

The Beginning of the End:

The Prologue and Epilogues of *Hungry Hill* and *The Glass-Blowers*

Daphne du Maurier's versatility and interest in biographical writings extends to family, literary and historical narratives in both fictionalised and non-fictionalised manifestations. Throughout her career, she published biographical works - notably *Gerald: A Portrait* (1934) and *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (1960), an autobiography entitled *Growing Pains: The Shaping of a Writer* (1977¹), and personal essays and documents in *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories* (1980). At the age of 30, she published *The du Mauriers* (1937), a companion book to *Gerald: A Portrait*. It presented her family history in the form of a novel, with her ancestress Mary Anne Clarke as a significant character, and included references to her French forebears. After introducing these colourful real-life ancestors in this family narrative in 1937, she returned to them in the 1950s and 1960s, devoting an entire novel, *Mary Anne* (1954), to a fictionalisation of the life of Mary Anne Clarke, and another novel to her French forebears, *The Glass-Blowers* (1963). She also published the fictionalised sagas of two families other than her own in *The Loving Spirit* (1931) and *Hungry Hill* (1943).

As literary historians have shown, the family saga genre gained popularity during the interwar period (Light 194), while in the 1960s, approximately the period when du Maurier's family narratives were written, women's literary productions often consisted of family sagas or chronicles of a woman's life (Kay 60). Critic Alison Light notes that, although these family chronicles were "not among her greatest successes", du Maurier exhibits in those works her obsession with "the passing of time" and a "hostile as well as fascinated attitude toward the past" through her (re)invention of her own heritage or the heritage of others (Light 182, 193, 195), as demonstrated by the two novels which will be discussed here.

The fictionalised family saga *Hungry Hill* is based on the Irish ancestors of Christopher Puxley (Forster 167), an extramarital love interest of du Maurier's during World War Two, while *The Glass-Blowers* (1963) is a fictionalised account of du Maurier's own family history which documents the dramatic experiences of her French forebears—the master glass-blowers of La Brûlonnerie, Chérigny, La Pierre and Le Chesne-Bidault.² In the generic framework of these two fictionalisations of family history, such a difference already makes for a fruitful comparative study. Moreover, du Maurier ends *Hungry Hill* with a lengthy epilogue, and gives

¹ Published in the United States as *Myself When Young: The Shaping of a Writer*.

² du Maurier provides this information in the Dedication of her novel.

The Glass-Blowers both a prologue and an epilogue, which is not standard practice in her oeuvre. For instance, no prologue or epilogue is to be found in either her autobiography or *Golden Lads: A Study of Anthony Bacon, Francis, and Their Friends* (1975), though she does include an epilogue in *The Winding Stair: Francis Bacon, His Rise and Fall* (1976), the second volume she devoted to the famous Renaissance scientist, philosopher, and statesman. As far as her non-biographical novels are concerned, it must also be noted that some of them begin with a first chapter that performs the function of a prologue, set in a time when the fictional events in the story have returned to some sort of equilibrium and can be narrated in retrospect, the protagonists being now older and wiser. *Rebecca* (1938), *The King's General* (1946), and *My Cousin Rachel* (1951) are cases in point. This essay, however, focuses on the two family narratives in du Maurier's works in which a chapter or chapters specifically bear the labels "Prologue" and "Epilogue". By focusing on these narrative features, it will demonstrate how those chapters contribute to the key themes of lineage, transmission, and continuity. It will also shed light on the processes of making meaning - in relation to the reconnection of a lineage through a family legacy in *The Glass-Blowers*, and to the fulfilment of a curse in *Hungry Hill* - through du Maurier's articulation of such a narrative strategy.

