

An Analysis of Edgar Linton's Psyche Based on Archetypes Theory

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ABSTRACT

Wuthering Heights is one of the most significant realistic novels in British literature, primarily depicting the tragic love story of Catherine and Heathcliff. Nevertheless, involved in the love triangle, Edgar Linton receives much less attention from the researchers. In an attempt to further unravel the characteristics of Edgar Linton, this paper, in conjunction with Carl Jung's archetypes theory, interprets Edgar's psyche by analyzing his persona, anima, and shadow through qualitative analysis. The result shows a strong relevance of these three archetypes that are closely related to his childhood experiences. The joint influence of the archetypes forms typical features of his psyche that affects not only him but also his social networks and his soft personality is a good approach to alleviating the heaviness of this work and forming a sharp contrast with Catherine and Heathcliff.

1. Introduction

As one of the most splendid critical realism novels in the nineteenth century, *Wuthering Heights* is noted for the tensions, conflicts, and repression throughout the book. The novel mainly confines its space to two places: *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange. One day, the host of *Wuthering Heights* brought back an abandoned child and named him Heathcliff. The host's care for Heathcliff incurred the jealousy of his son Hindley and Hindley oppressed him bitterly after his father's death. At the same time, the daughter of the host Catherine established an intimate relationship with Heathcliff. The female protagonist Catherine. However, three years after Heathcliff's leave, Catherine married Linton, a gentleman in Thrushcross Grange.

When Heathcliff returned with property, he decided to take revenge. He took the property of Hindley through gambling and made his son a slave. His marriage with Linton's sister Isabella brought Thrushcross Grange much pain and his violent love for Catherine was the main reason for her death. Still, he continued his revenge on the second generation, but he died, at last, leaving the two young lovers leading a happy life.

This splendid work didn't attract much attention from her contemporaries after its first publication in 1847. Even some critics thought *Wuthering Heights* was naive and absurd. In the first half of the 20th century, the attitude to this novel was changed as people came to realize and confirm its greatness. Gradually, different approaches have been taken to appreciate it. At present, there is a growing consensus regarding *Wuthering Heights* as a great work.

2. Literature Review

Over the years, scholars have attempted various views to look into this novel. Their studies mainly touch upon the fields such as thematic analysis, comparative studies, character analysis, Freudian psychoanalytic approach, and so on. Among these studies, the mainstream still concentrates on the first generation in *Wuthering Heights*.

In terms of thematic analysis, Gao (2008) looks at *Wuthering Heights* regarding its theme and narratology. He states that the theme of love is based on "congruence instead of complementarities" (108). Catherine and Heathcliff are of the same type, which is in accordance with Catherine's claim: I am Heathcliff! But Edgar's love for Catherine is complementary and he fails to gain Catherine's

love. He also points out its theme of revenge is extremely horrible and cruel. By exploring the strategies of narratology that are used in the novel, Gao studies its role in conveying the themes. And Gawthrop (2003) takes a different view to exploring its theme by studying the slavery-related themes in *Wuthering Heights*. He traces Emily Bronte's family background of slavery and demonstrates its connection with the theme of her novel.

Many scholars also show enthusiasm in comparing *Wuthering Heights* with other literary works, especially the comparative studies with the other two Bronte sisters' works. For example, Lindskog (2020) chooses the image of the sky as the entry point to discuss the difference between *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. He thinks the sky is a spatial phenomenon, but it has different functions, as the sky provides a refuge for the mind in *Jane Eyre* while it signals the relief is impossible for the latter.

From the perspective of psychology, Asl (2014) attempts to analyze the projection of Emily's mother's fixation on the characters in the novel based on Freudian psychoanalytic criticism. She concludes that Emily who experienced the loss of her mother, siblings, and father, was obsessed with dejection which can be seen from the characters in *Wuthering Heights*. Li (2016) applies Carl Jung's archetypes theory to analyze Catherine's psychology from three archetypes: persona, animus, and shadow.

