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重覆的夢境：論達芬·茉莉兒之懸疑浪漫小說《蝴蝶夢》中的雙重快感

A Repeated Dream: Double Pleasure in Daphne du Maurier's Romantic Suspense

Rebecca

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A REPEATED DREAM: DOUBLE PLEASURE IN DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班
碩士論文提要

論文名稱：重覆的夢境：

論達芬·茉莉兒之懸疑浪漫小說《蝴蝶夢》中的雙重快感

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論文提要內容：

本文研究暢銷懸疑浪漫小說《蝴蝶夢》(Rebecca, 1938)中所蘊含的大量閱讀快感，並試圖以羅蘭·巴特對於快感之論述，融合羅曼史小說相關之大眾文化理論，勾勒出「雙重快感」之原型構想，並以此理論解析《蝴蝶夢》文本中的快感運作。「雙重快感」理論點出，不論是巴特提及的「一般快感(plaisir)」與「極樂(jouissance)」，或者是大眾文化研究中，與父權社會合作的「共謀式快感(complicit pleasure)」以及相抵觸的「抵抗式快感(resistive pleasure)」，都無法帶來徹底的滿足。相反地，正是在這兩類快感之間的游移、模糊的地帶，才是衍生更巨大快感之所在。讀者能藉由文本中的多重角色身分，在兩類快感的擺盪中，激發出更強烈的雙重快感。第一章首先對《蝴蝶夢》文本及相關評論作概略統整的介紹，並針對其歷久不衰的暢銷性，切入閱讀快感的主題。第二章針對「快感」的定義，做一系列的文獻回顧，並以巴特的快感理論為基礎架構，融合大眾文化研究領域裡的快感相關論述，構築出「雙重快感」的理論模型，並以圖像方式清楚呈現。第三章進入文本分析，討論文本中的重要角色如何反映了「雙重快感」的運作：莉碧嘉大膽享受著表裡不一的衝突生活所帶來的雙重快感，而無名的女主角抱持著對莉碧嘉的憧憬與模仿慾望，與莉碧嘉進行幻想式的重疊，再由自身複雜多重的身分認同之中，獲得雙重快感。第四章著重探討《蝴蝶夢》的讀者們如何能與角色進行心理重疊，脫離了日常自我的框架，游移擺盪於各種位置之間而獲得雙重快感。最終章將點出，《蝴蝶夢》的半開放(迴圈)式的結局，巧妙呼應著羅曼史文類「過程重於結局」的本質，也諭示出：羅曼史讀者重複閱讀、購買浪漫小說的普遍習慣，亦是試圖回歸雙重快感的一種表現。

關鍵詞：雙重快感、《蝴蝶夢》、羅曼史文類、快感論述、一般快感、極樂、共謀式快感、抵抗式快感、多重主體位置

Abstract

This thesis aims to analyze the working of pleasure in the popular romantic suspense *Rebecca* through the “double pleasure theory” that is mainly based on Barthes’s pleasure theory of “*plaisir*” and “*jouissance*.” Chapter One introduces the novel *Rebecca* and the pleasure issue involved within, a widely discussed topic raised by theorists in the field of cultural studies. Chapter Two seeks for the definition of pleasure by providing a general review of how the remarkable theorists, including Freud, Lacan, and Barthes, have discussed and analyzed the meaning of pleasure. From their observations, it can be deduced that pleasure are mainly divided into two kinds: the pleasure of the “*Plasir*” (the release of excitation) and the pleasure of the “*Jouissance*” (the intensification of excitation). The double pleasure theory inherits this basic structure, while adding a new point that the greatest pleasure cannot appear alone in either kind of single pleasure, but can only exist in the shifting process between these two. The theory can also be brought to the cultural layer of discussion about female pleasure, suggesting that women’s greatest pleasure occurs exactly *between* patriarchal ideologies and feminist values. Chapter Three focuses on textual analysis of the novel, revealing that the most important characters of the novel, Rebecca and the narrator/protagonist, have both proven the successful working of double pleasure throughout the whole story. Chapter Four discusses how the readers can also receive this double pleasure by identifying themselves with the female characters in the novel, and how the novel’s circular narrative structure can also help readers to retain that double pleasure. Much emphasis is put in Chapter Five to show that the novel’s special narrative structure also highlights the very phenomena in the

romance genre—that the process of romance is far more significant than the ending—which presents as well a fact that romance reader’s repetitive reading/buying tendency is originated from the wish to regain double pleasure.



Keywords: *Rebecca*, double pleasure, romance genre, pleasure theory, *plisir*, *jouissance*, complicit pleasure, resistive pleasure

Chapter One Introduction

Rebecca, one of the best-selling romance novels in the 20th century ever since its publication in 1938, is a gothic romantic suspense written by the English author Daphne du Maurier. While numerous of du Maurier's suspense novels and short stories have been adapted into popular motion pictures, *Rebecca* is probably her most remarkable masterpiece that has been translated into more than twenty languages and made into stage plays, television series and films, including the classic 1940 adaptation by Alfred Hitchcock. Successfully capturing the atmosphere of the Cornish country setting, the novel mainly tells how an inexperienced girl, the narrator/protagonist "I," whose name is never mentioned in the story, marries Maxim de Winter, the middle-aged aristocratic widower, and how she is haunted by the perfect image of Maxim's deceased first wife Rebecca after their marriage. After finally finding out that Rebecca is actually killed by Maxim and that she is an adulterous "bad wife," the narrator/protagonist is able to consolidate the love between her and her husband. However, their beloved country estate Manderley is eventually burnt by Rebecca's loyal maid Mrs. Danvers, and the memory of Manderley still haunts the narrator/protagonist in her dream.

Like many of the romance novels written for female readers, *Rebecca* has not received much critical acclaim despite its popular success. In fact, the whole romance genre is "the genre which has been taken least seriously in literary studies," and "compared disadvantageously with more 'serious' literary forms" (McCracken 75). Since the romance, as a genre "created primarily for women" (Palmer 154), always offers the same pattern including fixed types of characters and a monogamous marriage that ends the story, feminist critics tend to rate it as second-class literature

for duped women readers and consider that it “reinforces an assumption of male authority” (Mussell 126).

However, such interpretation of women readers has fixed them into passive receivers of the text, and might be too narrow in exploring their repetitive motivation in buying and reading romances. Why do women read romances? Are female readers simply “either masochistic or inherently stupid” since they are “the victims of, and irrational slaves to, their sensibilities” (Light 8)? Romance clearly offers women readers pleasure, but is this pleasure simply propaganda for the patriarchal ideology, or the deceptive “complicit pleasure” raised by Adorno and Horkheimer (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, trans. 150-51. 1986)? Alison Light’s arguments have heralded a new way of reading romance by pointing out pleasure as the key element in romance reading:

I think we need critical discussions that are not afraid of the fact that literature is a source of pleasure, passion *and* entertainment. This is not because pleasure can then explain away politics... Rather it is precisely because pleasure is experienced by women and men within and despite those [social and historical] constraints... literary texts might function in our lives as imaginative constructions and interpretations. It is this meshing of the questions of pleasure, fantasy and language... which makes it so uniquely important to women.

(Light 8-9)

In other words, pleasure serves a function to explain away female readers’ motivation in a positive way that is free from Left/Right wing ideologies or moral values (Light 8; Chen 151).

What, then, is the pleasure in reading *Rebecca*? Readers might find it

exhilaratingly pleasant to see how the ultimately confident woman Rebecca crushes the patriarchal values within the marriage system; at the same time they might also feel glad when the narrator/protagonist's middle-class femininity, which the readers might be more familiar with and can easily identify with, finally triumphs over Rebecca's upper-class femininity because of her virtue (Light 11-15). However, "that triumph involves a deep sense of loss" because both Maxim and the narrator/protagonist have lost their place, and Rebecca's spirit is still alive as a symbol of desire in the narrator/protagonist's dreams (21). It is not only hard to tell who is truly happy in the end, but also difficult to assert to which side, whether to Maxim's or to Rebecca's, the narrator/protagonist finally identifies with. The only thing that we can be certain about by now, is the popular readers' timeless joy in reading this fiction that made it an eternal bestseller. Does the reader's pleasure come from Rebecca's pleasure, or the narrator/protagonist's? Or is this endless uncertainty of subjectivity between two kinds of values the key element that enables readers to make new discoveries of selfhood and to enjoy the pleasure derived from such exploration?

This paper will then give a close study of the pleasure issue in *Rebecca*, using especially Roland Barthes's ideas of "double pleasure" ("plaisir" and "jouissance"). It will be discovered that it is from the double pleasure, the shifting process of subjectivity between the realms of "plaisir" and "jouissance," that the feeling of pleasure in reading romances like *Rebecca* reaches its maximum. To prove the point, books and essays focusing on *Rebecca* and the pleasure issue in the romance genre will be generally introduced, particularly Alison Light's "Returning to Manderley: Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class," Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance*, along with Tania Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance* and *The Women Who Knew Too Much*. Together with abundant textual proof from the novel itself, a series of structural graphics will also be presented to explain and illustrate the working of

“double pleasure.” Finally, this thesis will argue that the novel’s “endless shifting” in double pleasure corresponds and mirrors the readers’ repetitive buying and reading of romances like *Rebecca*.

- Literature Review

Generally speaking, critics of *Rebecca* have put much emphasis on the novel’s presentation of “English society between wars” and “the identification problems of the narrator/protagonist.” According to Alison Light, “*Rebecca* is a rewrite of *Jane Eyre* amidst a nostalgia for the waning of the British Empire and the decline of the aristocracy” (7). The novel keeps presenting a yearning for a past England, the prosperity of the British Empire, and the decencies of the English, so strong that it is akin to a yearning for a lost Eden. The novel also reflects the insecurity among the English public between the two devastating wars, during which England was facing the fast rise of America. Therefore the lost prosperity of England is lamented, and some of the traditional values are to be cherished again: “[a]fter the war, men and women were... sentimental also in the ways that embraced homes and family, local gossip, and ‘ordinariness.’ They wanted to see themselves reflected in the literature they read, however attenuated it might be” (Bloom, “Bestselling Fiction” 193). This definitely has a thing to do with du Maurier’s strong obsession with the tranquil lifestyle in Menabilly, Cornwall, a place she loved so much that it even becomes the prototype of the fictional “Manderley” in *Rebecca* (Kelly 421). Indeed, such nostalgia for Englishness is apparent in the story especially when the narrator/protagonist despises the vain and vulgar American social climber Mrs. Van Hopper, and lauds the decency of the typical English gentleman Maxim de Winter.

Another group of critics adopt the psychoanalytical approach in discussing the novel. *Rebecca* is not only a classical gothic romance but it also tackles complicated

issues, as Richard Kelly mainly points out in his biography of Daphne du Maurier: “[d]u Maurier’s *Rebecca*... contains most of the trappings of the typical gothic romance... however, [it] is much more than a simple thriller of mystery. It is a profound and fascinating study of an obsessive personality, of sexual dominance, of human identity, and the liberation of the hidden self” (Kelly 54). While du Maurier has always been described as a “Brontë-esque” writer due to her wonderful technique in presenting the gothic and mysterious atmosphere with emotional intensity (Bloom, *Bestsellers*, 148), she has invented her idiosyncratic style in writing *Rebecca* with deep psychoanalytical portrayals of its narrator/protagonist who is troubled and uncertain about selfhood. Unlike the heroines of the Brontë sisters who are confident with themselves, the narrator/protagonist in *Rebecca* suffers from a lack of confidence, “childishness,” “total incompetence” and is in a desperate eagerness to replace another woman by imitating her (Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, 47). As Modleski clearly indicates, the story of *Rebecca* is “all about a woman’s problems of ‘overidentification’ with another woman” (44). It is from this angle that the “feminine oedipal complex” is frequently raised up: “*Rebecca* is the story of a woman’s maturation, a woman who must come to terms with a powerful father figure and assorted mother substitutes... *Rebecca* is an oedipal drama from the feminine point of view” (46).

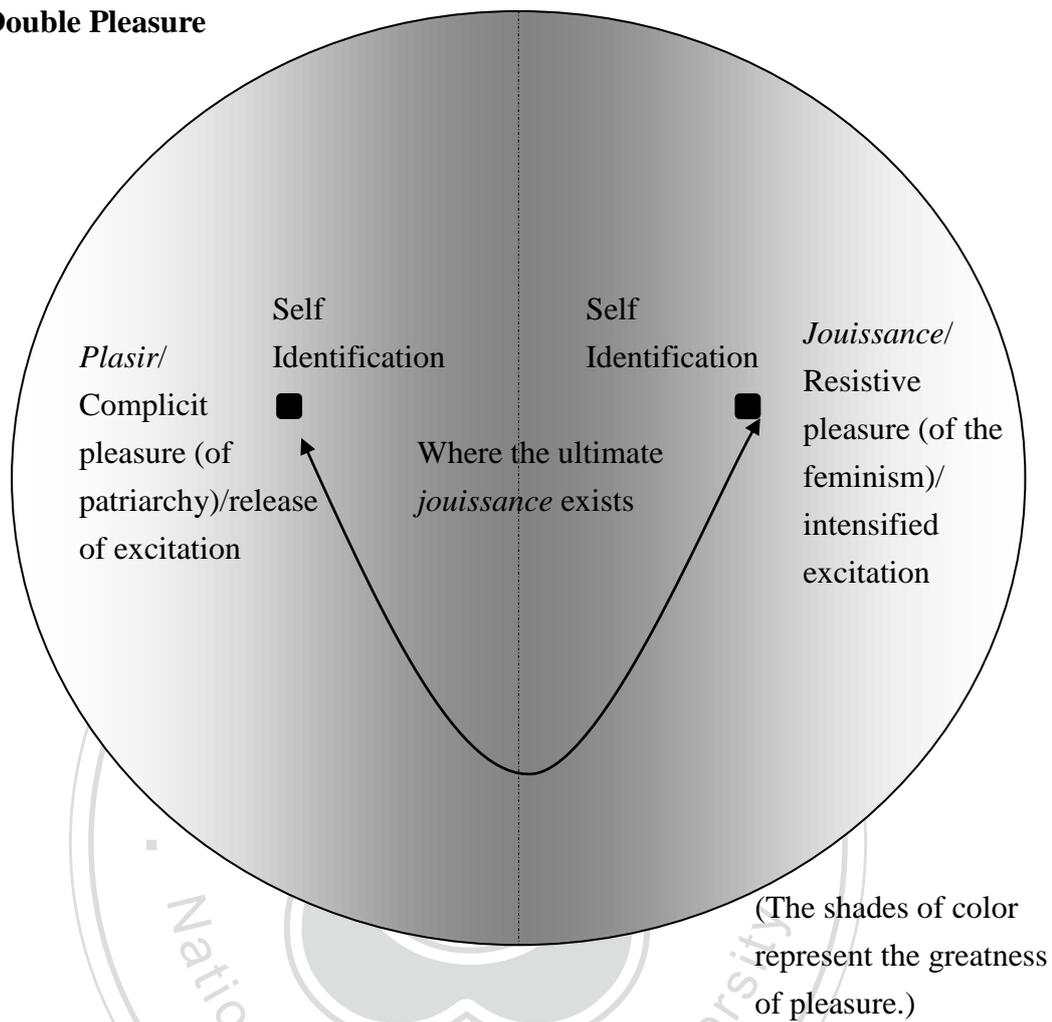
Among all of *Rebecca*’s critics, Alison Light is the one who points out the importance of the pleasure issue in her essay “Returning to Manderley: Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class.” This essay “argues for a social construction of bourgeois femininity in the narrator/protagonist’s collusion with the male (Maxim), and in the self-suppression (murdering) of the disruptive alternative of sensual and independent femininity (Rebecca)” (Makinen 35). Light is also “arguing for an appreciation of how romance works as a space of psychic and cultural resistance and

pleasure, even though it is not a site of open rebellion” (35). More recent critics have followed Light in focusing on the pleasure issue in the analysis of romance novels.

- Methodology and Chapter Organization

What this paper aims to do is to analyze *Rebecca* by using the idea of “double pleasure,” and to study the positive effects of pleasure in romance reading. In doing so, an observation of the essence of romance would be given at the beginning of Chapter Two, along with the study of the co-existence of women’s passiveness and activeness in romance reading. According to Makinen, such an idea is inspired by Tania Modleski, who is always arguing “for a complex process of reading that is both oppositional and capitulating,” and Janice Radway, who discovers “romance’s value in serving ordinary women’s needs within an oppressive system” (Makinen 34). Their theories are to be combined with a study on the evolution of the idea of pleasure that follows later on. Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is a good starting point for the pleasure theories, since he provides the very first distinction between “Thanatos” and “Eros,” the two ways of the working of pleasure through the death drive and the sexual drive. Lacan’s research about the term “*jouissance*” provides the very basis for Barthes’s pleasure theory, in which pleasure is divided into two main kinds: “*plaisir*,” the release of excitation, and “*jouissance*,” the intensified excitations. Barthes offers insofar not only the most relevant research for the hypothesis of “double pleasure” theory, but also the idea of “resistive pleasure” that sets a contrast with Adorno’s “complicit pleasure” in the cultural layer of discussion. In sum, the basic format of double pleasure in the reading experience of *Rebecca* is based mainly on these sets of comparisons, as the following graph may offer a clearer structure for the concept:

The Basic Format of Double Pleasure

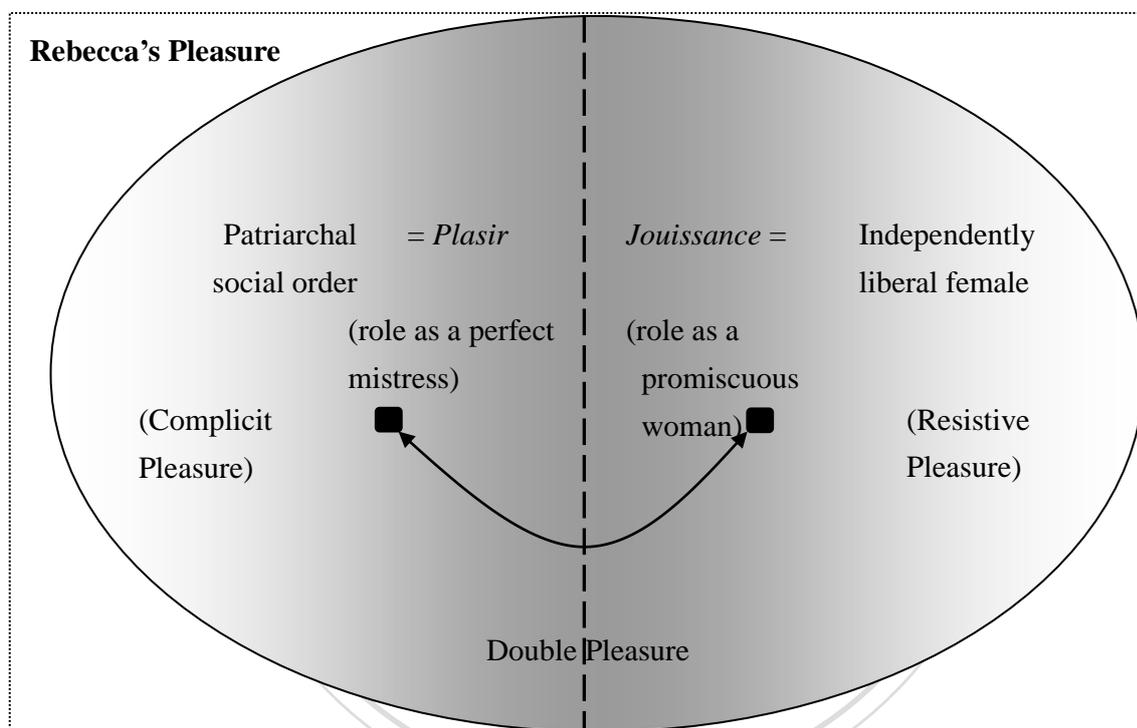


What this chapter also seeks to prove is that the real “jouissance” lies not in the extremity of a particular object, symbolism or value, but rather, as is pointed out by Barthes, in the “seam,” the “cut,” and the “edge” of pleasure (Barthes 7). That is to say, the real pleasure exists not in a single kind of pleasure, but instead, within the process of transition of different kinds of pleasure. It is from this structure we can understand that the strongest pleasure exists in the shifting of the subjectivity between two contradictory feelings or values. ¹

