

The Gothic and Madness

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The gothic as a literary genre negotiates ties between themes of the conscious and unconscious mind, spectral hauntings, nature, class and history. Each of these elements contribute to madness and a sense of isolation in gothic texts which often permeates throughout wider pop culture. I will identify and analyse these conventions in Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca*¹ and Sarah Waters', *The Little Stranger*² which explore madness and isolation in similar and differing ways. Moreover, I will draw upon further reading and relevant critical material and theory to support my argument and prompt further valid discussions into madness and isolation in the gothic tradition.

One major aspect of gothic fiction lies in the effects of madness on characters. In the chapter 'Persecution and Paranoia' of Punter and Byron's work *The Gothic*, it is noted that '[since its inception] the literary Gothic has been concerned with uncertainties of character positionings and instabilities of knowledge.'³ These 'uncertainties' and 'instabilities' fuel paranoia as characters are deprived of information and undertake precarious journeys for answers. This approach represents madness in gothic texts as the ludicrous, hideous encounters characters face plague their sanity. Brewster proposes 'the madness of interpretation'⁴ which questions the pathology and perspective of characters, narrators and readers in gothic texts. He offers insights into gothic madness noting that 'Gothic does not merely transcribe disturbed, perverse, or horrifying worlds: its narrative structures and voices are interwoven with and intensify the apparent madness they represent.'⁵ This depth and intensity portrays a symbiotic relationship between gothic conventions and madness which is evident in Du Maurier's *Rebecca* as Rebecca's ghostly yet intangible presence mars and deludes all characters in the novel. In comparison, Waters intensifies madness in *The Little Stranger* through Faraday's nostalgia and resentment for the past which leads to his manic obsession with Hundreds Hall.

The aforementioned ideas are underpinned by a sense of isolation which can be divided into three forms conveying gothic madness: the mental, physical and social. Isolation in the social sense involves the alienation of an individual from a particular society due to issues such as class division and

¹ Daphne Du Maurier, *Rebecca* (London: Virago Press, 2015).

² Sarah Waters, *The Little Stranger* (London: Virago Press, 2009).

³ David Punter and Glennis Byron, *Gothic : The Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 273. Accessed December 8, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴ Scott Brewster, "Seeing Things: Gothic and the Madness of Interpretation," in *A New Companion to The Gothic*, edited by David Punter (Somerset: Wiley, 2012), 487-490. Accessed December 28, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁵ Brewster, "Seeing Things: Gothic and the Madness of Interpretation," 487.

discrimination. In the gothic, these issues heighten resentment and desires for revenge as characters either transgress or are persecuted by their societies. Physical isolation refers to the spatial and geographical distance which isolates characters from their environments, examples include sailing alone in the sea or living alone in a large house. Mental isolation refers to the interiority of the mind through forms such as dreams and memories reflecting past trauma and nostalgia. These internal conflicts isolate characters within their mental space.

At times, these three forms of isolation converge as evident in *Rebecca* through the eponymous character's sailing habits. Near the end of novel, Colonel Julian states that Rebecca 'must have sailed alone over that spot [where she died] scores of times.'⁶ Evidently, Rebecca 'sailed alone'; a hobby which physically isolates her through the sea and separates her from society in a place where she is alone with her thoughts. Similarly, in *The Little Stranger*, Hundreds Hall is physically isolated through its ancient architecture and is socially isolated as a remnant of the ruling class which is being phased out in the setting of a post-War Britain. These two forms isolate the Ayres family mentally as they succumb to insanity and fall 'victim to that diabolical "infection"'⁷ through the hauntings at Hundreds. Moreover, Waters uses the word 'infection' which has medical connotations to subtly hint that Dr Faraday is connected to the hauntings which he denies throughout his narration.

