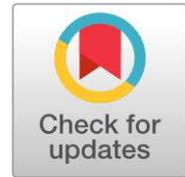


A HAUNTOLOGICAL READING OF DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S "REBECCA"

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Abstract

This essay focuses on the way the main characters in Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca* (1938) cope with the haunting influence of the past and attempts to read their struggle through the theoretical approach developed by Jacques Derrida in his *Specters of Marx* (1993). This approach, termed "hauntology" by Derrida himself, revolves around the notion of the "specter" haunting the present and emphasizes the need to find new ways of responding to it, especially because of the existing ontological failure to do so. The essay complements this reading with the earlier comparable theory of the "phantom" and "transgenerational haunting" developed by psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. A "hauntological" reading of *Rebecca* through these tools yields results that are significantly different from traditional approaches. Suggesting that the main characters in *Rebecca* are complete failures in dealing with the specter in a Derridean sense, the essay argues that the novel expects from the discerning reader a more insightful approach and a better potential to understand the specter. It is suggested further that a proper acknowledgement of the specter in *Rebecca* reaches beyond this particular novel, having subtle but significant implications concerning not only literary analysis but also social and cultural prejudices.

Keywords: Rebecca, du Maurier, haunting, specter, phantom, hauntology

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In the famous opening scene of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* Marcellus desperately asks Horatio to address the ghost that has just appeared to them: 'Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio' (I.i.42). Horatio makes an attempt – 'I charge thee, speak.' (I.i.51) – but it is to no avail. Later in the play Hamlet, who is another "scholar", is able to speak to the ghost of his father himself, but the success of this communication is highly debatable, given that Hamlet's encounter with the ghost leaves him torn through the rest of the play between belief and hesitation, action and inaction, leading eventually to his tragic end. It is these words of Marcellus – 'Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio' – that Derrida refers to early on in his *Specters of Marx* (1993) while expounding on his concept of the "specter". Derrida's major aim in this book is to look into the "spectral" status of Marxism in a post-communist world' (Clewell, 2009, p. 14). However, the notion of the specter Derrida introduces for this purpose has gone far beyond discussions of Marxism and opened new grounds of criticism especially in literary scholarship. Although quite vague and abstract, what Derrida suggests by the specter is an influence or trace of the past that cannot and should not be erased and that should actually be acknowledged as co-existing in order to enable a fuller life for the present. As Fredric Jameson (2008, p. 39) explains,

Spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist or that the past ... is still very much alive and at work, within the living present: all it says, if it can be thought to speak, is that the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be; that we would do well not to count on its density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstances betray us.

While explaining his notion of the specter, Derrida quotes from Marcellus' words specifically to indicate the erroneous nature of the assumption involved here. Marcellus thinks Horatio will speak to the ghost in the best way since he is a scholar. Derrida suggests just the opposite, however. For Horatio it will be even more difficult to speak to the ghost primarily because he is a scholar educated in positivist assumptions concerning ontological categories. In Derrida's words,

What seems almost impossible is to speak always *of the* specter, to speak *to the* specter, to speak with it, therefore especially *to make or to let* a spirit *speak*. And the thing seems even more difficult for a reader, an expert, a professor, an interpreter, in short, for what Marcellus calls a "scholar". ... As theoreticians or witnesses, spectators, observers, and intellectuals, scholars believe that looking is sufficient. Therefore, they

are not always in the most competent position to do what is necessary: speak to the specter. (Derrida, 2006, p. 11, emphases in the original)

It is for this reason that Derrida coins the term "hauntology" as an alternative to "ontology", which, to him, fails to respond to the notion of spectrality and, to expand this concept a little further, fails to respond to all kinds of liminality which characterize Derrida's thought in general. As Davis (2005, p. 373) explains, in this understanding 'Hauntology supplants its near-homonym ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive'. In fact, through introducing this concept, Derrida also imagines a time when another kind of "scholar" will emerge, who will be able to move beyond strict ontological categories and have a much wider perception and understanding:

... Marcellus was perhaps anticipating the coming, one day, one night, several centuries later, of another "scholar." The latter would be capable, beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility. Better (or worse) he would know how to address himself to spirits. (Derrida, 2006, p. 13)

And when Derrida says this, he obviously has himself and like-minded intellectuals in mind as the new "scholar" who will perhaps effect a change in the understanding of traditional scholarship.