For the character analysis, researchers are in favor of studying the two main characters, Catherine and Heathcliff. Tytler (2006) explores Catherine's problem of identification and her fascination with machismo. Wang (2012) analyzes the tragic destiny of Heathcliff by looking into the distorted British capitalist society's impact on the formation of his bigoted character, which leads to his tragedy. In addition to the focus on the two protagonists, increasing attention has been paid to the analysis of those minor characters. Stuchiner (2013) reviews *Wuthering Heights* by virtue of the version of the servant Joseph.

However, the supporting character Edgar Linton has not aroused much interest in the study of *Wuthering Heights*. And among those studies concerning Edgar Linton, few adopt the perspective of Carl Jung's archetypes theory to do further research. Based on the achievements made by previous studies, this paper explores the psyche of Edgar Linton in light of archetypes theories with the expectation of shedding light on the profoundness of this classic novel.

3. Methodology

Carl Gustav Jung, a well-known Swiss psychoanalyst, established a new branch of psychology: Jungian psychology in the early 20th century, where he furthered Freud's idea on the unconscious. For Freud, the unconscious is personal and individual. Jung develops this concept by extending its realm to a deeper layer: the "collective unconscious", which the "personal unconscious" is rested upon (Jung, 2014, p.3). Jung thinks that the collective unconscious is inborn and universal, which is not limited to individuals. While the contents of the personal unconscious chiefly contribute to the "feeling-toned complexes" (4), the contents of the collective unconscious are the archetypes, such as the mother archetype, rebirth archetype, death archetype, abounding in the religions, myths, fairy tales and so on. Among numerous archetypes, Jung pays more attention to four archetypes in particular: persona, shadow, anima, and animus, which he thinks influence human beings the most.

The term persona originally means "the mask of the actor" (20). Jung borrows this word to elaborate his theory of persona that indicates the "outer face" of our psyche, not the real personality. A person can have different masks to play a certain type of role in public so that he can conform to other people's expectations. And it can change with his social role. For example, a person may have different behaviors at home and in public. A persona is a significant tool for us to gain social recognition and win reputation.

The anima and animus archetypes respectively refer to the femininity in men's psyche and masculinity in women's psyche. Jung thinks that humans are essentially bisexual and "each person has the quality of the opposite sex." (Hall & Nordy, 1973, p.46). As the persona is the outer face of our psyche, anima and animus reveal the inward face. Through continuous exposure to the opposite sex, men have developed some characteristics of women and vice versa. Anima means "soul" not in the dogmatic sense nor its philosophical conception but regarded as an archetype that "satisfactorily sums up all the statements of the unconscious, of the primitive mind, of the history of language and religion" (Jung, 2014, p.27).

As anima and animus are responsible for the relationship with the opposite sex, the shadow can account for the friendly or hostile relationship with our own gender. It is another vital contribution that Jung made to psychology. He chooses this term to indicate the darkest and deepest-hidden side of human nature, representing the "evil, unadapted, unconscious and inferior part of our psyches." (Schultz & Schultz, 2001, p.86). It needs to call people's attention that shadow is not all bad. It both can be the sources of our creativity and the means of leading us to self-destruction.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Persona

Antony Stevens (1994) points out our persona begins to form in childhood. Children usually behave according to the wishes and expectations of authoritative people (parents and teachers) and their peers. Through observation and education, children learn that certain behaviors and attitudes are acceptable and even favorable while others may bring them punishment. He summarizes, “The tendency is to build acceptable traits into the persona and to keep unacceptable traits hidden or repressed.” (78). Edgar Linton’s early life experiences, especially those directly related to his parents, form a rigid view of the class. Directed by this view, he has to wear different masks based on situations. In the domestic environment, he wears his mask of being an ideal husband and a caring brother, while in public, the mask of being a decent gentleman is chosen.

4.1.1 The Mask of Being a Decent Gentleman

During the Victorian era, the gentleman culture achieved progressive development due to the prosperity of the economy. There are some generally acknowledged traits of British gentlemen in that time, such as having good manners, showing respect for women, and highlighting the importance of virtues.