Gothic conventions of spectral hauntings and the significance of the past in dreams and memories evoke madness in *Rebecca* and *The Little Stranger* through isolation. Dreams mentally isolate characters as the dreamer undergoes solitary experiences which separate them from their present reality. This separation is apparent through Faraday's fateful dream of Hundreds near the end of *The Little Stranger* beside the 'shady, overgrown pond'⁸ and when the narrator in *Rebecca* recounts, 'Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again.'⁹ Memories create distance between the past and the present where characters become entangled within their thoughts as evident in *Rebecca* when the narrator wishes of "'an invention ... that bottled up a memory... And it never faded, and it never got stale."¹⁰ The narrator's conjecture represents the past as a profound source of reflection and reminiscence which she is haunted by as a result. Thusly, hauntings reflect mental isolation with these internal conflicts and desires heightening to such an extent that they materialise into ghostly figures which terrorise the source of their woes. This presence denies any sense of escape other than suicide or psychosis a fate which 'left no trace of the Ayreses at all'¹¹ in *The Little Stranger*. Evidently, Du

⁶ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 334.

⁷ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 423.

⁸ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 472.

⁹ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 1.

¹⁰ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 40.

¹¹ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 498.

Maurier stresses a psychological attribute to haunting whereas Waters portrays a visceral poltergeist which kills and renders her characters insane.

Du Maurier's use of dreaming to begin her novel signifies a preoccupation with the mind and mental processes; the narrator is driven by her desire to revisit Manderley. Her dreams, which represent the unconscious facilitate her repressed desires. Psychoanalytic theory and more specifically Freud's dream theory offers an insight into the origins of the dream state. In an article entitled, 'The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis' Freud describes dreams 'as a *disguised* fulfilment of *repressed* wishes'¹² and discusses the origins of dreams in childhood memories. Freud mentions the '*repressed*' in reference to emotions and behaviours which are involuntarily buried in the unconscious due to their severity and trauma. He posits that dreams are a mode in which these repressed desires can be actualised. With this process in mind, Du Maurier uses dreaming as a narrative tool to express the narrator's preoccupation with the past. Freud also mentions the role of childhood memories in dream analysis; he discusses the 'importance of the role [in] which impressions and experiences from early childhood exert on the development of men.'¹³ These 'impressions' and 'experiences' can be applied to the character of Dr Faraday in *The Little Stranger* as his childhood memories of Hundreds Hall reflect a deep jealousy.

Throughout Waters's novel, Hundreds Hall is subjected to abject terror by an unknown, mysterious presence, a poltergeist. One explanation for this spectral haunting lies in Faraday's unconscious mind as all of the sinister events take place in his absence. Arguably, his unconscious projects his jealousy from memories of Hundreds with his childhood want 'to possess a piece of it'¹⁴ and the subservient position of his mother. This idea of a mobilised and independent unconscious is explored in further detail by Welsh psychologist, Frederic Myers in his work, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*¹⁵ (1903). Myers discusses the 'Self' and 'the possibility that different fractions of the personality can act so far independently of each other that the one is not conscious of the other's actions.'¹⁶ In Waters's novel, 'personality' relates to Faraday's jealousy; his unconscious desire is to acquire Hundreds Hall at any cost, yet his conscious self focuses on medical care for the Ayres family. Myers stresses a total disassociation between the conscious and unconscious self which explains Faraday's complete obliviousness as to his involvement in the hauntings. Moreover, the contrasts between the rational, caring qualities of a doctor (his conscious self) and the irrational, violent qualities of the

¹² Sigmund Freud, "The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis," *The American Journal of Psychology* 21, no. 2 (1910): 202. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1413001>.

¹³ Freud, "The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis," 203.

¹⁴ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 3.

¹⁵ F.W.H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, 1903)

¹⁶ Myers, *Human Personality* II, 84; Myers, *Human Personality* I, 56.

poltergeist (his unconscious self) are so far detached and mentally isolated from one another that there is no logical connection joining the two. At the end of the novel, Faraday remarks in relation to Hundreds that 'its ghost doesn't show itself to me'¹⁷ supporting this idea of detachment and an independent unconscious self haunting Hundreds.