Narrative Form as a Strategy

In her essay "Twentieth-Century Recent Theories on Beginnings and Endings of Novels", Giuliana Adamo lists the different functions of beginnings, one of which is "to stimulate expectation and surprise in the reader" (55). Du Maurier's method of beginning a tale by its conclusion serves this function through inducing anticipation in her readers and raising questions which will be answered in the course of the novel. In employing this narrative strategy—e.g. in *Rebecca*, *The King's General*, *Mary Anne*, or *The Glass-Blowers*—she sometimes mentions characters yet to appear and events yet to occur. This method sometimes demands that readers reread parts of the novels to fully comprehend the significance of the references in the opening scenes, and it also creates suspense by withholding information. It is one of du Maurier's central narrative strategies to move a story forward. The technique of circularity, meanwhile, also creates a stronger sense of formal completion, because a form of narrative closure is achieved despite the inconclusiveness of the endings of novels such as *My Cousin Rachel* or *The Scapegoat*.

The epilogue is a structural device to signify the ultimate closure of a text. It records what happens after the end of the story and exists outside the framework of the main narrative.

In Mike Cadden's words, the epilogue is "post-narrative despite being narrative" (344). It satisfies "what is perceived to linger in the mind of the reader after the plot has been resolved" and provides emotional satisfaction through reassuring readers about the positive outcome of a story (344). It is an extension which gives additional information and meaning to the story while being separate from it. At the same time, it distances the reader from the story (345) by giving them a sense of completion that goes beyond mere narrative closure (346).

For critics Andrew Bennet and Nicholas Royle, the *ending* of a novel involves "not only the sense of 'conclusion' (the end of a text, for instance) but also the sense of 'goal' and 'purpose' (the goal or purpose of reading a text, for instance)" (286). They assert that "[a] part of the equilibrium that endings apparently offer is the satisfaction of epistemophilia, [that is,] the reader's desire to know" (55). Epistemophilia is important because readers want to know what happens to the main (and sometimes secondary) characters after the story ends, and tend to expect the end to provide answers to the questions raised in the text. The presence or absence of closure can, in turn, affect the meaning of a text and, subsequently, the entire reading experience. The *ending* here does not only concern the *end* of the narrative, in the form of the last few pages of a novel, but also the chronological end of the occurrences in the diegesis, including any introductory chapter that might actually serve as a conclusion.

Epistemophilia is achieved when there is closure for the readers. This can occur on the thematic or the narratological level, which can be understood as "thematic completeness" and "stylistic closure"³. The former signifies the achievement of the characters' goals, once the major events have played out and brought resolution. Readers finish a thematically complete work with the feeling that nothing of importance has been left out, or that the main conflicts are solved and the main questions answered (8)—as in crime fiction, when the motive is finally explained and the criminal is caught. The latter refers to "the aesthetic pleasure of endings" (170), whereby the narrative achieves completeness whether or not the action does. In other words, stylistic closure renders the narration complete regardless of whether the characters' goals are successfully achieved.

In *Rebecca*, closure is achieved because the second Mrs de Winter describes the life she leads with Maxim in the first couple of chapters, so that readers receive early information about the main characters after the burning of Manderley. This also happens in *Mary Anne*, du Maurier's fictionalised account of her great-great-grandmother Mary Anne Clarke (1776-1852),

³ See David H. Richter, *Fable's End: Completeness and Closure in Rhetorical Fiction*, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974. Richter does not use these two terms exactly but these are the concepts explored in the book.

where the deaths of the central characters signal the end of events, drawing the narrative to a close. Her death provides a background against which the fate of each important man in her life is explained, allowing stylistic closure to be achieved, but it is narrated at the beginning of the novel. The removal of unstable situations that lead to the events portrayed in the story, together with the formation of a new equilibrium after the central conflicts, provide readers with a strong sense of finality (Richter 166), and hence, when readers feel that their desire to know is fulfilled, epistemophilia is achieved.

