

***Almayer's Folly*: Conrad's Investigation into Modern Man's Unpromising Fate**

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ABSTRACT

Almayer's Folly is Conrad's initial step in his long journey to trace the soul of modern man, overshadowed by rapid developments in science and technology intensifying particularly from the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite its positive aspects, modernity left man in such an uncertain state about everything including his own identity that his destruction seemed and it may still seem unavoidable. Twentieth-century man, stripped of his cloak of faith, relied far too much on his conscious ego as the modern truth. However, he soon realised that he could not have been more wrong as the consequences were devastating. Conrad depicts such a dubious state in his works, and unlike many of his contemporary counterparts, he comes up with a possible solution that may function as a modern salvation. For the reader, Conrad's works are a journey or a quest of Self-discovery through which his principal characters, like mythical heroes traverse ups and downs and at the end are either defeated (as in his earlier works) or return as conquerors (more obvious in his later works). *Almayer's Folly* is his very first work and the first step in his journey of individuation and may be regarded as the thesis of his dialectical method, in which Conrad vividly explores and portrays the unpleasant aspects of modernity and the reasons why modern man fails to establish an individual self.

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INTRODUCTION

At the time of its publication (1895), *Almayer's Folly* was first considered a Romance. Ian Watt suggests two reasons for the initial reception of the work as a Romance. First, "it contained a love story with a happy ending", and second, it "fitted

in with contemporary interest in exotic adventure” (1993, p. 49). By happy ending, Watt must be referring to the elopement of Nina and Dain; otherwise, what fate brings for Almayer is far from happy. Peters is in partial agreement with Watt. He agrees that to some extent this story is a Romance, but he does not recognize the ending as a happy one (he must be referring to Almayer’s destiny). As a result, in Peter’s opinion, since the novel does not have a happy ending, nor “is the love interest of the typical sort or the exotic setting romanticized”, Conrad is playing with the form of Romance”, which corresponds with what Ian Watt posits (Peters, 2006, p. 37). What makes Conrad’s works stand out is the way he attends to political and social issues in his writing. “Conrad sets an example”, holds Peters, “that he continues throughout much of his work as he focuses on issues that affect individual lives” (Peters, 2006, p. 38). He believes that Conrad entwines larger social, political and philosophical issues with the lives of individuals, “demonstrating the individual consequences of such issues, and always individual lives take precedence” (Ibid). Similarly, Matthews believes that in *Almayer’s Folly* “Conrad suggests again the failure of the imperial enterprise and of global capitalism which underlies it”, and the house symbolizes “the ultimate powerlessness of the colonizers in the alien habitat” (2004, p. 28). Andrea White, too, sees *Almayer’s Folly* as a reflection of Conrad’s “scepticism about the imperial venture generally and about the accompanying ‘fine words’ in particular, in

its refusal to depict the Europeans in Sambir heroically” (1996, p. 188).

DISCUSSION

In spite of all the arguments Conrad has been subject to, what this study shall attempt to show is that in *Almayer’s Folly* Conrad sets off a dialectic journey in which he explores a modern man’s concerns and worries, and by the end of this voyage that takes place in his later works, comes up with a solution which may lead mankind to real salvation. Conrad’s first novel takes place in Sambir, a small island in the Malayan Archipelago and starts with Almayer’s being startled from his “dream of splendid future” after his Malay wife calls him to dinner (Conrad, 1976, p. 3). The very first lines of the novel, in fact, foreshadow what is going to happen later: “the splendid future” is replaced by “the unpleasant realities of the present hour”. Conrad has been considered one of the forefathers of modernism, and this seems to be justified in the very first words of his very first work. Almayer, Lingard, the Dutch officials, figuratively speaking, represent the modern West with all its hopes for a splendid new era in the twentieth century, thanks to scientific and technological advancement, while the native residents of Sambir represent the ‘uncivilised’ East. Indeed, Conrad prophesies that the West would experience disillusionment early in the twentieth century after the outbreak of the First World War.

One major theme in *Almayer’s Folly*, the authors would like to argue, is the failure of the materialism the modern world was

pursuing. His loveless marriage, which merely took place out of his calculating character in the hope of taking control of Lingard's business and wealth, his hope of finding gold and returning to Europe as a rich man with Nina, and his belief that material wealth will make people turn a blind eye to Nina's Malay blood, all depict Almayer and the modern world's materialistic views. Indeed, Almayer believes his freedom lies in materialistic prosperity, separation from his dark-skinned wife and escape to Europe. Almayer's obsession with gold may be interpreted as a projection of an internal search for something valuable, which he fails to realize. Like alchemists, Almayer is in search of the elixir of life, thinking, wrongly of course, that by leaving with Nina rich and "witnessing her triumphs he would grow young again, he would forget the twenty-five years of heart-breaking struggle on this coast where he felt like a prisoner" (Conrad, 1976, p. 3). In addition, the readers will soon learn that his "honest exertions" are not so honest, as he resorts to different dishonest methods to realize his rags-to-riches ambition. This reveals on the one hand, the insincerity of his attempts, and on the other, his blindness to the shadow side of his psyche, his own dark aspects.