Based primarily on these notions of Derrida, this study attempts a reading of Daphne du Maurier's famous novel *Rebecca*. The paper explores in what ways this novel, in which the specter of the character Rebecca and "haunting" as a theme and motif take a central place, lends itself to a "hauntological" reading as suggested by Derrida. It argues eventually that a conventional reading and a hauntological reading of the novel yield significantly different results, forcing us perhaps to acknowledge the importance of the Derridean notion of the specter for a better understanding of the implications of not only this novel but also of any life situation requiring a fuller perception of the way specters (of the past) might inform the present both on a personal and social basis. Throughout this analysis, Derrida's notion of spectrality will be the primary point of reference. However, the study will also make use of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria

Torok's theory of the "phantom" and "transgenerational haunting," which, despite some considerable differences, is also in line with the Derridean notion of the specter.

Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* came out in 1938 and remained a bestseller for more than two decades following its publication. The novel tells the story of a young and inexperienced first-person nameless narrator, who meets a man of serious wealth and influence twenty years older than herself while working as a "companion" to a rich old woman staying at a luxurious hotel in Monte Carlo. She is immediately drawn to this enigmatic man who appears to be courting her, and once the fortnight at the hotel is over and they are about to leave, the man, who is named Maxim de Winter, proposes to marry her. Head over heels in love, she immediately accepts and comes to live with him in his big estate called Manderley, located in the countryside by the sea, presumably in the southwest of England.

During their courtship in Monte Carlo, the nameless narrator learns that Maxim de Winter was previously married to a woman named Rebecca and that Rebecca drowned in a tragic boat accident about a year earlier. Although Maxim himself is highly reticent about his previous wife and the incident of her death, the narrator hears a lot about her mainly through her employer. Therefore, even before marrying Maxim and going to live with him in Manderley, the figure of the dead Rebecca looms before the nameless narrator. Hearing about Rebecca's beauty, influence, and popularity, she almost becomes obsessed with her and develops an acute feeling of jealousy. Going to live in Manderley once their honeymoon is over makes matters even worse. The house appears completely haunted by the spirit of Rebecca, with her legacy and the objects she left behind everywhere and the servants as well as the neighbors, relatives and family friends continually talking about her, as though invoking her from the dead each time they praise a certain outstanding quality of her, making explicit or implicit comparisons between Rebecca and the new bride, who is the nameless narrator.

The narrator, then, is almost certain after several months of marriage that Maxim regrets marrying her because he is still very much in love with Rebecca and cannot really forget her. She is soon to find out, however, that she has been completely wrong. After a number of climactic scenes full of suspense, it is surprisingly revealed that Rebecca did not drown in a boat accident after all, but was murdered by Maxim himself. Primarily

through Maxim's narrative to the narrator, we learn how he actually detested Rebecca's highly independent, promiscuous and threatening ways and how he eventually shot her at a moment of rage, placing her dead body in her boat and letting the boat sink. Interestingly, the narrator takes this in much more calmly than would be expected and does not seem disturbed by the fact that she has married a man who has murdered his previous wife. On the contrary, grateful that Maxim actually loves her, she becomes Maxim's accomplice in helping him clear out of the resuming investigations concerning Rebecca's death. At the end of the novel, the haunted Manderley is burnt down and Maxim gets away with the murder, but all this happens at the price of the couple leaving England and continuing their life in a Mediterranean country in the South.