Near the end of the novel, when Caroline dies, Betty refutes suicide as a cause of death claiming she was prompted by 'a spiteful ghost [who] wanted the house all for its own.'¹⁸ During the fatal incident, Faraday had experienced a 'fretful slumber'¹⁹ and dreamt about a car ride directly to Hundreds Hall. This dream may suggest that the 'spiteful' entity was Faraday's own unconscious self, sprouting from a dream which encapsulated his repressed memories of Hundreds. The dichotomy of the conscious and unconscious mind reflects dualisms in characters embodying autonomy and entrapment, good and evil, activity and passivity, isolation and inclusion.

Gothic literature often consults this duality through its characters and texts, a most notable example being Robert L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.²⁰ Stevenson emphasises the dual composition of man where one half is a respectable and law asserting citizen (Dr Jekyll) and the other a depraved and unruly menace (Mr Hyde). The author portrays the corrupt side of man as a literal monster, a physical embodiment of all that is immoral and considered evil by society. Du Maurier embeds this monstrous visage in *Rebecca* but in a more subtle manner. Stevenson's androcentric interpretation of duality is applicable to Rebecca who embodies the same traits as Mr Hyde apart from his grievous and violent streak. Rebecca held dominance and control over all she encountered in a similar fashion to the transfixing rage Hyde so often exercised with the former utilising manipulative psychological threat rather than brutal violence. Rebecca maintained a respectable public profile like that of Dr Jekyll, yet her influence reigned long after her death; she was universally adored while privately resembling a figure of transgression and bitterness. Thusly, she underwent internal conflicts between her public image and private desires isolating herself between two states of mind unable to commit to one. This mental isolation bears a social component as her states of mind represent two sectors of society: the corrupt and the respectable. Eventually, as is also apparent in Stevenson's work, her conflicting behaviour is fundamentally flawed and destined for disaster, madness and death.

¹⁷ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 499.

¹⁸ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 495.

¹⁹ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 473.

²⁰ Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (London: Reader's Library Classics, 2021).

Duality is further explored through autonomy and passivity in both *Rebecca* and *The Little Stranger*. Waters and Du Maurier appear to stray from the formula of fragile heroines in gothic texts opting for self-sufficient female characters who are not dependent on men. Rebecca and Caroline can be seen as gothic heroines through their defiance of traditional gender roles instilled by a patriarchal society. Rebecca expresses her sexuality and control over people who 'all admired her'²¹ while Caroline refuses marriage and dependence on a man after her mother's funeral stating 'my thoughts... They've only just begun to get straight.'²² Caroline experiences an epiphany which marks an assertion of female autonomy and independence in the novel. In *Rebecca*, Maxim represents the patriarchal order through his class and status as owner of Manderley. He is a man of power and assumed the property as a male heir. He notes, 'She was not even normal'²³ when revealing the true personality, from his perspective, of his late wife to the narrator. Maxim's inability to understand Rebecca epitomises the ignorance and inability of patriarchal society to understand the non-conforming female. Similarly, Faraday represents the patriarchal male through his controlling behaviour over Caroline and yearning to possess Hundreds Hall. Caroline rejects Faraday's sexual and marital advances symbolising her repressed sexuality and more specifically sexual frustration at the hands of the patriarchy. Waters uses this trait to heighten the incompatibility of Caroline and her admirer with her repulsion of him signifying a resistance and disgust for the patriarchy itself.

