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Shadow, Anima, and the Ethics of Individuation in *Heart of Darkness*¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness through the lens of Carl Jung's analytical psychology, with specific focus on the archetypes of the shadow, the anima, and the process of individuation. While existing scholarship has extensively addressed the novel's imperial, moral, and postcolonial dimensions, relatively little attention has been given to the ethical implications of Marlow's psychological development, particularly his decision to lie to Kurtz's Intended. This study addresses that gap by arguing that Marlow's lie represents not moral failure but an advanced stage of individuation, where ethical judgment emerges from psychological integration rather than rigid moral absolutism. Using close textual analysis supported by Jungian theory, the paper explores Marlow's encounters with Kurtz as shadow and with the African Mistress and the Intended as negative and positive aspects of the anima. The methodology combines psychoanalytic criticism with detailed textual reading of key narrative moments. The findings suggest that Marlow's final lie is a conscious ethical choice shaped by his integration of unconscious elements, marking a psychological maturation absent at the novel's beginning. This reading challenges interpretations that view the lie solely as hypocrisy or weakness. Instead, it positions Marlow's act as a necessary negotiation between truth, compassion, and social responsibility. The study contributes to Conrad scholarship by reframing ethical ambiguity in Heart of Darkness as a function of Jungian individuation rather than moral collapse.



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Introduction

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* remains one of the most critically examined texts in English literature. Scholars have approached the novella from multiple angles, including imperialism, race, narrative form, morality, and psychology. Since its publication in 1899, the text has invited sustained debate because of its symbolic density and moral ambiguity. At the center of this ambiguity stands Marlow, the narrator, whose journey into the Congo becomes a journey into the darker regions of human consciousness. His encounter with Kurtz, and his actions after Kurtz's death, continue to trouble readers and critics alike.

Political and ethical issues related to colonialism constitute the majority of the existing criticism. Major studies explain the novella as a critique of the brutal nature of European imperialism and of the ethical double standards. There are also interpretations based on Conrad's narrative technique, focusing specifically on the frame structure of Marlow's narration and on the concealment of information. The psychological approaches are also prevalent; they tend to present Kurtz as a figure embodying moral extremism and psychological degradation. Nevertheless, those approaches might be relevant to the interpretation of *Heart of Darkness* but they either regard Marlow's last lie to Kurtz's Intended as either a moral failure or simply mention it in terms of the plot development. However, the mentioned issue raises ethical questions that have not been discussed from the psychological perspective.

Jungian criticism is one of the relevant approaches that can be used for filling the mentioned gap. Carl Jung's concepts of the shadow, the anima, and individuation are useful for both the analysis of Kurtz's psychological condition and Marlow's transformation. As Jung (1954/1968) states, individuation is a process that brings unconscious components of one's personality to consciousness, resulting in psychological growth and maturity. I have elsewhere studied a case in which this integration is not possible: D. H. Lawrence's Paul Morel, who is psychologically divided, not individuated, due to his enmeshment in the mother complex and failure to resolve the issue of projection of anima (Khan & Khattak, 2024a). There is an instructive contrast in the experience of Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, whose experience with the shadow and the anima leads to integration but not arrest. In this approach, disturbing and conflicting aspects of the self become opportunities for development rather than failure. If this approach is applied to *Heart of Darkness*, there will be a shift of interest from Kurtz to Marlow's moral and psychological development. This development is an extension of my previous research on the psychological aspect of the novella in the context of colonialism that explored the relationship between internal change and external violence (Khan & Khattak, 2024b).

Some critics have commented on the symbolic nature of Kurtz as Marlow's double, but not many studies have focused on how Marlow deals with this duality when he returns to Europe. His conversation with Kurtz's Intended and the fact that he lied to her about the last words of Kurtz are viewed by some as sentimentality going awry. However, this is a crucial stage in Marlow's psychological development, a turning point where idealistic ideas of ethics collide with reality. What is important is not the fact that Marlow lies, but the reasons for which he decides to lie.

