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**THE DESCENT INTO THE INNER DEPTHS:
JEROME MARTELL AND KURTZ**

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**“The measure of a man is how he faces
the moments when life gets rough”.**

Edward J. Gordon,

Introduction to Tragedy (1973)

Abstract

This thesis focuses on two memorable characters: Jerome Martell in Hugh MacLennan's *The Watch that Ends the Night* (1959) and Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Kurtz and Martell are comparable characters who, in two entirely different contexts, embark on similar inner journeys. In fact, both men are at the mercy of their passions, which incite them to act in potentially self-destructive ways. The most significant difference between the two is that Martell is able to surpass his limitations and become a more enlightened man while Kurtz, who succumbs to temptation, eventually destroys himself.

This thesis examines Martell and Kurtz as individuals whose psychological forces produce a similar, and, at the same time, a very different result. In both *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*, the psychological struggle is a reflection of the archetypal journey of the discovery of the inner unconscious.

Résumé

Cette thèse a pour objet l'étude de deux personnages remarquables : Jerome Martell dans *The Watch that Ends the Night* (1959), écrit par Hugh MacLennan et Kurtz dans *Heart of Darkness* (1902), écrit par Joseph Conrad. Kurtz et Martell sont des héros dotés d'une personnalité comparable qui, bien qu'impliqués dans des aventures similaires, vivent dans un contexte tout à fait différent. En réalité, les deux hommes sont à la merci de leurs passions, ce qui les entraîne dans une démarche potentiellement destructrice. La différence la plus flagrante entre les deux personnages est que Martell arrive à outrepasser ses limites jusqu'à devenir un phare pour son entourage alors que Kurtz, qui succombe aux tentations, en arrivera à se détruire.

La ligne directrice de cette thèse est d'étudier Martell et Kurtz comme des individus dotés d'une force de caractère qui déclenche des résultats à la fois similaires et différents. Dans les deux romans, *The Watch that Ends the Night* et *Heart of Darkness*, le combat psychologique est l'image de la découverte de l'archétype du moi inconscient.

Preface

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CHAPTER I:

COMPARABLE CHARACTERS ON A SIMILAR JOURNEY

It seems improbable that two novelists, one of Polish origin and the other Canadian, could create, in two entirely different novels, comparable male characters who undergo a similar psychological journey. Yet, such might be considered to be the case of Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's revolutionary *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and Jerome Martell in Hugh MacLennan's award-winning *The Watch that Ends the Night* (1959). On the surface of things, the story of Kurtz, a man who is corrupted by greed and avarice in the jungles of the Congo at the beginning of the twentieth century, has little in common with a passionate and idealistic surgeon named Jerome Martell, who lives a turbulent life among a select group of intellectuals in Montreal during the 1930's. However, with deeper probing, some striking similarities between the two protagonists, Kurtz and Martell, become evident, highly thought-provoking and worthy of consideration. In fact, Conrad and MacLennan have created heroes who are at the mercy of their passions and desires, which incite them to act in potentially self-destructive ways. Despite a remarkable difference in context, time, and place, these characters embark on similar and fascinating inner psychological journeys of which their geographical movements are symbolic. The most significant difference between the two characters is that Martell is

able to overcome his limitations and become a more enlightened individual while Kurtz, who succumbs to temptation, eventually destroys himself and dies a sick and troubled man. It is the path taken by the two characters on their different inner journeys that this thesis investigates, in order to probe the psychological framework of Kurtz and Martell.

I first studied *Heart of Darkness* in high school, next in a short story undergraduate class, and finally a third time in 1998 in a class entitled *The 20th century British Novel*. With each successive study, I enjoyed the novel more and remained continuously in awe of Kurtz and his psychological depth as a character. During the winter of 1999, I attended a graduate seminar, *MacLennan and Callaghan*, and once I had finished reading *The Watch that Ends the Night*, I remember exclaiming that it was one of the best books I had ever read. Once again, I was drawn to another strong and complex character, and this time it was Jerome Martell. Certain characters do have the ability to leave a lasting impression on readers and this is not particularly uncommon; for instance, one only has to think of characters such as Hagar Shipley in Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, and Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. However, the challenge of devoting my Master's thesis to a comparison of these two men who are at the focal point of their respective novels is a testimony to the parallel experiences that they suggest as well as a tribute to the authors who created them.