In spite of this subversion of feminine archetypes, Waters suggests that the male ultimately asserts control over the female. In both texts, the aforementioned heroines are killed. The character of Caroline, as suggested in relation to Myers work, is killed by Faraday's unconscious self the night before she leaves Hundreds. Waters stresses Caroline's obsession with spectral hauntings, and, in interpolating Faraday's role in her murder, Caroline describes the "'Unconscious parts [of Faraday], so strong or so troubled... can take on a life of their own [as a poltergeist].'"²⁴ This interpolation illuminates morbid irony as Caroline studies the spectral presences she is eventually murdered by. Her death also reflects a patriarchal jealousy of female autonomy with murder being the only permanent solution to alleviate male anxieties. Rebecca is murdered by her husband, Maxim, who, like Faraday serves as a conduit for the patriarchy that seeks to eradicate the liberated female. This liberation transgresses social and gender expectations as Rebecca expresses her sexuality defying the passive and monogamous traits attached to traditional female spouses. Ultimately, the patriarchy eliminates that which it cannot tame and by effect diminishes female empowerment in both texts.

²¹ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 307.

²² Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 473.

²³ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 304.

²⁴ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 364.

Patriarchal oppression can be seen as a source for the hauntings in *Rebecca* and *The Little Stranger*. This perspective is shared by feminist critic Auba Llompart Pons who focuses on Du Maurier's text, yet her views are equally applicable to *The Little Stranger*. Pons claims that 'The ultimate Gothic villain in Daphne Du Maurier's novel is the haunting presence of an old-fashioned, strict patriarchal system.'²⁵ Here, the 'Gothic villain' is cast as patriarchy which motivates madness and isolation in each text in the form of Maxim and Faraday. This male dominated system provokes female madness as Caroline is driven to suicide by Faraday and Rebecca into a deteriorating manic state due to Maxim's resentment of her lifestyle. Both female characters are socially isolated and disadvantaged due to their gender thus being unable to achieve true freedom which becomes curtailed by the patriarchy.

Similarly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*²⁶ explores the restriction of female freedom through spousal roles. The ailing narrator's husband, John is a doctor whose opinions are decidedly inclined to the physically curable. John deems his wife's nervous, mental condition 'temporary'²⁷ and is unable to accept a diagnosis outside of his realm of medical knowledge which is that of psychiatry. This ignorance is shared by Dr Faraday in *The Little Stranger* whose pride and sphere of knowledge restrict him from accepting that an irrational, supernatural force causes Roderick and Mrs Ayres's psychotic breakdowns. In both texts it is apparent that the male figure neglects and dismisses female madness as curable when its roots are far from tangible. In relation to gender in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, American author and critic Eugenia Delmotte notes 'that women's "separate sphere" is a house of horrors, and that the "mysteries" heroines try so desperately to decipher [...] are only a disguise for the real mystery, woman herself.'²⁸ The mention of a 'women's "separate sphere"' and a 'house of horrors' reflects female social isolation. Specifically, the word 'house' connotes the domestic expectations of women as portrayed in Gilman's work. Delmotte discusses the female mystery and offers an introspective take that an inner force is its source in comparison to the view that a patriarchal society subjugates the female to madness.

Despite Delmotte's view, the historical grasp of the patriarchy to lure women into madness is a concurrent theme in gothic literature. In *Rebecca*, the eponymous character sailed alone in the sea, isolating her from this patriarchal society. The sea is a crucial setting in the novel in enabling Rebecca's freedom and containing her sullied corpse whilst also traumatising Maxim as he killed Rebecca in its

²⁵ Auba Llompart Pons, "Patriarchal Hauntings: Re-Reading Villainy and Gender in Daphne Du Maurier's 'Rebecca' / Fantasmas Del Patriarcado: Una Relectura de La Villanía y El Género En 'Rebecca', de Daphne Du Maurier," *Atlantis* 35, no. 1 (2013): 71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43486040>.

²⁶ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-Paper" in *The Yellow Wall-Paper, Herland, and Selected Writings*, edited by Denise D. Knight (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 166-182.

²⁷ Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-Paper", 166.