Despite and perhaps due to its best-seller status for many years following its publication, *Rebecca* has had the misfortune – until fairly recently – to be received and interpreted from a highly traditional perspective, 'as a convention-ridden love story, in which the good woman triumphs over the bad by winning a man's love' (Beauman, 2007, p. 56). Helen Taylor (2007, p. 78) relates that 'On first publication, *Rebecca* was called by *The Times* a "novelette" ... [and afterwards] described repeatedly as "a great love story", "a classic romance"'. Even Alfred Hitchcock, whose famous adaptation of *Rebecca* won the Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Cinematography, said 'The [novel's] story is old-fashioned ... [a part of] feminine literature' (cited in Truffaut & Scott, 1985, p. 127) and 'The heroine is Cinderella' (cited in Truffaut & Scott, 1985, p. 132, emphasis original). As obvious in the analogy with a fairy-tale, this traditional reading suggests a happy ending for the couple and especially for the nameless narrator, who, after all the terrible events is reassured of Maxim's love for her. Furthermore, as the loyal and loving wife ready to be her husband's accomplice under all circumstances, she has gained his love, respect and gratitude to a point she could not even have imagined possible in the first place. Furthermore, justice has eventually been served: Rebecca, the evil, promiscuous woman, who deserved such punishment, has finally left their lives, never to come back. Manderley is burnt down together with the ghost of Rebecca. Rebecca will no longer be able to haunt Maxim and the narrator, and the couple can now live a relatively happy and peaceful life.

This traditional reading of the novel primarily as a work of romance has been challenged, of course, by subsequent critics, who have focused more closely on the novel's

defining place 'in the genre of the female gothic, understanding it as a psychological study of personal insecurity, class, and national instability, and female Oedipal crisis' (Taylor, 2007, p. 78).¹ Such studies have given Rebecca the attention she deserves as a character by emphasizing how she is not allowed to make her own voice heard within the patriarchal world of the novel, and by exploring Rebecca's possible status as an alter ego of the nameless narrator. Some of these readings consider the encounter with Rebecca's legacy to be a painful but significant learning process for the narrator, whereby she overcomes her initial shyness and insecurity and attains knowledge and maturity. Horner and Zlosnik argue, for instance, that 'the (now older) narrator has finally acquired the confidence for which she envied Rebecca as a young woman' (2000, p. 216). Regarding Rebecca as an alter ego or "doppelgänger figure" haunting the young narrator throughout, they emphasize the narrator's positive transformation at the end. The older narrator telling us the story retrospectively is 'one empowered by her "double" and who, far from being haunted, now exudes an understanding of herself and the world about her which has given her strength and self-confidence' (Horner & Zlosnik, 1998, p. 119). Some other readings, on the other hand, are more hesitant to suggest a relatively peaceful resolution of the plot through an exorcism of the ghost of Rebecca. Alison Light argues that 'The ending of *Rebecca* resists a simple resolution ... and the triumph of the ordinary girl is suffused with loss', that 'the image of Rebecca continues to haunt the mental life of the heroine, even in her calm middle age' (2001, p. 178). Margaret Mitchell similarly comments that at the end 'we see the narrator living not the life of a heroine, but one of monotonous exile' (2009, p. 31). In Peterson's view, this life of exile signifies a 'nightmare- a deathlike existence' (2009, p. 62).

This study takes a similar stance: a careful exploration of the novel's preoccupation with haunting raises serious questions about Maxim and the narrator's eventual success in exorcising the ghost of Rebecca. Like the symbolically laden name of her boat – *Je Reviens* – which is at the bottom of the sea together with her dead body, Rebecca is a revenant; she always comes back. Considered from the perspective of Derrida's notion of the specter, she cannot be eliminated. And neither should there be an attempt to eliminate her because that is not the way to deal with a specter. Actually, the

¹ Helen Taylor refers the reader here to the two definitive studies on the work of Daphne du Maurier: Alison Light's *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (1991), and Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik's *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity and the Gothic Imagination* (1998).

novel includes many instances where the narrator attempts to eliminate Rebecca and her memory through what Derrida would perhaps call strict and narrow ontological strategies. For example, a famous scene in the novel describes the narrator trying to get rid of the haunting handwriting and signature of Rebecca, which she first encounters on the title page of a poetry book that Maxim has lent her:

It [the book] fell open, at the title-page. "Max from Rebecca." She was dead, and one must not have thoughts about the dead. ... How alive was her handwriting though, how full of force. Those curious, sloping letters. The blob of ink. ... It was just as if it had been written yesterday. I took my nail scissors from the dressing case and cut the page, looking over my shoulder like a criminal. (du Maurier, 2012, p. 63)