Despite the similarities that I later came to identify in their inner journeys, I did not see the connection between Kurtz and Martell until I read Hugh MacLennan's biography, *Hugh MacLennan A Writer's Life* (1981), by Elspeth Cameron. Cameron states that Conrad was a writer whom MacLennan liked (271) and more specifically, she points out that *Heart of Darkness* was actually a model for *The Watch that Ends the Night* (286). It was after reading these comments that I almost immediately became sensitive to the similarities and differences between Martell and Kurtz, two memorable non-conformists. It was at that point that a study of these two exceptional characters appeared possible and, moreover, necessary to undertake. It is also important to point out that MacLennan was, in fact, the first to see the similarity between his novel and Conrad's. In a letter written in April 1958 to his close friend and editor John Gray, MacLennan writes of *The Watch that Ends the Night*: "It is a new kind of book. Conradian in its theme and mood, but nothing like Conrad ever did. The subconscious has been utilized now as no other novelist has ever utilized it: not clinically, but poetically, and I know true to experience" (Cameron 293). Ultimately, *The Watch that Ends the Night*, while certainly not *Conradian* in its theme, is certainly *Conradian* in its characterization, considering the fact Martell and Kurtz are highly comparable characters, and also that Marlow and Stewart, the other main characters in the novels, share a number of similarities in personality and point of view.

With MacLennan's comments in mind, I knew that I wanted to examine Kurtz and Martell as individuals whose psychological forces produce a comparable, and, at the same time, a very different impact on the reader. In fact, their inner struggles and subsequent transformations were what appealed to me the most. In both novels, Kurtz and Martell are characters whose literal journey, the first in the African jungle and the second in Canada and Western Europe, is symbolic of the spiritual one, namely of the descent into the self. The literal journey in each case is a strong reflection of the psychological struggle and an archetypal journey into the depths of the unconscious, which in some fashion is illustrated in the works of Carl Jung, and this thesis will refer to Jung's theories at length later.

Another important point which both novels have in common is that they are both based in many ways on their author's own personal experiences. Critic W.J. Keith feels that *The Watch that Ends the Night*

draws upon circumstances close to [MacLennan's] own autobiographical experience. He lived through the various historical periods with which the novel deals, and within his personal life he had also lived through equivalents to some of the more painful scenes depicted [...] MacLennan seems to have used certain aspects of himself and his wife as basic foundations for his characters, but then transforms them into independent figures, the products of his fictive imagination (34).

Accordingly, although George Stewart is not Hugh MacLennan, “some interesting interconnections can be established between the two” (Keith 34-5) whereas for T.D. MacLulich, Stewart, one of the male heroes of *The Watch that Ends the Night*, “is a projection of [MacLennan’s] essential self” (64). In terms of the autobiographical influences in *Heart of Darkness*, Cederic Watts indicates that “*Heart of Darkness* was prompted mainly by Conrad’s own journey into the Congo in 1890” (Stape 48) while Franklin Walker specifies that the novel “was based on Conrad’s voyage to the headwaters of the Congo and his personal impressions of the geographical and social conditions of that exploited country. Many of the characters were taken from life” (218).

Heart of Darkness is a classic of English literature and is commonly acknowledged as having been written ahead of its time. For Lawrence Graver, author of *Conrad’s Short Fiction* (1969), the “tale is universally read as one of the first symbolic masterpieces of English prose” (78). For Watts, *Heart of Darkness* is a novel with many layers of meaning. He writes:

Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* is a rich, vivid, layered, paradoxical, and problematic novella or long tale; a mixture of oblique autobiography, traveller’s yarn, adventure story, psychological odyssey, political satire, symbolic prose-poem, black comedy, spiritual melodrama, and sceptical meditation. It has proved to be ‘ahead of its time’: an exceptionally proleptic text (Stape 45).