At this point it must be noted that many du Maurier novels have an *absence* of closure, which may contribute to the power of her stories, and thus it is important to understand her treatment of the beginnings and endings of her works. For example, in *My Cousin Rachel*, the narrative remains stylistically intact even though thematic completeness is not achieved. To use Richter's term, the "plot-question" remains unanswered (8) because, as a first-person narrator, Philip is unable to find out whether Rachel is guilty or innocent, which frustrates the reader's epistemophilic needs. Yet the narrative is complete, as is made evident by the circularity that has the final line in the novel echo the opening sentence, "They used to hang men at Four Turnings in the old days. Not any more, though" (335). In some of du Maurier's novels, therefore, readers do not get all their questions answered in the end, but the characters move on all the same. Both John-Henry Brodrick (*Hungry Hill*) and John (*The Scapegoat*) involuntarily leave the scene of action at the end - John taking the road to Bellême and Mortagne (373), while John-Henry departs without a clear destination, although it is suggested that he will travel and see the world (515-16). In both novels, the major events are indeed concluded, but readers are left with unanswered questions, like *What will their next destination be? How will John survive without his job? or What will John-Henry do without Clonmere Castle?* The fact that these particular questions are left hanging frustrates epistemophilia, and offers a different experience from that offered by the reading of *Rebecca*, or *The King's General*, or *Mary Anne*, in which no specific questions regarding the characters are left unanswered. Though both thematic completion and stylistic closure are achieved in *Hungry Hill* and *The Scapegoat*, epistemophilia is not.

These open endings also differ from du Maurier's treatment of the ending in one of her short stories, *No Motive* (1980). The story investigates the suicide of a young woman: when her motive is finally discovered, the investigator decides not to tell her husband. Here is a case where the readers have the central question in the story answered, but the character - in this case, the husband - does not. Hence, in *No Motive*, epistemophilia and stylistic closure are achieved despite the fact that the character's goal is not.

As the two novels discussed below are not among the most widely read of du Maurier's works, it should be noted here that *The Glass-Blowers* is a homodiegetic non-linear family story told from the perspective of du Maurier's ancestress, spanning roughly a hundred years, from 1747 to 1844. The first-person narrator, Sophie Duval, is the younger sister of the author's great-great-grandfather Robert-Mathurin Busson du Maurier, a French master craftsman, but the prologue and epilogue are told by a third-person omniscient narrator who frames Sophie's retelling of family events, essentially creating bookends to the main narrative. As for *Hungry Hill*, it is a heterodiegetic linear narrative divided into five books and an epilogue. Spanning a century from 1820 to 1920, it deals with five generations of the Brodrick family, the inheritors of Clonmere Castle and of the copper mines at Hungry Hill, who struggle to survive a curse laid upon them by a rival family. As these two family narratives end, the characters move on to other courses of action, so that the reader's epistemophilia is at once fulfilled *and* frustrated: both stylistic closure and thematic completeness are achieved while various questions are left unanswered. In both novels, these narrative features play an important role in the resolution of the tales.

The Prologue of *The Glass-Blowers*

Set in June 1844, the prologue of *The Glass-Blowers* details the visit Sophie Duval pays to Louis-Mathurin to confirm his identity as her brother Robert's lost descendant. It performs several functions, including those of contextualisation, characterisation, and perhaps most importantly, closure, in the form not only of a reconnection with the rightful heir, but also of the fulfilment of a promise and the passing of a crystal tumbler. That passing of a tumbler is particularly significant, because it is a family heirloom supposedly created in 1769 by Sophie's father Mathurin Busson, in the foundry of La Pierre, Coudrecieux, on the occasion of the visit of King Louis XV, a great honour for the Busson family (11, 41).

Since its main object is to create suspense in the exposition scene, the issue of epistemophilia is not particularly significant in the prologue: its first function is to explain that the family story needs (re)telling as a result of Robert's fabrications regarding his lineage and family identity. Robert escaped his debts and the prospect of imprisonment during the French Revolution by settling in England, but he made his descendants believe that he was an *émigré*, a fallen aristocrat who narrowly avoided the guillotine. He returned to France alone in 1802 and stayed there for nine years, leaving his second wife Marie-Françoise to believe him dead and to raise their young family on her own. Moreover, Robert's family is unaware that he had

been the heir of a glass-blowing enterprise, that he was previously married and had abandoned a teenage son. When the elderly Sophie realises this, she is compelled to disclose the truth of their family history through a letter to her long-lost nephew.

