand and appeal to a narrow or wide audience on the other. We proposed, in other words, a middle ground that would make it possible for the gulf to be denied, not merely closed.

Indeed, it will amuse some people to know this perhaps, but a thoroughly serious consideration of our problem is available in the work of T. S. Eliot. Not only did he enjoy popular literature and theatre, as his many reviews reveal, but he internalized a good deal of such writing (he could quote whole passages form Conan Doyle's Sherlock

Holmes later, for instance). Even more to the point is his reconsideration of the 'problem' of Hamlet. In 1919, reviewing J. M Robertson's book on objectivity in literature and criticism, Eliot had (reluctantly) come to the conclusion that despite its success Hamlet was in fact "an artistic failure*[1 1]. Many have criticized Eliot for such a conclusion without realizing that for Eliot the question was phenomenally serious. He obviously continued to ponder it for decades. For when he had the opportunity next, being invited to lecture on Shakespeare at Edinburgh University in 1937, he began his consideration of Shakespeare's 'last plays' by returning to the question of the success or failure of Hamlet. While we cannot go into detail regarding this reconsideration, it will be instructive to note Eliot's conclusion, which is so serious and open-minded as to surprise those who dismiss him as a stuffy establishment critic (he was in fact anything but that in his day); it will also gladden the hearts of those who have despaired of ever managing to give popular literature its due. That conclusion is as follows--the success of a work may certainly be measured by what is called 'artistic' achievement; yet the evaluation of a work cannot be valid until one has also taken into account the measure of 'popular' success; that indeed Hamlet cannot be a failure because it rates extraordinarily high on both scales, of artistic as well as popular success; and therefore the method to judge a work of literature must really be to arrive at the point at which, on a graph, these two values happen to cross each other, so that the higher the point the greater the work in question, because it satisfies both criteria highly.[2]

What makes a work of art popular? This is clearly a difficult question to answer and involves a complication of many factors. Novelty, adventure, ingenuity in constructing a story, characters whose ideas and motivations interest you, all go into it. Neither the power to provoke thought or to arouse feelings, nor merely the power to provide escape form harsh reality yield sufficient criteria of judgement. Authors like James Joyce or Marcel Proust will never be read by many, nor can we say that the power, once they are read, of their work is of the same kind as that of Erie Stanley Gardner or Daphne du Maurier. Indeed, so very many factors enter the picture of 'success' that one must never approach ft cavalierly. The very fact that certain art forms are called "popular" suggests that they "appeal" to an audience of significant proportion.

The map of popularity, on the other hand, changes all the time. Authors and books usually disappear from memory quicker than trends or kinds of fiction. Yet the authors and books that endure also explain the vitality of the domain of popular arts and culture. How does one explain the popularity of Shakespeare's Hamlet. written centuries ago? How does one explain the instant success followed by a lifetime's oblivion of many a junk/pulp novel? How does one explain the enduring popularity and timeless appeal of several other works written over a period of time. If we contemplate a graph, however, for this phenomenon it will not be restricted to only to literature, but extend to all popular culture phenomenon form painting, crafts, music to even fashion. Yet it is not really a puzzling and difficult phenomenon to explain in itself. Attempts have been made to consider popular phenomena as mirror images of the tastes and attitudes of a particular society. The neglect of and contempt for popular phenomena by high culture remains the most difficult things to explain. Of late the paradigms and suggestions of recent theory and criticism have begun to change the nature of the problem from a puzzling to genuinely intriguing cultural phenomenon.

Popular fictions have never been integrated into mainstream literary discourse. The critical space created for it of late risks running parallel to mainstream literary discourse. For its recently begun study has been generally a separate discourse, "popular culture studies" or "popular fiction studies", and so on have tended to remain on the fringes of respectability. It has never been integrated within the mainstream literary study of a particular period. For instance, we do not find popular literature of any period discussed in most books of literary history, although in many significant ways popular phenomena record or represent history. Although popular culture studies have been promoting the study of popular phenomena, we find that popular fiction still continues to exist as a separate parallel space to "serious", "canonical" or "established" literature study. By acknowledging the presence of a middle ground between serious and junk/pulp fiction and in trying to create n honestly receptive critical attitude toward it we hope to pose an important question—will it counter this paradox of parallel discourse? If we want to prevent this category of fiction becoming just another, remaining

unintegrated into the mainstream discourse, we will have hardly made a difference to the debate on the subject.