This paper posits that the lie of Marlow is not an immoral step but an ethical act that is based on individuation. His earlier fixation on absolute truth indicates that at that time Marlow possessed a rather rigid persona. Marlow's subsequent ethical choice demonstrates his psychologically developed character. The confrontation of Marlow with the dark side of himself in the form of Kurtz and with the woman figures makes Marlow realize the limits of moral absolutism. Marlow starts realizing that truth without empathy turns into destructive power. However, this ethical development does not mean that Marlow becomes irresponsible. On the contrary, it demonstrates his developed moral sensibility.

The research gap that this study intends to cover is the lack of focused examination of ethical meaning of Marlow's lie within a Jungian perspective. I have earlier noted that the endpoint of this shadow-integration process is Marlow's lie to the Intended, which I read as the "middle

ground” he finds himself in between his professed hatred of lies and his need to protect her from a harm that only he can measure (Khan & Khattak, 2020). The present paper continues that reading, but focuses on the lie as an ethical, and not just psychological, act of maturity. My previous research has pointed to this reading as well: elsewhere I observed that, when his anima is integrated, Marlow acquires “the courage to tell sensible lies” to preserve the world of the Intended (Khan & Khattak, 2022). What is missing in both studies is a sustained ethical argument: neither addresses the psychological basis of the lie as a separate question of moral philosophy, nor inquires about the degree of ethical maturity the lie meets. This paper directly addresses this question. While Jungian terms appear in Conrad criticism, they are often applied in a loose or symbolic way. Very few studies follow the entire process of individuation throughout the story, particularly to the very end of the story when Marlow meets the Intended. This paper aims to do just that, and to provide a sustained psychoanalytic reading that will bridge the gap between Marlow’s experiences in Africa and his ethical choices in Europe.

Methodologically, the study is based on close reading, combined with Jung’s theory and the known scholarship on Conrad. Close readings of key passages in the novella are included to follow the development of Marlow’s attitude toward truth, women and moral judgment. The African Mistress and the European Intended are two opposing representations of the anima. Kurtz, on the other hand, is the shadow. The three figures are significant in the formation of Marlow’s moral sensibility.

By reframing Marlow’s lie as a product of psychological integration, this paper contributes to ongoing debates about morality in *Heart of Darkness*. It challenges readings that equate truth with virtue and silence with weakness. Instead, it proposes that ethical maturity in the novel emerges through negotiation, restraint, and recognition of human limits. In doing so, the study offers a nuanced understanding of Conrad’s exploration of selfhood, ethics, and responsibility.

Literature Review

Critical engagement with *Heart of Darkness* has developed along several major lines, most prominently imperial critique, narrative ethics, and psychological interpretation. Early criticism often focused on Conrad’s stylistic innovation and narrative complexity. Ian Watt (1979) identifies the novella as a turning point in modern fiction because of its emphasis on moral uncertainty and subjective perception. He argues that Marlow’s narration resists fixed meaning and forces readers to confront ambiguity rather than moral clarity. This insight remains foundational for later ethical and psychological readings.

Postcolonial criticism has played a significant role in reorienting Conrad scholarship. The well-known essay by Chinua Achebe entitled “An Image of Africa” criticizes *Heart of Darkness* as a work that dehumanizes Africans and sustains racist ideology. According to Achebe, Africa operates as “the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization” (Achebe, 1977, p. 782). Although controversial, Achebe’s criticism directed scholars’ attention towards the ideological implications of Conrad’s imagery and narrative silence. The debate, which Achebe’s article generated, made imperialism essential for understanding and interpreting *Heart of Darkness*. Previously, I explored the archetype of the shadow beyond the individual towards the collective level in Achebe’s and Roy’s fiction that stages the postcolonial shadow as a repository of

cultural trauma suppressed during colonial rule; in this paper, I narrow that lens back onto individual psychological development in Marlow (Khan & Khattak, 2025).

In addition, Edward Said continues the dialogue by positioning Conrad within imperial culture while recognizing his moral dilemma. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said points out that Conrad depicts the violence of empire yet finds himself unable to envision any reality beyond it. As Said states: “As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them” (Said, 1993/1994, p. 30). This paradox is a clue to Marlow’s moral dilemmas. Said’s argument is helpful in the sense that it links Conrad’s moral ambiguity to his historical context. It does not see the issue as one of individual psychology.