Chapter Three deals with how this working of double pleasure is reflected in the novel, particularly on the most important two female characters, Rebecca and the

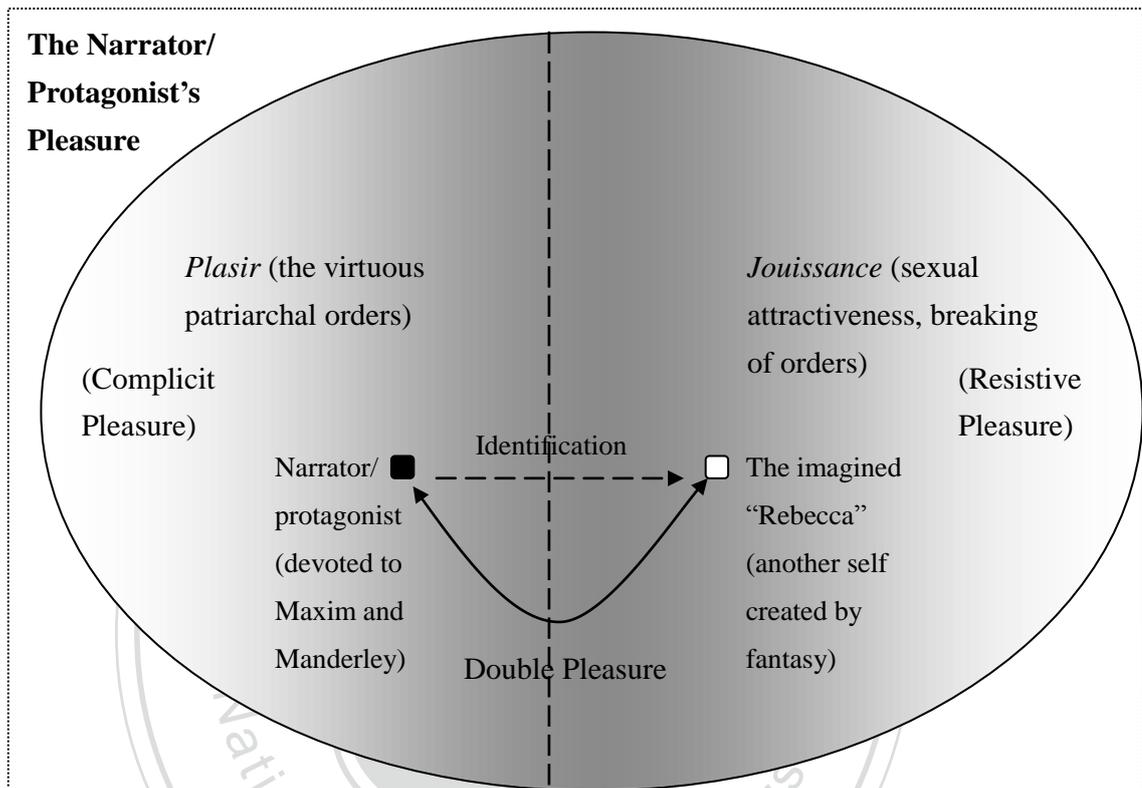
¹ The capitalized terms “*Jouissance*” and “*Plasir*” refer specifically to the two groups of pleasure.

narrator/protagonist. They serve as the main examples for the working of double pleasure since they are able to obtain different kinds of pleasure, unlike people of the traditional Manderly, including Maxim, Beatrice, Old Gram and other servants, who are wholly subject to the rigid social orders that lack excitements (e.g. the stale library, the strict routines in the house... etc.). None of these characters can enjoy Rebecca's double pleasure that shifts between "*Plasir*" and "*Jouissance*," as the following picture shows:



Rebecca does everything "only to make her laugh" (*Rebecca* 340). In other words, she does things only to find pleasure. Her sexual games, her false marriage with Maxim and her hypocritical acts in front of people as a good wife and a perfect mistress, her choice to meet her sex partners once in a while instead of permanently divorcing Maxim...etc., are all to serve her own pleasure at the cost of her husband and the patriarchal order she mocks at. Her seemingly contradictory behaviors can be explained by the double pleasure theory: it is by role-playing a perfect mistress *and* a promiscuous woman that she could obtain the strongest pleasure in her life.

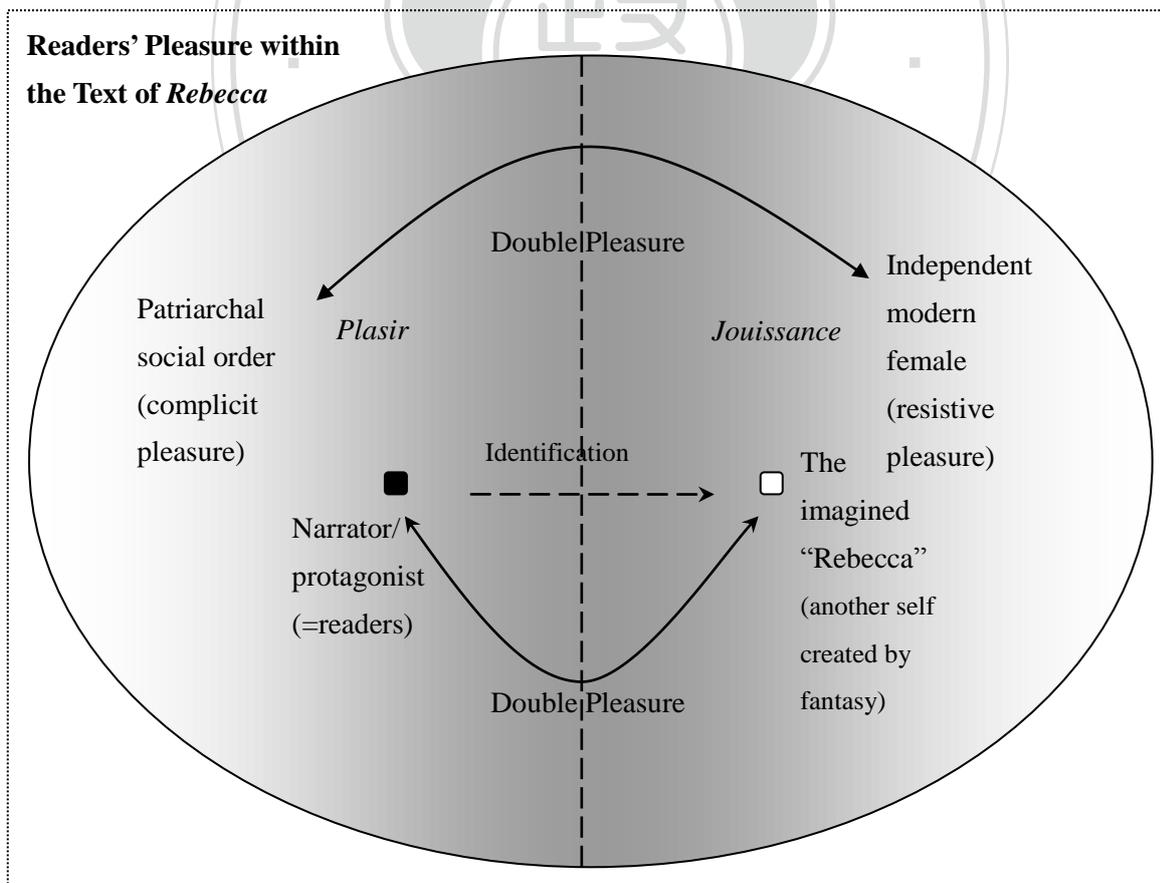
The second part of Chapter Three will be dealing with the narrator/protagonist's pleasure, which is more complicated than Rebecca's, since the narrator/protagonist can obtain excitement and sexual joy only through her identification with Rebecca, as can be explained through the diagram below:



The narrator/protagonist, always trapped in patriarchal values, has no other means to experience sexual pleasure but to imagine herself as Rebecca. On the one hand, she feels content and secured within the patriarchal social orders in Manderley, and succumbs to her husband's absolute authority; yet on the other hand, she also longs for a transformation into a mature and attractive woman like Rebecca. Textual evidence proves that the moments considered most amazingly pleasurable for her are when she switches herself from a dull girl into Rebecca—for example, at the dinner table (du Maurier 200), and before the masquerade ball (205). What is also worth mentioning is that, both *Plasir* and *Jouissance* are the important sources of pleasure for the narrator/protagonist, and the greatest pleasure exists only during the process in

which she is trying to free herself from a single kind of female model, to swift her pleasure from one kind to another kind. With “Rebecca” being the fixed model representing *Jouissance* and Maxim/Manderley representing *Plasir*, the narrator/protagonist is able to obtain double pleasure by simultaneously identifying with the patriarchal social orders *and* a liberated female figure.

Double pleasure can also be seen within the entire reading process of *Rebecca*. Chapter Four specifically aims to study how fantasy theory can explain the multiple positions in the story, and how it can also present readers’ “double pleasure” in reading the story. Radway’s use of fantasy in studying the reading of romance will help to explain how the reader of *Rebecca* first identifies with the narrator/protagonist, and then gradually identifies with Rebecca through fantasy and multiple reading positions to gain double pleasure, as the following graph shows:



Readers can easily identify themselves with the narrator/protagonist as their

alter-ego, and, as the narrator/protagonist gradually “overidentifi[es]” with Rebecca (Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, 44), they are encouraged to identify with Rebecca as the ideal self as well. In other words, this chapter deals with the viewing positions of romance readers. The double pleasure derived from multiple identifications can prove that fantasy is not a merely passive escape from the reality (Chen 165-70), but rather a positive means to experience the maximum of pleasure by shifting between “*Plasir*” and “*Jouissance*” within the text.

The unique circular narrative structure of the novel would also be put into discussion in the remaining part of Chapter Four. By not providing readers with a clear ending of the story, the novel *Rebecca* urges reader to go through the beginning again, and successfully creates a situation in which the readers could repetitively experience the reading pleasure. This structure not only corresponds to romance critics’ suggestion that for the readers, the process of a courtship in romance is far more important than a closure or ending (Ang 528-29), but also mirrors the “repetitiveness” in the general reading and buying process of the entire romance genre. It is expected that through the analysis of the narrative structure of the popular romance *Rebecca*, suggestive answers to romance readers’ pleasure can be discovered, and prospective contributions can be further made to the study of romance genre.

Chapter Two

The Double Pleasure Theory

To understand how the novel *Rebecca* can be analyzed by the double pleasure theory, first we should take a thorough survey into the historical connection between romance genre and pleasure theory. Janice A. Radway's *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* argues that the real female readers "are certain... that the activity of romance reading is pleasurable and restorative as well" (Radway 119). Linda K. Christian-Smith furthermore points out in her study *Becoming A Woman through Romance* that, in both her and Radway's studies, it can be concluded that the readers' reasons for reading romances "combined elements of fantasy, knowledge, and pleasure" (Christian-Smith 105). While many critics agree that pleasure is the motivation and function of romance reading, what, then, is the exact structure of such pleasure?

Tania Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance* provides us with a good start to study the issue of pleasure in romance novel reading. Modleski firstly points out that there is an ambiguous perspective toward patriarchy in popular women narratives: it enhances patriarchal marriage system but simultaneously voices women's dissatisfaction as well: "women writers of popular fiction have indeed registered protest against the authority of fathers and husbands even while they appeared to give their wholehearted consent to it... plots have to be 'submerged' into more orthodox ones just as feminine rage itself" (Modleski 25). Such a phenomenon subverts the Frankfurt School's presupposition of women readers as merely duped readers who, as Adorno suggests, are planted with false consciousness of patriarchy through romance novels, the products of culture industry (Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," 47). Instead, these critics view romance reading in a positive way, since women's agency is hidden under the "highly 'orthodox' plots," and that women can fulfill their

desires and needs by recognizing their own agencies through the reading process of the romance novels (Modleski 25).

However, this will lead us to another question: if what women readers wish for is an opportunity to voice out, to protest against patriarchy, why don't they simply read feminist literature instead? Recent scholars tend to dig into psychoanalysis to find proper reasons: "[r]ejecting the notion of 'false consciousness,' many Marxists have turned to a study of the unconscious, as it is structured in and by the family. This emphasis has the merit of beginning to explain why people cling to oppressive conditions even after it is pointed out to them that their own best interests lie elsewhere... [and] why the sales of Harlequin Romances have not simply remained steady in recent years but have actually increased along with the growth of feminism" (Modleski 29). The desire to rebel against patriarchal society certainly cannot be the only reason for the large readership in romance novels which often conversely provide readers with domestic happy endings. One may then want to ask: what are the exact elements in such romance fictions that can give readers what they need, fulfill their desires, and make them feel pleasant during the reading? Modleski suggests we dig into psychoanalysis for answers, and that it is "only by taking psychoanalytic insights into account, by understanding how deep-rooted are the anxieties and fantasies contained in (and by) popular narratives for women can we begin to explain why women are still requiring what Jameson calls the 'symbolic satisfactions' of the texts instead of looking for 'real' satisfactions," so as to probe out "what constitutes narrative pleasure for women" (*Loving with a Vengeance* 29; 32). In order to find out the answers, a thorough survey toward the basic construction of pleasure and the history of pleasure theory will be helpful.

Throughout the discourses about pleasure, what should never be omitted is Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which he observes the important

relation between the feeling of pleasure and the two general kinds of instincts lying in the nature of human being: death-instinct and life-instinct. Freud finds his original concept “pleasure principle” cannot fully ascribe the truth of pleasure without the addition of these two instincts. According to him, pleasure principle is “a tendency operating in the service of a function whose business is to free the mental apparatus entirely from excitation or to keep the amount of excitation in it constant or to keep it as low as possible;” however, more than this, he also discovers that “the greatest pleasure attainable by us, that of the sexual act, is associated with a momentary extinction of a highly intensified excitation” (Freud 62). In other words, both the elimination and the intensification of excitation can bring out pleasurable effect, and it is from this point that the two main kinds of instincts that drive human beings to make such elimination and intensification are elaborated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Death-instinct is “the compulsion to repeat” (19), “*an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life*” (36). Under the death-instinct “towards the restoration of an earlier state of things,” a person gains pleasure through repetition so as to be close to death, since “everything living does for *internal* reasons—becomes inorganic once again—then we shall be compelled to say that *‘the aim of all life is death’*” (37-38). Life-instinct, on the other hand, is the “Eros,” the “self-preservative sexual instincts” that “do not seek to restore an earlier state of things” (42; 55; 41). Working in an opposite way from the death-instinct, the life-instinct (also as sexual instinct) drives a person to obtain pleasure through the intensification of excitations.

However, Freud also admits that “[t]he pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts. It is true that it keeps watch upon stimuli from without... but it is

more especially on guard against increases of stimulation from within, which would make the task of living more difficult. This in turn raises a host of other questions to which we can at present find no answer” (63-64). In other words, further explorations are still in need to explore the relation between death-instinct and life-instinct: Are they parallel forces that never meet each other in a binary structure, or two forces that contradict yet entangle with each other? How exactly can pleasure be attainable under such condition?

Jacques Lacan’s contribution is especially notable in his “promotion of the principle of *jouissance*” (Connor 211). Lacan prefers another angle to define the term “pleasure” as “desire:”

We shall come back to all this, but I would point out that I said desire, not pleasure. Pleasure limits the scope of human possibility—the pleasure principle is a principle of homeostasis. Desire on the other hand found its boundary, its strict relation, its limit, and it is in relation to this limit that it is sustained as such, crossing the threshold imposed by the pleasure principle.

(Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 31)

Lacan makes a few corrections of the term “pleasure” in Freud’s pleasure principle, pointing out that it is but a limited concept because of its “conservatism and homeostatic inertia” (Connor 211). Lacan further provides a promotion of the theory with one of his most remarkable terms, the *jouissance*: “The subject... will realize that there is a *jouissance* beyond the pleasure principle” (Lacan 183-84), suggesting that “a true ‘beyond’ of the pleasure principle” should be found “not in death but in *jouissance* or desire” (Connor 211). The term *jouissance* here may indicate the ultimate desire, or the ultimate goal for the pleasures. The translator Alan Sheridan of

Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* can perhaps give us so far the most adequate concept of the term *jouissance*:

JOUISSANCE (*jouissance*). There is no adequate translation in English of this word. "Enjoyment" conveys the sense, contained in *jouissance*, of enjoyment of rights, of property, etc... "Pleasure," on the other hand, is pre-empted by "*plaisir*"—and Lacan uses the two terms quite differently. "Pleasure" obeys the law of homeostasis that Freud evokes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, whereby, through discharge, the psyche seeks the lowest possible level of tension. "*Jouissance*" transgresses this law and, in that respect, it is *beyond* the pleasure principle.

(Sheridan 281)

Combining Freud and Lacan's contributions to the pleasure theory, there can be seen a general division between the two kinds of pleasure: one is of the "*plaisir*," of the release of excitations and of the pleasure principle, the law of inertia and homeostasis; while the other is of the "*jouissance*," of sexual desire and of intense excitations.

No one has used the terms "*plaisir*" and "*jouissance*" in a more distinctive way than Roland Barthes. In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes links the discussion of pleasure with the textual reading experience, and "suggests, like Lacan, that there are two kinds of pleasure and two kinds of text to go with them, the text of pleasure and the text of bliss" (Connor 211). In defining the text of pleasure (*plaisir* in French) and the text of bliss (*jouissance* in French), Barthes lists clearly in this way:

Text of Pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a comfortable practice of reading. Text of bliss: the text that imposes a

state of loss, the text that discomforts, unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, bring to a crisis his relation with language.