We have already suggested that, perhaps perversely, but far more probably echoing a natural historical process, a canon exists even within popular fiction. There is inevitability and indispensability behind the existence of these categories, for the domain has not been able to function without its own established texts. Recent study, too, has often tended to merely elevate certain authors and books into such a canon—only, the jargon has altered. We acknowledge that the categories such as "classic" and junk/pulp fiction do exist, and that even popular readership may not be loath to admit them. To counter treatment of popular writing as though all of it were junk, however, we need to establish the idea that it does not constitute a different species altogether from works that become classic. We need to show that they are both representatives of the same urge, the same craft, and at times the same art. The purpose of introducing the middle ground has been to show that a continuity indeed exists between these two extremes.

Have we been able to define the middle ground adequately for our purpose? What do we want this category to be considered as? The aim of this category or creation of a specific space has not been to establish a distinct category. For it alters the other two extremes? In trying to locate, identify, the defining characteristics of the kind of fiction that occupies the middle ground, we need to keep in mind that we must neither needlessly eulogize the classics nor should we devalue junk/pulp fiction—in either case we must avoid snobbery and prejudice. We must keep in mind that our starting point for positing the middle ground has been one end of the popular fiction canon 'good popular fiction which involves serious consideration of genres and readers as essentially relate to what is generally called 'literature*. Readership and genres alone will not invariably control discussion. The attitude and nature of criticism itself ought to change, become inclusive in principle, open minded and not exclusive or dismissive.

Our aim in proposing the middle ground was to locate the entire spectrum in the literary discourse. The space has always been too large to be neglected by the literary establishment. In our opening chapter, we suggested that the various connotations of the term middlebrow will not suffice. The term has long been discarded, and in any case it complicates the questions quite erroneously by appearing to summon up the 'class' debate. The kind of fiction in question was shoved into the popular fiction bracket and did not even have a tag which to identify itself with. The term 'good popular fiction' is ambiguous and lacks force. Therefore, we chose the term middle ground in order to represent the kind of fictions in question and its signal utility in allowing us to consider one way to resolve the critical deadlock. We also suggested some major defining characteristic of the middle ground. One—it is a combination of genre and formula that offers quality reading meaningfully comparable to 'serious' fiction. Two—it not only defies the boundaries between serious and popular fiction by combining the characteristics of both the categories but will allow us to fill in the divide rationally, without prejudice on either side.

A writer like du Maurier with a prolific and obviously successful career represents the strength of our argument. In our examination of some of her popular novels and reviews of her works we prepared an instance of the kind of works that occupy the middle ground. A spectrum of reviewers—literary critics, historians, short-story writers, novelists, reviewers and anonymous reviewers--have reviewed her works. This means that she was not dismissed altogether, and indeed she could not be dismissed. Yet far too often she was considered merely a popular author. We also discussed in detail many of the reviews of her novels as reflection of critical opinion that revealed du Maurier's position in an ambiguous space--a sort of no-man's land. Although reviews praise her skills, they still criticize her attempt at serious writing. Her novels were in fact very apt examples of the middle ground—they could be read as popular novels with few rivals or as serious novels which dealt with important and relevant themes. Our own analysis considered her novels at two levels—that they defy neat generic boundaries; two—far more significantly, that level at which they defy attempts at posing boundaries between serious and popular fiction. For it is beyond

controversy that her novels reflect their times both in terms of reading patterns and tastes bans serious contemporary subjects. Therefore, without making claims to the effect that du Maurier's novels are great literature, we hope to have established the impossibility if their cavalier discussed as 'merely' popular.

For too long time her works were considered only as popular novels. This has begun to change from 1980s. There have been some interesting readings and approaches to her novels, especially Rebecca. With her novels as 'classic' examples of 'popular' phenomenon, each of these readings and approaches also focus on larger debates within the domain of popular fiction, and therefore, it is important that we briefly discuss them here. Most of them have figured briefly in the earlier chapters. But in our study we have attempted to focus attention on their ability to foreground the importance of middle ground fictions such as du Maurier's.