Along with political interpretations, there have been critical works dedicated to the ethics of Marlow’s storytelling. Critics have considered Marlow’s lie as an ethically complex action rather than pure deceit. Such an interpretation implies that the purest form of truth has a destructive nature, and the idea which this paper develops through Hawthorne’s and Brooks’s interpretation of narrative restraint. Jeremy Hawthorn considers the issue of moral purity in the flawed social world as one of the main themes of Conrad’s novels. According to Hawthorn, Marlow’s restraint demonstrates the recognition of the ethical responsibility of the narrator, whose silence is sometimes better than speech (Hawthorn, 1990). In addition, Peter Brooks considers modernist novels’ tendency to refrain from revealing the truth because the naked truth is oppressive (Brooks, 1984). Thus, Marlow’s decision not to say the last words of Kurtz is the way to preserve the meaning of narrative instead of distorting it. Ethical considerations emphasize hesitation, empathy, and restraint. Nevertheless, very little attention is paid to how Marlow reaches the stage of ethical awareness. The unexplored area is the psychological mechanism leading to ethical judgment. For this reason, the Jungian approach seems appropriate.

There have also been a number of scholars who have explored the psychology of Conrad’s characters. In the view of Frederick Karl, for example, Kurtz is more of a character of inner collapse than just a villain. For Karl, civilized restraint requires “a kind of muscular courage not to do.” This is where Kurtz loses his self-control as he is cut off and unsupported. Karl thus suggests that “the future of civilized society, hangs in the balance” (Karl, 1979, p. 420). Karl does not employ the Jungian language in his discussion. Nevertheless, his understanding is based on the notion of psychological imbalance. This is very near to Jung’s concept of the shadow and its disruptive force.

Kurtz symbolizes what happens when the unconscious elements prevail over the ego. Besides the Jungian approach to analysis, there are other psychological perspectives on *Heart of Darkness*. Freudian critics usually consider Kurtz to be an example of unrestrained instincts and Marlow to be the witness to powerful excesses of libidinal nature (Guerard, 1958). This interpretation implies repression and release, but it reduces ethical conflict to the instinctual battle. I have interpreted the psychological transformation in the novella in connection with the colonial context and argued that the confrontation of Marlow with the wilderness is connected with the duality of human nature revealed by colonialism (Khan & Khattak, 2024b). From the existential perspective, Kurtz symbolizes moral failure and meaninglessness in a universe that is indifferent, almost hostile (Watt, 1979). Though these approaches shed light on the processes of Kurtz’s

disintegration, they provide little insight into the ethical transformation of Marlow after his travel to Africa. Thus, the Jungian approach proves to be more promising since it explains not only moral and psychological collapse but also maturity and growth. His concept of individuation explains how ethical balance emerges when one confronts their own darkness. Hence, the Jungian approach allows interpreting the last decisions of Marlow as the result of psychological maturity achieved during confrontation with darkness, not any sense of fear or denial. Although some Jungian interpretations of *Heart of Darkness* exist, yet their scope is rather narrow. They usually focus only on Kurtz's moral and psychological destruction rather than Marlow's transformation after he is back in Europe.

The theoretical framework of Carl Jung is crucial in order to understand the present study. He defines the shadow as "the thing [a person] has no wish to be" (Jung, 1954/1982, para. 470). He argues that confrontation with the shadow prevents projections and helps to avoid moral rigidity, while failure to confront and integrate the shadow leads to these. Jung defines individuation as a continuous life-long process of ethical responsibility rather than moral perfection (Jung, 1954/1968). All these concepts are very important in the analysis of Marlow's ethical transformation.