(Barthes 14)

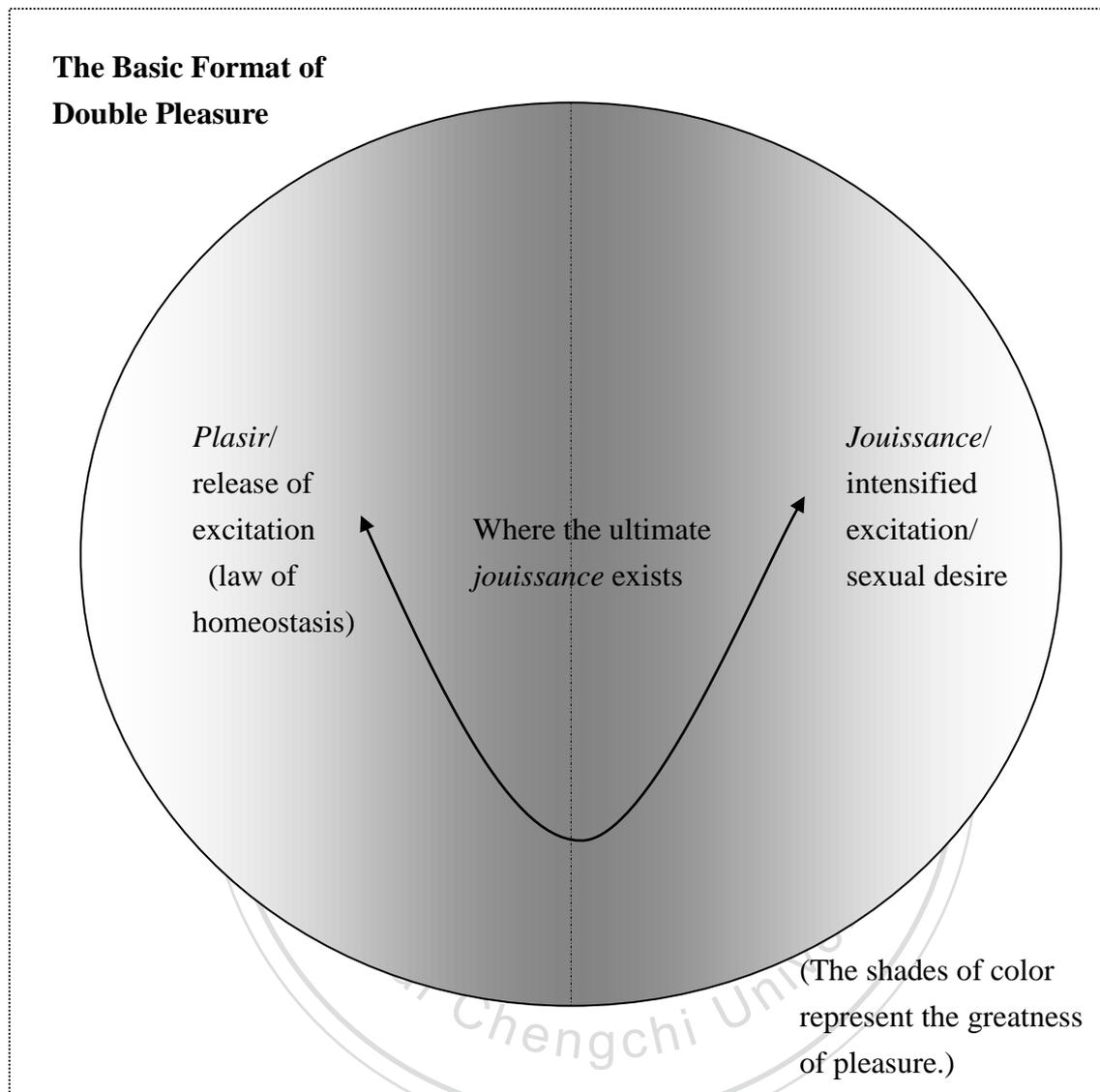
Apparently the text of pleasure can be classified into the group of *plaisir*/release of excitation, while the text of bliss is more of the group of *jouissance*/intensified excitation. Albeit the two systems of pleasure work in contradictory ways, they can be obtained at the same time: "the subject... simultaneously and contradictorily participates in the profound hedonism of all culture and in the destruction of that culture: he enjoys the consistency of his selfhood (that is his pleasure) and seeks its loss (that is his bliss)" (14).

However, what remains questionable is the relation between the two groups of pleasure: are they different only "of degree," or are they "parallel forces" that "cannot meet" (20)? Barthes has given us some clues through a series of related questions: "[i]s pleasure only a minor bliss? Is bliss nothing but extreme pleasure? Is pleasure only a weakened, conformist bliss—a bliss deflected through a pattern of conciliations? Is bliss merely a brutal, immediate (without mediation) pleasure?" (20). This leads us to the confusion of the term "bliss (*jouissance*)," which cannot be simply identified as merely one of the elements in Barthes's binary structure of *plaisir* and *jouissance* since, according to Barthes, "[b]liss is unspeakable, inter-dicted" (21), and that "the general rule... would assign bliss a fixed form: strong, violent, crude: something inevitably muscular, strained, phallic. Against the general rule: *never allow oneself to be deluded by the image of bliss*; agree to recognize bliss wherever a disturbance occurs in amatory adjustment (premature, delayed, etc.): passionate love as bliss?" (25).

We are certain by now, after a series of surveys of pleasure theories, that there basically exists two systems of pleasure (that of the release of excitation and that of the intensification of that excitation), and a reading subject can simultaneously obtain the two pleasures, yet there seems to be another “unspeakable” *jouissance*, outside of the two pleasures (Barthes 21). In fact, “bliss (*jouissance*)” seems to have split into two roles: the *jouissance* of the second group of pleasure (the intensified excitation) and a *jouissance* that belongs to neither of the two groups. What is the exact form of that ultimate *jouissance*, if it really exists? What is the difference between it and the original *jouissance* (in the second group, the intensified excitation) that seems to be merely “strong, violent, crude” (25)? Also, how will a reading subject experience that ultimate *jouissance* through romance, along with the “passionate love” (25) described within?

Barthes’s later discussion of the “extremity” in the text of bliss can be supportive for the existence of such ultimate *jouissance*: “it is the extreme of perversion which defines [bliss]: an extreme continually shifted, an empty, mobile, unpredictable extreme. This extreme guarantees bliss” (52). Here, let us perceive in this way: there is an ultimate “bliss (*jouissance*)” is the “unpredictable extreme” that flees out of the fixed region of pleasure (*plaisir*) and the original bliss (*jouissance*). The ultimate *jouissance* is a transcended form of pleasure: it has not only transcended the first group of pleasure (the group of *plaisir*/ release of excitations) but also the second group (the group of *jouissance*/ violent, strong, intense excitations). It lies in neither of the two groups, but in somewhere between: it is in the transitioning progress, the fluctuation from one kind of pleasure to another, that one can obtain the pleasurable feeling to the greatest degree. This is the constitution of double pleasure, the basis of this thesis that combines the ideas from pleasure theorists—Freud, Lacan, and mainly Barthes—with a little revision, and tries to explain away the complicated relationship

between *plaisir* and *jouissance* by providing a new vision: the existence and the working of an ultimate *jouissance*, as presented in the diagram below:



With the aim of this diagram, we can then understand what Barthes means when he suggests “what pleasure wants is the site of loss, the seam, the cut, the deflation, the dissolve which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss” (7). While Barthes has never made clear the definition of bliss, the structure of the double pleasure, the two kinds of bliss—the area *Jouissance* and the ultimate *jouissance*— could solve the confusion of the term. It is at the “seam,” the “cut,” the transiting, the shifting process from mere release (the area marked as *Plaisir*) to mere sexual excitation (the area marked as *Jouissance*) –or vice versa— that can bring the subject the ultimate

jouissance, which gives him the greatest effect of pleasurable experience. The double pleasure can also solve the riddle-like description of pleasure when Barthes says “‘pleasure’... sometimes extends to bliss, sometimes is opposed to it” (19), and the ambiguity of the Lacanian definition for pleasure/desire as “the repetition in order to reach the perfect oneness in the past... a process of the searching for pleasure that already contains the discontent, anxiety, and excitation” (Chen 153), since *Plasir* and *Jouissance* are both contained in one circle, representing their tendency to become a “oneness,” to extend to each other, to neutralize the qualities in each other, and to create the ultimate *jouissance* so as to achieve the greatest pleasure.

Connor’s annotation could be supportive for the existence of the ultimate *jouissance* (bliss): “Barthes’s text of bliss is orientated towards extremity rather than containment... an extremity of nonfinality. As opposed to the centered, genital finality of texts governed by the pleasure principle and the sense of an ending, the text of bliss perversely resists or turns aside from centered pleasure... this is a claim for the absolute value of bliss over mere pleasure” (Connor 211-12). What should be specifically added here is that, the term “bliss” here should not be equalized as the *Jouissance* group of pleasure—for even the plain intensification of sexual excitation can only be a fixed, centered form of pleasure. Instead, it should be realized as the ultimate *jouissance* that is unpredictable (because it is always in a shifting status between two kinds of fixed pleasures), unrestrained by any centered pleasure or an ending, a finality.

A discussion for the pleasure attainable in romance novels can also help us understand the non-finality in the ultimate *jouissance*. As Barthes has also wondered “passionate love as bliss?” (25), we may find it not so hard to understand the working of double pleasure in the pattern of most romance novels. While passionate love is a necessary element in romance fictions, happy ending is another crucial element for

the romance readers. In most cases, the heroine, originally living in a mundane reality, experiences the passionate, violent, or even destructive love with the hero, and together they welcome a happy ending that guarantees a happiness that is peaceful, harmonious, and relieved, totally different from the love they have experienced in their love adventure. From the general pattern we can suggest that the reader, along with the heroine, gains the ultimate *jouissance* exactly from the switching from one kind of pleasure to another: she enjoys to the fullest when being rescued by the hero from the mundane reality into the thrilling and sexy adventure (from area *Plasir* to area *Jouissance*); yet when the adventure becomes too excited and even problematic to bother her, she is extremely happy as well when being promised an anxiety-relieved, peaceful future with the hero (from area *Jouissance* to area *Plasir*). Ien Ang points out in her research that the romance readers actually enjoy such a pattern in which the heroine is being passionately wooed by the hero *especially* under the promise of a happy ending:

When the reader is sure that the heroine and the hero will finally get each other, she can concentrate all the more on how they will get each other. Finding out about the happy ending in advance could then be seen as a clever reading strategy aimed at obtaining maximum pleasure: a pleasure that is orientated towards the scenario of romance, rather than its outcome. If the outcome is predictable in the romance genre, the variety of the ways in which two lovers can find one another is endless.

... After all, it is more than striking that romance novels always abruptly end at the moment that the two lovers have finally found each other, and thus never go beyond the point of no return: romantic fiction generally is exclusively about the titillating period *before* the wedding!

This could well indicate that what repetitious reading of romance fiction offers is the opportunity to continue to enjoy the excitement of romance and romantic scenes without being interrupted by the dark side of sexual relationships.

(Ang 528-29)

Such preference of the readers shows as much the work of the double pleasure, in which the greatest pleasure is obtained in the fluctuation between two kinds of pleasure, the *Plasir* and the *Jouissance*, instead of the finalities, the ends in either of these two. It is by living such contradiction, by being a “living contradiction,” that the reading subject can reach the maximum of his pleasure from the endless uncertainty of selfhood, as Barthes describes: “... this subject is never anything but a ‘living contradiction’: a split subject, who simultaneously enjoys, through the text, the consistency of his selfhood and its collapse, its fall” (Barthes 21). The source of the subject’s enjoyment is the feeling of the unpredictable, the inconsistency of the selfhood that brings the subject into the forever-shifting status which provides him with the greatest pleasure.

One may doubt here that the romance readers who tend to find out a happy ending in advance actually prefer to walk into a fixed ending instead of accepting the unpredictability of the storyline. But to look at it in a different way, we can also suggest that, what those readers truly search for is not exactly what happens in the ending but rather the pleasure of the whole reading experience, something they have to make sure that will not be ruined by the sad endings that are notorious for their sheer, realistic unpleasantness, as Radway concludes in her field study: “[sad endings] negate the romance’s difference and distance from [readers’] day-to-day existence, dominated as it so often is by small failures, minor catastrophes, and ongoing

disappointments” (Radway 73). As Ang indicates, readers focus more on “the variety of the ways in which two lovers can find one another is endless” (Ang 528), it is obvious that the process of the romance, in which the unlimited possibilities of the romanticity contained within, is the real source of pleasure in a romance novel. This corresponds to the double pleasure structure: the greatest feeling of pleasure occurs not at the end of *Plasir* but the area between *Plasir* and *Jouissance*. Happy endings being read in advance provides readers with a free space to enjoy the romanticity of the process, defended from the disappointment and the unpleasant sad endings that can only make romances “failed romance,” “the garbage-dumped romance” (Radway 76-77).

The working of double pleasure can be presented in romance novels not only in the sphere of psychoanalysis but also in the research of mass culture. The pleasure theory raised by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer introduces the idea of “complicit pleasure,” the tendency in people to search for relief and comfort, has made people into a bunch of conservative cowards that are dumbly controlled by the capitalists with their invention of culture industry. Since “pleasure always means not to think about anything, to forget suffering even where it is shown. Basically it is helplessness. It is flight; not, as is asserted, flight from a wretched reality, but from the last remaining thought of resistance” (Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, trans. 144. 1997), the group of people who hold the economical power learn to use this feature of pleasure to advertise commercials to people, and to build up a false model of culture so as to spread the legitimacy of the products:

Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system... The conspicuous unity of macrocosm and

microcosm confronts human beings with a model of their culture: the false identity of universal and particular... The truth that [films and radio] are nothing but business is used as an ideology to legitimize the trash they intentionally produce. They call themselves industries, and the published figures for their directors' incomes quell any doubts about the social necessity of their finished products.

... The standardized forms, it is claimed, were originally derived from the needs of the consumers: that is why they are accepted with so little resistance. In reality, a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need is unifying the system ever more tightly. What is not mentioned is that the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest.

(Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,
Edmund Jephcott, trans. 94-95)

Adorno and Horkheimer view the concept of pleasure in a much pessimistic way, asserting that the pleasure in the mass culture is but the wish for mental relief, and is used as a tool by the capitalists to take the advantage for the expansion of their business. Death-instinct is the notorious origin of the complicit pleasure. Since “the repetitiveness, the relief of excitation in the pleasure of mass culture is linked with death instinct,” Adorno criticizes mass culture as “deadly, valueless, and even conservative in cultural and political concerns, which turns mass culture’s pleasure into a ‘complicit pleasure’ with the propaganda, the tool of the authority to maintain the established social orders, to paralyze and to cheat the mass readers” (Chen 153-54). While romance novels are nominal for their successful sales in the mass culture, the romance genre becomes a target despised by Adorno, Horkheimer and

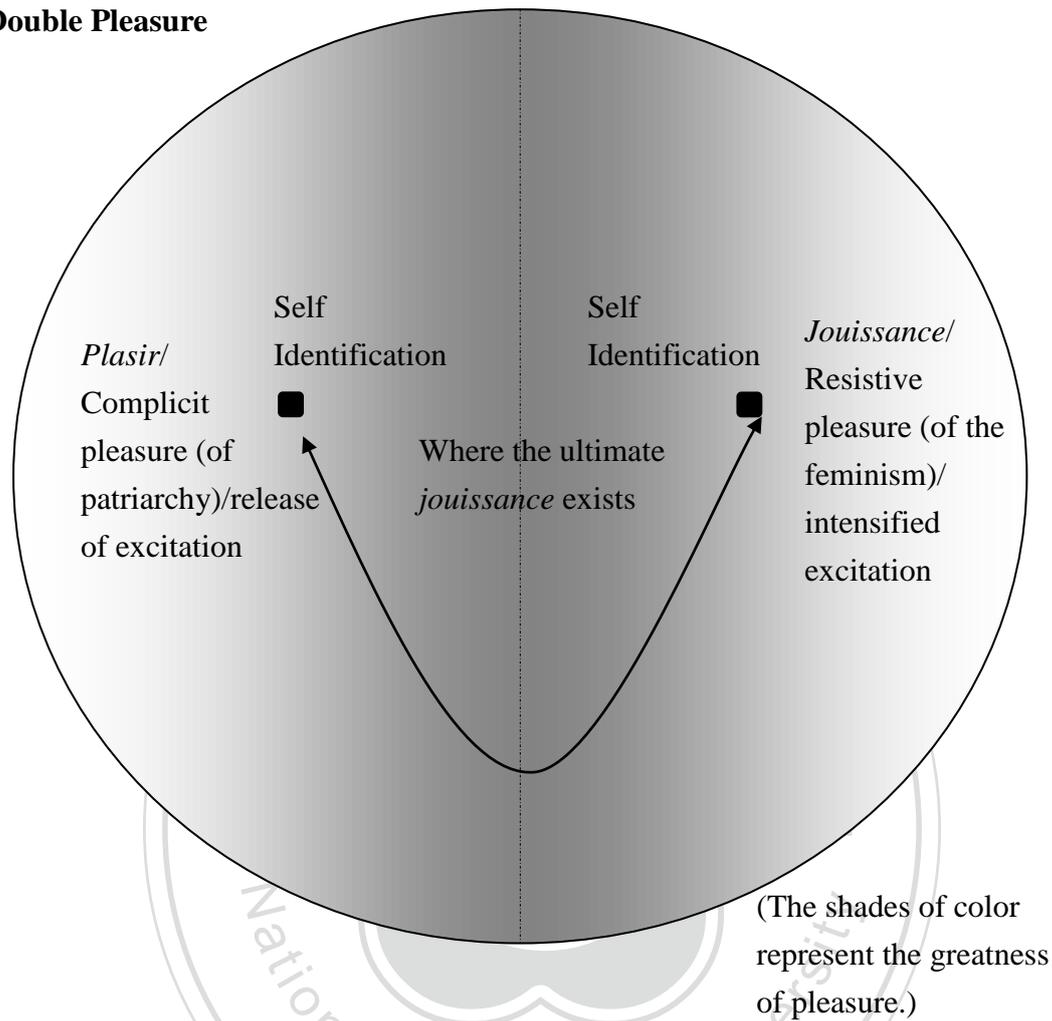
other traditional Marxists with a specific negative prejudice for romance readers as merely dupes who enjoy being manipulated by the book market that produces novels advertising patriarchal social values.

Objections have risen of course. While “Barthes’ pleasure theory points out the diversity of sensual pleasures and indicates the possibilities of the positive meanings of popular culture” (Chen 157), the idea of “resistive pleasure” is then brought up as the contrary to “complicit pleasure,” suggesting women readers’ agency in the interpretation of romance novels, as Mary Ellen Brown introduces: “[r]esistance theory comprises a body of work which addresses the issue of how ordinary people and subcultural groups can resist hegemonic, or dominant pressures, and consequently obtain pleasure from what the political, social and/or cultural system offers, despite that system’s contradictory position in their lives” (Brown 12). Modleski takes numerous textual evidences from best-selling romances to point out the “female resentment,” “heroine’s anger and frustration,” “women’s revenge fantasies” between the lines in romance’s texts (*The Women Who Knew Too Much* 43; 47). However, as much as it seems that the female readers’ resistive pleasure is brought up against the complicit pleasure, Modleski and other scholars in the study of popular female romance have not denied the ambiguity of the position of female readers, who can never be simply judged as the believers of feminism or the supporters of patriarchy. The major paradox exists in that, romance novels often show female sexuality as a sort of danger or sin yet at the same time intend to discover the sexual desire for the readers (Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, 51). Female readers do not surrender to patriarchy wholeheartedly; their rebel, their discovery of sexual desire, is quietly actualized inside the domestic family. Their reading pleasure is ambiguous: it does not completely belong to the extreme of resistive pleasure (that of the radical feminism) or totally to the extreme of complicit

pleasure (that of the absolute obedience of patriarchy). Female readers have escaped from the fixed identifications to gain pleasures that cannot be easily classified under either social extremity.