It might seem that du Maurier's reputation rests chiefly only on Rebecca for, most readings focus mainly on Rebecca. We have already seen that the novel has been in the public eye for several decades through adaptations for theatre, television, cinema, and opera. Sequels have been written to it. It was translated into twenty languages in as many years. It has also seen various editions and has almost never been out of print. We have also seen that it has been advertised as a romance on par with Jane Eyre and Gone With the Wind (see Ch. II). Jane Eyre is now a canonized text and Gone With the Wind still remains one of the all-time popular novels. Rebecca seems to fit the space that the first occupied for long and the second still does. It is indeed very clear that this middle position the establishment chooses to ignore. This attitude reflects the fact that romance as a popular genre is, surprisingly gendered by our own century almost exclusively as feminine. In fact, the whole career of du Maurier severely challenges such stock notions as well. Moreover, this is one criteria by which literary criticism judges the value of writers. Yet again the establishment chooses to ignore the evidence of influence.

In her essay "Returning to Manderley—Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class" (1984)[3] Alison Light considers Rebecca as a model of romance but uses it to address a larger debate on the reading of romances and in particular the question—what does a reading of the romance do for its reader? Romance as a genre, is condemned by the critics of the right as well as the left. Marxists consider it a form of oppressive ideology for they believe that like capitalism, romance keeps women in a subordinate place, and in any case many romances seem to endorse capitalism by telling a rags-to-riches story. She supports psychoanalysis, for it takes the question of pleasure seriously thus, opening up various discussions on popular culture that are not subject to dictatorial or prescriptive and moral traps. She considers Rebecca as a classic model of romance fiction because it illustrates and investigates social, psychological and fictive conditions that make a successful bourgeois romance. She goes a step further to examine Rebecca as a novel of two genres--crime and romance--both genres dominated by women writers themselves in this century. She enters a larger debate regarding reading of romances by positing that though Rebecca the character was condemned as a deviant woman, through her as early as in the 1930s the text succeeded in foregrounding the problem of desiring an autonomous sexuality. She argues that although women are represented in many romances as sexual objects, there might be an opportunity for reader-power to reveal itself in them because it "gives women uncomplicated access to a subjectivity which is unified and coherent *and* [Light's emphasis] still operat[es] in the field of pleasure" (p. 341). Despite all its formulae, romance may be the only discourse directly which addresses the question of women's sexuality. She also posits that by foregrounding and examining heterosexuality romance really creates an embarrassment to the literary establishment because the writers of such fictions are always asking to be considered seriously, as do their subjects. This, she suggests, and as we have also shown in our analysis of du Maurier, only highlights the heterosexism problems covered up by routine acceptance of: "[f]or, leaving aside the representation of femininity, what other models are available *anywhere* [Light's emphasis] for alternative constructs of masculinity?** (p. 342).

With one novel as a case, Light argues successfully for a close and serious reading of popular texts for they have the power to illuminate problems at the heart of social institutions such as marriage and property. Romance quite justifiably, therefore occupies a broader area of popular culture debate. It is also the tradition in which du Maurier is questionably placed. Light suggests, as we have in the present study, that we adopt a less defensive attitude, because it is, no doubt, one of the few discourses open to women where they can orchestrate and articulate not only their imaginary representations but also their real predicaments, while simultaneously deriving genuine escape and pleasure. She suggests that the feminists need to develop a compassionate understanding of how these fictions work in women's lives. Thus, the focus on one text covers a broader area of popular culture debate. It is this area that we have seriously used, to posit the middle ground.

Jane S. Bakerman (1985)[4] considers du Maurier as a mystery writer. Tracing formulae embedded in Jamaica Inn, Rebecca. Frenchman's Creek. My Cousin Rachel. The Scapegoat and The Flight of the Falcon, she suggests that in her novels du Maurier chiefly experiments with the Cinderella story which is almost a myth in itself. Devices used in the myth such as the public humiliation of Cinderella's relatives as punishment, and the mask or disguise, are also used by du Maurier. She also suggests that du Maurier used variations of the *Bildungsroman*, a serious and conventional form also used by romance. Through, or even despite these formulae, du Maurier explores problems that take on the aura of cultural myth yet reflect contemporary reality. For instance, the distinction between good and evil and purging of guilt are hardly the only preoccupations of du Maurier--in reality most of these novels examine with honesty a variety of genuine identity crises of men and women of the mid-twentieth century. Bakerman points out that crime, action, suspense and melodrama are the chief ingredients of du Maurier's novels and considers her novels as 'romantic suspense novels'. Plots, characters and settings of these novels, however, also analyze the British class system and the concept of upward mobility—both as standard, conventional, formulaic material. The novels examined. She states that du Maurier's experiment with formula illustrates, for example, Cawelti's definition of formula and du Maurier's