The concept of anima has also been ignored by Conrad scholars. According to Jung (1951/1959), the anima is the inner feminine figure that acts as a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious parts of the psyche. A few scholars briefly mention the symbolic opposition of Kurtz's African Mistress and the Intended. Watt (1979) locates Marlow's final moment in the context of the more general nineteenth-century "disenchantment with truth." He compares this moment to Ibsen's *Dr. Relling* and the last works of Henry James in which the characters "tacitly agree to bury the unpalatable truths about themselves and their pasts" (p. 246). However, Watt does not develop this idea into a fuller psychological argument. The lack of scholarly critique of women characters in the novel justifies a dire need for psychological analysis. It is noted by many feminist critics that female figures in *Heart of Darkness* are either idealized or marginalized with no focused examination of their symbolic function in the narrative. The African Mistress is described as a spectacle, whereas the Intended becomes an illusion. As Straus (1987) notes, in the works of Conrad women appear as stabilizing elements that retain social meanings regardless of their exclusion from meaningful knowledge. Jung's notion of the anima provides a framework for understanding this function without dismissing it as mere stereotype. The analysis of Black Mistress and White Intended as contrasting anima figures demonstrates their contribution to the development of Marlow's ethical consciousness. This is a way to get beyond the identification of symbols. It enables those symbols to be linked to more emotional and psychological significance.

In recent scholarship, the significance of Marlow's lie has also been a subject of debate. J. Hillis Miller believes the lie is a story-telling device which keeps the story open and ambiguous. He does not take it as a simple moral stance (Miller, 1982). Ethical critics, on the other hand, consider the lie a sign of Marlow's sensitivity to the social and emotional constraints. However, rarely do these studies incorporate an ethical dimension with a psychological dimension.

This review reveals a clear gap. While Conrad criticism is rich in political, narrative, and symbolic analysis, few studies examine Marlow's ethical choices through a systematic Jungian

lens. Existing Jungian references remain fragmentary. The ethical function of individuation, especially as it culminates in Marlow's lie, remains insufficiently explored. This paper builds on established scholarship while offering a focused psychological and ethical reading grounded in Jung's theory and close textual analysis.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative literary approach with the psychoanalytic criticism. The primary approach is the close reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The analysis is particularly concerned with narrative voice, symbolic characters, and situations in which an ethical struggle occurs. The main theoretical base of the research is provided by Jung's concept of shadow, anima and individuation (Jung, 1951/1959; Jung, 1954/1968). Passages about Kurtz, the African Mistress and Kurtz's Intended are viewed through the prism of manifestations of the unconscious psychological forces through those characters. Marlow's transformation from one extreme of morality to the other is tracked through those characters. It also helps to distinguish my previous reading of Marlow's transformation. I interpreted it as the process of transitioning from the world of consciousness with its European personality to the world of the shadow, which is an unconscious part of the mind (Khan & Khattak, 2024c).

The study is placed into the context of existing criticism by means of referring to relevant sources from the critical literature. Nevertheless, at the same time, the research stays faithful to the text itself. It does not speculate too much and does not separate the elements of Jungian theory from Conrad's text. Thus, psychological development and ethical decision making can be studied together.

Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals that Marlow's psychological development in *Heart of Darkness* follows a clear Jungian pattern of individuation. This process unfolds through his encounters with Kurtz, the African wilderness, and the two women linked to Kurtz. The wilderness itself is not merely a backdrop for these encounters but, as I have argued elsewhere, the symbolic register of the unconscious that Marlow's journey away from Europe progressively uncovers—the same study in which I first identified his final lie to the Intended as a moment where conscious self-presentation overrides what the unconscious journey has revealed (Khan & Khattak, 2024c). Together, these experiences reshape Marlow's ethical outlook. His final lie to Kurtz's Intended emerges not as weakness but as a conscious ethical response shaped by psychological integration.

Kurtz is the center of this process. In a previous research on the novella (Khan & Khattak, 2020), I expanded the notion that Kurtz is the shadow of Marlow. According to Jung (1951/1959), the shadow is the part of the self that is rejected and repressed and is a repository for immoral tendencies. Marlow's attraction to Kurtz dates back to before they meet. He imagines Kurtz to be an ideal man. But when he finally meets him, Kurtz seems morally unconstrained and spiritually empty, as evidenced by the image of the heads on stakes, "black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids" (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 57). Kurtz's famous last words, "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 69) capture this collapse of inner coherence. These words show Kurtz's knowledge of his own inner darkness, and Marlow's statement that Kurtz "had kicked himself