²⁸ Eugenia C. Delamotte, "MALE AND FEMALE MYSTERIES IN 'THE YELLOW WALLPAPER,'" *Legacy* 5, no. 1 (1988): 11. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25679011>.

depths and stresses he ““never go[es] near that bloody place.””²⁹ The sea acts as a form of isolation, it removes characters physically, mentally and socially throughout the course of the novel. Rebecca’s sailing hobby isolates her as a solitary sailor; she is alone with her thoughts with no one accompanying her. A more sinister form of physical isolation lies in the fact that the sea is Rebecca’s final resting place isolating her from dry, hospitable land. The sea acts as a keeper of secrets which isolates Maxim from his past as Rebecca is concealed within its depths. Maxim keeps the fatal secret strictly to himself for over a year with no one near him that is privy to his actions. The secrecy subsequently plagues his sanity until Rebecca’s boat is retrieved from the water and he explains to his wife that he killed Rebecca on the boat and ‘there was so much blood’.³⁰ This description emphasises his shock and trauma as he recounts the incident but also a catharsis as he has unloaded his secret and unburdened his conscience.

In many ways then, the sea is a living, breathing creature who regurgitates and reveals the truth no matter how gruesome and incriminating. Arguably, this personified body of water embodies the mental states of characters and is an accomplice to Rebecca’s murder. Initially, the sea allowed Rebecca to control her boat on its surface facilitating her wilful isolation and freedom from society, it embodied her liberated mindset and control over her boat. However, on the night of her murder, its turbulent waves helped Maxim dispose of her body. These conditions embodied Maxim’s intense anger, guilt and anxiety for killing his wife as ‘The water began to come in’³¹ and sink the boat. This terrible eventuality resurfaces near the end of the novel as the boat is uncovered along with Rebecca’s remains. The discovery proves to the narrator that Maxim detested Rebecca with the sea expressing her relief as it reveals the dead body. Evidently, nature is a vital part of the story forming its resolution and is a vehicle for isolation to conceal a past of secrets and lies.

The gothic also permeates pop culture through horror cinema with Robert Eggers’s independent feature, *The Lighthouse*³² (2019) representing similar tropes of madness through isolation. Only two characters occupy the entire film; they are stranded on a lighthouse island until they are both consumed by insanity. This mental imbalance is caused by visceral and disturbing dreams, a deeply repressed and secretive past, sexual frustration and desire, isolation from the truth and isolation from society. The cinematography is in black and white evoking a historical cinematic atmosphere which represents the disturbing, all-encompassing past. The characters in the film are the product of this

²⁹ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 129.

³⁰ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 314.

³¹ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 315.

³² *The Lighthouse*, directed by Robert Eggers (A24, 2019), 0:1:31 to 1:13:22.
<https://www.netflix.com/watch/81135068>

stark past and none more so than Robert Pattinson's, Thomas Howard, who is eventually revealed as a murderer.

This deeply personal confession is unravelled through isolation as Thomas only has his captain as company. Therefore, the sea, as a conveyer of isolation, reveals the fatal secrets of its travellers. The confession acts as a precursor for the total unravelling of both characters' minds. Eggers employs the sea and isolation as foundational themes through the film's title generating a mounting madness as the film progresses and isolation increases. In *Rebecca*, the sea is a secondary setting, yet it subtly upholds much of the narrative's tension and mystery just as *The Lighthouse* does. Despite Du Maurier subtly implying the importance of the sea and Eggers overtly doing so, both produce similarly profound impacts. The major difference between these two works is the visual (cinematic) and written (literary) portrayals of isolation. Eggers uses moody cinematography and directing whereas Du Maurier uses rich imagery and polished language to convey her message.