experiments demonstrate that any formula or convention can be invented fruitfully. We have ourselves gone much further here in suggesting that formulae and forms may be equally seriously subverted, as du Maurier has done. Bakerman in fact defends du Maurier's use of formulae and states emphatically that critics tend to dismiss "commonality" with other practitioners of the craft. However, this results in a "misapprehension of the skills with which the author combines formulaic elements with experiments in established literary forms" (pp. 12-13). Du Maurier as an author, we have suggested, has also an appeal that lies in the fact that she uses cultural material that is easily accessible to the common reader, being part of his or her experience, from which serious literature seems to shy away.

While Light and Bakerman essentially approach du Maurier as a popular author and her works as popular novels, Roger Bromley's essay "The Gentry, Bourgeois Hegemony and Popular Fiction: Rebecca and Rogue Male"(1986)[5] presents a Marxist reading of Rebecca. He begins by stating that at first the novel seems "remarkable for its total lack of reference to anything that might even hint of that crisis" of bourgeois (p. 151), by which he means the economic slump of the 1930s. However, he adds, the novel is definitely a response to the crisis itself. He analyzes it using Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and 'Ceaserism'--arguing for a reading into the text that sees the absences as determining presences at the level of its deep structures. Further, his analysis focuses on negotiations of one class within it—Maxim's with Rebecca as a war between the same class--as well as negotiations between members of different classes--Maxim's with the girl as the aristocracy's negotiation with the middle class. Finally it focuses on the survival of the displaced class--the displacement of Maxim and his wife. In other words, whether we agree or not with such ideologically inclined criticism, it definitely proves that some popular works are amenable to serious study form a variety of significant standpoints. This is another justification for our proposal of a middle ground and the essential continuity within the art and craft of fiction. We must mention Alison Light's discussion of the class models working in the novel.[6] She suggests that Maxim's loss of Manderley represents an atonement of his crime. But it performs other functions as well. Since both Maxim and his wife are literally placed outside of the English class system,

unlike most romances the novel avoids any further endorsement of class positions. We need hardly wonder, therefore, at the extreme popularity of Rebecca. For it must be seen as a product of class phenomena at that time. Further, faced with wartime problems readers of this novel found its essential relevance, which is why it became a bestseller. How did this text negotiate with its readers? Read by those who were hit by unemployment and deprivation, the novel also provided escape and wish-fulfilment without turning them into mere fantasy-

It is, indeed, quite surprising the supposedly open-minded twentieth century has gendered romances exclusively for women. While on one hand we argue that the appeal of popular fiction transcends various barriers, we seem to have ended up constructing a new barrier by targeting only women readers for romances. There are other questions which arise out of our subject: how is it that the issue of gender transcends authorship with other genres, for instance, detective fiction? Romance and detective fiction were monopolized by women in the earlier part of this century. However, the readership of detective fiction was never restricted to men even before women began to dominate the genre. Agatha Christie was called the "Queen of detective fiction". The fact that she was a woman writer hardly affected her readership. Why has romance gendered its readership in the first place? Should not men read romances? Critics of the literary establishment still seem to retain the assumption of gendered audience, whereas facts question the assumption. Some critics have tried to blame women themselves for this problem. Daphne Watson's book titled Their Own Worst Enemies: Women Writers of Women's Fiction (1995)[7] clearly reveals her agenda—to consider du Maurier and other women writers as writers who write exclusively for women.