loose of the earth” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 66) alludes to this. This is a moment of revelation for Marlow. He perceives in Kurtz the possible consequences of unchecked confrontation with the unconscious. It is at this point that the need arises to differentiate recognition of the shadow from its integration. Kurtz recognizes the darkness within himself, as suggested by his final words. However, recognition does not necessarily bring about psychological equilibrium. When confronted by the unconscious without mediation, Jung (1951/1959) cautions, psychic disintegration can occur. Kurtz is impulsive, unreflective and lacks moral direction. This is a form of unchecked fall that I have followed elsewhere, comparing Kurtz with Jack in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* in terms of the rise and fall of characters who believe that their lack of external restraint means that they are free from internal accountability (Khan & Khattak, 2024d). His immersion in the wilderness dissolves moral limits rather than transforming them, as the wilderness itself “seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 65). Marlow, on the other hand, survives as a result of not giving in to the shadow. He witnesses it, suffers its presence, and then backs off, maintaining what he calls “a choice of nightmares” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 62). This is the reason that Kurtz collapses and Marlow comes back changed, but not broken. The shadow overpowers and ultimately engulfs Kurtz. It instructs Marlow. This is a key to comprehending Marlow’s moral growth later in the novel.

Importantly, Marlow does not denounce Kurtz completely. Rather, he becomes more understanding and more sympathetic after seeing Kurtz’s fall. This compassion is the start of the integration of shadow. Jung (1954/1968) believes that individuation is not the annihilation of the shadow, but its recognition. Marlow’s attempt to preserve Kurtz’s memory is a testament to this. He refuses to surrender Kurtz’s papers to company officials. He does so because he detests the idea of reducing Kurtz to a mere criminal. This change indicates that Marlow is now becoming aware that moral judgments without understanding result in dehumanization.

Marlow’s moral development is more apparent in his attitude to truth. Early in the narrative, Marlow claims that he hates lies and associates them with moral decay, insisting that “there is a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 27). This is a ‘hard line’ attitude reflecting a dominant persona. Marlow’s initial emphasis on truthfulness is not a sign of moral strength, but of moral inflexibility. According to Jung (1951/1959), the persona is a social structure that is needed, but can become a threat when it is confused with the whole self. Marlow’s disdain for lies is a safeguard from self-contradiction. This helps Marlow maintain his moral superiority. But his inflexibility leads to a lack of ethical discernment. His experience in Africa demonstrates the limitations of this kind of absolutism. Marlow discovers that there are no absolutes in morality. His later flexibility is not a sign of moral decay. It indicates psychological expansion. In this sense, ethics does not come from following rules, but from being aware of them. Marlow’s individuation diminishes the persona so that moral judgment takes the place of moral posturing. The persona, as described by Jung (1951/1959), is the social mask which allows for moral certainty but may also be used to cover up inner complexity. Marlow’s persona first requires total honesty. But his experiences in Africa shake up this certainty. He is a witness to the complex interactions of truth, power and violence. Truth cannot be divorced from harm.

This transformation is a preparation for Marlow’s meeting with the anima. Jung (1951/1959) describes the anima as the inner feminine aspect that connects the conscious and unconscious

mind. The anima is manifested in two contrasting aspects in *Heart of Darkness*, an aspect of duality I have explored extensively elsewhere (Khan & Khattak, 2022). The African Mistress represents the dark, negative and instinctual anima. She is known for passion, excess and unrestrained emotion. Marlow sees her in awe and fear. She is a representative of what Jung describes as the primitive anima, “savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 60), and more connected with instinct than reflection. In contrast, Kurtz’s Intended represents the positive anima. She represents idealism, faith and emotional purity. She lives in a world shaped by belief rather than experience existing, as Marlow notes, “in a world of [her] own” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 12). Marlow encounters another moral dilemma when he meets her. In contrast to the wilderness, Europe requires restraint and social responsibility, but Marlow’s contempt for the “sepulchral city” and its inhabitants, whom he characterizes as “intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence”, suggests that this restraint is a form of willed blindness rather than security (Conrad, 1899/2006, pp. 70–71). The Intended’s commitment to Kurtz makes Marlow question the balance between truth and compassion.