The story does not have a promising opening because all the imagery is so gloomy and sad. He is standing on the verandah of "his last failure of his life": his house dubbed by local people as 'Almayer's folly' which is "new but Decaying". The paradox used in the description of his house reminds one of the *fin de siècle* when the

new era was supposed to bring new hopes and achievements, but soon proved to be the opposite.

Young Almayer left home with "a light heart and a lighter pocket", but without the slightest doubt that he would "conquer the world" (Conrad, 1976, p. 5). His arrival in Macassar has been described as "an important epoch in his life, the beginning of a new existence for him" (Conrad, 1976, p. 4). Like a young traditional hero, with the same ambitions and desires, Almayer "clad all in white and modest-looking", is at the beginning of a journey from innocence to experience. The whiteness of his clothes may suggest his innocence and inexperience. However, by taking the wrong path not only causes Almayer to not gain the experience and conquer the world, but leads him to failure and a sad and lonely death.

As a matter of fact, with Almayer, Conrad begins his diagnosis and disclosure of blunders and errors of judgment made both at an individual and a collective level that have resulted in tragic and disastrous outcomes throughout history and have, consequently, distanced man from an ideal, real and truthful civilised state. There is no doubt that Almayer's series of misfortunes stem from these errors he makes one after another. Nevertheless, Conrad tries to show all these have their roots in one's lack of success to establish a healthy relationship with the unknown and perhaps, but not necessarily, darker side of one's psyche.

Taking on a Faustian barter by agreeing to marry captain Lingard's adopted daughter to inherit his prosperous business, Almayer

makes his first mistake. Lingard's proposal, through which he tries to convince Almayer of the deal, is of great significance. First of all, it represents the materialistic outlook of the West which grew even more enormously in the nineteenth century and saw everything in the accumulation of wealth. It was perhaps due to this rise in materialism and the consequent decline of spirituality that the new century which was supposed to be a giant leap forward to civility proved calamitously otherwise. Jung in "Approaching the Unconscious" states that a "sense of wider meaning to one's existence is what raises a man beyond mere getting and spending. If he lacks this sense, he is lost and miserable" (1978, p. 78). Therefore, his (the West's) lack of a spiritual dimension is a significant factor in Almayer's sense of being lost and in his unfortunate fate. Secondly, through Lingard's words, Conrad is criticising the way the West discriminates against whatever is non-Western and so exercise a false sense of superiority arising from technological and military progress.

The uniqueness of Conrad's art lies in the fact that his reprimand is not merely toward the West, but it is more universal. Although he depicts the way the West projects its misfortunes upon the East, Conrad simultaneously blames the East's prejudice, but perhaps to a smaller extent, toward the West. Indeed, he attempts to illustrate all the follies that have resulted in the widening chasm not only among the people of different countries, but also in an individual's psyche. From a Western perspective, Nina is considered a half-

caste girl who needs material wealth to compensate for her impure blood and be able to keep her head high. However, it is not only Westerners who look down on her mixed blood. Answering Lakamba's question about Dain's whereabouts, Babalatchi relates:

In Bulangi's clearing—the furthest one, away from the house. They went there that very night. The white man's daughter took him there. She told me so herself, speaking to me openly, for she is half white and has no decency... She is like a white woman and knows no shame.

(Conrad, 1976, p. 93)

It goes without saying that Conrad is criticising both the East and West for their fault-finding attitude toward each other, which has led to their separation. On the other hand, it is a criticism of rejecting the less familiar aspects of one's psyche, which can be of great benefit, by labelling them indecent attributes.

In the process of individuation, as defined by Jung, the person who has started the journey encounters different aspects of the unconscious psyche, and in order to pursue this journey, he has to come to terms with them. Mere suppression will not help, but will also actively impede progress so that the journey ends in dismal failure for the hero. Given that the self was one of Conrad's concerns and obsessions, it would not be unimaginable that Conrad put his protagonists in the midst of a situation

or situations through which they were exposed to their less visible corners. One of the differences between Conrad's choice of his settings and those of most novelists before him is that his aims, the nature of his interests in human nature and moral problems determine such settings (Hewitt, 1975, p. 6). The Eastern and African settings of his stories, in their unfamiliarity and mystery, provide an alternative or dream-like atmosphere in which the protagonists face aspects of their unconscious psyche and are put to test in such conditions to see how they respond to the voices heard from their own depths.