It is important to note that, although the novel is a fictionalised account of family history, Sophie Duval's letter and the crystal tumbler were not creations of the author's imagination. They were both in du Maurier's possession when she wrote *The Glass-Blowers* (Hall, "Introduction"). As described in the novel, the author's grandfather George "Kicky" du Maurier inherited these important heirlooms, which were later passed to his son Gerald du Maurier and then to Daphne du Maurier after his death. She remembered the crystal tumbler as "the family Luck", which was put on display on special occasions. The letter is now kept in Special Collections at the University of Exeter library, and when George du Maurier inherited the letter, he proudly made his own annotations in the margins, explaining his relationship to his French ancestors (Hall, "Introduction").

Sophie's ten-page letter was what inspired du Maurier to embark on a series of visits to central-western France, starting in October 1955, to discover more about her own family history. She was excited to be able to verify the contents of the letter by finding the places associated with her forebears, as well as many relevant birth, marriage, and death certificates (Hall, "Introduction"). The du Mauriers' ancestor, Robert-Mathurin Busson, came from Saint-Martin-de-Chenu, a village in the Province of Anjou (in the southern part of the current Département de la Sarthe). His father was born in the village of Coudrecieux, also in Sarthe, and his mother, Madeleine Labbé, came from the village of Saint-Christophe-en-Touraine, which is currently known as Saint-Christophe-sur-le-Nais (Hall, "Introduction"). These facts and verifications were particularly significant for Daphne du Maurier as a family chronicler herself.

Thus, Sophie Duval's role as a family chronicler in the novel echoes that of the author herself as the family historian, and du Maurier's great-grandfather Louis-Mathurin Busson becomes a character and the initial recipient of this family narrative. Epistemophilia here concerns the author herself just as much as it concerns Sophie, Louis-Mathurin, and Kicky; for Sophie's narrative—Sophie's letter as real artefacts—is the final revelation of how the du Mauriers came to be, and was instrumental in satisfying Daphne du Maurier's own need to learn about the history of her family.

This contextualisation contributes to the characterisation of Robert, and explains why the reconnection with Louis-Mathurin signifies closure for Sophie. Robert's choice of an aristocratic lineage and the glamorised version of his personal history suggest a lifelong desire

to be associated with the aristocracy and to live in luxury, causing the series of events that eventually led to his bankruptcies. Robert's recklessness, his irresponsibility, and his indifference to the feelings of others create a pattern in which bold risks are taken on a whim, problems arise, and his family are left to suffer the consequences of his poor judgment.

One of the many consequences is the breakup of the Busson family: Robert abandons his second family and then fakes his death. For decades this second family leads a life entirely disconnected from Sophie and her family, of whose existence they are unaware. By reconnecting with Louis-Mathurin, Sophie assuages Robert's lifelong regret of having abandoned his second family—the family from which the author herself descended—and restores the wholeness of the Busson family. This carried particular significance to Daphne du Maurier as the lost family thus retrieved their place in the genealogical tree.

Another consequence is the symbolic, decades-long disruption in the lineage caused by the fact that the family crystal tumbler, engraved by Robert and Sophie's father Mathurin Busson, never passed on to the rightful heir when it followed Robert to France or when it was placed in Sophie's care after his death. Closure is only achieved for Sophie when she presents the heirloom to its rightful owner, her great-nephew George "Kicky" Busson, Daphne du Maurier's grandfather. Kicky's claim to the tumbler by right of inheritance is symbolic in three ways: it represents closure for the dramatic life and affairs of Robert-Mathurin Busson through the reconnection in the lineage; it epitomises the family's reconnection to its Busson lineage; and it embodies a future that will hopefully turn out to be quite different from his grandfather's past—full of triumph and artistic talent.

Moreover, the prologue is also essential in providing a sense of closure not only to the Busson family but also to the readers. Epistemophilia is achieved here insofar as Sophie is reunited with Robert's lost second family, and the crystal tumbler is passed to its rightful heir. With the final debunking of Robert's fabricated tales and the transmission of the family heirloom, the prologue acts as an epilogue to the family tale while creating suspense.