This contrast of the African Mistress and Kurtz’s European Intended further highlights Marlow’s ethical development. The Mistress is the symbol of a strong feeling without any thought. She is a part of the realm of instinct and spectacle. Marlow notices her but does not relate ethically to her presence. The Intended, however, calls for an ethical response. She asks questions. She seeks meaning. Jung (1951/1959) states that the anima is ethically meaningful when it takes the ego to task for emotional responsibility. When Marlow meets the Intended, he is no longer facing off with Kurtz’s monstrous overindulgence, but instead facing the emotional fragility of someone who loves Kurtz with a romantic idealism that is too fragile to endure the truth. This is an encounter that demands restraint, empathy and judgment. Therefore, it is a more challenging experience than the experience with the Mistress. The Intended does not physically threaten Marlow. She dares him to act on his conscience. This is why the lie appears at this time and not before.

This analysis reveals that Marlow’s lie occurs at just this juncture. When the Intended asks for Kurtz’s final words, Marlow chooses not to repeat “The horror! The horror!” for, as he later recalls, “it would have been too dark—too dark altogether” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 77). Instead of exposing his final word of horror, he substitutes it with her name. This incident has been referred to as a “sentimental weakness.” However, from the perspective of Jungian psychology, this suggests something else altogether. Marlow is fully aware that when he discloses to the Intended the horror of Kurtz, it will not enlighten her but rather destroy her psychologically.

It is evident from the work of Jung (1954/1968) that moral responsibility is the result of psychological maturity rather than moral rigidity. Marlow’s lie shows his psychological maturity because he understands that sometimes the truth is not the best option. The truth can be violent if it lacks certain context. By preserving the inner world of the Intended through the lie, helping her “to stay in that beautiful world of [her] own” (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 48), Marlow recognizes the boundaries of what another person can bear. Thus, such moral decision shows an integrated self with psychological maturity because he combines the understanding of what is right and wrong with empathy.

This is also an indication that Marlow resolves the problem with his anima and comes to terms with it to develop a more productive relationship. As Jung (1951/1959) believes, if the anima is not integrated, it leads to projections and moral absolutism. The projections of Marlow are seen in his contempt and repugnance for women. However, after his time in Africa, Marlow's attitude changes: he stops blaming women for being in illusions; instead, he recognizes the importance of illusions in human life. Therefore, such changes show that Marlow comes to terms with his emotional vulnerability.

This discussion also shows that the speech of Marlow becomes more ironic after he goes back to Europe. Marlow's irony is his psychological defense that helps him reconcile the contradicting demands of his situation without getting into the sense of guilt. While telling the Intended that the life of Kurtz was "worthy" although knowing that his report ended with the horrible statement "Exterminate all the brutes!" (Conrad, 1899/2006, p. 50), Marlow expresses his irony using words with double meaning. For the Intended, these words are a confession of faith while for Marlow, it is a recognition of tragedy. Such duality is an example of holding the tension of opposite that is described by Jung (1954/1968) as a characteristic of individuation. After returning to Europe, irony becomes Marlow's main ethical language as it allows him to say something without hurting the people. Truth hurts while silence helps the guilty escape. Irony is in between. The indirect expression often is the characteristic of modernist ethics. Meaning is preserved without the exposure. When Marlow speaks ironically, he recognizes the complexity of the situation but does not force it on other people. According to Jung (1954/1968), the psychological maturity is the acceptance of contradiction, not its solution. This tolerance is reflected in Marlow's irony. It enables him to find the balance between the notions of truth and compassion. Hence, in this case, irony is not evasive but moral control derived from psychological understanding.

This is also supported by the fact that Marlow refuses to give the details to the journalists and officials. He withholds Kurtz's report from them and limits their access to his story. In the beginning, these actions can seem to be contradictory to his desire for truth. However, they are more meaningful when considered as an aspect of his moral growth. Marlow has realized that institutional truth cannot be synonymous with justice. At times, it simply perpetuates the status quo. His silence, thus, becomes a sort of ethical boundary. He refuses to allow Kurtz's humanity be subjected to bureaucratic reduction.

This also highlights his need to tell the story. In this way, Marlow is like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Like the Ancient Mariner, he feels that he must tell what he has experienced. The narration process is a means of facing and acknowledging his psychological change. Jung (1954/1968) proposes that narration can be used to make unconscious experience conscious. Marlow's narration is thus a confession and a recognition. He tells his story not only to cast judgment on Kurtz, but to figure out what he has seen and experienced.