Almayer had begun the journey of self-discovery as soon as he decided to "conquer the world", and stepped on the jetty of Macassar. However, from his second but very significant step into unconscious, which was marrying a Malay woman, it became clear that he had no real intention of coming to terms with his hidden facets as no sooner was he contemplating accepting Lingard's proposal and becoming rich overnight than he showed his hatred of the idea of marrying a Malay woman by hoping that "she may mercifully die" (Conrad, 1976, p. 8). His "vague idea of shutting her up somewhere, anywhere, out of his gorgeous future" is in fact repressive behaviour through which he tries to conceal and deny the existence of such unfavourable parts in himself, and there also lies the irony that although he thinks it is "easy enough to dispose of a Malay woman, a slave", not only is she not silenced, but she plays a very important part in his destruction by managing Nina and Dain's escape.

The description of the setting at this stage when he is remembering the day he was offered such a proposal, and the present setting are also very telling and foreshadowing of the course of events. Conrad writes:

He remembered the narrow slanting deck of the brig, the silent sleeping coast, the smooth black surface of the sea with a great bar of gold laid on it by the rising moon. He remembered it all, and he remembered his feelings of mad exultation at the thought of that fortune thrown into his hands.

(Conrad, 1976, p. 9).

"The silent sleeping coast" and "the smooth black surface of the sea" are associated with the unconscious. "The great bar of gold" contrasted with the "smooth black surface" is in fact a ray of hope and the prize that meeting with one's darkness may bring. In his *A Dictionary of Symbols* Cirlot, quoting Jung, writes that gold is the "image of solar light and hence of the divine intelligence", and therefore, "gold is symbolic of all that is superior". In addition, gold is "also the essential element in the symbolism of the hidden or elusive treasure which is an illustration of the fruits of the spirit and of supreme illumination" (Cirlot, 1971, p. 120).

What has painted the bar of gold on the surface of the sea is the moon, which is associated with the feminine. According to Cirlot, "When patriarchy superseded

matriarchy, a feminine character came to be attributed to the moon” (p. 215). The moon is considered “the guide to the occult side of nature, opposed to the sun which is responsible for the life of the manifest world” (p. 216). Because of all the feminine associations the moon brings to mind, it can be concluded that the “fortune thrown into his hands” is in fact an opportunity to see his anima and other unconscious contents of his psyche. However, since Almayer only wishes to follow the material benefits of such encounter and represses the spiritual gain, the great bar of gold is soon replaced with “the intense darkness which, on the sun’s departure, had closed in upon the river, blotting out the outlines of the opposite shore” (Conrad, 1976, p. 9). Indeed, this darkness has been brought upon Almayer by himself who refuses to establish a healthy communication with his unknown parts, and his anima in particular.

Describing the nature of archetypes, Jung explains that since they are “relatively autonomous, they cannot be integrated simply by rational means, but require a dialectical procedure, a real coming to terms with them” (Jung, 1978, p. 4). However, in this novel, Conrad stresses Almayer’s lack of success to establish a sound relationship with the local people of his unconscious when he writes “Almayer looked vainly westward for a ray of light out of the gloom of his shattered hopes” (Conrad, 1976, p. 21). In other words, Almayer by looking at his westward consciousness fails to understand his unconscious East which is vital if he wants to reach wholeness and

escape the stagnation he is in. As stated earlier, in order for the individual to fulfil the process of individuation, he must be able to establish a balance between his conscious and unconscious contents. This may seem too formidable a challenge to rise above, since one has no choice but to face what are inevitably unfavourable corners of one’s psyche. However, it is the only way if the individual intends to reach the feeling of wholeness and integrity inside. Defining the process of individuation as “the conscious coming-to-terms with one’s own inner centre (psychic nucleus) or Self” von Franz argues that this “generally begins with a wounding of the personality and suffering that accompanies it” (1968, p. 169). Indeed, it functions as an alert despite the fact that it is mostly not taken as such. “On the contrary”, von Franz continues, “the ego accuses God or the economic situation or the boss or the marriage partner of being responsible for whatever is obstructing it” (Ibid). It goes without saying that Almayer, too, is in such condition and sees his marriage to a local woman and his life among the natives of the Malayan Archipelago as the only cause of his miserable state.