This does not fully satisfy the narrator, however. She first tears 'the page up in many little fragments' and throws 'them into the waste-paper basket'. Still discontented, she then sets 'fire to the fragments' (2012, p. 64):

The flame had a lovely light, staining the paper, curling the edges, making the slanting writing impossible to distinguish. ... The letter R was the last to go, it twisted in the flame, it curled outwards for a moment, becoming larger than ever. Then it crumpled too; the flame destroyed it. ... I went and washed my hands in the basin. I felt better, much better. (du Maurier, 2012, p. 64)

This is a very transitory feeling of well-being, however. As the narrator realizes a short while after this incident, Rebecca's handwriting and her initial – this R which was the last to go in the flame – can be found everywhere in Manderley and become central haunting motifs in the novel. Rebecca's 'scrawling pointed hand' (2012, p. 94) is on the pigeon-hole labels and in the leather guestbook the narrator finds in the drawer of the writing table in the morning room where Rebecca used to do 'all her correspondence and telephoning' (2012, p. 91) so efficiently. Her monogram, "R de W", is 'on the nightdress case ... interwoven and interlaced corded and strong against the golden satin material' (2012, p. 187) in her bedroom in the west wing, which is still 'fully furnished, as though in use' (2012, p. 185). It is on the used handkerchief that has remained in the pocket of the mackintosh the servant fetches for the narrator to wear on a rainy day: 'A tall, sloping R, with the letters de W interlaced. The R dwarfed the other letters, the tail of it ran down into the cambric, away from the laced edge' (2012, p. 132). Lots of objects in the house

reminiscent of Rebecca have a similar haunting quality. The narrator comes to this uncanny realization one day as she is sitting with Maxim in the library:

... I was not the first one to lounge there ... someone had been before me, and surely left an imprint of her person on the cushions, and on the arm where her hand had rested. Another one had poured the coffee from that same silver coffee pot, had placed the cup to her lips, had bent down to the dog, even as I was doing.

Unconsciously, I shivered as though someone had opened the door behind me and let a draught into the room. I was sitting in Rebecca's chair, I was leaning against Rebecca's cushion, and the dog had come to me because ... he remembered, in the past, she had given sugar to him there. (du Maurier, 2012, pp. 86-87)

It soon dawns on the narrator that the words of Mrs Danvers – 'I feel her everywhere. You do too, don't you?' (2012, p. 194) – are not just oddities characterizing a housekeeper obsessed with the legacy of her beloved mistress:

She was in the house still, as Mrs Danvers had said; she was in that room in the west wing; she was in the library, in the morning-room, in the gallery above the hall. Even in the little flower-room, where her mackintosh still hung. And in the garden, and in the woods, and down in the stone cottage on the beach. Her footsteps sounded in the corridors, her scent lingered on the stairs. ... Rebecca was still mistress of Manderley. (du Maurier, p. 2012, p. 261)

All this clearly attests to Rebecca as a very powerful presence in the house even a year after her death, and as will be suggested shortly, even the burning down of Manderley at the end of the novel cannot put an end to her legacy.

It can be argued, then, that Rebecca emerges as a specter in the novel in a Derridean sense. Her memory and the secret surrounding both her personality and her death are potential sources of trauma for both the narrator and her husband, Maxim. Speaking from a Derridean perspective, the narrator and Maxim perhaps need to learn to "speak of" the troubled memory of Rebecca, or to "speak to" it, or even "speak with" it, but obviously this is something neither of them is willing or able to do. Maxim's stance is clear even in Monte Carlo where they have newly met: 'All memories are bitter, and I prefer to ignore them. Something happened a year ago ... and I want to forget every phase in my existence up to that time' (2012, p. 42). Although at the beginning the narrator is

not as firm as Maxim concerning memories evoking the past, she is quick to adopt an approach similar to his. In Monte Carlo, disturbed by the comment of her employer, Mrs Van Hopper, that she is making a mistake in marrying Maxim, she confidently reassures herself: 'The past would not exist for either of us; we were starting afresh, he and I. The past had blown away like the ashes in the waste-paper basket' (2012, p. 66). In Manderley, too, the narrator as the new wife learns to curb her curiosity about the past. It is especially after the narrator's unintentional discovery of Rebecca's boat-house at the beach and Maxim's ensuing anger that the subject of the past and particularly the utterance of Rebecca's name turn into a kind of taboo for them. Gaps and silences abound in their communication whenever the topic looks like it will be leading to the past and to Rebecca. 'And if you had my memories you would not want to ... talk about it, or even think about it' (2012, p. 130), says Maxim following the incident at the beach, and it is quite often that the narrator makes remarks like: 'It was over The episode was finished. We must not speak of it again' (2012, p. 132).