The Epilogue of *The Glass-Blowers*

The epilogue of *The Glass-Blowers*, set on 6 November 1844, does not only achieve closure for readers, but also for the lead character, Sophie Duval. It signifies the completion of her family history as she relives the incidents of her life, and prompts her to revisit La Pierre, her childhood home, the next day. This echoes du Maurier's own visits to the places described in Sophie's letter. At La Pierre, Sophie observes the life of the secluded glass community which

passes on ancient traditions to their successors (367). At the beginning of her narrative, her grandfather Pierre Labbé warned her mother Magdaleine in 1747 about the world of glass, "If you marry into glass, [...] you will say goodbye to everything familiar, and enter a closed world" (15). Almost a hundred years later, Sophie Duval sees that nothing has changed, that it is still a community where the craftsmen and workmen abide by their own rules and customs, and remain indifferent to the world outside (367). What she observes conveys a strong sense of succession and continuation, and brings her narrative to full circle.

Epistemophilia, in this case, is achieved when the main issue of Louis-Mathurin's parentage has been dealt with in Sophie's narrative, and when the fates of the other characters are communicated in the epilogue, although they do not necessarily have any bearing on Louis-Mathurin. These include the deaths of Robert's eldest son Jacques, his youngest sister Edmé, Sophie's husband François Duval, and the rest of the large cast of family members. Epistemophilia is frustrated, however, when one piece of information is missing from the epilogue, which is Louis-Mathurin's reception of Sophie's grand narrative of the family mystery. His reaction to the real family story, and more importantly, the cruel truth of his father's fake death and his abandonment of his mother and siblings in France, are left unknown. The revelation of his true ancestry should have a profound effect on his perception of a father of whom he has no recollection and whom he was raised to regard as "a man of tremendous principle and integrity" (5). This is the illusion that Sophie shatters by delivering the truth about their family, just as Robert's recklessness through the years had shattered the Busson family, as symbolised by the vulnerability of the tumbler. It is through these family narratives that du Maurier explores "the shaping influence of family history upon an individual's identity", and what it means to be a du Maurier (Baker 272). In the same light, the revelation should force Louis-Mathurin to reconsider his identity as the descendant of a commoner, not of noble forebears, and to confront his roots. His father Robert bluffed that he became a glass-engraver out of "amusement", not from need (8), but the truth is that his artistry as a master glass-engraver is what defines him as the heir of the family business. Thus, artistry, in fact, plays a more significant role in Robert's identity than he claimed. Louis-Mathurin's reaction to all of these cruel truths about his father and their ancestry is the missing piece in the narrative that frustrates the reader's desire to know.

Significantly, the epilogue highlights the fact that meaning-making lies more in the act of telling and less in the reception of the tale. Epistemophilia may be frustrated for readers, but for Sophie, the delivery of the papers alone involves closure. "Even if he does not read any of it aloud, [...] or suppresses those parts that show his family, and especially his father Robert,

to disadvantage, it will not matter. I shall have done my duty and told the truth. Most important of all, his son George, the boy he called Kicky, will keep the glass" (368). It is the passing of the symbolic family heirloom, which happens in the prologue, and the passing of the family story, which occurs in the epilogue, that really matter. Both of them are required for full closure for Sophie.

Louis-Mathurin's role as a "receptive audience member" (Borland 438), meanwhile, is less significant in the tale. In fact, it is not revealed in the novel whether he has even received or read Sophie's letter, for the epilogue ends with the *dispatch* of these papers to him. For readers this is a gap in their knowledge of the family's story because, to them, Louis-Mathurin's reaction to a truth that does not place his much-admired father in a positive light is more relevant than details about the deaths of the minor characters, without which there would still be closure. But for du Maurier, his reception of the family tale is not a necessary element in the resolution, for his acceptance of Sophie's account of the family story is already implied from the fact that he had preserved the letter and passed them to his son George, and later to the author herself⁴. What is more important is that the enduring narrative ensures that the story continues in the family, and the truth of the lineage is passed to the descendants. As Alison Light observes, the fortunes of the family come full circle when Sophie Duval hands the glass heirloom to her great-nephew Kicky, thus bringing the distant past of the family close to home (193). Throughout Sophie's family narrative there is a strong symbolism of the Busson world shattering like glass because of the irresponsible lies of Robert, yet du Maurier's novel ends with a positive tone—with pride in the family's humble beginnings, and with the assertion that the tradition of her glass-blowing ancestors continues to thrive.