Indeed, Conrad's mastery of the English language and his ability to penetrate into the human psyche resulted in a haunting and memorable tale which is still widely read and studied everywhere today. Kurtz and his psychological exploration are at the centre of this novel which is set in Africa in the late nineteenth-century. Kurtz, who goes into the Congo as the representative of an international company lured by ivory, becomes a barbarian worshipped by those whom he makes his 'followers', the natives, in the depths of the jungle. Marlow, a seaman, is sent to escort a sick Kurtz out of the symbolic jungle back to Europe and is the person who, in the aftermath of the dramatic saga, tells Kurtz's story.

In *A Reader's Guide to Great Twentieth Century English Novels* (1959), Frederick Karl and Marvin Magalaner contest the argument that *Heart of Darkness* is a "study in human degradation and wretchedness" where "greed, selfishness, and materialism replace all ethical values" (48). As depicted in the novel, they argue, the person who is isolated from so-called civilized society, with its clear rules and its specific code of accepted social conduct and behaviour, changes drastically if he is weak. In addition, if he is easily tempted as Kurtz is, he becomes a savage. It is under these circumstances that Kurtz's moral or psychological weakness causes him to act immorally. By contrast with Kurtz, in Conrad's narrative, Marlow represents what at first might be called 'typical' man since he does not share Kurtz's weakness, and he simply does not have Kurtz's capacity for

perversion. He likewise lacks the potential depth of evil that corresponds to this capacity. Consequently, Marlow's more ingrained sense of social mores is what saves him, as he takes the same journey down the African river as Kurtz, and his critical sense is the trait that distinguishes him the most from Kurtz. In fact, unlike Kurtz, Marlow continually questions everything that he sees on every one of the laps of the same physical journey that he takes to retrieve Kurtz. Marlow possesses what appears to be an instinctive capacity to maintain his reason in order to avoid the self-deception and bitter disillusionment that the jungle, its ivory and the company that have lured him, invite him to develop.

Despite the very fundamental difference in his personality from that of Kurtz, Marlow knows that Kurtz is not proverbially insane. He says, for example, that "[Kurtz's] intelligence was perfectly clear" (65) and he describes him as "a remarkable man" (69). However, throughout the narrative, Kurtz is often referred to as a hollow man, implying that he has no integrity, no notion of what is fundamentally right or wrong. According to C.B. Cox in *Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination* (1974), once Kurtz is "away from society he is liberated to do anything, either good or evil. He shakes himself free from restraints, and becomes his own diabolical God" (55). If Kurtz follows this path of liberation to its absolute logical conclusion, it is because he does not have the ability to resist certain forms of degenerative temptation; he has a weakness that makes him give in to his

passions and desires, however primitive they may be. Marlow realises that the wilderness “had whispered to [Kurtz] things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude – and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating” (57). As a result, Marlow learns how important it is to maintain his own capacity for rationality in order to fight the “irresistibly fascinating whisper” which emanates from within those who are called to undertake the same journey up the symbolic river of the Congo as Kurtz.

As a result of Kurtz’s descent into the inner depths of his soul, Marlow learns a crucial lesson. He realizes that it is relatively easy, given the right circumstances, for an individual to return to a primitive state, a state from which all humans presumably come. Marlow also comes to the conclusion that it is manifestly difficult for a sophisticated person to exercise self-restraint in a relatively unexplored jungle, far from society and its numerous constraints. In his work *Introduction to Tragedy* (1973), Edward J. Gordon describes *Heart of Darkness* as a novel about “what happens if primitive instincts are not controlled by the restraints of reason and compassion” (217). This explains why Marlow understands that if he is to preserve his own morals and values, he must avoid being corrupted by the jungle and by his own inner demons that this jungle tempts him to release. Claiming that “the devotion to efficiency” (10) is what saves man, to resist the corruption of the jungle he keeps himself occupied with repairing the boat that is to