On the other hand, the Frankfurt School scholars like Adorno and Horkheimer seem to be too assertive in their distaste of mass art and in their preference of high art (Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance*, 26-27). Irony exists in their own definition of pleasure: while the culture industry advertises the relief of excitation, it is actually a relief “prolonged,” as Adorno and Horkheimer admitted themselves: “[t]he culture industry endlessly cheats its consumers out of what it endlessly promises. The promissory note of pleasure issued by plot and packaging is indefinitely prolonged: the promise, which actually comprises the entire show, disdainfully intimates that there is nothing more to come, that the diner must be satisfied with reading the menu” (Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Edmund Jephcott, trans. 111). Since the final relief of excitation will never be reached, it can be speculated as well that in order to reach this illusory pleasure, people have to endure endless excitation. The most controversial part is that there must be pleasurable feelings contained in this excitation as well, since, after all, people have to feel content blindly and *endlessly* while being manipulated by the social propaganda: “[i]t seems like, therefore, the pleasure in the mass culture consists not only of the relief of the excitation, but also the continual existence of anxiety and excitation, the frustration and discontent of the relief, which proves the insufficiency of the clear distinction between pleasure and the excitation” (Chen 154). It is from this sense that we can notice again that the borderline between the complicit pleasure and the resistive pleasure is indistinct, which can be explained as well in the double pleasure model, and be grouped under the two areas of pleasure, the *Plasir* and the *Jouissance*, as presented below:

The Basic Format of Double Pleasure



While the complicit pleasure can be linked with the *Plasir* area because of its drive toward the relief of excitement, the resistive pleasure, full of intensified excitement, can be linked with the *Jouissance* area.¹ Take a female reader's situation for instance: when reading a romance novel, she can sense two kinds of reading pleasure at the same time: one is the pleasure coming from the liberation of social duties by experiencing the exciting sexual adventures (the *Jouissance*/resistive pleasure), and another is from the sense of security when being provided with a happy

¹ In this chapter, Freud's theory of "death instincts" and "life instincts" will only serve as the starting point of the discovery toward the distinction between two kinds of pleasure: the pleasure originating from the intensification of excitations and the pleasure originating from the release of excitement. Freud's ideas about the death drive and life instinct concern many issues, but this thesis focuses only on this aspect.

ending (the *Plasir*/complicit pleasure). However, the crucial point is that, in order to enjoy the *liberation* or the sense of *security*, one must compare the situation in the now-moment with the situation in the past time, since one can only be liberated *from* some restrictions that strained him before, and can only be secured *by* something that has not protected him before. The point is clear now: the real enjoyment cannot simply originate from an eternally exciting adventure or plainly from a fixed happy-ever-after. Instead, it is always between the shifting of these two that the greatest pleasure can be created. Therefore, as presented in the diagram, it is only when a reader who learns to appreciate both kinds of pleasure, who submits herself into both of the identifications in these two pleasures/social values, and who freely switches her position from one to another, that she can enjoy herself to the upmost, to obtain the ultimate *jouissance*. The greatest happiness occurs in the process when she gradually liberates her sexual desire with the heroine, and the process when she is gradually given a sense of security under patriarchal social orders when the heroine is guaranteed a happy marriage with the hero. It is only during the changing process that is free from the restrictions of the fixed type of social value that the ultimate *jouissance* can be actualized.

Radway's field study towards real romance readers would be the most representative source to enlighten the importance of such shifting process of identifications:

Romance reading... is a strategy with a double purpose. As an activity, it so engages [women's] attention that it enables them to deny their physical presence in an environment associated with responsibilities... Reading, in this sense, connotes a free space where they feel liberated from the need to perform duties... At the same time... they escape

figuratively into a fairy tale where a heroine's similar needs are adequately met. As a result, they vicariously attend to their own requirements as independent individuals who require emotional sustenance and solicitude.

(Radway 93)

Romance novels serve the function of fulfilling women readers' hidden desire exactly because they help women readers to escape from their original identification and free themselves from social responsibilities. However, what is not often discussed is the tendency in women readers towards the sense of security, and an awareness that the interest for mere excitation could be eventually worn out. The term "liberation" could fall into the same dilemma as the term "*jouissance*" did: once it is fixed into a classical, strict type of term that tends toward an end, or finality, it will immediately lose its original meaning: the freedom originates from a breakthrough, and the pleasure created from within. This issue of liberation will be brought to the next chapter with a more detailed analysis of how pleasure and sexual liberation have worked in the novel *Rebecca*, in which the two important female characters' pleasures can be explained under the working of double pleasure, presenting the endless entanglement of *Plasir*/complicit pleasure and *Jouissance*/resistive pleasure in women's search for pleasure.

Chapter Three

The Double Pleasure in *Rebecca*

This chapter aims to discuss how the theory of double pleasure has actually worked in the novel *Rebecca*. The discussion will be mainly divided into two parts, analyzing the double pleasure working on the two most important characters of the novel: Rebecca and the narrator/protagonist. What makes these two characters specifically representative is not only because they are the most important two female characters of this story but also because they have more apparent pleasurable experiences in the story than other characters. As this chapter goes on to discover the original source of their pleasures, it will also be revealed that their pleasures in fact work under the structure of the double pleasure theory; that is, through their search for pleasure, there can be clearly seen an endless entanglement between *Plasir*/complicit pleasure and *Jouissance*/resistive pleasure.

- Case 1: Rebecca

Rebecca might be the most impressive character for the readers with her strong personalities and her bold attitude in search for sexual pleasure. Although Rebecca is publicly remembered as a beautiful and elegant mistress: “beautiful, talented, and loved by all who knew her” (*Rebecca* 301), under the surface, she secretly holds non-marital sexual relationships with her numerous adorers, as described by her closest maid Mrs. Danvers: “men she’d meet up in London and bring for weekends... They made love to her of course, who would not?” (245). In fact, Rebecca lives a two-faced life: on the one hand, she gracefully acts the angelic lady in Manderley; on the other hand, she savagely enjoys her complicated sexual relationship with her multiple sex companions in London. What is amazing about her two-faced life is that she is fully capable to shift from one lifestyle to another freely, as exemplified by her

husband:

I can remember days when [Manderley] was full for some show or other, a garden party, and she walked about with a smile like an angel on her face, her arm through mine, giving prizes afterwards to a little troop of children; and then the day afterwards she would be up at dawn driving to London, streaking to that flat of hers by the river like an animal to its hole in the ditch, coming back here at the end of the week, after five unspeakable days.

(*Rebecca* 274)

Rebecca's husband, Maxim de Winter, has no courage to reveal her secret to the public, due to his obsession with the reputation of his family name and his homeland: "[s]he knew I would never stand in a divorce court and give her away, have fingers pointing at us, mud flung at us in newspapers, all the people who belong down here whispering when my name was mentioned... I thought about Manderley too much... I put Manderley first, before anything else" (273-74). Clever as Rebecca is, she clearly sees this care for reputation as Maxim's weak point, and makes good use of it in order to carry on her two-faced life. Maxim is informed by Rebecca of all of her lustful history shortly after their marriage, and is advised, rather threatened, to act as a good couple in front of the public with her:

'I'll run your house for you,' she told me, 'I'll look after your precious Manderley for you, make it the most famous show-place in all the country, if you like. And people will visit us, and envy us, and talk about us; they'll say we are the luckiest, happiest, handsomest couple in all England. What a leg-pull, Max,' she said, 'what a God-damn triumph!' She sat there on the hillside, laughing...

(*Rebecca* 273)

It is ironical indeed that Rebecca, a woman who actually disregards chastity, the greatest virtue, the most fundamental rule in all traditional values, would seem “so lovely, so accomplished, so amusing” to the traditional de Winter family, that even Maxim’s stubborn grandmother, who is “the most difficult person to please,” adores Rebecca at the first meet, reassuring Maxim that “[s]he’s got the three things that matter in a wife... breeding, brains, and beauty” (272). Rebecca has acted so well as a “perfect wife” (280) not only by her physical beauty but also by her wonderfully sophisticated acting and social skills, as Maxim also comments, “she knew exactly what to say to different people, how to match her mood to theirs” (271).

However, although Rebecca has successfully acts a wonderful mistress of Manderley with the help of her stunningly beauty and social skills, what may remain vague and confusing for the readers is Rebecca’s motivation: what does she want? What can she gain from her acting and her secret sexual relationships? What is her purpose to continue this two-faced life? How can we find a way to explain all her doings in the story?

“Pleasure” might be the most plausible answer to these questions. Much textual evidence can support the fact that pleasure-seeking has always been an issue for Rebecca in all the things she has done. She promises Maxim to run the house of Manderley because she thinks it is “a leg-pull,” a joke that she heartily laughs at (273). While her friends, relatives, servants in Manderley “all believed in her down here... all admired her,” Rebecca “laughed at them behind their backs, jeered at them, mimicked them” (274). When she tortures her husband with her faked news of pregnancy, she cannot stop her laughs, and regards the situation as “funny... supremely, wonderfully funny” (279). It is Rebecca’s talent to discover the hypocrisy lying under the crumbling social orders and fragile human relationships, and to mock

at, and even play with, the difference between the graceful appearances of things and their disgraceful or pitiful facts.

Mrs. Danvers's description of Rebecca may give us a closer understanding of her pleasure-seeking nature in which a certain degree of self-centered egoism is contained:

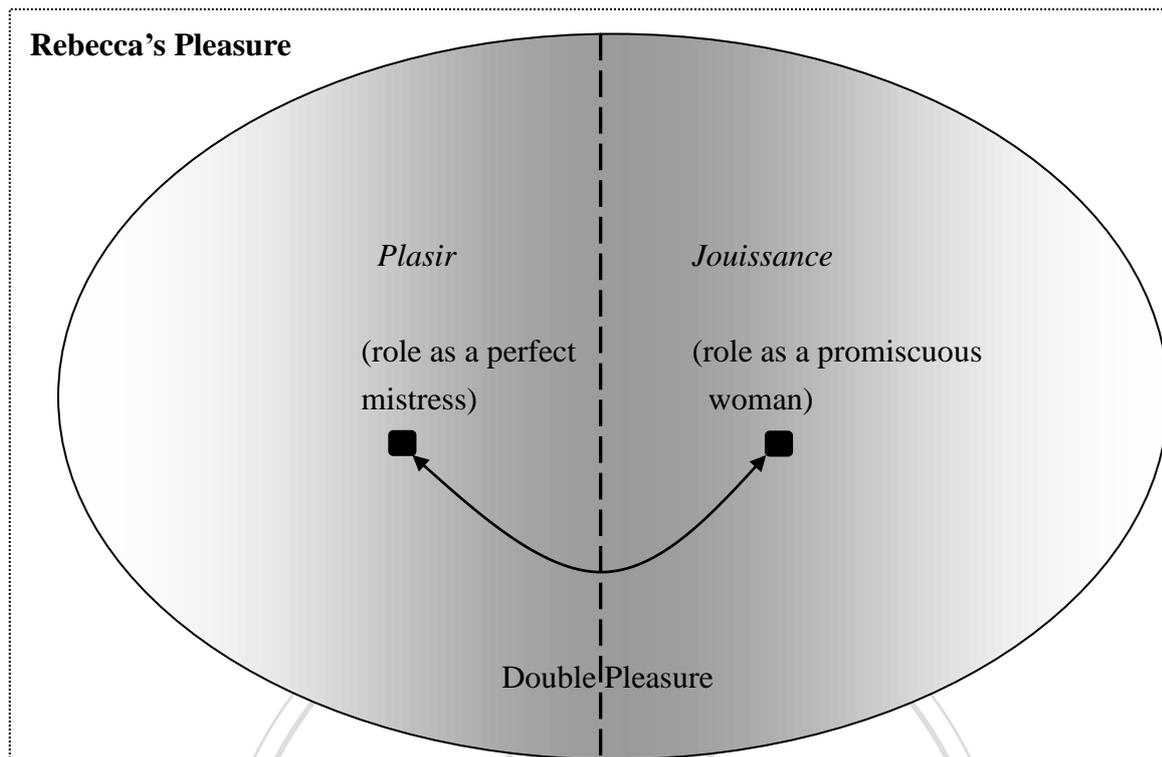
Spirit, you couldn't beat my lady for spirit... She did what she liked, she lived as she liked... she cared for nothing and for no one... she didn't care. She only laughed. 'I shall live as I please, Danny,' she told me, 'and the whole world won't stop me.'... [Men] made love to her of course, who would not? She laughed, she would come back and tell me what they had said, and what they'd done. She did not mind, it was like a game to her. Like a game.

(*Rebecca* 243-45)

Since "[p]assion is no guarantee of moral strength" (Hardy 97), Rebecca, having too much passion for life, does all things only for herself, only to amuse herself without moral concerns. Throughout the most of the texts, her existence is followed by triumphal laughs. What should particularly be mentioned is how she views her love affairs as unserious and entertaining games. Love-making with her sexual partners turns out to be merely "a game with her, only a game... she did it because it made her laugh" (*Rebecca* 340). The pleasure of finding laughingstocks is what she mainly seeks for, and sex is but one of the means for her to gain such pleasure. There is no romantic fantasy in the sexual games she plays, and she treats men as pleasurable tools instead of people to fall in love with, as Mrs. Danvers disproves Rebecca's love to Jack Favell, Rebecca's cousin and one of her sex mates: "[Rebecca] was not in love with anyone. She despised all men. She was above all that... she had a right to amuse

herself, hadn't she? Love-making was a game with her, only a game... She did it because it made her laugh. It made her laugh, I tell you. She laughed at you like she did at the rest. I've known her come back and sit upstairs on her bed and rock with laughter at the lot of you" (340).

In short, by making fun of everyone, Rebecca belongs neither to the people in Manderley nor to her sex mates in London. What should be clearly marked is that she is *not* a poor victim of patriarchy, like most heroines in feminist novels, whose freedoms are banned by the social rules and who seek to leave the marriages. Instead, the two-faced life in which she continuously switches from one lifestyle/role-play to another—instead of choosing one eternally—is exactly the life she wants. The threats of bad reputation (276), divorce (278), and the fatal cancer (367) cannot frighten her a bit because she loves no one and cares for nothing except for the pleasure she could obtain from her two-faced life. It can perhaps be deduced then, that the very source of Rebecca's pleasure, might originate from the freedom to stay away from any constraining force of labeling that could only categorize her rigidly into a single lifestyle/role-play—whether it is the graceful mistress of the royal family or the horny slut dwelled in love affairs. It is exactly from the shifting status of these two different positions that Rebecca's pleasure can reach its maximum, which can be explained fully by the double pleasure theory model, as the following graph shows:



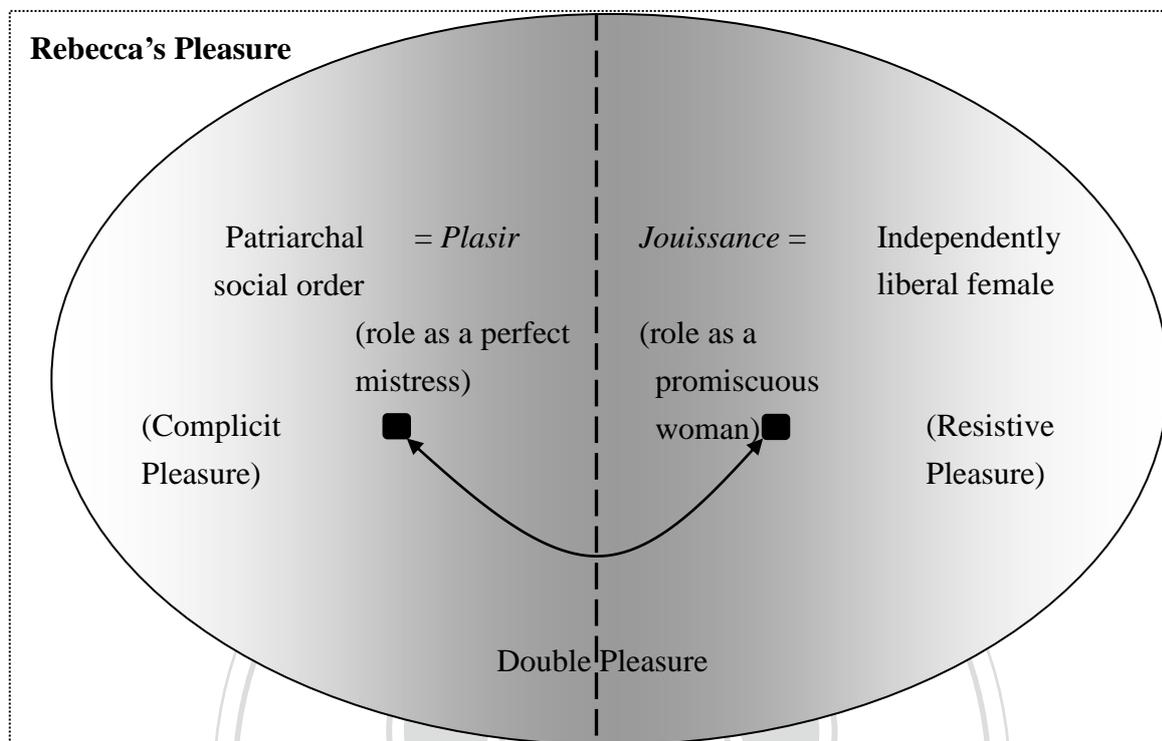
The fact that sex is merely one of Rebecca's means to gain greater pleasure, together with her devotion into her two-faced life, fit into the double pleasure theory assuming that the greatest pleasure can only be obtained when a person shifts between the intensified sexual desire, the *Jouissance*, and the release of excitement, the *Plasir*. This theory can also explain why Rebecca does not choose to divorce so as to channel out her sexual desires freely in London, but instead, stays in the dull traditional Manderley filled with rigid routines (68) and insincere courtesy (228), because acting the perfect mistress can bring as much pleasure as the love-making games can create. They are all entertaining games for Rebecca, as can be seen when she heartedly laughs at the thought of giving birth to heirs of Manderley: "God, how funny... how supremely, wonderfully funny... They'll be happy, won't they, all these smug locals, all your blasted tenants?... I'll be the perfect mother, Max, like I've been the perfect wife" (279-80). For Rebecca, the essence of her greatest pleasure exists in the shifting process between her position as a perfect mistress and her position as a horny slut. By not being strained in either position, might she feel the freedom from

within and assure herself that she is “above” all these (340), and that not a single person or social group can fully control her: “I shall live as I please... and the whole world won’t stop me” (245).

While it is clear that Rebecca’s pleasure is obtained in a metaphysical way, other issues pop out, widening the scale of Rebecca’s double pleasure: How are we going to understand Rebecca’s pleasure under social concerns? Can she represent the New Women in the late 19th century novels who search for their freedom under the patriarchal social orders? Has the powerful energy in Rebecca transformed from a charming feature to a dangerous tool to threaten the social orders?

The concepts of the “complicit pleasure” and the “resistive pleasure” can perhaps give us some clues in the probation of these questions. In the former chapter discussing the basic format of double pleasure, it is explained that the complicit pleasure can be grouped under the *Plasir* area, representing the release of excitations, the sense of security or any other kinds of pleasure that one can obtain when obeying the social orders; on the other hand, the resistive pleasure is classified in the *Jouissance* area, representing sexual desires or other exciting pleasures that one can obtain when disobeying the social orders. In fact, such working between the complicit pleasure and the resistive pleasure can also be seen in Rebecca: although she is depicted many times as a lustful woman who searches for resistive pleasure against the patriarchal social orders, she does not choose to go for the extremity—to leave her marriage and to become an liberal woman independent from the patriarchal society; instead, she stays in Manderley, enjoying her complicit pleasure in role-playing a proper mistress: she “[supervises] things herself” in Manderley (73), running daily routines, arranging magnificent parties and balls for the guests, and decorating the gardens and rooms, all with “great care” and “exquisite taste” (82; 83). The complicit pleasure in the patriarchal social order is not an enemy to Rebecca; instead, it is more

like one of the means for her to obtain greater pleasure, as shown in the diagram below:



Rebecca is a perfect mistress and a lustful woman: she is enjoying the complicit pleasure under the patriarchal social order *and* the resistive pleasure as a sexually liberated woman at the same time. However, she never tries to go to the extremities in each pleasure: to turn into a boring housewife, or to boldly liberate herself from the marriage system. The reason is simple: because either of the choice would ruin her double pleasure, the greatest enjoyment she can obtain only from the difference between one kind of lifestyle/role-playing and another.