The two most important female characters upon whom Almayer’s fate depends are his wife and his daughter Nina. In Jung’s school of analytical psychology, they may represent the anima, which plays a significant role in the psychic integrity of an individual and as a result needs to be encountered appropriately. One of the positive aspects of the anima is that

“whenever a man’s logical mind is incapable of discerning facts that are hidden in his unconscious, the anima helps him to dig them out”; in addition, it plays a crucial role by “putting a man’s mind in tune with the right inner values and thereby opening the way into more profound inner depths” (vonFranz, 1968, p. 194).

Moreover, the incongruity between his hatred for his wife and his love towards Nina may be interpreted symbolically as a reaction to representations of the anima as a witch and as an angel. Although the personification of the anima in the form of a witch or a sorceress is frightening and undesirable, since it represents the unconscious aspects of one’s personality, it is essential not to turn a blind eye to it. As a result, Almayer’s marriage could have played a prominent role in linking him to his unconscious and considerably resourceful forces. His behaviour towards Nina, in contrast, is totally different. It is firstly because he sees her as someone who has at least half of his blood in her veins, and secondly and more importantly because Nina represents an innocent and more pleasant anima. However, his sending her away to Singapore to become civilised by being away from her mother and by getting western education so that once they return rich to the absolutely materialist and rationalist West, he is less troubled by their gaze upon his half-caste daughter whose wealth, he hopes, will veil her Asian breed. All these are another sign of his unwillingness to meet and accept his more primitive and basic being which at times has

unreleased energy necessary to push one forward in the path of individuation.

Clearly, the return of Nina is a kind of resurrection for Almayer, and the whole island is affected as “great changes were expected; annexation was talked of; the Arabs grew civil. Almayer began building his new house for the use of the future engineers, agents, or settlers of the new company. He spent every available guilder on it with a confiding heart” (Conrad, 1976, p. 24). His partial coming to terms with his anima results in seeing some bright side of his unconscious as the Arabs, who are always referred to by Almayer as uncivilised, “grew civil” in Almayer’s opinion.

In addition, the symbolic significance of the house must not be overlooked. In Jungian analytical psychology, a house can be the representative of the psyche. On the symbolism of the house, Cirlot (1971) writes:

In architectural symbolism, on the other hand, the house carries not only an overall symbolism but also particular associations attached to each of its component parts. Nevertheless, the house as a home arouses strong, spontaneous associations with the human body and human thought (or life, in other words), as has been confirmed empirically by psychoanalysts. Ania Teillard explains this by pointing out that, in dreams, we employ the image of the house as a representation of the different layers of the psyche (p. 153).

Almayer's resuming the building of his house may symbolize the urge of attending to one's psychic growth. However, from the beginning, his efforts are insincere since he sees his new house not for himself as it should be, but for the future engineers, etc. While discussing the symbols of transcendence, Henderson (1968) argues that the external changes in one's life pattern are to no avail "unless there has been some inner transcendence of old values in creating, not just investing, a new pattern of life" (151). Ironically enough, the very first time someone in Sambir sees the lights shining about the house is when the Dutch officers—and not engineers and traders—are investigating Dain's death. In fact, the lights were "the lanterns of the boats hung up by the seamen under the verandah where the two officers were holding a court of inquiry into the truth of the story" of Dain's tragic fate (Conrad, 1976, p. 105). Therefore, from the very beginning, due to the fact that these changes are more external than internal, one should not have high hopes in what will occur to Almayer in the end.

Almayer, instead of actively working on his relationship with his daughter, would rather remain passive and it is through this passivity that Nina is drawn closer and closer to her mother and taken farther away from his father. Nina spends more time with her mother in her riverside hut, "coming out as inscrutable as ever, but with a contemptuous look and a short word ready to answer any of his speeches" (Conrad, 1976, p. 23). Later in the novel, when Nina and Dain are about to elope, she explicitly complains about Almayer's indifference to

her situation:

"Can I not live my own life as you have lived yours? The path you would have wished me to follow has been closed to me by no fault of mine."

"You never told me," muttered Almayer.

"You never asked me," she answered, "and I thought you were like the others and did not care."

(Conrad, 1976, p. 138)

Not only is Almayer unable to communicate healthily with his daughter (the anima), his unwillingness to communicate with his internal forces represented in the local characters is portrayed in his wife's futile efforts to make Almayer trust the powerful locals such as Lakamba. Nevertheless, he deprives himself by not allying with Lakamba to search for gold mines. Conrad describes these supposed gold mines in terms that recall Jung's references to the exploration of the psyche as a daunting search to find sources of unused and positive energies which can help an individual to a great deal to know himself or herself. Conrad (1976) writes: "The coast population of Borneo believes implicitly in diamonds of fabulous value, in gold mines of enormous richness in the interior. And all those imaginings are heightened by the difficulty of penetrating far inland" (29).