The Epilogue of *Hungry Hill*

While the epilogue of *The Glass-Blowers* mentions the flourishing glass-blowing business of the Bussons, the epilogue of *Hungry Hill* details the downfall of the Brodrick family and the fulfilment of a curse. Closure is achieved when the curse is fulfilled, but epistemophilia is frustrated when, as in many other du Maurier novels, the fate of the central character remains ambiguous.

⁴ Daphne du Maurier was aware that her great-grandfather Louis-Mathurin and her grandfather George, despite having allowed Sophie's letter to be passed on, were in fact to some extent farceurs like their forefather Robert. George sustained Robert's fantasy of having an aristocratic lineage through portraying their forbears as French aristocrats in his own novel about family history, *Peter Ibbetson* (1891). Daphne du Maurier herself, however, preferred to tell the truth as a family chronicler like her ancestress, Sophie Duval.

This particular epilogue is the result of narrative experimentation on du Maurier's part. While the untitled epilogue of *The Glass-Blowers* is much shorter, serves to give additional information about Sophie Duval's letter or various characters, and fulfils the reader's desire to know, the epilogue in *Hungry Hill* is structurally different. Du Maurier entitles it "The Inheritance, 1920" and extends it over three chapters, thus making it seem more like a subplot with its own elements of suspense, or its conflicts, climax, and conclusion. With the first two of these chapters functioning as suspenseful exposition, closure and epistemophilia are only achieved and/or frustrated in the last chapter of the epilogue.

Du Maurier approaches this epilogue in a different manner from that of *The Glass-Blowers*. Each of the five books that precede the epilogue is titled with the name of the characters and the corresponding years, as in "Book One: Copper John, 1820-1828", "Book Two: Greyhound John, 1828-1837" (Copper John's second son), "Book Three: 'Wild Johnnie', 1837-1858" (Greyhound John's eldest son), "Book Four: Henry, 1858-1874" (Wild Johnnie's younger brother), and "Book Five: Hal, 1874-1895" (Henry's son). Yet du Maurier does not name the epilogue "Book Six: John-Henry, 1920", because she draws a distinction between that particular section and the five books before. While those other books involve the personal histories of the heirs and make up the grander, decades-long narrative of the Irish family's history, the epilogue stretches over a few days only and focuses on the inheritance itself. Instead of providing supplementary information about what happens to the characters, the epilogue resolves the issue of what happens to the estate. For *Hungry Hill*, epistemophilia concerns both the fate of the inheritance and that of its heir; and although both aspects are addressed in the epilogue, the heading du Maurier gives to this section suggests that the fate of Clonmere Castle is the most important question the epilogue needs to address.

The answer to the question hinges on two factors: the heir's safety, and his intentions. The previous patriarch of the family, Henry Brodrick, brother of "Wild Johnnie", led a long life but had no intention of preserving the estate, as he even attempted to break the entail. His son and heir Hal Brodrick wanted to keep the estate, but died before he could inherit it. The fate of Clonmere Castle and the nearby woods thus depends on whether John-Henry, the son of Hal and the current Brodrick heir, lives, and whether he decides to retain the estate. There is a possibility that John-Henry will die young, for the five generations of the Brodrick heirs, due to "the Donovan curse", either die young or lead long, lonely lives.

This can be traced back to the century-long rivalry between the Brodricks and the Donovans. When Copper John Brodrick of Clonmere Castle develops the copper mines at

Hungry Hill in 1820, the patriarch of the Donovan family, Morty Donovan, curses him and his heir Greyhound John on two occasions:

"I tell you your mine will be in ruins, and your house destroyed, and your children forgotten and fallen maybe into disgrace, but this hill will be standing still to confound you." (11)

"I curse you, John Brodrick, [...] and not only you, but your sons after you, and your grandsons, and may your wealth bring them nothing but despair and desolation and evil, until the last of them stands humble and ashamed amongst the ruins of it, with the Donovans back again in Clonmere on the land that belongs to them." (70)

Thus the curse, as a symbol of rivalry, is also what seeks closure in the epilogue. In other words, epistemophilia is achieved when the epilogue resolves the Brodrick-Donovan conflicts and provides answers to the fate of Clonmere Castle.