Here, one might also like to question whether Rebecca can be categorized as a type of New Women that appear in the late 19th century England novels remarkable for their courage to challenge the patriarchal social values and to ask more for women's rights. However, Rebecca is very different from the general images of New Women in most popular novels: "[t]he typical New Woman heroine of commercial fiction is young, pretty and single. She is almost invariably a keen bicyclist... The

New Woman of popular fiction was physically and mentally healthy” (Willis 53-55). Instead of being a typically “young, pretty and single” New Woman, Rebecca is mature, married woman without healthy body and mind. Rather than riding a bicycle, she drives her car to London in many unspeakable nights; she is considered unhealthy by the doctor: “too thin... rather pale” (*Rebecca* 367), and her unkindness to people also makes herself hard to be defined as a mentally healthy woman under normal social values.

In fact, Rebecca is often depicted as a person with an abnormally wicked mind rather than a healthy one: “[Rebecca] walked through the woods by night... tall and slim. She gave you the feeling of a snake... She sat there on the hillside, laughing, tearing a flower to bits in her hands” (272-73). Her close maid Mrs. Danvers loves to call her a “little devil” ever since she was a child: “she not twelve years old... she used to wink at me like the little devil she was... She had all the knowledge then of a grown person... she twisted her father round her little finger” (243). Rebecca manipulates everyone and overrules every force with coolness, determination, or even cruelty that people seldom expect from a graceful and beautiful woman like her. This can be especially seen in the following scene, in which she tries to tame a fierce horse with violence:

[S]he stuck to [the horse]... with her hair flying out behind her, slashing at him, drawing blood, digging the spurs into his side, and when she got off his back [the horse] was trembling all over, full of forth and blood. ‘That will teach him, won’t it, Danny?’ she said, and walked off to wash her hands as cool as you please. And that’s how she went at life... She cared for nothing and for no one.

(*Rebecca* 243-44)

Concluded by Mrs. Danvers, Rebecca is “wild,” having “too much spirit to obey orders... she did what she liked, she lived as she liked. She had the strength of a little lion” (243). It is from these discoveries that Rebecca’s wildness could become an issue to be considered, leading us to the question of whether is more of a Wild Woman, a semi type to New Women mentioned by Ardis when she tries to introduce the term New Women in her *New Women, New Novels*. Different from a New Woman’s image as an intellectual beauty, a Wild Woman is usually featured with biological and sexual energy: “unladylike,” “hideous, fierce sexual woman” who “could no longer be dominated ‘sexually,’ a woman who would no longer submit to domestication” (Ardis 24).

It is true that Rebecca is in many times described as a woman full of wild spirits, and a figure that sometimes possesses powerful, masculine features: “tall, slim, dark, very handsome” (*Rebecca* 366); “she looked like a boy in her sailing kit” (278); “she doesn’t come kindly... she was never one to stand mute and still be wronged... she had all the courage and spirit of a boy...She ought to have been a boy” (243); “Rebecca slashing her horse; Rebecca seizing life with her two hands; Rebecca, triumphant, leaning down from the minstrel’s gallery with a smile on her lips” (272). However, what makes Rebecca different from a Wild Woman is that she perfectly balances her graceful beauty with wild energy in front of people, and by which Rebecca conquers the patriarchal social rules sophisticatedly, instead of directly fighting against them to make herself the target of blames and attacks by men. She may be a Wild Woman, but she understands how to control her wild energy smartly. She enjoys her resistive pleasure secretly so as not to sacrifice the complicit pleasure she could obtain as a successful mistress of a royal family. She is never a feminist who stands on the streets and shouts, trying to give men some lessons, but the lessons she has actually given to Maxim and other men, have caused perhaps more serious

damages and deeper harms to the entire patriarchal system. Such damage can be seen in the fact that even after her death, she still owns the power to affect people, thus to destroy Manderley, and make Maxim say “I’m not sure if she hasn’t won, even now” at the very end of the story (374).

Femininity has also become a tricky issue in the story, as Rebecca manipulates almost every male character with her personal charm. Femininity is indeed an amazing tool for Rebecca when she needs to present her charms to the public (168) or to seduce her targets (276); however, in presenting her femininity, she does not prefer to act like a naïve creature that men would consider easily controllable, as can be seen in the fact that she never wears pink: “This pink set here she had never worn” (169). With her evening gowns and coverlet being sharply “silver” or “golden” (168), it is apparent that her charm exquisitely combines some masculine energy and wild nature. Her fashion style is not conventionally feminine as well: sometimes she wears her hair short and puts on “slacks” and “a shirt” in a simple and fashionable way (168-69). Such perfect combination and proportion between femininity and masculine energy would be most apparent in the morning-room, a room decorated by herself and for her use only:

This was a woman’s room, graceful, fragile, the room of someone who had chosen every particle of furniture with great care, so that each chair, each vase, each small, infinitesimal thing should be in harmony with one another, and with her own personality... There was no intermingling of style, no confusing of period, and the result was a perfection in a strange and startling way, not coldly formal like the drawing-room shown to the public, but vividly alive, having something of the same glow and brilliance... The room was filled with [the lean

and graceful rhododendrons], even the walls took colour from them, becoming rich and glowing in the morning sun...

I went and sat down at the writing desk, and I thought how strange it was that this room, so lovely and so rich in colour, should be, at the same time, so business-like and purposeful... this writing table, beautiful as it was, was no pretty toy where a woman would scribble little notes, nibbling the end of a pen, leaving it, day after day, in carelessness, the blotter a little askew. The pigeon-holes were docketed, "letters-unanswered," "letter-to-keep," "household," "estate," "menus," "miscellaneous," "addresses"; each ticket written in that same scrawling pointed hand that I knew already... there was [Rebecca's] writing once more, this time in an open leather book, whose heading "Guests at Manderley" showed at once, divided into weeks and months, what visitors had come and gone, the rooms they had used, the food they had eaten. I turned over the pages, and saw that the book was a complete record of a year, so that the hostess, glancing back, would know to the day, almost to the hour, what guest had passed what night under her roof, and where he had slept, and what she had given him to eat. There was note-paper also in the drawer, thick white sheets, for rough writing, and the note-paper of the house, with the crest, and the address, and visiting cards, ivory-white, in little boxes...

(Rebecca 82-84)

What can be seen from this long description is that Rebecca's morning-room, like the mistress herself, is a perfect combination of styles and effectiveness, a place full of loveliness and systematical arrangements, showing how the mistress takes care of her

social relations logically and passionately at the same time. Although according to the research, from the beginning of the 20th century, the aesthetic field of decoration has been “governed by an opposition between modernism and art deco, with its attendant binaries of avant-garde/historicist, exterior/interior, structural/decorative, industrial/handmade, mass/elite, and male/female” (Elliott 110), readers can see no conflicts between the two groups in Rebecca’s morning-room. Rebecca’s talent and taste in choosing decorations for rooms, gardens, and parties has also helped her to gain reputation as the mistress of the royal-classed Manderley more easily and naturally, since, as Bourdieu suggests, interior designs show not only the inhabitant’s aesthetic sense in lifestyle but also his/her economic class (Bourdieu 257).

However, contrary to Rebecca’s morning-room, the library in Manderley is a stale and traditional room made for male, as witnessed by the narrator/protagonist:

It was a deep, comfortable room, with books lining the walls to the ceiling, the sort of room a man would move from never, did he live alone; solid chairs beside a great open fire-place, baskets for two dogs in which I felt they never sat... There was an old quiet smell about the room... Whatever air came to this room... would lose its first freshness, becoming part of the unchanging room itself, one with the books, musty and never read, one with the scrolled ceiling, the dark paneling, the heavy curtains.

(Rebecca 68-69)

The library is an awful example for interior decoration both in taste and function, yet ironically it is the only place that men can feel comfortable in the house of Manderley, the only room unarranged by Rebecca and kept mostly the same since Maxim’s ancestors’s time. It is the representation of the originality of the de Winter family, the

patriarchal traditions appreciated by Maxim as he complains about Rebecca's over-decorating the natural, inartificial Manderley:

[Rebecca's] blasted taste made Manderley the thing it is to-day. The garden, the shrubs, even the azaleas in the Happy Valley, do you think they existed when my father was alive? God, the place was a wilderness, lovely yes, wild and lonely with a beauty of its own... Half the stuff you see here in the rooms was never here originally... my father knew nothing about furniture or pictures.

(Rebecca 274)

It is apparent that Maxim prefers the patriarchal origins passed down by the fathers even if they may lack the sense of style and the appreciation from the guests. It is ironical that the master of Manderley is depicted as a passive creature, staying in the old room filled with mossy smell and bad-tasted furniture, enjoying his unchanged life and rigid routines contentedly (77); while the mistress Rebecca actively builds up the relationships with others, carrying on an open social life day after day (122). Rebecca's femininity is a combination between graceful beauty and powerful, energetic spirits that help her to experience the resistive pleasure and the complicit pleasure at the same time in her two-faced life in Manderley.

In sum, the double pleasure in Rebecca's two-faced life is a continuous shifting process between the *Plasir* and the *Jouissance* areas, between the role-playing as a perfect mistress and a lecherous slut, between the complicit pleasure that yields to patriarchy and the resistive pleasure that revolts against it secretly at the same time. With her name being the book title and her impressive personalities, Rebecca is a strong character that does not only represent a Wild Woman who possesses unrestrained spirits, but also a crafted woman with extraordinary wisdom, knowing

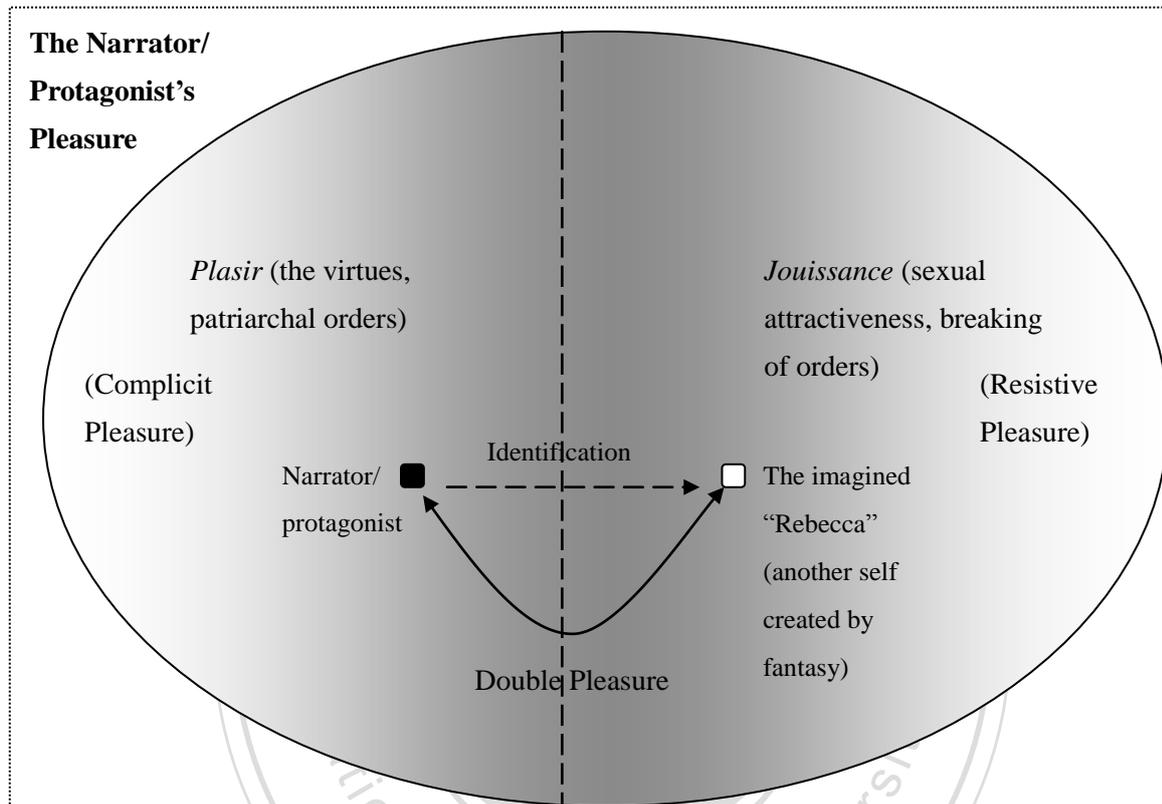
exactly how to manipulate people around her, how to present herself through the perfect combination of her masculine energy and her feminine charm, which can be well reflected in her brilliant tastes in her dressings and in interior decorations. With the reputation she has gained as the elegant mistress of Manderley and with her secret humiliation to the de Winter family, Rebecca has not only obtained her double pleasure but also has successfully caused enormous harm to the male characters and the patriarchal traditions in this story, totally without the need to walk on the street and raise a furious claim against the patriarchal society.

- Case 2: The Narrator/Protagonist

The narrator/protagonist profoundly reflects how a woman can gain double pleasure even in a situation when she is seemingly being oppressed by the patriarchal society. Unlike the strong, determined, beautiful and sophisticated Rebecca, the narrator/protagonist is a meek young girl, plain and inexperienced, behaving obediently under the patriarchal social orders. However, as she knows more about Rebecca, a new identity has begun to develop inside her as well: an image of a mature woman with independent spirits, fully capable of controlling males with her sexual attractiveness. This part of the chapter will reveal how the image of Rebecca has become a stimulus of the narrator's/protagonist's liberation against the patriarchal orders, and how an internal revolution has been constructed in a meek woman like her who seems to be obedient to the patriarchal orders.

The narrator/protagonist is able to experience pleasure from the intensified sexual excitements and desire by developing a self overlapping with the image of Rebecca so as to discover her own “sensual and independent femininity” (Makinen 35). However, this does not contradict the fact that she also gains pleasure from the rigidly ordered daily routines and “the collusion with the male (Maxim)” (Makinen

35). As a matter of fact, in the following part of this chapter, it would be exemplified that the narrator/protagonist experiences double pleasure within the shifting between the two different kinds of pleasure—the *Jouissance*, the intensified excitements, and *Plasir*, the release of such excitement—as the following diagram presents:



The narrator/protagonist's double pleasure is accomplished during the shifting process of her two identities. Her passive and meek self adoring her aristocratic husband and the peaceful routines in Manderley provides her with the pleasure of the *Plasir* (the release of excitement) and the complicit pleasure within a patriarchal society. On the other hand, her liberated self as a sexually attractive, mature, uncontrolled woman, created by her fantasy based on the figure of Rebecca, provides her the pleasure of the *Jouissance* (the stimulating excitement) along with the resistive pleasure against the patriarchal society. By identifying herself with the traditional female *and* the liberal female at the same time, the narrator/protagonist obtains both kinds of pleasure, the *Plasir* and the *Jouissance*. The following paragraphs will be

supporting this viewpoint with detailed textual analysis.

Being financially poor and inexperienced, the narrator/protagonist has no other choice but to serve as the travel companion of the vulgar American woman Mrs. Van Hopper in Monte Carlo, where she meets Maxim for the first time. Maxim, the gentleman of high social class and his “silent, exquisite courtesy” (*Rebecca* 15) are the representation of the noble and delicate Englishness on the contrary to Mrs. Van Hopper’s inappropriate sensual and vulgar behaviors (19). Maxim’s Manderley, the paradise-like place that the narrator/protagonist has longed to visit since her childhood, furthermore makes Maxim the ideal Prince Charming for her. Therefore, their quick marriage, though without a romantic courtship, is like a dream-come-true for her: “suddenly I realised that it would all happen, I would be his wife, we would walk in the garden together, we would stroll down that path in the valley to the shingle beach... Mrs. de Winter. I would be Mrs. de Winter... I am going to be Mrs. de Winter. I am going to live at Manderley. Manderley will belong to me” (53-55); “Yes, there it was, the Manderley I had expected, the Manderley of my picture post-card long ago. A thing of grace and beauty, exquisite and faultless, lovelier even than I had ever dreamed, built in its hollow of smooth grassland and mossy lawns, the terraces sloping to the gardens, and the gardens to the sea” (65). Arriving at Manderley, the narrator/protagonist is overwhelmed by the peaceful beauty of the landscape, deeply enjoying the pleasure of the *Plasir*, the pleasure from peaceful orders and the release of nerves: “I began to feel more like the self I wanted to become, the self I had pictured in my dreams, who made Manderley her home” (76); “Everything was quiet and still... ‘This is what I what I always imagined,’ I thought, ‘this is how I hoped it would be, living at Manderley’” (102).

More than simple enjoyments of peace, in Manderley the narrator/protagonist also obtains the complicit pleasure—the pleasure of being the mistress of such noble

and magnificent place: “I had to teach myself that all this was mine now, mine as much as his, the deep chair I was sitting in, the mass of books stretching to the ceiling, the pictures on the walls, the gardens, the woods, the Manderley I had read about, all of this was mine now because I was married to Maxim” (69). Her preference of the quiet rose garden over the sea sounds that are “pitiless” and “cruel” (90) matches her husband’s fondness of peacefulness, as indicated by Maxim: “I love the rose-garden... one of the first things I remember is walking after my mother, on very small, unsteady legs, while she picked off the dead heads of the roses. There’s something peaceful and happy about this room, and it’s quiet too. You could never tell you were within five minutes of the sea, from this room” (75). The complicit pleasure in her marital life can also be observed in her imagined future of having male heirs born to continue the peaceful ordinary routines:

We should grow old here together, we should sit like this to our tea as old people, Maxim and I, with other dogs, the successors of these, and the library would wear the same ancient musty smell that it did now. It would know a period of glorious shAbiness and wear when the boys were young—our boys—for I saw them always a litter of rods, and cricket bats, great clasp-knives, bows-and-arrows.

On the table there, polished now and plain, an ugly case would stand containing butterflies and moths, and another one with birds’ eggs, wrapped in cotton wool. ‘Not all this junk in here,’ I would say, ‘take them to the schoolroom, darlings,’ and they would run off, shouting, calling to one another, but the little one staying behind, pottering on his own, quieter than others.

(Rebecca 69)

However, this pleasure of the *Plasir* confronts continual disturbance by the

history of the former mistress Rebecca, a perfect woman in every respect whom the narrator/protagonist could never surpass as her successor. People in Manderley consider the narrator/protagonist as “very different from Rebecca” (85) while Rebecca is repeatedly described as “clever,” “lovely,” “beautiful,” “full of life” (123-24), and gifted with the talent “of being attractive to people; men, women, children, dogs” (187). Based on people’s descriptions, the narrator/protagonist gradually builds out the image of Rebecca: “tall and slim, with dark hair... dark hair against a white face, someone whose quick eyes saw to the comfort of her guests, who gave an order over her shoulder to a servant, someone who was never awkward, never without grace” (125); “[s]omeone tall and slim and very beautiful, who had a gift... of being attractive to people. Easy to like, I supposed, easy to love” (188). The image of Rebecca is not only beautiful and kind, but also handsomely determined and efficient as the narrator/protagonist studies Rebecca’s well-organized writing desk in the morning-room:

She who sat here before me had not wasted her time, as I was doing. She had reached out for the house telephone and given her orders for the day, swiftly, efficiently, and run her pencil perhaps through an item in the menu that had not pleased her... when she had finished, she began her letters, five, six, seven perhaps to be answered, all written in that same curious, slanting hand I knew so well. She would tear off sheet after sheet of that smooth white paper, using it extravagantly, because of the long strokes she made when she wrote, and at the end of each of her personal letters she put her signature, “Rebecca,” that tall sloping *R* dwarfing its fellows.