Another reason Nina distances from Almayer is that she finds her father's side which is the representative of modern

time's materialism and pure rationalism hollow and meaningless, and therefore, she becomes "gradually more indifferent, more contemptuous of the white side of her descent represented by a feeble and traditionless father" (32). The growing disconnection of the rationalist West with its more primitive history has left it "traditionless". In other words, if consciousness and unconscious are disconnected and the contents of the latter are not taken into consideration due to the immature notion that man is all consciousness, what is left is a feeling of excruciating hollowness.

What makes this change of attitude significant is the synchronous appearance of Dain Maroola, a prince from Bali, who brings a new experience of hope and vigour. Almayer becomes more optimistic about finding the hidden gold with the help of Dain and returning to Europe as a rich man. Nevertheless, his relationship with Dain is simply business-oriented; he does not make the most of Dain's arrival in Sambir in order to know himself better as Dain may represent an aspect of the self. The Self, the inner most nucleus of the psyche, argues von Franz (1968), "does not always take the form of a wise old man or wise old woman. These paradoxical personifications are attempts to express something that is not entirely contained in time—something simultaneously young and old" (p. 209). Since it is Dain who revives hope in Almayer, who sees his dreams are about to come true, he may be interpreted as an aspect of Almayer's self. Dain is not only a prince, but also a very romantic, young,

and energetic person who has all the traits that are missing in Almayer. In addition, his being a prince from Bali gives a primitive colour to him as well, a resemblance with unconscious forces that have not mixed with the modern rational conscious forces. According to von Franz, "if a man devotes himself to the instruction of his own unconscious, it can bestow this gift, so that suddenly life, which has been stale and dull, turns into a rich unending inner adventure, full of creative possibilities" (p. 209). It goes without saying that Dain is the reason why Almayer's stale and stagnant life gives way to excitement and dynamism, despite its shortness.

Once again, Almayer makes a serious mistake as he does not take this opportunity to know his inner forces and sees it only as a chance to realise his materialist ambitions. He is so obsessed with the gold that he does not even take notice of the romantic relationship that has been formed between Dain and Nina, which symbolically shows Almayer's inattention to his unconscious contents. As a result of focusing his ideals on the conscious West and ignoring the spiritual benefits of the unconscious East, Almayer distances himself from Dain Maroola. Dain's connection with Mrs. Almayer and Nina represents the separation of Almayer's positive unconscious energies from him due to his not paying appropriate attention to them. The separation of them from Almayer and their getting united together can lead to disastrous endings.

When the unconscious contents are merely repressed, they grow enormous

and as a result they can have disastrous effects once they are manifested. The personification of the unconscious has a dual aspect of both good and evil, which makes this process very difficult. For instance, the shadow, apart from its darkness and primitiveness which have to be overcome, has some positive aspects that can help an individual grow if they are encountered and realised appropriately. Similarly, the anima and the animus have a dual nature, too. They can move the personality forward towards development, or they can inflict paralysis or physical death. In the same manner, the Self has both a light and dark aspect. "The dark side of the Self", argues von Franz (1968), "is the most dangerous thing of all, precisely because the Self is the greatest power in the psyche" (p. 234). Therefore, it can be concluded that Almayer's indifference to his unconscious contents leads to the manifestation of their negative and destructive sides. In other words, they gang up against him and their liaison is lethal, which in the end results in Almayer's both spiritual and physical death.

In Conrad's works the flaws and strengths of the protagonist are made clearer through the comparisons with other characters. In this work, for instance, Nina is juxtaposed with Almayer as what she does is in contrast to what Almayer does in relation to their interaction with other characters who represent different psychic forces. Taking Mrs. Almayer as an example, unlike Almayer, who simply wishes to deny her existence (thus denying his own anima), Nina establishes a healthy

relationship with her mother (representing her shadow) and benefits from the positive aspects of such a relationship, although she is not overcome by it. In addition, Dain Maroola, who plays the role of an aspect of the Self for Almayer, is mostly overlooked by Almayer as he seeks only material profit out of this relationship. However, Nina sees her animus in Dain, and consequently, feels that she has been reborn. She sees her encounter with Dain as an opportunity that gives her "a knowledge of a new existence" and a sense of completeness to her life. In fact, the fruitfulness of such a relationship with primitive forces "untrammelled by any influence of civilised self-discipline" is in line with Jung's theories suggesting that the depths of one's psyche is the source of useful energies that can lead the individual to psychic growth unless they are overlooked.