Edgar was born and raised in a middle-class family where education and gentleman-like manners were emphasized. He followed his parents’ instructions and grew to be a “good boy” in people’s eyes. However, when his parents were absent, he could quarrel with his sister about who should hold their dog and sob silently, refusing to take it after the struggle to get it. Without his parents’ surveillance at home, he put down his mask of being a good boy and joined in the battle, arguing with her sister for trivial matters. But things were different when he was in public. As he witnessed Catherine lie and use violence, he was shocked at her faults which were not allowed in his family education. The gentleman's mask directed him to feel ashamed of his partner and determine to leave her. It does not permit violence and lies, prompting Edgar to disguise such behaviors, even if she was Catherine.

The mask of being a decent gentleman also encourages him to show politeness even confronted with the people he hated. He called Heathcliff the “gipsy” , “ploughboy” , “ranaway servant” (120) in front of Nelly and Catherine and suggested that the kitchen would be a proper place to treat Heathcliff. But when he treated Heathcliff in person, he avoided those insulting nicknames and showed his respect by addressing him “Mr. Heathcliff” . As Nelly observed, he was “striving to preserve his ordinary tone, and a due measure of politeness” (123).

One benefit of keeping personas is to gain social recognition and build a favorable self-image. In public, Edgar endeavored to maintain his gentleman image and show respect to people he disliked or even hated.

4.1.2 The Mask of Being an Ideal Husband

During the Victorian era, British reached its peak of industrialization. Society was so permeated by the commercial spirit that “love could be blatantly thrust aside if it interfered with more important values” (Houghton, 1957, p.381). The “more important values” are usually connected with fortunes, power, position, and so on.

Edgar lived up to the social expectation of an ideal husband. That’s one reason that Catherine was attracted by refined Edgar and accepted his proposal. When Nelly asked her whether she loved Mr. Edgar, Catherine replied with a certain answer and listed his virtues: He was handsome and pleasant to be with; he was young and cheerful; he would be rich so that she shall be proud of having such a husband. These favorable traits, especially his property and social status in that era, fascinated Catherine and motivated her to marry Edgar Linton. After marriage, Edgar also satisfied the needs of an ideal husband for most young girls. He was in deep love with his wife, and would rather hurt himself than see his loved ones get hurt.

Another essential character of Victorian love is “the passion that was very much tempered by reverence and confined to the home” (341). Edgar also made many contributions to protect his home from being broken. During the marriage, Edgar took on the responsibility of a husband and tried to establish a peaceful home that was unstable in the first place. Facing the abrupt interruption of Heathcliff, he knew he was a threat to his family. Therefore, he tried his best to cut his family’s connection with Heathcliff but failed. After the demise of Catherine, Edgar didn’t give up hope completely and continued his mission of educating their daughter, maintaining the traditional home, which created a beneficial growing environment for little Cathy.

4.1.3 The Mask of Being a Caring Brother

Edgar was regarded as a caring brother for his sister, but this mask got removed after the news of Isabella’s intention of marrying Heathcliff. When hearing the news that Isabella ran off with Heathcliff, the brother, who used to love her tenderly, exclaimed with agitation and repeatedly said that “it cannot be” (169). But after confirming this fact, he lost hope and behaved coldly, announcing Isabella was only her sister in name hereafter. The feeling of betrayal forces Edgar to remove his mask of a caring and loving brother, leaving coldness in the attitude towards his sister. He didn’t make any further inquiry or mention her in any way, except directing Nelly to send the share of her property in her fresh home. In the letter Isabella sent to Nelly, she expressed her

ardent desire to see his brother and wished his forgiveness. Notwithstanding, Edgar replied to Nelly that he had nothing to forgive her and he would not see her, for they were eternally divided.