Similar to the sea in *Rebecca*, Sarah Waters portrays Hundreds Hall as a living, breathing entity seemingly possessed by a poltergeist. Ultimately, the rampancy of the possession drains Hundreds to the point of dilapidation and ruin. Kedra-Kardela and Kowalczyk discuss the decline of Hundreds Hall and mention that 'the disintegration of family life [at Hundreds] is symbolised by the theme of broken lineage.'³³ Roderick's mental and physical afflictions prevent him from providing an heir to inherit Hundreds whereas Caroline's undesirable features and eventual suicide terminate any chance of progeny. The quote suggests that Hundreds Hall besides its architectural decay faces a deeper, hereditary decay whereby family history and succession is decimated as the British ruling class disintegrates. The values of family and class are a prominent theme in gothic literature with *The Little Stranger* stressing the dissolution of both as the future takes over from the past in a post-World War Two British society. This takeover highlights social isolation as the Ayreses are a remnant of an old order stuck in a rapidly advancing modern society; their social displacement forges madness as they become delusional and suicidal.

Building upon the idea of the present overthrowing the past, author Katharina Boehm discusses social innovation in Waters's novel. She notes, 'The ruin [of Hundreds Hall] evokes many different pasts, but it is also a space that contains the present and that is suggestive of future developments.'³⁴ The medley of 'different pasts' portray the grand undoing of an illustrious, outdated order and despite the

³³ Anna Kedra-Kardela and Andrzej Slawomir Kowalczyk, eds., *Expanding the Gothic Canon : Studies in Literature, Film and New Media* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2014), 179. Accessed December 24, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bcu/reader.action?docID=3030159>

³⁴ Katharina Boehm, "HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE MATERIAL IMAGINATION IN THE NOVELS OF SARAH WATERS," *Studies in the novel* 43, no. 2 (2011): 251.

persistently bleak tone of the book, Waters instils a sense of hope through the ‘future developments’ which replace it. These include affordable housing which surround the grounds of Hundreds Hall forming a sharp contrast between innovation and tradition. These two elements prompt lengthy discussions on culture and history but in the context of *The Little Stranger* they emphasise the physical, architectural void between Hundreds Hall and the rest of society; it is physically isolated by its ancient appearance from its modern surroundings. These developments encroach upon Hundreds, suggesting a patching over of the Hall, a traditional feature replaced by a contemporary one as the past fades from existence at least physically. The large gap in relation to time between these two forms of residence illuminates temporal isolation. Hundreds is not only isolated as a relic by a progressive society but as an embodiment of the past, it is instantly displaced in post-War Britain.

Boehm discusses ‘the materiality of the ruin’³⁵ in relation to the traditional practises of Hundreds returning as the building decays. Its inhabitants soon rely on material objects such as ‘old-fashioned candlestick[s]’³⁶ for lighting. Boehm surmises that the characters live in an earlier iteration of Hundreds thus imitating their ancestors. This re-enactment eerily suggests the ancestors inhabit their children which emphasises the inescapability of the past. There is no way to avert this presence and even the once prosperous inhabitants of Hundreds subject the characters to squalor and misery. Moreover, Waters forms a preoccupation with the material through the hauntings at Hundreds. The angry poltergeist weaponizes inanimate objects, sparks fires, invokes insanity and subjugates the Ayreses to abject terror. In comparison, ancestral hauntings drag the characters further into the past hindering any form of progress and growth thus cementing history as the destroyer of Hundreds and the Ayres family through “‘inherited family madness – a family taint’”³⁷ as the character of Riddell surmises. Subsequently, family and history are possible sources for haunting in Waters’s work and explanations for the supernatural, yet the origins of the hauntings still remain ambiguous. Waters purposely uses this elusive technique to elicit an unsettling conclusion to her mysterious gothic narrative.

As theorised earlier, Faraday’s unconscious self may be the source of the hauntings. Furthering this interpretation, Waters implies a collective disgust from the former servants of Hundreds Hall who were mistreated as members of the working class; their hatred conjuring the poltergeist. This vengefulness takes the form of Faraday, a person who was born into a working class family and worked hard to gain status as a respected, well paid doctor. Faraday is the perfect conduit for revenge as he (a member of the working class) invades the ruling class and dismantles its power structure from the

³⁵ Boehm, “HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE MATERIAL IMAGINATION IN THE NOVELS OF SARAH WATERS”, 251.