When Maxim confesses to his wife that he murdered Rebecca and tries to justify his act through a long narrative of his tortuous past with her, it initially appears like an improvement of their position in relation to this traumatic memory:

There were no shadows between us any more, and when we were silent it was because the silence came to us of our own asking. (2012, p. 323)

However, their seeming ability to discuss Rebecca through Maxim's confession is still a far cry from what Derrida means by talking *of* the specter or *to* the specter. This can perhaps be understood better by looking at the way Derrida himself elaborates further on the example he gives from the scene in *Hamlet* where the ghost appears. When Marcellus asks Horatio to speak to the ghost, Horatio obeys. But this is not the kind of communication Derrida has in mind:

... Horatio enjoins the Thing to speak, he orders it to do so twice in a gesture that is at once imperious and accusing. ... ("By heaven I Charge thee speake! ... speake, speake! I Charge thee, speake!") ... By charging or conjuring him to speak, Horatio wants to inspect, stabilize, *arrest* the specter in his speech (Derrida, 2006, p. 13, emphasis in the original)

This kind of ‘calling’, ‘interpellating’ or ‘interrogating’ – again in Derrida’s own words – is precisely how *not* to speak to the specter (2006, pp. 12-13). It can be argued that the way Rebecca becomes the topic of conversation between Maxim and the narrator is quite similar to the way Derrida describes Horatio addressing the ghost. It is as though in his narrative Maxim tries to “arrest” Rebecca or “fix” her in the image he has created of her. She is the dangerous, promiscuous woman, the *femme fatale* that should be avoided at all costs: “I hated her, I tell you. Our marriage was a farce from the very first. She was vicious, damnable, rotten through and through. ... Rebecca was incapable of love, of tenderness, of decency. She was not even normal” (2012, p. 304). Maxim even justifies his own strange changes of mood through the devilish image of Rebecca he has in his mind: “It doesn’t make for sanity, does it, living with the devil” (2012, p. 305). The narrator, whose primary focus in listening to Maxim’s narrative is on how she has been mistaken all along about Maxim’s love for herself, is more than ready to join in this act of “arresting” Rebecca: ‘Now ... I knew her to have been evil and vicious and rotten ... Rebecca’s power had dissolved into the air She would never haunt me again’ (2012, pp. 319-20). In this mistaken understanding of being ‘free of her forever’ (2012, p. 320), she becomes Maxim’s accomplice not only in clearing out of the murder investigation but also in attempting to exorcize Rebecca’s specter and wipe her out of their lives altogether.

Maxim’s and the narrator’s failure in speaking of the specter or to the specter in a Derridean sense can also be observed at the end of the storyline, where the couple are living in a southern country probably never to return to England again. This is presented in the first two chapters of the novel, in which the first-person narrator describes their present situation before beginning her retrospective narration. A careful reading of these chapters makes it quite clear that the past and Rebecca have again become a taboo subject for the couple, and their only way of coping with the past seems to be to refuse to remember it – if this is at all possible – and *not* to speak about it. The narrator makes it very clear that they are highly anxious about going back – either to England or in time: ‘The things we have tried to forget and put behind us would stir again, and that sense of fear, of furtive unrest, struggling at length to blind unreasoning panic – now mercifully stilled, thank God – might in some manner unforeseen become a living companion’ (2012, p. 5). In these opening pages the narrator tries to put on a strong and confident appearance especially when she claims that they ‘have no secrets now from one another’