(Rebecca 86)

Rebecca's successful image causes huge pressure on the narrator/protagonist. The narrator/protagonist is originally aware of her own unattractiveness, and feels a strong sense of inferiority when being around with the rich, confident and well-bred people in Manderley: "my dull, lanky hair" (36); "I anything but the creature that I was in my shabby coat and skirt, my broad brimmed schoolgirl hat" (33); "people like myself, quiet and dull and youthful, who did not matter" (43); "[my handwriting] cramped and unformed... without individuality, without style, uneducated even, the writing of an indifferent pupil taught in a second-rate school" (86-87); "[t]hey had guts, the women of her race... I had not the pride, I had not the guts. I was badly bred" (219). Rebecca's glorious history in Manderley is no doubt a continual reminder of the narrator/protagonist's own insufficiency, crushing her self-esteem every second in the house: "[I'm] just like a between-maid... and not the mistress of a house" (143); "[l]ittle things, meaningless and stupid in themselves, but they were there for me to see, for me to hear, for me to feel... I could not help it if [Rebecca] came to me in thoughts, in dreams. I could not help it if I felt like a guest in Manderley" (137).

Nevertheless, with a closer observation, it can well be seen that the imagined Rebecca has also turned into an ideal female figure for the narrator/protagonist, as Light has put, "in pursuing Rebecca the girl has identified with her as a positive alternative to herself"; "Rebecca becomes the figure which reveals the girl's unfulfilled desires" (Light 10; 12). From the very beginning of the story, readers are informed with the narrator/protagonist's strong wish to be "older and different" (*Rebecca* 22), and to become "a woman of about thirty-six dressed in black satin with a string of pearls" (37) instead of a "raw ex-schoolgirl" (16) as she is. It is after she knows about Rebecca that this longing to be an elegant and mature woman at last finds its ultimate model: "confidence, grace, beauty, intelligence, wit... all the qualities that mean most in a woman—[Rebecca] possessed" (131). It is crucial to

notice that “Rebecca is wholly a figment of the girl’s imagination, invented from a sense of her own social and sexual limitations” and that ““Rebecca’ is a projection of her own desires which both help to produce and to ratify the girl’s feelings of adequacy” (Light 11). By identifying herself with Rebecca, the narrator/protagonist becomes dissatisfied with the way Maxim treats her like a child instead of a woman: “You’re playing with me all the time, just as if I was a silly little girl” (*Rebecca* 202).

Maxim’s patriarchal violence can be especially seen in his arrogant marriage proposal: “[s]o [the marriage]’s settled, isn’t it?... instead of being companion to Mrs. Van Hopper you become mine, and your duties will be almost exactly the same” (53), which make the narrator/protagonist feel inferior and unsecured: “he had not said anything about being in love” (56); I’m not a bride... I did not even have a proper wedding. No white dress or orange blossoms or trailing bridesmaids” (194). After their marriage, Maxim considers himself a father-like husband who is allowed to control the narrator/protagonist with male authority: “[a] husband is not very different from a father after all. There is a certain type of knowledge I prefer you not to have. It’s better kept under lock and key... don’t ask me any more questions, or I shall put you in the corner” (202). The fact is, Maxim has created a strict “women v.s. men” binary structure in his mind, believing that all grownup women are evil and treacherous while men are honest: “[m]en are simpler than you imagine, my sweet child. But what goes on in the twisted tortuous minds of women would baffle anyone” (201). Such attitude can also be speculated in his gardening: he dislikes the full-bloomed roses, commenting on them as “something shallow and raucous, like women with untidy hair. In the house they became mysterious and subtle” (31). Women of abundant sexuality are mysterious therefore dangerous, uncontrollable therefore hateful, unlike the purely white azaleas, child-like flowers “of beauty and grace, drooping their lovely delicate heads in the soft summer rain” (108). Maxim’s

favor for the innocent childishness along with his hatred for female sexuality could no doubt be strengthened after his first humiliating marriage with the sexy Rebecca, and eventually have altogether changed into the obsessive attitude in wishing the child-like narrator/protagonist would never grow up: “[i]t’s a pity you have to grow up” (53); “[p]romise me you will never wear black satin” (41).

However, without knowing Maxim’s thoughts, the narrator/protagonist could only feel the sense of inferiority in her own childishness: “I suppose that’s why you married me... you knew I was dull and quiet and inexperienced” (145). She becomes more and more resistive towards Maxim’s patriarchal control and feels the “lightness of heart” (150) whenever she is alone without Maxim’s companion: “[n]ow that Maxim was safe in London... I felt very well and curiously happy. I was aware of a sense of freedom, as though I had no responsibilities at all...” (150); “places are so much lovelier when one is alone... I did not want anyone with me. Not even Maxim... Now I could relax... How lovely it was to be alone again” (151). While facing Maxim, she wishes to gain more power so as to be standing on the equal position with him:

I wished he would not always treat me as a child... someone to be petted from time to time when the mood came upon him, but more often forgotten, more often patted on the shoulder and told to run away and play. I wished something would happen to make me look wiser, more mature. Was it always going to be like this?... Would we never be together, he a man and I a woman, standing shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, with no gulf between us? I did not want to be a child, I wanted to be his wife, his mother, I wanted to be old.

(Rebecca 196)

What can be speculated from above is the narrator/protagonist's desire to experience the resistive pleasure, to obtain equal rights in a marriage, and the pleasure of inspiring excitations, the pleasure to become a mature woman, confident and sexually attractive like Rebecca. The whole novel "sets up a binary opposition between the two kinds of femininity," and "Rebecca emerges as an aristocratic mix of independent and 'essential femininity, a strong physical presence, a confident and alluring sexuality'" while the narrator/protagonist is "literally a girl, immature by Rebecca's standards" (Light 11). What Rebecca represents for the narrator/protagonist is everything that is mysteriously beautiful and dangerously secretive: Rebecca's name and history banned to be spoken in front of Maxim, and Rebecca's room banned from people's visits in the house. Therefore, when the narrator/protagonist bravely speaks out Rebecca's name, and when she sneaks into Rebecca's room, an amazingly strange, exciting pleasure catches her: "saying Rebecca's name... gave me a curious satisfaction, it acted upon me like a stimulant" (*Rebecca* 127); "I began to walk upstairs [to Rebecca's room]. My heart was beating in a queer excited way" (163). The following monologue after her quarrel and compromise with Maxim shows how she secretly creates a strong personality in her mind, and imagines how this new self, similar to Rebecca, could stand against Maxim: "I heard myself speaking in a hard cool voice. 'If you don't think we are happy it would be much better if you would admit it. I don't want you to pretend anything. I'd much rather go away. Not live with you any more.' ... It was the girl in the play talking, not me to Maxim. I pictured the type of girl who would play the part. Tall and slim, rather nervy" (146).

The narrator/protagonist's greatest challenge in actions towards patriarchy, and towards her original dull self as well, could be seen in her preparing for the masquerade ball, during which she imagines herself as Rebecca, and discovers a new self with a new appearance that provides her with awesome and exciting joy. Two

days before the ball, at the dinner table with Maxim the narrator/protagonist starts to picture how Rebecca has dined with Maxim everyday, and starts to identify herself directly as Rebecca: “I pictured Rebecca sitting where I sat now, picking up her fork for the fish... in that brief moment, sixty seconds in time perhaps, I had so identified myself with Rebecca that my own dull self did not exist, had never come to Manderley” (200). This identification gives her a certain degree of joy but annoys Maxim, who witnesses the whole process: “[d]o you know, you did not look a bit like yourself just now? You had a quite different expression on your face... you looked older suddenly, deceitful. It was rather unpleasant... You had a twist to your mouth and a flash of knowledge in your eyes. Not the right sort of knowledge” (201). Instead of being aware of Maxim’s displeasure, the narrator/protagonist feels strangely excited: “I felt curious, rather excited. ‘What do you mean, Maxim? What isn’t the right sort of knowledge?’” (202). Through imagining herself as Rebecca, the narrator/protagonist finds pleasure in approaching the dangerous knowledge, the banned knowledge about the secrets of Rebecca and the female sexuality.

The stunning change of her appearance for the masquerade ball is a symbolic transformation of the narrator/protagonist from a plain girl into an attractive woman, tasting the pleasure of the *Jouissance*. As indicated by Light, “the desire of the girl to be like Rebecca reaches its full expression when... she unknowingly copies a fancy dress costume identical to one worn by Rebecca. This is the moment of her most complete social and sexual confidence as mistress of Manderley and as Mrs de Winter” (Light 12). Instead of taking Maxim’s strong advices for playing the child-like “Alice-in-Wonderland” (*Rebecca* 196; 202; 205) or the un-sexy “Joan of Arc” suggested by Maxim’s friend (205), the narrator/protagonist decides to dress like Caroline de Winter, one of Maxim’s beautiful ancestors whose elegant portrait is hanged on Manderley’s hall. With the help of the beautiful white dress and the dreamy

wig, the narrator/protagonist's tremendous transformation is completed from a dull schoolgirl into an attractive woman: "I looked quite attractive, quite different altogether. Not me at all. Someone much more interesting, more vivid and alive" (205); "... white dress in its folds of tissue paper... how it would hide my flat dull figure, my rather sloping shoulders... my own lank hair covered by the sleek and glamorous curls" (209). Not knowing that the dress has been identically chosen by Rebecca for the previous masquerade ball, the narrator/protagonist simply experiences the joy of becoming a real woman, confident, proud, and triumphant because of her charming appearance: "I twisted and turned in front of the mirror, I frowned, I smiled. I felt different already, no longer hampered by my appearance. My own dull personality was submerged at last... I covered my own mousy hair with the curled wig trying to hide my triumph, trying to hide my smile" (211); "I did not recognize the face that stared at me in the glass. The eyes were larger surely, the mouth narrower, the skin white and clear? The curls stood away from the head in a little cloud, I watched this self that was not me at all and then smiled; a new, slow smile... I don't think I have ever felt so excited before, so happy and so proud" (212).

Nevertheless, this joy of transformation is suppressed by patriarchy, as the dressing-up fails at the end because of Maxim's furious attitude toward the narrator/protagonist for dressing identical with Rebecca. On the other hand, the narrator/protagonist, when knowing her pleasurable dressing-up game is also a kind of imitation of Rebecca, becomes more and more attracted and obsessed with the wonderful womanhood that Rebecca represents: "Rebecca, always Rebecca. Wherever I walked in Manderley, wherever I sat, even in thoughts and in my dreams, I met Rebecca. I knew her figure now... I knew her face too... I knew the scent she wore, I could guess her laughter and her smile. If I heard it, even among a thousand others, I should recognize her voice. Rebecca, always Rebecca. I should never be rid

of Rebecca. Perhaps I haunted her as she haunted me” (233-34). The image of Rebecca has so overlapped with the narrator/protagonist’s newly discovered pleasure of the *Jouissance*, that Rebecca means not only a target of her jealousy but also an example serving as an ultimate woman incredibly confident and beautiful, from whom the narrator/protagonist can learn to become more attractive, more mature, and to live care-freely even within the oppressive patriarchal society. Leaning toward the resistive pleasure, the narrator/protagonist starts to renounce the complicit pleasure by denying the love in her marriage and her link with Manderley: “Maxim was not in love with me, he had never loved me. Our honeymoon in Italy had meant nothing at all to him, nor our living here together. What I thought was love for me... was not love. It was just that he was a man, and I was his wife and was young... I did not belong to Maxim or to Manderley” (233).

It is at this moment that there comes the turning point of the whole story: Rebecca’s dead body is found under a boat, and Maxim speaks the whole truth only to the narrator/protagonist, that it is he who actually kills Rebecca because he cannot stand Rebecca’s “evilness” anymore. Maxim accuses Rebecca as “vicious, damnable, rotten through and through” (271) because she wouldn’t control her sexual desire and continues to seduce almost every male in Manderley, which would ruin Manderley and the de Winter family’s reputation: “[t]here had been Frank, and Giles. She might get hold of one of the workmen on the estate, someone from Kerrith, anyone... And then the bomb would have to fall. The gossip, the publicity I dreaded” (276). For the narrator/protagonist, it is after hearing the truth that the “jig-saw pieces” of Rebecca’s image are finally “fitting into place” (276)— she for the first time knows about the real nature of Rebecca. She is inspired by the fact that she could still defeat Rebecca by being a virtuous wife: “[n]ow that I knew [Rebecca] to have been evil and vicious and rotten I did not hate her anymore” (284-85), because as Maxim’s best friend

Frank has suggested her, “kindliness, and sincerity, and... modesty—are worth far more to a man, to a husband, than all the wit and beauty in the world” (132). Her heart becomes “light like a feather floating in the air” because Maxim has “never loved Rebecca” (274), never considered Rebecca superior than she is, as people often do.

An important point that should be specifically remarked here is that Maxim is not truly cared and considered by the narrator/protagonist at this crucial moment.

When Maxim shares his story to her, kisses her, and exposes his softness to her, she is calm, cool, and indifferent: “[h]ow calm I am, I thought. How cool. Here I am looking at the piece of curtain, and Maxim is kissing me. For the first time he is telling me he loves me” (268); “I did not care about his shame. None of the things that he had told me mattered to me at all. I clung to one thing only, and repeated it to myself, over and over again. Maxim did not love Rebecca... Maxim was talking, and I listened him, but his words meant nothing to me, I did not really care... I looked away from him so he should not see my face. What did it matter whether I understood him or not?” (273-74). The only thing that the narrator/protagonist cares about is that she suddenly obtains an opportunity to surpass Rebecca under the patriarchal values, and exactly because Rebecca is “incapable of love, of tenderness, of decency... not even normal” (271), the narrator/protagonist would be willing to play the tender, decent and normal wife on the surface, so as to gain her husband’s fondness. Such changes blend her resistive pleasure with the complicit pleasure, providing her with a sense of superiority of defeating the evil woman by virtue, along with a sense of security as well, guaranteeing her the righteous position to live in Manderley as the real proper mistress.

It is through being a chaste, virtuous and understanding wife that the narrator/protagonist finally becomes the proper mistress of Manderley, which provides her a certain degree of complicit pleasure, along with a certain degree of

resistive pleasure of women's power overcoming men's, which can be especially seen when Maxim confesses his crime and hands out his authoritative power to the narrator/protagonist. Since Maxim has no idea what to do with people's awful discovery of Rebecca's body, for the first time the readers see this tyrant's uncertainty and helplessness: "[w]hat are you going to do?" I whispered. 'I don't know,' he said. 'I don't know'" (269). It is exactly at this moment when Maxim renounces his authoritative power that the narrator/protagonist begins to feel the warmth of her own hands and body, and the strength to support and take care of her husband: "[m]y hands were cold no longer. They were clammy, warm. I felt a wave of colour come into my face, my throat. My cheeks were burning hot" (269); "'I love you,' I whispered, 'I love you. Will you believe me now?' He kissed my face and my hands. He held my hands very tightly like a child who would gain confidence" (270); "I held out my arms to him and he came to me like a child. I put my arms round him and held him... I held him and comforted him as though he was Jasper. As though Jasper had hurt himself in some way and had come to me to take his pain away" (352). By taking care of Maxim like a mother and by making decisions for him, the narrator/protagonist gains the authoritative power in their marital relationship, no longer playing the meek and obedient wife: "I was using the words he had used to me. I felt better and stronger. It was I now who was taking care of him. He was tired, pale. I had got over my weakness and fatigue and now he was the one to suffer from reaction... 'Eat up your fish,' I said" (375-76).

Readers can also witness that the narrator/protagonist is gradually taking Rebecca's place as the mistress of the house: "I had not thought it would be so easy to be severe. I wonder why it had seemed hard for me before... 'I'm afraid it does not concern me very much what Mrs. de Winter used to do,' I said, 'I am Mrs. de Winter now, you know. And if I choose to send a message by Robert I shall do so'" (290).

She is not even afraid to challenge the social justice, to perjure for the murder case: “I was free now to be with Maxim... I would never be a child again... I was not young any more. I was not shy, I was not afraid. I would fight for Maxim. I would lie and perjure and swear, I would blaspheme and pray” (285). As Light brilliantly concludes, “for the girl to learn about Rebecca is in some measure to repeat Rebecca’s fall, to lose her own sexual innocence” (Light 16). She is no longer an innocent girl, as Maxim sadly indicates: “[i]t’s gone forever, that funny, young, lost look that I loved. It won’t come back again. I killed that too, when I told you about Rebecca. It’s gone, in twenty-four hours. You are so much older...” (*Rebecca* 299).

Depressed as Maxim is, however, this is obviously the narrator/protagonist’s happiest moment throughout the whole story, since she has at last transformed into a powerful woman and achieved her ultimate success in the patriarchal society: “to become wife of Maxim and mistress of Manderley” (Light 19). Yet Light has furthermore pointed out the troublesomeness in such transformation: “[n]otably, the girl’s first action as a newly confident Mrs de Winter is to bully the housemaid and dismiss Mrs Danver’s stale menu. Both acts make her the mistress. Her new-found sexual status and her superior class position differentiate and strengthen each other. The problem is of course that the [narrator/protagonist]’s actions are here too Rebecca-like for comfort” (19). Becoming the mistress by imitating Rebecca, the narrator/protagonist’s pleasure gains a kind of pleasure that is no longer the complicit pleasure or the resistive pleasure only, but the combination of the two: it is a process of protecting the patriarchal values—perjuring in order to protect the murderer of an unchaste wife—yet simultaneously experiencing the powerful revolution against the patriarchal authority in one’s marriage. Readers can see her cheerfulness about the change: “something new had come upon me that had not been before. My heart... was light and free” (*Rebecca* 284), and her hopeful, confident and determined attitude

toward her future: “[i]t was going to be very different in the future. I was not going to be nervous and shy of the servants any more... I would go and interview the cook in the kitchen. They would like me, respect me... People would come and stay and I should not mind” (376). The changes have given her the power to be important, a feeling she has slightly experienced when arranging the masquerade ball as a hostess: “I felt pleased and flushed and rather happy. People were being nice... It was suddenly fun, the thought of the dance, and that I was to be the hostess... It was new, this sudden unexpected sensation of being important” (209). She is even confident enough to declare a farewell to her old shyness and reserve:

It seemed incredible to me now that I had never understood. I wondered how many people there were in the world who suffered, and continued to suffer, because they could not break out from their own web of shyness and reserve, and in their blindness and folly built up a great distorted wall in front of them that hid the truth. This was what I had done. I had built up false pictures in my mind and sat before them. I had never had the courage to demand the truth. Had I made one step forward out of my own shyness Maxim would have told me these things four months, five months ago.

(Rebecca 276)

Enjoying the peaceful routines and the exciting power to control men in her life, the narrator/protagonist experiences the pleasure of the *Plasir* and the pleasure of the *Jouissance*—altogether constructing the double pleasure that gives her the greatest happiness throughout the whole text.

However, near the very end of the story, the narrator/protagonist’s resistive pleasure is again suppressed due to the acknowledgement of Rebecca’s disease. The

truth is revealed that Rebecca actually has a terminal cancer that would painfully kill her sooner or later, along with the incapacity of bearing children: “[t]he X-rays showed a certain malformation of the uterus... which meant she could never have had a child” (367). Rebecca’s disease serves as a good explanation for her seeming “suicide,” which sets Maxim free from the suspicion of murder; on the other hand, the disease looks more like a punishment for the evil women to the narrator/protagonist: “Rebecca’s physical abnormality... might be read as a physical manifestation, even punishment, of her promiscuity” (Abi-Ezzi 256); “[Rebecca] was punished with death” (Light 14). This could also explain why the narrator/protagonist is obsessed with the idea of having children: “[w]e would have children. Surely we would have children” (*Rebecca* 376), so as to prove herself as the chaste, virtuous, proper mistress of Manderley, because “the distance between Rebecca and the girl is in fact proof-positive of the girl’s superior femininity and true worth” (Light 12).