Her examples include Mary Stewart, Anita Brookner, Barbara Pym, Dorothy L. Sayers, and P D. James. Watson places du Maurier in the tradition of the Brontes and most of the essay is devoted to the comparisons between Jane Eyre and Rebecca. She also notes how du Maurier departs from the Bronte's—by not giving the readers the happy ending that Bronte does. Apart from the authors mentioned above, Watson also examines Mills and Boon novels in her book. She states that she finds even novelists

like Sally Beauman, Jackie Collins, and Shirley Conran as deluding as Mills and Boon novels. Writers discussed in Watson's work are all popular writers. Daphne du Maurier's and Mary Stewart's works follow, among others, the gothic tradition. Anita Brookner and Barbara Pym seem to follow the tradition of romances (although their works is not restricted to the love story format) and Dorothy L. Savers and P D. James concentrate on crime fiction. There is nothing in the works of any of these writers to suggest that they write for women. Such considerations only heighten the gender politics of reading of genres. Furthermore, their work, generally, presents such serious examination of contemporary society as to make us wonder at their routine classification among popular writers. Their works do sell hugely, of course. Yet they too seem to highlight or confirm the continuity between serious and popular fiction which we have proposed in the present study.

Some other new approaches that, unlike our proposal, fail to fit the central and significant facts of the case may be mentioned in passing here. In Daphne du Maurier: Writing. Identity and the Gothic Imagination (1998)[8] Horner and Zlosnick weave together in their analysis du Maurier's writing and what they call her bisexual identity.[9] This gothic, historical, geographical and cultural contextualising of her works marks a change in her authorial status. This work, however, analyzes her writing as exploring both personal and larger cultural anxieties concerning sexual and social identity. As underpinning for their analysis, they use the most recent works in gender studies and current debates about the nature of the female gothic and they raise questions regarding du Maurier's relationship to such a tradition. They also argue and demonstrate that she used popular forms to explored through gothic writing the anxieties of modernity.

Although it hardly matters to our study whether du Maurier was herself a bisexual or not, Homer and Zlosnick consider it as one of the key factors influencing her writing. In their analysis they divide her career into three phases. The first phase is marked by a search for authenticity (in her life and her works). Some major preoccupations in this phase are the discovery of the self through the family history, family relationships, a sense of the place, incest and most importantly mismatch between the authentic self (which may be androgynous or bisexual) and a surface self (which is

unmistakably feminine and heterosexual). The novels they examine are The Loving Spirit, I'll Never Be Young Again, and The Progress of Julius. The second phase is marked by anxieties regarding female authorship. Writing is considered an empowering and masculinizing process which threatens to disrupt the nature of female identity as well as the social fabric into which it exists. Jamaica Inn. Rebecca. The King's General are novels examined from this angle. The third phase deals with experimental identities in the male narrative in novels like My Cousin Rachel, The Scapegoat and The Flight of the Falcon. Fear of loss of identity or inability to arrive at one which is only fragile and precarious (with consequent threat of social dislocation), is examined as a serious threat. These critics also look at a few specific subjects such as the symbolic importance of the mother. Once again, irrespective of whether we agree with them or not, their study also suggests that du Maurier's works are also attracting serious critical attention.

In another interesting study, the essay "Extremely valuable property: the marketing of Rebecca" (1998),[10] Horner and Zlosnick also examine the marketing and publishing scene behind Rebecca They emphatically remind us that the novel has never been out of print. They focus on the range of editions and the categorizations they imply—particularly those that tag du Maurier as a ' woman writer'. They argue that the female authorship of the novel was never before so foregrounded by the earlier marketing or reception. They record how Gollancz was more than thrilled by the novel and quote a letter in which he said that the book had "every single one of the essential qualities of a best-seller" (p. 49). For Gollancz, the timing of the publication was very important because of the prospect of war and the threat of paper rationing. Gollancz panicked when du Mauri er's agent wrote that the book might be serialized before publication in one volume. Du Maurier was herself not very thrilled she had to do a promotional campaign. Horner and Zlosnick also mention sales figures of the novel in Britain and the United States, how the novel appeared on the bestseller list and how it was voted the favourite novel by the American Bookseller's Association. They also record how Gollancz kept the novel in the public eye, by producing special editions for example; and how Doubleday, her American publisher, also engineered a telephonic interview of du Maurier by Clifton Fadiman (who also reviewed du Maurier's

Frenchman's Creek later) which was broadcast on the radio. The popularity of the film also restored the book in circulation from declining sales figures. Since then the novel has never been out of print. They also suggest that the "way in which the book was perceived in terms of genre and literary status, and the manner in which it was subsequently produced and marketed, tell us much more about post-war cultural perceptions of popular fiction in general and du Maurier's novel in particular" (p. 56). They also reveal interesting information regarding its abridged, simplified and annotated versions as fit reading for schools.