(2012, p. 6) or that 'it is over now, finished and done with' (2012, p. 9). These remarks, however, are quickly refuted when she has to acknowledge that Maxim remembers the past 'rather more often than he would have me know' (2012, p. 5) and when she relates how she constantly remembers and dreams about Manderley but is highly hesitant to share this with Maxim: 'We would not talk of Manderley, I would not tell my dream' (2012, p. 4); it is best to 'keep things that hurt to myself alone. They can be my secret indulgence' (2012, p. 7). Furthermore, that she is compelled to look back and tell about the past is a clear sign of her inability to put down the specter of Rebecca and all she is associated with. As Alison Light aptly observes, the novel presents 'the reiteration of the past as a kind of exorcism, a calling up of ghosts in order to dispel them, but the ... [protagonist remains] haunted by memory, by a past imagined as trauma' (2001, p. 184). Ironically, then, the narrator's retrospective narration backfires: 'A story that ostensibly attempts to bury Rebecca, in fact resurrects her, and renders her unforgettable' (Beauman, 2007, p. 58). The irony becomes even sharper when we consider the novel's popular reception through the years: Rebecca returns forcefully each time the story reaches out to ever newer generations of readers.

It should be clear by now that Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca* portrays two major characters who can be regarded as complete failures in dealing with the specter in a Derridean sense. A question arises here, however. Why should it be important to learn to deal with a specter like Rebecca? On a personal level, the answer is more obvious. Taking these characters as representative of individuals in real life, it could be argued that here is a demonstration of how to and how not to conceive of the past, with all its pleasant and unpleasant memories, disturbances and traumas. The issue, however, definitely goes beyond an evaluation on a personal basis in line with Derrida's concept of the specter, which is similarly meant in a wider social and political sense. As the earlier discussion in this article also suggests, Rebecca cannot be perceived simply as the embodiment of an obsessive jealousy the new wife feels in the face of her influential predecessor. Rebecca's haunting presence throughout the narrative comes to represent something much larger: Rebecca is the much-dreaded figure that has the potential to seriously undermine the firm social and patriarchal order represented by Manderley, Maxim and even by the narrator, who, though fascinated by Rebecca's legacy, still finds it easier to turn against it and adhere to what is expected of her social position as the wife

of an English gentleman and the hostess of an English country house. In his narrative Maxim makes it very clear how he felt great 'shame, loathing and disgust' (2012, p. 306) because of Rebecca, and how he seriously dreaded any 'gossip' or 'publicity' (2012, p.310) that might harm Manderley and all it represented:

"She [Rebecca] knew I would sacrifice pride, honour, personal feelings, every damned quality on earth, rather than ... have them know the things about her that she had told me then. She knew I would never stand in a divorce court and give her away, have fingers pointing at us, mud flung at us in the newspapers, all the people that belong down here whispering when my name was mentioned ...". (du Maurier, 2012, p. 306)

Rebecca as specter, then, exposes some of the fundamental and also flawed and hypocritical values of the dominant social patriarchal order represented in the novel. Rebecca's specter unfalteringly points to how this order has been designed to safeguard itself no matter at what cost. As Beauman puts it, 'the novel's milieu is that of an era and social class that, in the name of good manners, rarely allowed the truth to be expressed' (2007, p. 50). Regarding a woman like Rebecca and 'her sexual energies as monstrous' (Wisker, 2003, p. 94), the existing order can go to any lengths – even to the dreadful secret of a murder – to suppress and silence her influence. But by presenting Rebecca as a powerful haunting force, a specter and a revenant, the novel refuses to allow this silencing to succeed. From a Derridean perspective, the novel condemns the narrator and Maxim for failing to acknowledge the specter, let alone speak to it, and expects discerning readers to learn how to address this specter properly and even speak *with* it. This is the only way to face some of the "unspeakable" assumptions and practices of an order that are carried over from the past and continue to reverberate even today.