The epilogue takes place in 1920, when Henry Brodrick has died, and his grandson John-Henry returns to Doonhaven to claim his inheritance, Clonmere Castle. By then the family estate has been left uninhabited by the Brodricks for half a century, because Henry Brodrick removed his family from Clonmere upon being widowed. Unlike his grandfather, John-Henry sees himself as a Brodrick of Clonmere, and intends to restore the mansion, and return to live in it with his mother. He describes his attachment to the family estate:

'This overgrown sub who sweats his guts out in an engine-room and then goes ashore at Malta and overstays his leave, isn't John-Henry at all. The real John-Henry is standing in front of Clonmere, looking across the creek to Hungry Hill. And that's where I belong. That's where my roots are, that's where I was born and bred.' (496)

This symbolises permanence and the continuation of a legacy which is particularly significant at a time of change and upheaval. John-Henry's grand plan to restore the estate and its nearby woods thus raises the readers' hopes, because it signifies that after half a century of negligence, the last of the Brodricks finally returns to his family estate, hopefully to revive its past glory and prosperity. This is the closure which readers may anticipate in the epilogue.

Rather uncharacteristically, du Maurier creates suspense at the beginning of the epilogue by placing John-Henry in dangerous situations. In the first chapter, he finds himself at the mercy of stray bullets fired in a fight between soldiers and civilians, while in the second chapter, six strangers kidnap him on his way to Clonmere and hold him captive until after his mansion has burnt down. Du Maurier provides an answer to the key question in the reader's mind through a twist—the safety of the heir is ensured, but the inheritance is not. Clonmere Castle

stands as an enduring entity that testifies to the turmoil of changing times, due to the rivalry between the Brodricks and the Donovans, until its destruction in 1920. The Brodricks may have been blessed by material prosperity, but they suffer from early death or loneliness. The burning of the mansion symbolises an end to both the prosperity and the sufferings of the Brodrick heirs.

It should be noted that, while the burning of Clonmere Castle echoes the burning of Manderley in *Rebecca*, and where John-Henry's loss of his inheritance parallels the unnamed heroine's loss of Manderley, "For Manderley was ours no longer. Manderley was no more" (8), the contexts of the destruction in the two novels are very different. In *Rebecca*, Manderley is destroyed as an act of revenge for the death of Rebecca on the personal level; but Clonmere Castle is demolished as an act of retribution on the national level during the Irish War of Independence. The country houses (or "big houses") of Irish landowners like the Brodricks were symbolic of the power of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the economic strength of the landed class⁵. Hence the physical dismantling of these "big houses" symbolises the destruction of the British power base (Clark 75), and has become a phenomenon during the Irish revolutionary period (1919-1923), beginning in the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) and becoming intensified during the Irish Civil War (1922-1923). Thus, Clonmere Castle becomes the target of the revolutionists in addition to the antagonism on a personal level with the Donovans, with its demolition changing the significance of the Donovan curse in the context of colonial oppression.

Nevertheless, the destructions of both grand mansions are significant to the texts as a whole. For *Rebecca*, the burning of Manderley does not signify the end of the influence of Rebecca, but rather, it represents the beginning of an aimless life and a flight from England for the two protagonists. As the second Mrs de Winter admits in "The Rebecca Epilogue", a section in *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories*, "Those things we are trying to forget and put behind us would stir again, and that sense of fear, of furtive unrest struggling at length to master unreasoning panic—now peacefully stilled, thank God—might in some manner unforeseen become a living companion, as it did before" (37). In *Hungry Hill*, however, it is a fulfilment of Morty Donovan's curse a century ago, while John-Henry's grand plan of restoring the castle vanishes into thin air. True to the Donovan curse, Hungry Hill stands to witness the rise and fall of the Brodrick family until, a hundred years later, the last of the Brodricks, John-Henry, returns the land to Eugene Donovan, as Morty Donovan had prophesised.