Another key comparison drawn between Almayer and Nina is in what they are after, or in other words in their objectives in life. The treasure Almayer is searching for is merely materialistic. First, he marries Lingard's step daughter to inherit his wealth. Then he tries to find a way to go after the gold he thinks, very naively of course, is his and he has been deprived of. In marked contrast, Nina is looking not for material, but spiritual wealth, "the treasure of love and passion", and she can find it by making a positive relationship with her unconscious forces. Compared to Almayer, she has had more experience seeing all kinds of people. In Singapore, she learns how hypocritical the westerners are hiding themselves behind a civilised mask. Her return to Macassar is

similar to a journey to her more primitive roots, to her unconscious. Experiencing both, she reaches a sort of maturity, which her father is unable to reach, and succeeds in escaping the stagnation.

As a matter of fact, the individual who fails to communicate with his inner depths, Jolande Jacobi (1968) argues, is "as much afraid of the feminine element in himself as he is of real women. At one moment he is fascinated by her, at another he tries to escape" (p. 345). Why he flees is because he does not wish to fall under her influence. This duality in action and behaviour can be seen in Almayer, too. The woman he tries to escape is his wife, who seems savage and barbaric to him, but the woman he is fascinated by is his daughter, Nina. However, although he is fascinated by Nina, when he gets the opportunity to escape from Macassar, he chooses not to, a decision which might have its roots in Almayer's fear of communicating with his inner depths. His opportunity to flee from Macassar with Nina and Dain symbolizes potential unity with his hidden aspects. Although he sees where he lives as a "wretched hole", and does not want to die there, because he is so arrogant, because he does not have the courage to confess that he has imperfections too, and because he is "deceived by the emotional estimate of his motives, unable to see the crookedness of his ways, the unreality of his aims, the futility of his regrets", ironically enough, he dies in a miserable state in that "wretched hole".

In marked contrast, Dain establishes a sound relationship far from a material one

with his anima, Nina, and this leads to a symbolic rebirth for him. The juxtaposition between Almayer and Dain is of great significance. There is a partial similarity between Almayer and Dain. They are both in a moment of crisis. Early in the story, the reader realizes, Almayer feels entangled in that island, but soon Nina's return brings back a ray of hope to him. Dain, likewise, after the clash with the Dutch, is in terrible condition and it is Nina who brings him back to life. Clearly, the contact with one's anima can be very fruitful as it can issue new blood in one's veins if one learns how to have a constant relationship with it, and there lies the difference between Almayer and Dain.

Nina is about to commence her journey to a new and unknown land and separate herself from the people she knows, but first she has to make her mind because it is not only a physical journey, but an odyssey to her psychic world, and naturally she has doubts whether to take on this journey or not. Nevertheless, eventually she becomes aware of the fact that in order to end her misery and have a happy life full of love she has to enter the darkness. This is in line with the notion of individuation which is not to be fulfilled unless one steps into one's darkness. However, it is easier said than done and one has to be extremely determined; otherwise, the doubts and concerns are so overwhelming that one may omit to proceed. Although she seems, at first, determined to venture the darkness, when the moment comes close she begins to have mixed feelings arising from the immensity of the decision she has to make.

Individuation is indeed a process filled with doubts and indecisions that have to be overcome.

The time of her flight to Dain is of high significance too. She waits for the sun to set so that she can, veiled by the dark, go to Dain without being noticed by the people. In addition, the night journey symbolizes a voyage to the sea of the unconscious filled with unknown and apparently threatening voices that may discourage and deter someone, who is not persistent enough, from entering such a realm. When the sun sets, Conrad (1976) continues, “the sudden darkness seemed to be full of menacing voices calling upon her to rush headlong into the unknown; to be true to her own impulses, to give herself up to the passion she had evoked and shared” (p. 107). One major difference between Nina and Almayer, which brings forth a divergence of fate for them, is that she listens wholeheartedly to the voices of her darkness, while Almayer keeps ignoring them.