After Isabella's unexpected visit, Nelly told her master that his sister had left her husband and Edgar was pleased by this news. The departure of Isabella from Heathcliff once ignited his hope and once again, he accepted the mask of a caring brother. He began to soften his attitude to Isabella and had regular correspondences with her. Later, he was also willing to take on the responsibility of taking her left son Linton Heathcliff at the request of Isabella.

4.3 Anima

Anima is complementary to persona and constitutes part of the structure of the human psyche. According to Jung (2014), the anima in man's psyche can soften his character and even makes him touchy, irritable, and moody. The anima is usually projected to women in most cases, which explains why a man falls in love with a woman and his feminine traits.

4.3.1 Falling in Love with Catherine

Edgar's love for Catherine is the result of the projection of his anima. The presence of young and beautiful Catherine kindled a spark of spirit and liveliness in the Lintons. Edgar Linton was fascinated by her beauty without exception. Besides, during her five-week stay at the Thrushcross Grange, Catherine was flattered by their courtesy and felt ashamed of being rude. Hence, she eschewed the "rough side" of her psyche and wore a mask of a fine lady in the Lintons' company. Living in an environment that was contradictory to her true nature, Catherine developed double characters. Her deliberate design won the old couple's favor and also the "heart and soul" of Edgar, who only saw one side of Catherine's characters.

The result of projecting his anima onto Catherine was obvious. Edgar deeply fell in love with her and proposed. Jung also points out that although sometimes anima can be a "good basis" in a relationship, it often causes problems because of "idealisation, lack of fulfillment and disillusion" (Papadopoulos, 2006, p.66). Edgar idealized Catherine's image through his interaction with Catherine who deliberately demonstrated her cultivated manners. In other words, Catherine was not the real and complete Catherine but the expectation and illusion of his anima.

The projection of his anima often brought Edgar meaningless but constant hope regarding his relationship with his wife. Even when he had a bitter quarrel with Catherine and the latter defended her friend against him, he shut himself up among books and expected that Catherine would "repent her conduct" and "come of her own accord to ask pardon and seek a reconciliation" (153). But the return of Heathcliff broke Catherine's fine-lady mask. He required Catherine to be a traditional qualified household wife, who took on her duty as a mistress in a decent family and a loyal wife to her husband. The wrong and unrealistic expectation of Catherine collides with her true nature that is contrary to his anima-image, and it results in dissatisfaction and disillusion.

4.2.2 Feminine Traits

Hall and Nordby (1973) point out that a well-adjusted and balanced personality allows the feminine side of a man's personality to express themselves in consciousness and behavior. Perceiving the psyche of Edgar, it is easy to notice his feminine traits such as caring quality and jealousy throughout the novel.

Edgar demonstrated his extraordinary caring quality, which can be perceived by his interaction with his wife and daughter. Even in the mid of bitter quarrel, he was the one who yielded himself to compromise first so that he would not hurt his loved ones. When he saw Catherine was in a fit of frenzy, his anger and desperation were replaced by care and sympathy for his dear wife: He told Nelly to fetch some water for Catherine to calm her. He loved and cared for Catherine tenderly even when the latter broke his heart again and again. During Catherine's severe brain fever, Edgar was there caring for her meticulously. As the narrator, Nelly commented, "no mother could have nursed an only child more devotedly than Edgar tended Catherine" (171). He took good care of her day and night, enduring all the unreasonable annoyances to preserve a "mere ruin of humanity" even at the cost of his health and strength. The devoted care also continued to his daughter Cathy. He protected his daughter from any harm and gave her everything he had.

Besides, his jealousy is another prominent feminine trait. Seeing Catherine was overjoyed with the return of her old friend, Edgar behaved crossly, asking his wife not to be frantic for this "marvellous treasure." His jealousy accelerated step by step during the treatment and reached its peak as Catherine was eager to share her happiness of meeting Heathcliff with him. He could not control his emotions and released a cry for a pang of envy. The jealousy aroused his wife's contempt and regarded his envy as a sign of a spoiled child.