The fear for being a bad woman and getting punishments has forced the narrator/protagonist to hide her desire to become a real woman, and as the ending shows, Rebecca can only appear in her dreams:

I was writing letters in the morning-room. I was sending out invitations. I wrote them all myself with a thick black pen. But when I looked down to see what I had written it was not my small square hand-writing at all, it was long, and slanting, with curious pointed strokes. I pushed the cards away from the blotter and hid them. I got up and went to the looking-glass. A face stared back at me that was not my own. It was very pale, very lovely, framed in a cloud of dark hair. The eyes narrowed and smiled. The lips parted. The face in the glass stared back at me and laughed. And I saw then that she was sitting on a chair

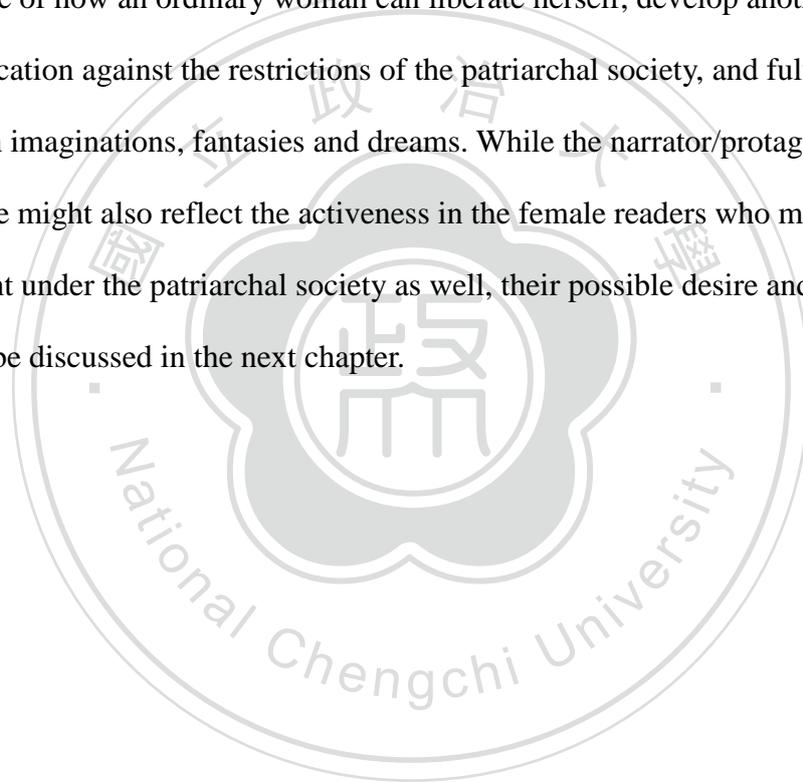
before the dressing-table in her bedroom, and Maxim was brushing her hair. He held her hair in his hands, and as he brushed it he wound it slowly into a thick long rope. It twisted like a snake, and he took hold of it with both hands and smiled at Rebecca and put it round his neck.

(*Rebecca* 379)

Cryptic as this dream seems, a clear suggestion is given here that the male power is strangled and captivated by the female, by the dead, by the mysterious power in the subconscious domain. According to Abi-Ezzi, this specific scene is an “extraordinary enactment of justice” that involves “Maxim’s imaginary ‘execution’ by Rebecca/the narrator” (Abi-Ezzi 271). As Light brilliantly concludes, the narrator/protagonist “wants to be like Rebecca, but dare not... yet once that process of identification with Rebecca has been set in motion its effects can never be fully contained nor its disruptive potential fully retrieved” (Light 13). As a result, her yearning to become a sexy and powerful female against patriarchy continues to haunt her in her numerous subconscious fantasies and dreams, as reflected in her repetitive dreams of Manderley (*Rebecca* 4) and the haunting memories about Rebecca (11) at the very final stage of the whole story.

In summary, through the whole process of the narrator/protagonist’s pleasurable experience, it could be observed that the narrator/protagonist has continually shifted from one kind of pleasure to another, more often standing on the vague borderline between the two. First she enjoys the pleasure of the *Plasir*, the peaceful beauty of the landscape and the peaceful routines in Manderley; later, she experiences the pleasure of the *Jouissance* by identifying herself with Rebecca, for all of the exciting sensuality, ideal femininity and resistive pleasure she represents; finally, near the very end of the novel, the narrator/protagonist shifts to the borderline between the *Plasir* and the *Jouissance*, experiencing the complicit pleasure of being the appropriate wife and

mistress in the patriarchal society, along with a resistive pleasure of gaining power in her marriage and having a suppressed desire against patriarchy that can be voiced out through subconscious dreams. Reviewing the whole process, the narrator/protagonist obtains her greatest happiness when she receives both kinds of pleasure at the same time: instead of going to the extremity of either kind of pleasure, by shifting between the double kinds of pleasure she can simultaneously present the ideal femininity yet stay secured in the patriarchal system. The narrator/protagonist serves as a good example of how an ordinary woman can liberate herself, develop another self identification against the restrictions of the patriarchal society, and fulfill her desire through imaginations, fantasies and dreams. While the narrator/protagonist's double pleasure might also reflect the activeness in the female readers who may be seemingly obedient under the patriarchal society as well, their possible desire and pleasure would be discussed in the next chapter.



Chapter Four

Readers' Double Pleasure in Reading *Rebecca*

The double pleasure theory may also give us a closer understanding about the readers' strong pleasure in reading *Rebecca*, which enormously helped the novel to become a long-term best-seller in the book market. In this chapter, the analysis is mainly split into two parts, discussing the working of reader's double pleasure inside and outside the text, explaining how readers could, through reading *Rebecca*, keep an enjoyable balance between patriarchal orders and feminism, between the passive position as the "duped" consumer in the romance market, and the active position as a reader with the agency of innovative interpretation. This will be followed by a series of interrelated questions: first, how could readers possibly identify with the nameless narrator/protagonist and therefore gain the same pleasure of hers? Secondly, how could the seemingly unpleasant ending ironically provide pleasure for the readers while it might seem "unjust" to them? Finally, how could the dream-sequences enhance the reading pleasure of this novel? These questions would also lead us to the next layer of discussion, which deals with the readers' possible pleasure outside the text: the readers' double pleasure in the whole reading method of the novel. The issue is specifically brought out because of the novel's special technique: the circular narrative, by which the final scene is never made clear and readers have to flip to the first page to make sure what truly happens. As the novel starts and ends with the dream of the narrator/protagonist's returning to Manderley, the dream-sequences in the novel also help to create an everlasting repetitiveness of the memory and an uncertainty about the storyline, which will be regarded in this chapter as the main source of the readers' double pleasure shifting between a fixed happy ending (complicit pleasure) *and* a fixed unhappy ending (resistive pleasure). This continual

work of double pleasure marvelously corresponds to romance readers' general tendency in their repetitive buying behaviors in the romance book market. Theories and field studies focusing on romance readership will be introduced along with the discussion, with some film theories included as well in order to suggest the double pleasure as a common experience for all romance readers.

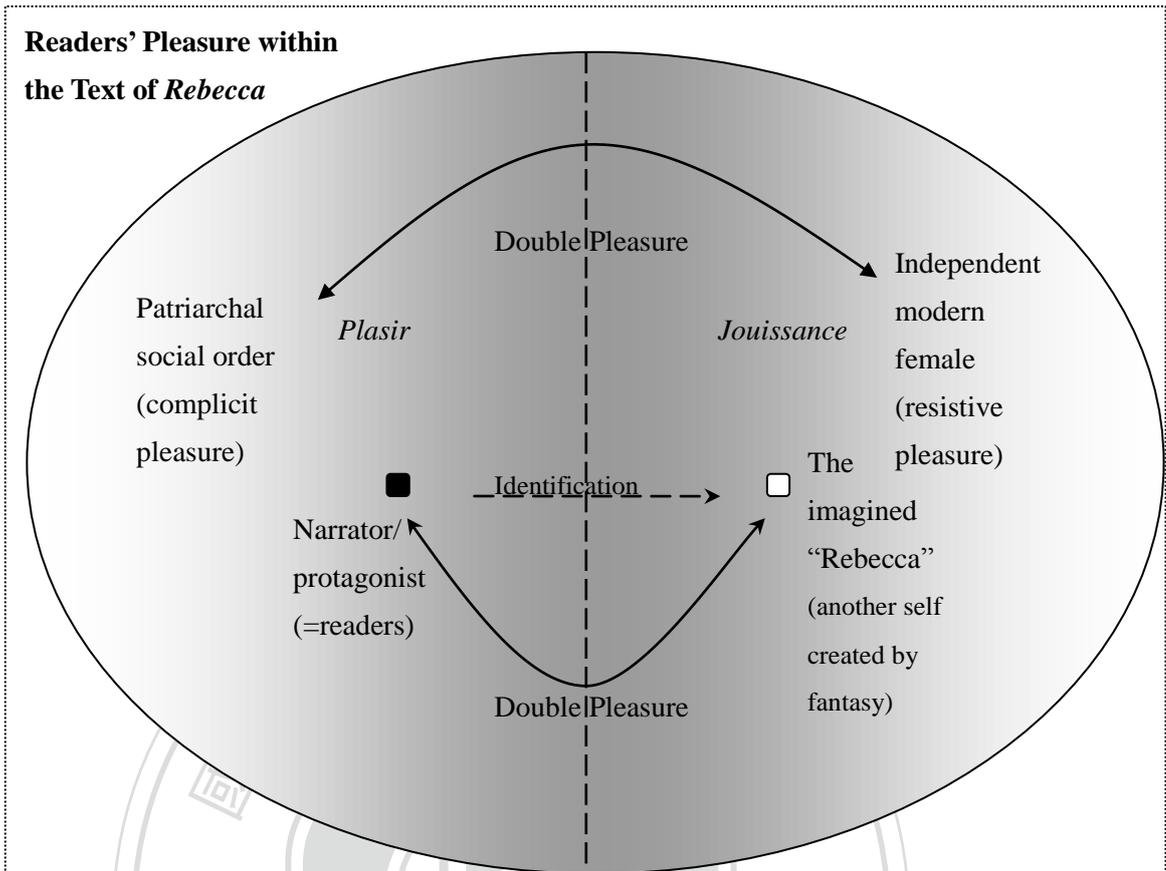
- Readers' Double Pleasure within the Text of *Rebecca*

According to Janice Radway's specific field studies of real-life readers of romance novels, most readers tend to hold a "desire to lose the self in a book" because "reading keeps them from being overwhelmed by expectations and limitations" in the dry reality (Radway 94). Their primary motivation of reading romance fiction is the search for pleasure and happiness, since the romance "seems to sustain [the readers], at least temporarily, for they believe reading helps to make them happier people and endows them with renewed hope and greater energy to fulfill their duty to others" (Radway 100). By temporarily losing themselves in romance novels, readers are able to free themselves from the obligation and boredom in their banal everyday life experience. In the field studies of adolescent romance readership, Christian-Smith further points out the imaginary self-identification with the heroine as the efficient method to lose one's original self-identification during the reading: "[t]he girls derived pleasure from imagining themselves as the heroine of romance novels. Through their reading, they lived out much of the specialness and excitement associated with being the object of a boy's affection" (Christian-Smith 106). Imagination and fantasy intertwined with the self-identification with the heroine have become the main source of pleasure for the romance readers during their reading, as Kay Mussell also indicates: "[r]omances offer a compelling fantasy to their readers because they allow them to imagine, prospectively or retrospectively, the possibilities

inherent in that moment of a woman's life when she is a physical or emotional virgin and capable of making good or bad choices. Readers may try on an alternative identity as they read, with each individual book exploring renewed possibilities for error or success" (Mussell 162). The readers' pleasure originates not only from the escape of the banal reality, but also from the development of a new self given with new possibilities. Mussell also points out the different tastes of traditional male and female readers, suggesting female readership as the strongest support of the romance market so far: "[a]s male fiction falls into adventure patterns, providing a prospective or retrospective fantasy of mastering the world and controlling the self in new modes, romances offer an analogous vicarious experience to women by recreating their own dramatic moment in new real contexts" (Mussell 162). The difference is probably caused by the patriarchal social orders already existing in reality that has oppressed women rights so much that women have to turn to daydreams for comforts: "all women in this society suffer... [from] a series of troubles and oppressions... If we look for happy endings in fiction it is because at present it is the only place we can hope to find them. Heroines negotiate a path through a world full of difficulty and danger, and emerge triumphant with a man transformed by their love" (Batsleer 219). In general, romance fantasies serve as one of the few means for the female readers to experience pleasure despite their distress in everyday life.

Readers' pleasure in reading *Rebecca*, however, turns into a rather complicated issue because of the novel's unusual arrangement of the process along with the ending that is far from the traditional "happily-ever-after" version, which has brought up a problem: how could readers gain pleasure by identifying themselves with the heroine, the plain and nameless narrator/protagonist often oppressed by the patriarchal violence, hardly a winner of love at the very end of the story? I would like to point out that although readers might firstly identify themselves with the plain

narrator/protagonist because of their own normality, they would furthermore, while the narrator/protagonist gradually “grows up” and identifies herself with Rebecca, identify themselves with the image of Rebecca, and enjoy the double pleasure between the pleasure of the *Plasir* and *Jouissance* exactly the way the narrator/protagonist has done. The namelessness and normality of the narrator/protagonist, and her first-person narrative along with detailed psychoanalytic depictions, altogether make it easier for the readers to identify narrator/protagonist as their alter-ego, while the femininity that Rebecca represents is an ideal self to be fantasized, a sexual and political liberation for all normal women: “[the appraisals of Rebecca] contrasts with the narrator’s meekness and failure to define herself to the reader as a substantial character... the narrator seeks to be liberated by ‘becoming’ Rebecca” (Abi-Ezzi 210). Christian-Smith also indicates that “[r]omantic relationships feature heroines’ attempts to try to negotiate better terms for themselves—to seek ways to be influential and powerful, and to participate in decisions that may affect their relationships. This process of negotiation or absence thereof reveals romance to be an important experience for learning about the power relations between women and men” (Christian-Smith 25). Readers’ pleasure in reading *Rebecca* is to experience the process of a girl’s self-awakening to her sexuality, during which she gradually learns how to become a powerful woman, to manage the household and to negotiate with her marital partner. What *Rebecca* presents is not a story about love, but a story about a woman’s exploration of her own desire and power, and her exquisite compromising technique to keep balance between her sexual desire and her yearning for social comfort, as can be presented by the graph below:



In reading the novel, readers can enjoy the pleasure of the *Plasir*, the peaceful grace and beauty of Manderley through the depictions, and the sense of security that the conventional de Winter family has provided through marriage. But very often, the mysteriously sensual and dangerous image of Rebecca strongly gives readers another kind of pleasure, the pleasure of the *Jouissance*, conflicting with the orderly peacefulness. While a woman's yearning for self-awakening is obvious throughout the whole novel, however, it is not to say that we should read the story totally as a feminist novel, since the readers might feel pleasantly secured as well to see how the normal narrator/protagonist triumphs over Rebecca and protects her marriage with her virtuous middle-class femininity, a feature shared by most common readers, as highlighted by Light: "the heroine's bourgeois virtue triumphs and in the end she manages to save both her husband and her marriage" (Light 7). In short, what the readers might always feel in this novel is very likely to be a double pleasure, a

pleasure that combines both the identification for patriarchy *and* for the feminism. In commenting on the film adaptation of *Rebecca*, Tania Modleski points out the impropriety to read the story as simply feminist: “it is that feminine element in the textual body that is unassimilable by patriarchal culture and yet cannot be ‘vomited out’... I do not mean to suggest that *Rebecca* is thereby a ‘progressive’ film for women; the social order is, after all, a patriarchal order... My own analysis is dedicated to tracing the resistances that disturb the text” (Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, 45).

While Germaine Greer summarizes modern romance this way: “[p]erhaps young girls have allowed an actual sexual battle to replace the moony fantasies” (Greer 192), *Rebecca* perhaps serves as opposite evidence of how the sexual battle is fought in reality, and the desire has retreated into the unconsciousness, yet never to be wiped away, hidden in the moony fantasies not about the hero but about another woman. Certainly, it is not simple to judge which side, either Rebecca’s or patriarchy’s, owns the right to proclaim the final victory; neither is it easy to define to which side that the narrator/protagonist truly turns to for good. “Unhappy” as its ending may seem,¹ however, what *Rebecca* actively presents is the pleasurable self-discovery of a girl and the forever ambiguity in every woman between her association with the

¹ The ending would be the most curiously controversial part in suggesting the narrator and Maxim’s happiness and victory, since their final predicament is rather miserable with their situation in reality proven to be “homeless, countryless, and childless” (Light 19). What the readers could know from the description is that the two of them live alone in a little hotel somewhere faraway from England, carrying a dull, simple and boring life in a “lost and puzzled” way, and the memories of Manderley never cease to haunt them every now and then (*Rebecca* 5). Manderley is burnt to ashes, and the couple strives to recover from that loss: “we must endure ordeal by fire... We have both known fear, and loneliness, and very great distress” (5). Although the narrator/protagonist believes that “men and women emerge finer and stronger after suffering” (5), there is still no any sign about their happy ending while they repetitively feel “uneasy for no reason” (7) along with the “sense of fear, of furtive unrest... unreasoning panic” (5). There is also a series of self-deceptions in their final predicament: the narrator/protagonist claims that “[t]he devil does not ride us anymore” and that “[w]e have no secrets now from one another” (6), but what the situation reflects is merely a large barrier between the two of them: “I would not tell my dream” (4); “he remembers [Manderley]... which happens, I think, rather more often than he would have me know” (5). For the hero and heroine in this romance, what waits in the end is a distorted version of a “happily-ever-after.” They share their future together indeed, but rather in dismay, boredom, and alienation.

traditional patriarchy and her adoration for the feminist values.

- A Justice Done to Everyone?

The ending of the story is no doubt a tricky part in our analysis of readers' pleasure in reading *Rebecca*. While the narrator/protagonist describes her own situation in the end as "the exile we have brought upon ourselves" (*Rebecca* 8), it seems that the hero and the heroine consider the ending as a revenge from Rebecca and a punishment for them: "the destruction of Manderley, representing as it does the lineage of which Maxim is so proud, appears to be virtually a revenge of the dead, a fitting punishment which the murderer has thus far evaded... the reader has seen the couple exiled, leading an existence void of both life and activity in a sterile, alien environment" (Abi-Ezzi 268). Maxim has committed a crime by killing Rebecca and hiding the truth, all because of his excessive care about Manderley, its landscape along with its reputation: "I thought about Manderley too much... I put Manderley first, before anything else. And it does not prosper, that sort of love... Christ said nothing about stones, and bricks, and walls, the love that a man can bear for his plot of earth, his soil, his little kingdom. It does not come into the Christian creed" (*Rebecca* 274). The narrator/protagonist, on the other hand, has committed her sin in persuading Maxim to hide the truth: "[w]e've got to think out a way to explain it... They can't prove anything against you... Nobody saw you that night" (282-83). A sense of guilt is heavy at the same time: "[w]e were allies, we travelled the same road, but we could not look at one another. We neither of us dared risk a confession" (314); and a sense of failure is strong while Maxim knows that even his crime was actually set up by Rebecca: "[s]he wanted me to kill her... It was her last practical joke... And I'm not sure if she hasn't won, even now" (374). Even after they are no longer suspects, they still live under the fear and anxiety that someone else might have

known the truth: “[h]ow much of the truth... do you think Julyan guessed?... He knew... of course he knew” (374). The final tragic fire of Manderley is very likely caused by Rebecca’s faithful people, Mrs. Danvers and Jack Favell, as an outlaw justice: “[y]ou think you’ve won, don’t you? The law can get you yet, and so can I, in a different way...” (370). In the very end, what keeps the couple away from rebuilding Manderley or regaining a social life, is exactly the sense of guilt, which makes them frightened of people’s guesses and gossips: “[w]e can never go back again, that much is certain” (5); “our little hotel is dull... [but there are] too many of the people he knows in any of the big hotels... we are sometimes bored—well, boredom is a pleasing antidote to fear” (6).