This interpretation also challenges the notion that Marlow is just a morally corrupted man. Rather, he can be viewed as a person who has become more aware of moral issues. His lie does not justify Kurtz's crimes. It does not reduce the horror and savagery of imperialism either. All that changes is Marlow's understanding of what ethical action is and what it requires. He has discovered that man is fragile. He has also discovered that truth does not always heal. There are

some truths which can be more damaging when they are communicated without sensitivity to the recipient.

It is also symbolic of the general discussion of morality by Conrad in the novel. In this case, there is no simple answer in terms of morality in the novel. Instead, moral decisions are seen to be situational and psychologically informed. Marlow's process of individuation is no exception and follows the same trajectory. Here, ethical clarity is not achieved by being entirely sure. Ethical clarity is achieved when one has the capacity for restraint. This means that moral clarity is not achieved through certainty but through self-control or restraint. This supports Jung's theory according to which moral growth entails embracing ambiguity, not eliminating it (Jung, 1951/1959).

As such, the outcomes of the analysis point towards the fact that Marlow's final lie marks the culmination of his individuation process. Through Kurtz, he faces the shadow. In addition, through the two women characters, Marlow meets the different sides of the anima. The lie told by Marlow can thus be understood to be an act of compassion rather than deception. It shows an individuated self that is able to maintain compassion without being naive. At the same time, it is aware of what the truth is without being brutal.

This discussion reframes *Heart of Darkness* as a narrative of ethical maturation grounded in psychological integration. Marlow's journey into Africa becomes a journey into the self. His return to Europe marks not a retreat from truth but a deeper engagement with its human consequences. Through this lens, Conrad's novella emerges as a profound exploration of the ethics of individuation.

Conclusion

The current study examines *Heart of Darkness* using the analytical psychology framework developed by Carl Jung. Specifically, shadow, anima and individuation concepts have been analyzed. It turns out that Marlow's travel is not merely a physical travel through the Congo jungle, but also a journey in the inner world of mind.

Kurtz is the person who makes Marlow face his shadow. On the other hand, the African Mistress and Kurtz's Intended are two aspects of anima. All these experiences slowly reshape Marlow's understanding of morality and human responsibility. Under such an approach, Marlow's final lie should not be viewed as a sign of his moral weakness. Actually, it is a step forward on the path of moral development. Marlow decides to defend the Intended. This means that now he is able to transcend his traditional perception of the truth. He knows about the weakness of men. This act is the manifestation of an individuated self capable of living with the contradictory values without reducing them to pure opposites.

This analysis contradicts those interpretations which describe the lie as hypocritical or sentimental. Moreover, it goes against the idea that ethical actions necessarily presuppose transparency of truth. Actually, according to Conrad's story, empathy plays a significant role in the healing process, and without it truth can be cruel. Thus, ethical responsibility depends on judgment, experience and self-knowledge. Marlow does not reach any moral conclusions.

Individuation proposed by Jung is not the time when all contradictions vanish. Marlow gains more tolerance for living with contradictions. He reaches a balance rather than certainty.

Thus, we see that *Heart of Darkness* is a story about limits of the truth and moral awareness. Marlow's journey shows that learning about moral problems involves overcoming of contradictions, not avoidance of them.

Recommendations

For future research, a similar approach to Jungian analysis may be used when working with other literary pieces written by Joseph Conrad. *Lord Jim* would be of particular interest for such analysis, as the topics of moral failure and personality splits are present in this novel. The comparison of Freudian and Jungian approaches to the analysis of Conrad's characters would provide a deeper insight into their psychological peculiarities. The topic of narrative ethics and psychological individuation could be explored in other pieces of modernist literature. In addition, there is an opportunity for conducting interdisciplinary research in the sphere of psychology, ethics and postcolonial studies, which could help understand moral ambiguity in colonial literature better. Finally, the use of gender archetypes and their contribution to ethical judgment in literature and society would be helpful for exploring the role of the anima in literature as well as in the ethical development of the characters.

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