By creating the middle ground between serious and junk/pulp fiction, we do not mean to arrange these fictions alongside literature 'proper' or serious literature, to dismantle the very idea of value judgement For that is both a separate subject *and* a fact of life. Similarly, that we are not claiming for the middle ground the status of great literature does mean that we are according it a space that is less important. The willingness to accommodate it within what still remains an unjustifiably divided literary discourse must come from within the establishment. The starting point for integration is creating alternate approaches. However, these should not, as they have so far, remain the "twain that shall never meet". The alternate approaches and the very possibility of the middle ground will at least mark the beginning of an entry into a single discourse.

The business of entertainment is, regardless of class, caste, age and racial distinction and barriers, a human endeavour not just a lowly popular one. The range of entertainment varies from comic interludes in street plays to Shakespeare's plays. There need not be gulfs between them. This is where the middle ground or space helps by acting as a family or kinship tree to allow us to negotiate between high culture and popular culture phenomena. The middle ground emphasizes continuity between 'art' and 'entertainment'. It can remove blinkers from the eyes of the establishment, dismantle fences and bridge the gulf in our literary discourse. This bridge itself, however, is the result of overlap as well as movement between the two extremes so that, as Margaret Forster suggests, it leaves no room for snobbery.

By suggesting a possible list of works that qualify for this middle category, we must also be careful that the other extreme--especially the junk fiction—is not devalued. We should not commit the same mistakes of high culture--overlooking the skills that go into the making of a popular text. Nor must we sound apologetic about the space we are creating for the middle ground. If the category of middle ground achieves a degree of acceptance, the authors and texts that populate it will extend in one direction towards the 'serious' and in the other towards the popular without unhealthy disjunction. It does seem a superior alternative because it accommodates far more than it discards or dismantles. If this proposal finds favour with the critics, du Maurier will have acquired recognition she richly deserves. Far, far more crucially, however, it will have made it possible to conduct literary criticism and analysis in a domain rescued from divisiveness.

Notes and References to Chapter IV

1 T. S. Eliot, "The Problem of Hamlet", generally republished and known as "Hamlet" 1919. T. S. Eliot. "Hamlet." *n* 919) Selected Essavs. (1932). London: Faber and Faber, 1951.

2 For a full treatment of Eliot's view and the Shakespeare lectures at Edinburgh, see Sudhakar Marathe, T. S. Eliot's View and the Shakespeare Criticism, Delhi: BR, 1989.

3 Alison Light "Returning to Manderley—Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class." 1984. Ed. Terry Lovell. British Feminist Thought: A Reader. Oxford: Basil Biackwell, 1990.

4, Jane. S Bakerman. " Daphne du Maurier." Ed Jane S. Bakerman. And There Were Nine... More Women of Mystery. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. 1985.

5 Roger Bromley. "The Gentry, Bourgeois Hegemony and Popular Fiction: Rebecca and Rogue Male." Eds. Peter Humm, Paul Stigant and Peter Widdowson. Popular Fictions: Essavs in Literature and History. London and New York: Methuen. 1986.

6 Ibid.3.

7, Daphne Watson. "Reader, I Married Him: The Novels of Daphne du Maurier and Mary Stewart." Their Own Worst Enemies: Women Writers of Women's Fiction London, Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press, 1995.

8 Avril Horner, Sue Zlosnick. Daphne du Maurier: Writing. Identify and the GothicImagination. London: Macmillan, 1998.

9 There has been a lot of speculation on whether du Maurier was a bisexual. The biography of du Maurier written by Martyn Shallcross calims that du Maurier had bisexual relationships with Fernande Yvon, director of her school in Paris and later with actress Gertrude Lawrence. Forster's biography on du Maurier also dwells on du Maurier's relationships with these women and also mentions du Maurier's attraction to Ellen Doubleday, wife of her American publisher Nelson Doubleday. However, Forster avoids any obvious mention of du Maurier being bisexual. The biography written by Shallcross is being adapted for a film starring Kate Winslet (of Titanic fame) as du Maurier.

10 Avril Homer, Sue Zlosnick. "Extremely Valuable Property: The Marketing of Rebecca." Eds. Judy Simons. Kate Fullbrook.. Writing: A Woman's Business: Women, Writing and the Marketplace. New York: Manchester UP, 1998.

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[The first date in each case is that of first publication, the second of the edition used.]

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