⁵ See Terence A. M. Dooley, *Decline of the Big House in Ireland: A Study of Irish Landed Families, 1860-1960* (2001), p.30.

Closure is finally achieved, as the Brodrick heir makes peace with the Donovans and ends the antagonism between the two families for good; and, like the de Winters in *Rebecca*, John-Henry embarks on what might be perceived as voluntary exile at the end of *Hungry Hill*. Yet this is also precisely where epistemophilia is frustrated. The reasons for the retrocession of Clonmere to its original owners and for John-Henry's voluntary exile are never stated. Neither is his fate as the Brodrick heir described after the burning of the mansion, unlike that of Maxim de Winter and his wife in the opening chapter of *Rebecca*. Epistemophilia is fulfilled for *Rebecca* because the opening chapters of the book give readers "a sensation of closure" when they realise that "nothing important has been omitted in the text" (Adamo 98). Readers already know what happens to Maxim and his second wife after the burning of Manderley because the dream sequence in the first chapter of *Rebecca* demonstrates that the couple remains haunted by Manderley and their experiences in the mansion, while the second chapter illustrates the dull life they lead in their voluntary exile "many hundred miles away in an alien land" (8). The unnamed narrator expresses a certain degree of contentment as she feels "boredom is a pleasing antidote to fear" (9). John-Henry, however, simply embarks on a journey into the unknown. Readers remain ignorant of the life John-Henry will lead, and how he feels about his exile. The Epilogue in *Hungry Hill* is not informative enough in these respects. Therefore, despite the fact that the conflict between the Brodricks and the Donovans is resolved, the readers' epistemophilia is, in fact, frustrated.

Du Maurier demonstrates her stylistic versatility and ability through the various forms which her prologues and epilogues take. Some of her novels, including *Rebecca*, *The King's General*, and *My Cousin Rachel*, begin by the end, though the corresponding sections are not specifically labelled; while *The King's General* concludes with a brief three-page section ("What Happened to the People in the Story") which could be perceived as an epilogue. Du Maurier's treatment of that section thus differs from those of *Hungry Hill* and *The Glass-Blowers* in the sense that, whereas the narrative of *The King's General* is complete without an epilogue, neither of the family narratives is, for it is in these sections that du Maurier ties up the loose strands of her stories and deals with what is not settled yet (the inheritance in both novels), thereby fulfilling the reader's epistemophilia.

In "The Art of Fiction", Henry James mockingly asserts that a "happy ending" is merely "a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks" (3). Although du Maurier's novels are often devoid of happy endings, they comply with this tradition to an extent, as John-Henry returns the land to Eugene Donovan, and Sophie Duval dispatches the letter that will become her family's legacy.

Ultimately, though, as Mike Cadden underscores, epilogues are not about the characters, but about creating the desired reading experience for the implied reader (344). Since closure is provided in the prologue and epilogues of *Hungry Hill* and *The Glass-Blowers*, it can be argued that these particular narrative features are employed precisely to give "a sense of what happens after the events depicted in the narrative" (Cadden 345) and thus fulfil the readers' desire to know. In the experimental epilogue of *Hungry Hill* that includes a subplot in the tale, du Maurier manipulates the hopes, relief, and disappointment felt by her readers, while in the epilogue to *The Glass-Blowers*, she simultaneously fulfils and frustrates their expectations by both providing resolutions to key issues and writing ambiguous endings that raise still more questions. Ultimately, it is through the use of the particular narrative features of such sections, in which symbolic legacies are passed on to their rightful heirs—in the shape of a letter, or a crystal tumbler, or a castle and its surrounding woods—that the key themes of lineage, transmission, and continuation are highlighted. In the lesser-known family chronicles of Daphne du Maurier, epistemophilia is simultaneously fulfilled and frustrated, providing a unique reading experience.

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