4.3 Shadow

The persona is the side people would like to demonstrate to the public, and the repressed and hidden side which is unacceptable constitutes their shadow. According to Jung's writing, "shadow from the personal unconscious is said to be projected onto a person of the same sex." (Papadopoulos, 2006, p.97). This section discusses the shadow represented by violence and weakness in Edgar's psyche.

4.3.1 Violence

Human beings inherit animal spirits from their ancestors. In order to integrate into society, people have to tame their animal spirits. However, the persistent shadow roots in the deepest part of our psyche, and it will be triggered off under some circumstances. Edgar's violence to Heathcliff is the epitome of his animal spirits emerging from his psyche.

Violence can be verbal and physical. When Hindley mocked at Heathcliff's hair, Edgar also added his comments saying that "they are long enough already. I wonder they don't make his headache. It's like a colt's mane over his eyes!" (Bronte, p.73). The young boy might not have the intention to insult him, but the discrimination against Heathcliff had rooted deep under the unconscious. His verbal violence hurt Heathcliff's esteem, but he was not conscious that he was actually committing violence to others. In addition to the verbal violence, Edgar also showed physical violence as his repressed shadow came to erupt. Heathcliff ridiculed Edgar and spoke to Catherine, "Cathy, this lamb of yours threatens like a bull" (146). Instead of defending her husband against the humiliation, Catherine responded to Edgar's look of angry surprise, "If you have not the courage to attack him, make an apology, or allow yourself to be beaten. It will correct you of feigning more valour than you possess" (147). His loved ones added more desperation to Edgar's state, his shadow began to engulf him and motivated him to attack back, even though as a gentleman violence was the last thing he would like to touch on. Therefore, the time his enemy gave the chair on which Linton rested a push, Linton quickly responded to his act and struck Heathcliff a heavy blow on the throat.

4.3.2 Weakness.

Weakness is another shadow that Edgar refused to accept. When Heathcliff poured hot apple sauce to Edgar, the latter immediately commenced a "lament" and began to sob, while finishing the remainder of purification with his handkerchief. Even Catherine showed her contempt, asking Edgar to stop crying and saying that "you're not killed" (74). Besides fragility in his character, he was not the traditional strong and masculine image in *Wuthering Heights*. Especially when it comes to comparing with Heathcliff, he was rather slender and youth-like. Therefore, in the eye of Heathcliff, Edgar was no more than a "milk-blooded coward", and Catherine also thought her husband was not even the type of "a lamb" but "a sucking leveret" (147).

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes Edgar's psyche from three archetypes of Jung, which embody strong relevance among themselves. Edgar's overdeveloped personas, with the complementation of his anima, provide him with good fame and reputation in his community, but the shadow is suppressed and eventually triggered off due to the strong counteraction from his personas and anima. The personas allow Edgar to act the roles of an ideal husband, a caring brother, and a decent gentleman in the Victorian era. It presents what Edgar wants to show in front of the public to keep his fame. Also, the anima in Edgar's personality explains his love for Catherine and also the feminine traits like caring quality and jealousy that both make him expose to the bully from Catherine and Heathcliff and a constant balance to the wild nature of his wife, maintain the function of his home and sustainable source of comfort and care to his daughter. The part unacceptable hides in the deepest side of his personality and becomes his shadow. Once being touched upon his shadow, Edgar reacts out of his normal code, which explains his sensitivity towards people's humiliation of his weakness.

The three archetypes affect Edgar's psyche and his relationships in clusters, contributing to part of the conflicts and contrasts in the novel. In addition, the analysis also shows Edgar's soft and caring psyche, which is different from Catherine's and Heathcliff's, plays a significant role in providing stability and reassurance, especially the loving, growing environment for his daughter. It avoids the recurrence of the first generation's love tragedy to a large degree.

The paper provides a way to review the character, Edgar Linton, in light of archetypes theory and explains the character's words and actions from the perspective of analytic psychology. However, the paper also has some deficiencies due to limited theoretical analysis and insufficient supporting argumentation which will be improved in future work.

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