³⁶ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 234.

³⁷ Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 491.

inside as he latches onto the Ayreses and drains them in a parasitic manner. He disembowels their once robust history through the destruction and tragedies at Hundreds. Thusly, the historical injustices endured by working class servants are partially avenged by Faraday's subjugation of the Ayres family (regardless of him being conscious of the act) who represent the ruling class.

Returning to his perception of the unconscious self, Myers notes, '[I]f I have such a self [...] I am certainly not conscious of him, and that, whatever he may be, he is at any rate not what I take him for.'³⁸ This frightening, unknown quality of the unconscious illuminates Faraday's mental isolation as he is in denial that he is the root of the Hundreds hauntings. Faraday even acknowledges this unnerving possibility at the end of novel, noting that Hundreds may have been terrorised by something which 'spawned from the troubled unconscious of someone connected with the house itself'³⁹. The word 'someone' reiterates his ignorant belief that he is not at fault. The disconnect Myers states above may reside in Faraday's refusal to accept he is of a working class background as he desperately seeks ruling class status; his vengeful unconscious frustrated with the class divide materialises into Myers's 'self' while his conscious self denies his social inferiority as he is blinded by his obsession with the Ayres family and Hundreds Hall. Faraday is socially isolated between the ruling and working classes never able to reside in one or the other.

Rebecca and *The Little Stranger* incorporate discussions of history and hope with many of the events in both novels involving a fixation with the time. This fixation is manifested by memories of the deceased, childhood traumas and a complex yearning to return to a past era which inspires physical and psychological hauntings. The future and what it holds negotiates ties between hope and hopelessness that is so often prevalent in the gothic. Du Maurier provides hope through the narrator and Maxim finally enjoying their belated honeymoon by the end of the novel which represents emancipation from the grasp of Rebecca. This perceived progression may disguise regression and hopelessness as Rebecca's death and villainised status reflect Maxim's patriarchal perspective. This view condemns female deviancy from gender expectations an action which can only be dealt with through lethal punishment. Maxim's ideologies are filtered through our infatuated narrator emphasising the influence of the patriarchy. In comparison, Waters suggests hope through the future with new housing developments surrounding Hundreds which represents the dissolution of the ruling class. In the novel, hopelessness arises through Faraday's unwavering empirical perspective unable to accept his presence as the sinister force which destroyed Hundreds. Furthering the earlier discussed idea of temporal isolation, the disparity between past memories and the present mentally isolates the

³⁸F.H.W. Myers, 'Human Personality', *Fortnightly Review* 38, no.1 (October 1885): 638.

³⁹Waters, *The Little Stranger*, 498.

inhabitants at both Manderley and Hundreds as they are trapped in a state of contemplation deciding how to manage their futures with the burden of their tainted histories.

From the arguments considered and analysed above combined with the gothic conventions mentioned, isolation is seen as a crucial element in the composition of gothic madness. Social isolation is the most prevalent when comparing *Rebecca* and *The Little Stranger* with entrenched constructs such as class division isolating the less fortunate from the socially superior. Mental isolation is potent through memories of the past in both texts which prove crucial in *The Little Stranger* as a dream prompts Faraday's unconscious self to materialise and kill Caroline. These ideas of isolation also bear significance in a variety of gothic texts including Gilman and Stevenson's works as discussed earlier. They embody duality and domesticity which invoke insanity over a sustained period of time. Ultimately, *The Little Stranger* presents isolation as a damaging force which destroys Hundreds Hall and the Ayres family through each member's mental incapacitation as they are terrorised by a poltergeist. In *Rebecca*, isolation conjures the haunting presence of its eponymous character and provokes reminiscence and nostalgia in the form of the narrator's connection to Manderley. Thusly, haunting and the impact of the past are prominent gothic conventions which leads to madness in both texts facilitated by an overwhelming sense of isolation.

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