Objections may arise, suggesting that the ending is an unfair punishment for the couple since Rebecca has also committed sins. But discussing the justice issue in this novel would be an extremely difficult task, since we will need the criterion to judge the following questions: Is Rebecca’s promiscuity sinful? Are Maxim’s killing and the narrator/protagonist’s strong intention to hide away the truth more sinful? If Rebecca is guilty, has she already been punished by her disease? Whether Rebecca is guilty or not, will it make Maxim’s murder less guilty? Will Rebecca’s secret wish for a quick death make Maxim’s killing more tolerable for the readers? If by any kind of moral standard should Maxim be considered less guilty, does that standard inevitably belonged to patriarchal ideology?

There are no simple answers to these questions however, because one will have to dig into the problem of choosing a single moral standard to explain away the conflicts between personal desire and social orders. My only point here is that it would always be more appropriate if we treat *Rebecca* as a text full of reading pleasure, and one must be prepared to see how ideologies and moral standards (feminism and patriarchal moral standards) are serving as the sources of the readers’

double pleasure, from which women can get pleasure when feeling secured in a marriage system *and* when challenging that marriage system. It is always the shifting between the pleasure of peacefulness and the pleasure of excitation that leads to the greatest pleasure for *Rebecca*'s readers.

- Mystery of the Ending: Double Pleasure in Fantasies and Dreams

It would be necessary to figure out the significance of the dreams in this novel to solve the mystery of the ending, where the narrator/protagonist has the strange dream about Rebecca right before the fire in Manderley (*Rebecca* 379) and the eerie, melancholy, repetitive dreams about Manderley after the fire (1-4). Light points out that the dream about Rebecca is a fantasy to reverse the patriarchal hierarchy in marriage, “a displaced revenge, a revenge which the ordinary middle-class girl dare not acknowledge as her own” (Light 20). The repetitive dreams back to the ruined Manderley, according to Abi-Ezzi, is in fact a working of fantasy as a way to resist the banal reality: “the contrast with the richness of the girl’s subjective view of Manderley is highlighted, and even now, the only true stimulus in the narrator’s unvarying existence must come from her imagination, a secret escape from this death-in-life” (Abi-Ezzi 272). The working of fantasy inside the novel has corresponded to the way it works *outside* the novel—how romance readers read romance novels in order to escape from the mundane routines. For the teenage readers, romance is a thrilling, unrealistic escape from the banal life since “every girl is hoping that something more exciting, more romantic than the expected sequence of the social event will happen;” while for most married readers, reading romance is their only way to experience some dreamy and romantic atmosphere in life since “marriage is not romantic... husbands forget birthdays and anniversaries and seldom pay compliment,” and so for each wife “marriage is a hard job. Her romanticism becomes, if it has not

already become, escapism... Romance is now her private dream (Greer 193; 209; 210). According to the psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow's point, women could be emotionally nurtured *only* by themselves: "women reproduce themselves through their own daily housework... no one supports and reconstitutes women affectively and emotionally... Men are socially and psychologically reproduced by women, but women are reproduced... largely by themselves" (Chodorow 36). Radway further borrows Chodorow's theory to suggest that women readers can satisfy their own desire and obtain pleasure simply through their identification with the heroine in a romance novel: "[g]iven the nature of the female personality as a self-in-relation, the inability of men to function as completely adequate relational partners, and the reciprocal demands made upon women by [their children]... it is understandable that many women derive pleasure and encouragement from repetitive indulgence in romantic fantasies (Radway 138). This is reflected in the reading process of *Rebecca* in a slightly different way, in which not only the readers but also the heroine of the story is identifying with Rebecca, "a creation of the narrator's mind" (Abi-Ezzi 244) yet an ultimate representation of a "full-blooming womanhood" to be fantasized by all women readers (Radway 126). The secret fantasies about Rebecca have provided pleasurable escapes from the mundane reality, for both the narrator/protagonist inside the text, and the readers outside the text.

In a cultural point of view, the fantasies about Rebecca are presenting the resistive pleasure toward patriarchal society, and that female sexual desire is exactly like Rebecca, sensual, rebellious, murdered but never fading—an actually untamed power as described by Martin Hipsky: "[w]e need to avoid a reductive interpretation of that [heterosexual female] desire for transcendence through the lens of later crucial stereotypes about the romance novel, in which that desire is minimized as purely 'emotional' and as channeled into 'safe,' institutionally sanctioned desublimations

(Hipsky 7). But what should be especially noted is the very *impracticality* of those dreams/fantasies: they are sill desires that have never been acted out in reality. Perhaps for the narrator/protagonist and most women readers like her, having fantasies is a way of obtaining double pleasure: while the dreams/fantasies provide escapes full of resistive pleasure away from the reality, after they wake up, they can still carry on their normal lives and enjoy the complicit pleasure living in a secure marriage system, without putting one's social and life security in danger.

- Readers' Double Pleasure outside the Text: A Forever Continued Story

What should never be omitted in our discussion is the circular narrative structure, the most remarkable arrangement of the form of the novel that gives readers pleasure of reading a novel without a fixed ending. At the final page of *Rebecca*, readers are not given with sufficient clues about Manderley's fire except these following sentences that end the whole book: "the sky on the horizon... was shot with crimson, like a splash of blood. And the ashes blew towards us with the salt wind from the sea" (*Rebecca* 380). Most readers would have to refresh their memories about the hint given at the novel's first chapter, which starts with the narrator/protagonist's dream of returning to the ruined Manderley (1-4), along with a gradual flashback to the good old days in Manderley (5). After finishing the last page, readers can, by flipping back to the first page, smoothly read the whole story all over again to guess what has really happened. Within the circular narrative structure readers can sense that "there is no physical end to be gained" in the storyline (Abi-Ezzi 275), and a losing-track of the time caused by the flash-back-dreams, because "in the unconscious the fantasy scenario has no time periods" (Cowie 139). This lack of a physical end and the loss of the sense of time provide the readers with a sense of an everlasting continuity of the story, and I wish to prove it as an excellent narrative skill instead of a shortcoming in

the writing compared to those concrete endings in most romance novels. In fact, this manipulation of the circular narrative has liberated the novel from a rigidly linear storyline that is often pointed as a fatal flaw by Kay Mussell: “[i]n romance fiction, the moment of truth for a woman occurs when she is assigned to an appropriate marriage partner, and life beyond that moment has little explicit or dramatic value in the imaginative world of the formula. If the part of a woman’s life that occurs before that moment is prologue and the rest anticlimax, then it seems understandable that women of all ages might read romances to capture or recapture through fantasy that supposedly supreme moment of their lives” (Mussell 118). In other words, in a linear narrative of a romance, the *process* is always the part that can give readers more pleasure *than* an enclosed ending could do. If we use double pleasure to understand this phenomenon, it would be clear that while the concrete happy ending in a romance can provide readers with the sense of security and the joy of peacefulness (i.e. the pleasure of the *Plasir*), it has nevertheless at the same time wiped out their *possibility* to reach another kind of pleasure: pleasure of excitements, passion, and pure craziness (i.e. the pleasure of the *Jouissance*). Women can never feel satisfied enough by walking into an end of a single kind of pleasure and to be permanently deprived of the possibility to experience another kind of pleasure. What is unpleasant would be the loss of the *time* and *possibility* to experience both kinds of pleasure.

Many details in the text of *Rebecca* have reflected women’s fears of losing the time to experience double pleasure. On the one hand, the narrator/protagonist expresses her anxiety and doubts towards people’s peaceful final stages in life, in which women have eventually lost their energy and liveliness. She feels sorry for Maxim’s sister Beatrice, who has a stable marriage with an uninteresting man and

who has lost her youthful joy (*Rebecca* 101-03);² she also feels great pity toward Maxim's grandmother's oldness, and imagining the time when she still owns the beauty and the liveliness of a girl (183-84).³ On the other hand, she also shows her disgust and fear for people who have drowned themselves in purely sensual excitements and who have therefore, as time passes, eternally lost their grace. She describes the inevitable aging and decay of the sensual, lecherous womanizer Jack Favell this way: "[h]e had the hot, blue eyes usually associated with heavy drinking and loose living... In a few years he would run to fat... I could smell the whisky in his breath from where I stood" (158); "[h]is face was still very flushed. Excitement had made him sweat... Those florid good looks would not last him very long. Already he was out of condition, puffy" (334). It seems that no matter what one embraces, the pleasure of the *Plasir* or the pleasure of the *Jouissance*, life will inevitably run into staleness and one will lose the time and the possibility to experience the double pleasure, as long as one lives within a linear time order. This is exactly the reason for the narrator/protagonist to make the wishes that time can be stopped and kept: "If only there could be an invention... that bottled up a memory, like scent. And it never faded, and it never got stale," or to be made everlasting, at least in one's memory: "looking at the clock, I thought to myself, '[t]his moment now, at twenty past eleven, this must never be lost,' and I shut my eyes to make the experience more lasting" (36). This is also the reason why Rebecca, who is "afraid of nothing and no one," would worry about only one thing: "the idea of getting old, of illness, of dying in her bed" (343-44),

² "I wonder if she ever thought about the days that were gone, ever remembered the lanky pig-tailed child that she had been once, so different from the woman she had become, forty-five now, vigorous and settled in her ways, another person..." (*Rebecca* 103)

³ "I knew how she must have looked when she was young, tall and handsome, going round to the stables at Manderley with sugar in her pockets, holding her trailing skirt out of the mud... That was all finished now for her, all gone... I wished I could see her young, as she was once, with colour in her cheeks and chestnut hair, alert and active... little by little she had become accustomed to [be treated like an old person]... But the young woman with the chestnut hair and the narrow waist who gave sugar to the horses, where was she?" (*Rebecca* 183-84)

which will deprive her of the possibilities to obtain more pleasure.

However, for the readers of *Rebecca*, the circular narrative structure has provided positive solutions: readers are able to repeat the narrator/protagonist's pleasurable moments and to relive her story again and again, also, because of the very ambiguity of the storyline, free from assertions made by any kind of fixed ending—whether it is a happy one (e.g. Maxim and the narrator/protagonist live happily ever after) that fits the patriarchal orders; or an unhappy one (e.g. the narrator/protagonist is completely defeated by Rebecca the female rival eternally, and can only lead self-deceiving, miserable lives) which merely expresses female anger toward patriarchy. What readers might more likely feel is the novel's ambiguous potential for both a happy ending *and* an unhappy ending, thus they obtain a double pleasure created from the shifting between the complicit pleasure (originating from patriarchal ideology) and the resistive pleasure (originating from a militant feminist attitude).

It is also worth mentioning that this entire reading process of *Rebecca* also reflects the working of most women readers' double pleasure in their repetitive movements of buying romance novels, as Ang points out, "romance fans pick up a book again and again because romantic fiction does *not satisfy them enough*" (Ang 529). Romance readers have developed a circular reading process that could enhance the double pleasure in their reading. By repeatedly reading the process of a romance story instead of focusing on its fixed ending (whether a happy or an unhappy one), readers could all over again re-experience the heroine's double pleasure; and through repetitively buying new romances to read, readers can again and again devote themselves into the romantic process of the story and enjoy the double pleasure.

What should be noticed is the female readers' active agency reflected in their repetitively buying and reading romances, and it is more important to understand that that agency is not an overwhelming victory over male authorities but a co-existence

with them. Graeme Turner highlights female readers' particular control of romance in its consumption in this way: "while members of popular culture cannot gain control of the production of culture, they do control its consumption... [popular culture's] members continually seek out ways of operating that serve their own interests while appearing to acknowledge the interests of the dominant group" (Turner 199). Similar to the forever shifting between the complicit pleasure and the resistive pleasure that women experience in a romance, the romance reading/buying process is also an everlasting negotiation between an absolutely oppressing male production mechanism and female consuming power. Romance is, as Radway puts, "an account of a woman's journey to female personhood *as that particular psychic configuration is constructed and realized within patriarchal culture*" (Radway 138); and also, as Light exquisitely summarizes, "[c]onsumerist, yes; a hopeless rebellion, yes; but still, in our society, a forbidden pleasure" (Light 23). Mussell also infers that "[a]lthough romances may serve as a retreat from the real world, that retreat is not pathological. Romances might be more accurately characterized as a rejuvenating force in the lives of their readers" (Mussell 162). Indeed, what romances have provided for their readers is an excellent example of how the two strains of pleasure deriving from women's double identification toward oppressive patriarchy and militant feminists, can co-exist harmoniously and create even greater pleasure for them, which is no doubt an alternative pleasure-gaining instruction for women living in the patriarchal society.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In reading the novel *Rebecca*, readers are allowed to establish two different kinds of identification through the sharp contrast between the heroine as a plain girl and the character Rebecca as an extremely attractive woman, so as to obtain the two different sources of pleasure: the pleasure of the “*Plasir*” and the pleasure of the “*Jouissance*.” Also, the circular narrative structure of the novel enhances readers’ double pleasure by providing them with an endless feeling of the story. This might as well highlight how the unfixed endings of romances, or romance readers’ repetitive-buying behaviors, could function as the source of pleasure in the general romance reading experiences.

The key-point in analyzing the pleasure issue in *Rebecca* is the awareness of the ambiguity reflected in women’s so-called “happiness.” The most important character of the novel, Rebecca, is indeed a representative figure for women’s liberated sexual desires and passions inside a traditional marriage system, but she is also suffering from the fatal cancer, a likely punishment for her as arranged by the plot. The narrator/protagonist, on the other hand, replaces the promiscuous Rebecca to become the proper mistress all by her “bourgeois virtue” (Light 7), but she is also forced to carry on a dull and dissatisfying life, and to endure her endless longings to become an ideal female that Rebecca represents in her dreams. At the end it is not only hard to tell which of the two truly triumphs but also complicated to define their happiness. In fact, what the previous chapters have revealed is a fact that women’s pleasure is conflicting with the patriarchal society yet simultaneously being dependent on it: by rebelling against the patriarchal standards, women can experience an exciting and thrilling pleasure; yet by living under the patriarchal orders, women can as well obtain another kind of peaceful and secure pleasure. It is from this division of the two kinds

of pleasure that the double pleasure theory is gradually shaped out, in which one's pleasure is mainly divided into two kinds: "*Plasir*" and "*Jouissance*." Yet it does not mean that in order to experience one kind of pleasure, one would have to sacrifice the other one—instead, the greatest pleasure exists exactly between the two kinds, and by shifting between these two kinds of pleasure, one is enabled to experience the strongest sense of pleasure, the "double pleasure." Indeed, double pleasure theory explains away each confusing part of the story: why Rebecca would not choose to divorce so as to enjoy her sexual game wholeheartedly, but instead stays in the dull Manderley every now and then; and why the narrator/protagonist continually dreams about Rebecca, a figure always related with danger and sexual desires, even long after she has successfully protected her husband and saved her marriage. Women's pleasure and desires are complicated, because women can not be entirely satisfied with simply one kind of pleasure—women could only be satisfied when both the excitements and securities in life are promised to them.

While *Rebecca* serves a fine presentation for the working of women's double pleasure through detailed psychoanalytical portrayals of characters in the story, it has also revealed the importance of readers' double pleasure through its special circular narrative structure and the arrangement for an "unhappy ending." *Rebecca's* ending is no way to be felt happy at all: it has merely shown the dissatisfaction of the boring daily routines, and the everlasting longing for the gloomily beautiful Manderley in the narrator/protagonist's private dreams. The ending is conventional *and* unconventional at the same time: while the hero and the heroine are allowed to stay together eternally, they could not find each other attractive anymore. *Rebecca's* ending exquisitely reflects the truth about pleasure in almost every romance novel: peace is not the final answer for the readers, and that the process of the courtship is always the most crucial

part throughout the whole story.¹ What general romance readers actually wish for in a romance is a chance to channel out their sexual desire and to satisfy their need for social security and comfort simultaneously. By repetitively reading and buying romances, they are able to relive the most pleasant moment over and over again, the most romantic second when the hero confesses his crazy love for the heroine, and promises her a secured marriage at the same time. Unlike the peaceful endings in general romance fictions, in the romantic suspense *Rebecca*, the thrilling and romantic process of the story would not quickly flee away as the ending approaches. The vague ending filled with inauspicious feelings would drive the readers to flip back to the very first page of the novel, where some information of the narrator/protagonist's final predicament is mentioned. After confirming what has really happened, readers could easily run into the narrator/protagonist's memory about Manderley, and her first meet with her husband all over again. This circular narrative structure has isolated the story from a linear reality, and the essential part of the story is forever repeated. Through this repetitive reading process, readers are encouraged to reread the story over and over again, and the reading pleasure is therefore prolonged and sustained.

Double pleasure theory has also proven how single ideology or categorization could easily fail in interpreting this novel. The essence of pleasure in reading *Rebecca* lies in its very vagueness: the uncertainty of what kind of ideology one should depend on or identify with. In reading *Rebecca*, one can only find it hard to judge whether the novel should be categorized as patriarchal or feminist, because the whole novel is an ambiguity itself: it presents a female's desire to damage the patriarchal marriage system yet also a deep yearning for the peaceful orders provided by the same system;

¹ Perhaps the very lack of moral values in *Rebecca* is the reason why it has not yet been considered as a classic novel like *Jane Eyre*, since readers can hardly sense the existence of justice from the unsettled, ambiguous ending, which is rare in the tradition of classic literatures. However, what *Rebecca* does present is the exquisite working of pleasure, and how importantly that working of pleasure matters in the reading of romance genre.

it shows a wife's obedience in her marriage yet also her authority in the household. Indeed there are patriarchal ideologies and feminist thoughts involved in this novel, but neither of the kinds could have become supportive enough to expound the whole story. Instead, the novel presents the fluidity between ideologies as a way to provide pleasure: it has shown to its readers a way to keep balance between patriarchy and feminism, and to use both of them as sources of double pleasure. With this angle of interpretation, romance readers are freed from the binary labeling of women as either militant feminists or obedient patriarchal women. Women's romance reading represents a working of double pleasure shifting between patriarchal ideologies and feminist values. Women's pleasure can always be fulfilled in an exquisite way without confronting the struggles between different values: such as Rebecca's secret entertainments, the narrator/protagonist's dreams, or the readers' fantasies derived from the reading. Without directly fighting against the patriarchal values, these women continue their normal lives and enjoy the sense of security that a patriarchal marriage provides. Instead of risking their comfortable livings, they take advantages from the patriarchal system to gain their double pleasure. *Rebecca* presents a quite different definition for women's true happiness and success: women might need not to walk on the streets and shout so as to claim their authorities; instead, women can always have their quiet rebellion against the rigid patriarchy through secret romantic relationships, private fantasies, or even simply, through repetitive romance readings. As suggested by Kaplan, who works on the theory of fantasy and the research of pleasure contained in romance narrative, "romance narrative can constitute one of women's few entries to the public articulation and social exploration of psychic life" (Kaplan 165), indeed, the popular romance *Rebecca* reflects the significance of romance novels and women's double pleasure, and has provided a positive solution for the large sum of women living under the patriarchal society: that women could

obtain agencies simply by using the patriarchal society as their source of pleasure, without even having to take risks to battle with it. What this thesis tries to offer is an insight that double pleasure, the strongest sense of pleasure, is existing in the shifting between peace and excitation; and that women's double pleasure is often occurring within the conflicts between patriarchal and feminist values. As much effort has been paid for the construction of double pleasure theory in this thesis, it is my wish that through the gradual development of this theory, more could be contributed to the progress of romance studies in the long future.



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