Each character may represent a particular archetype to one character and another archetype toward a different character. Therefore, although Dain may be an aspect of the Self for Almayer, he is Nina’s animus, so in order to meet her animus, she has to venture into the darkness of her psyche, which has been symbolized in Dain’s hiding place “in the solitude of the secluded clearing, in the vast silence of the forest” (p. 107). According to Cirlot “Forest-symbolism is complex, but it is connected at all levels to the symbolism of the female principle or of the Great Mother”, and “since

the female principle is identified with the unconscious in man, it follows that the forest is also a symbol of the unconscious” (p. 112). Therefore, with its vastness and camouflaging ability, the forest has been an archetype of the unconscious where live many creatures, although one may be taken in by its apparent silence and stillness.

Throughout *Almayer’s Folly*, exposing the reader to the main characters’ thoughts and contemplations, Conrad establishes his central themes by enabling the reader to see for themselves how the characters’ beliefs and attitudes account for what happens to them in the end. About to leave home for ever, Nina remembers the days she spent between her parents, “those two beings so dissimilar, so antagonistic”, and how “she stood with mute heart wondering and angry at the fact of her own existence” (p. 110). Dissatisfaction with one’s existence and conditions is epidemic among Conrad’s major characters in general and in *Almayer’s Folly* in particular. Almayer is unhappy with the life he has had because he thinks he has wasted it among a bunch of savages who are far below him in humanity, rank, civility, etc. His wife is dissatisfied because she thinks she has been doomed to live with a coward. Nina’s dissatisfaction has its roots in seeing her youth wearing away unused.

As a matter of fact, her feeling of hopelessness and frustration parallels the modern disappointment that took place in the early twentieth century. In other words, these lines are a further critique on the materialistic view of the Western world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. Nina has found her father's dreams, representing Western materialist philosophy, too hollow and therefore she shows no sympathy towards them, but "the savage ravings of her mother chanced to strike a responsive chord, deep down somewhere in her despairing heart" (p. 110). This is due to the fact that by contacting her mother, representing less civilised and more barbaric aspects of the unconscious psyche, she benefits from deeper forces lying there waiting to be unearthed. It is through this connection with her deeper psyche that enables Nina to dream "dreams of her own with the persistent absorption of a captive thinking of liberty within the walls of his prison cell" (Ibid). It is the coming of Dain that enables Nina to find "the road to freedom by obeying the voice of the newborn impulses," and makes her believe that she can "read in his eyes the answer to all the questionings of her heart" (Ibid).

The climax of the story comes when Almayer finds Nina and Dain and wishes to dissuade her from leaving with Dain. In the conversation among the three, Conrad expresses his critique of the Western attitude that has led modern man to the extreme of insanity and chaos. Indeed, it stems from arrogance, prejudice, and projection. Almayer, who sees his European race superior, is unable to understand Nina's affection for Dain, whom he calls savage. However, this represents the West's projecting its own savagery upon the East considering the brutality of the two great wars in the twentieth century that took place in the modern and civilised

world. Jung (1968), in "Approaching the Unconscious", discussing the Freudian school's approach to the unconscious, states that it "presents the unconscious in a thoroughly depreciatory light, just as also it looks on primitive man as little better than a wild beast" (p. 16). Rejecting this outlook he continues: "Have the horrors of the World War really not opened our eyes? Are we still unable to see that man's conscious mind is even more devilish and perverse than the unconscious?" (pp. 16-17).

The biggest mistake one can make is not to listen to one's self. In other words, borrowing Jung's ideas, the only way to reach psychic wholeness is to look inside, and stop projection. Nina also points at the shallowness of Almayer's dreams, which represent the materialistic desires of the modern West:

You were speaking of gold then, but our ears were filled with the song of our love, and we did not hear you. Then I found that we could see through each other's eyes: that he saw things that nobody but myself and he could see. We entered a land where no one could follow us, and least of all you. Then, I began to live.

(Conrad, 1976, p. 130)

Stagnation versus vitality is a recurrent theme in some of Conrad's works which has been stressed in this particular novel as well by depicting Almayer's decay in Sambir versus Nina and Dain's flight from

Sambir. This is not only a physical but also a psychological matter as it is only after listening to “the voice of her new-born impulses” that Nina begins to live and move beyond stagnation. As von Franz (1968) argues one can avert a complete stagnation of the inner process of individuation only if one decides to take one’s fantasies and feelings seriously (p. 198). She states that this is the only way one can discover what one’s anima or animus figure means as an inner reality, and as a result the anima or animus functions as a messenger that conveys the messages of the Self (p. 198).