Derrida's concept of the specter resonates with the earlier theory of the phantom and transgenerational haunting set out by psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok in order to explain how a secret or 'an unspeakable fact' (Abraham, 1987, p. 288) relating to a loved one, usually a family member, may be completely unknown to the patient but may still have been 'inscribed within ... [the patient's] unconscious' (1987, p.290).² This kind of haunting is therefore transgenerational: 'The phantom is a formation

² See Colin Davis's article "État Présent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms" (2005) for an insightful discussion of how Derrida's 'specter' and Abraham and Torok's 'phantom' are in some ways significantly distinct from each other. Also see Meera Atkinson's chapter, "Channeling the Specter and Translating Phantoms: Hauntology and the Spooked Text" in *Traumatic Affect* (2013) for a convincing exploration of

of the unconscious that has never been conscious – for good reason. It passes – in a way yet to be determined – from the parent’s unconscious into the child’s’ (Abraham, 1987, p. 289). Although Abraham and Torok’s “phantom” relates primarily to the individual psyche, like Derrida’s “specter” it can also be said to have significant implications for society and culture. In a very insightful article, Allan Lloyd Smith approaches *Rebecca* particularly from this perspective. Defining the phantom as ‘the unknowing awareness of another’s secret’ (1992, p. 291), Smith argues that the haunting secret waiting to be discovered in relation to Rebecca is *not* Maxim’s crime of murder, as generally suggested. The secret here is ‘the murderous response of a fully socialized adult male to the sexual freedom of his wife’ (1992, p. 305). In the world of the novel this secret is transmitted from Maxim to the narrator, as from a parent to a child. It should be remembered that the narrator has lost both her parents at a young age, and her narrative frequently suggests how she feels like a child near Maxim, who is old enough to be her father. In that sense, the narrator may be regarded as haunted by a secret which is not originally hers but which she unconsciously sustains by becoming an accomplice in the crime of her husband/father. The phantom that is haunting her, then, is not Rebecca per se but what Rebecca’s story suggests concerning the patriarchal social order they are all an integral part of. Nicolas Abraham talks about how ‘shared or complementary phantoms find a way to be established as social practices’, and he regards this as ‘an attempt at exorcism, that is, an attempt to relieve the unconscious by placing the effects of the phantom in the social realm’ (1987, p. 292). It could be argued that this is exactly what Maxim and the narrator are doing to deal with the phantom. Their preference to talk about Rebecca and the past as rarely as they can and their self-justification of Rebecca’s murder through arresting her in the evil, monstrous woman image, which is also in line with established social norms, all attest to such an attempt. This, however, is doomed to fail: the novel takes pains to ensure that the phantom will not be exorcised through such means. Rebecca’s phantom insistently demands recognition, refusing to be the ghost of a familial, social and cultural trauma ‘so collectively well-tolerated as to have become the accepted norm’ (Atkinson, 2013, p. 258).

how the concepts of the “specter” and the “phantom” may be reconciled and even regarded as complementing each other.

This discussion could have implications reaching beyond the world of the novel when it is considered that the unspoken or unspeakable secret transmitted from Maxim to the narrator is also transmitted to ever newer generations of readers. Each new reception of the novel invokes Rebecca's phantom and transmits the secret to the reader. One way for the reader to deal with this haunting effect would be to approach the matter like Maxim and the narrator, finding it easier to ignore or dismiss the phantom through a traditional interpretation. Countless readings since the publication of *Rebecca* have been in this direction, reducing the plot to that of a typical female romance with full closure and exorcism at the end. However, as suggested throughout this essay, both the novel and the character "Rebecca" adamantly resist such an "ontological" approach and expect the discerning reader to sincerely face the phantom as suggested by Abraham and Torok, or to acknowledge the specter as suggested by Derrida. This is what the "scholar" of the future, the "intellectual" of tomorrow' is responsible for doing: 'He should learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself ...' (Derrida, 2006, p. 221).

In his seminal book on spectrality and literature Julian Wolfreys asserts that 'to tell a story is always to invoke ghosts, to open a space through which something other returns Ghosts return via narratives, and come back, again and again, across centuries, every time a tale is unfolded' (2002, p. 3). Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* is an apt example for such a phenomenon. A hauntological reading of this novel draws particular attention to the significance of acknowledging these ghosts, which point to certain "unspeakable" and potentially traumatic assumptions and practices of a culture that are carried over from the past and that are very much alive even today. It looks like *Rebecca's* haunting effect will never go away, and the same applies to countless other works which overtly or covertly deal with ghosts of all sorts. It would be wise, then, to learn to address these haunting effects sincerely and probe their wider social and cultural implications.

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