However, instead of listening to this guide from within, and using its direction and guidance, Almayer keeps making a relentless series of projections. After hearing Nina’s heartfelt confessions about how she feels for Dain, Almayer accuses Nina, “You want him as a tool for some incomprehensible ambition of yours” (Conrad, 1976, p. 131). Obviously, Almayer is blaming Nina for what he had in mind. His relationship with Dain was not a friendship, but it was totally business oriented on the side of Almayer because he saw Dain as a tool through which he could have fulfilled his lifelong ambition of becoming extremely wealthy. Or, when he calls Nina a deceitful person who “shall live a life of lies and deception”, and threatens to call out and surrender Dain to the Dutch, she answers back: “Call out you that cannot be true to your own countrymen. Only a few days ago you were selling the powder for their destruction; now you want to give up to them the man that yesterday you called

your friend” (Ibid). Almayer’s stepping into a loveless marriage in the hope of getting rid of his wife and inheriting Lingard’s wealth committed him to “a life of lies and deception” which he now projects onto Nina.

Jung’s emphasis on the concept of unconscious was due to the fact that he was well aware of its dangerous dual nature. However, he was, at the same time, familiar with the importance of human consciousness and therefore, the call for individual consciousness was Jung’s offer that could protect man against catastrophe, despite being a daunting task. Consciousness plays a very practical role in one’s life along with giving the possibility of meaning to life. Jaffe (1968) writes:

The evil witnessed in the world outside, in neighbors or neighboring peoples, can be made conscious as evil contents of our own psyche as well, and this insight would be the first step to a radical change in our attitude to our neighbors (p. 316).

Almayer’s incessant projections and fault-finding attitude towards others, especially the local and non-white residents of Sambir, have their roots in his inability in bringing into consciousness the evil contents of his psyche. This, on a broader scale, is what is happening in the world when countries keep shifting the blame on their neighbours and other countries. Almayer’s folly is turning a blind eye to his psychic contents, and this is explicitly depicted late

in the novel when he is left alone awaiting his death. The few who saw him in his last days were "impressed by the sight of that face that seemed to know nothing of what went on within: like the blank wall of a prison enclosing sin, regrets, and pain, and wasted life, in the cold indifference of mortar and stones" (Conrad, 1976, p. 138).

There comes a critical moment when he can free himself of his self-made prison of arrogance and negligence towards his hidden contents. As von Franz (1968) states, "Crossing a river is a frequent symbolic image for a fundamental change of attitude" (p. 211). If Almayer had accepted his calls from within, he would have had to join Nina and Dain in their voyage to Dain's land, which would have symbolized a basic and vital change in his psychic life. However, because he does not do so, he has to spend his remaining days stuck in Sambir and consequently die in loneliness.

Discussing neurosis, Jung (1968) suggests that two forms of concealments are very harmful to our psychic health, the second of which is the act of "withholding", which usually refers to emotions that are withheld. Almayer is a man who does not show his emotions although he has a wide and intense range of them deep within. At the moment of Dain and Nina's departure Almayer "looked at them embarking, and at the canoe growing smaller in the distance, with rage, despair, and regret in his heart, and on his face a peace as that of a carved image of oblivion" (Conrad, 1976, p. 141). This is an act of repression and withholding one's emotions that Jung finds dangerous

to one's psychic totality. When one fails to hear the voices from within, and keeps repressing the truest of feelings, one is doomed to find his personality split into pieces, as does Almayer, who begins having hallucinations—of a little girl who is most likely Nina's childhood—shortly after Nina leaves Sambir, and therefore, he takes refuge in opium as his last treatment to lessen his pain.

Almayer's attempt to forget Nina may signify two important points. First, it illustrates an act of denial and suppression on the side of Almayer, who refuses to assume responsibility for his own mistakes and uses projection as his only tool. Second, the futility of his effort implies that one can never dispose of the contents of the unconscious and they will grow immensely and may gather a huge destructive force if they are merely dumped. And consequently, they can cause irreparable damage to one's psychic health, which in *Almayer's Folly* has been symbolized in the disappearance of the slightest hope. As mentioned earlier, the story starts with Almayer's looking at the surface of the river where the setting sun has given a glowing gold tinge. If that was a ray of hope for Almayer, the lines describing his despair at Nina's boat disappearing illustrate the ripping apart of that hope. The disappearance of Nina's prau, indeed, represents Almayer's total disconnection with the hidden contents of his unconscious, a mistake with fatal consequences.

In conclusion, Almayer, who had one day stepped on the jetty of Macassar with high hopes and intention of "conquering the

world”, not only does not return to Europe as a conqueror, but he dies a miserable, lonely, and desperate death of an opium addict among strangers in a strange land. However, and more importantly, this is all because he remains a stranger to his own self. Indeed, to conquer the world without, Conrad has shown his reader that one has to first conquer the world within, failing to do which was Almayer’s folly.

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