bring Kurtz back to Europe. In fact, for Marlowe, keeping himself busy is the only way in which he can cling to and maintain “the redeeming facts of life” (26). Evidently, he does not want to confront his heart of darkness, that is, to come face to face with his human capacity for infinite evil, which is in him waiting to be discovered. Moreover, he does not even want to explore that heart of darkness because he would have to exercise the ultimate strength of character by saying “no” to its temptation to greed. The possibility of an approaching darkness of the human vision of the inner self, through a deep descent into his consciousness, is very real to him, and he knows he must keep himself occupied in order to fend off the temptation to explore it. According to Marlow, therefore, it is easier to stay sane when you have things to attend to, in order to keep “your precarious grip on existence” (42). This is precisely the grip that Kurtz has lost, and the one that Marlow is determined not to lose.

It is interesting to note that although both Kurtz and Marlow perceive and experience the same reality of the surging forth of the unconscious self in the depths of the jungle, only the former is compelled to pursue the illusion of being able to challenge and conquer it. By comparison, Marlow chooses not to pursue this illusion of conquest, which is why he manages to remain objective and clear-headed. As a result, he never experiences the ultimate inner struggle that the unconscious proposes to him, but significantly however, he never reaches that crucial level of self-awareness

that Kurtz attains by discovering how evil he can be. Although aware that there is something which “seemed to keep [him] away from the truth of things” (17), Marlow is simply grateful that “the inner truth is hidden – luckily, luckily” (36). But if he never faces his heart of darkness as squarely as Kurtz faces his, Kurtz’s experience nevertheless has a noticeable and long-lasting effect on him. Marlow’s entire outlook on life changes dramatically because he has seen in Kurtz something most people will never see, and he has “peeped over the edge” (69), even if he has not fallen over. By telling – and reliving – Kurtz’s story, Marlow appears able to experience the changes Kurtz goes through but only vicariously, without having to cross the ultimate boundaries that Kurtz had to sunder.

But paradoxically, what Marlow learns about himself, comfortably ensconced in his role as narrator within the wider narrative of Conrad’s novel, is therefore as important as Kurtz’s transformation. The transformation that he witnesses in another individual, whether it be termed spiritual or psychological, enables him to grow as a person, without plunging into the insanity to which Kurtz condemns himself. After having been illumined by Kurtz in this fashion, Marlow returns to Europe a changed man, and his attitude to human destiny will never be the same again. His journey is successful because he accomplishes his mission, namely to retrieve Kurtz from the jungle and to return to Europe with him, but it is also a spiritual one of self-discovery; in addition, the journey is a

fruitful one because he comes to terms with aspects of his own personality that he would otherwise never have grasped. Not surprisingly, once Kurtz is removed from the jungle onto the boat which is intended to bring him back to civilisation, he dies. It is when Kurtz dies that Marlow realizes just how much Kurtz not only belonged to the jungle, but that he had become an inherent part of it because of his discovery of his capacity for evil. As for Marlow, he also understands how he himself did not belong to that jungle at all.

In contrast with Conrad's concerns with Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, MacLennan's major preoccupations with Martell in *The Watch That Ends the Night* are life, love, death, and spirituality. The three main characters are George Stewart, the narrator, Catherine Carey, the female protagonist, and Jerome Martell himself, the unlikely, almost supra-human hero. The relationship between the three characters is at the centre of the novel, and it is Jerome Martell who is nothing less than the driving force around whom the other characters, including George and Catherine, gravitate. Like Kurtz, Martell is an unpredictable yet immensely revealing character who overwhelms by his stature. MacLennan draws Martell physically in this way through the eyes of George:

[...] Jerome Martell [...] ugly-handsome with muscular cheeks, a nose flattened by an old break, hair cropped short because it defied a brush, a bulldog jaw, nostrils ardent like those of a horse, mouth

strongly wide and sensual, but the eyes young, hungry and vulnerable, quick to shame as a boy's, charming with children and the weak, quarrelsome with the strong (12).

If it is true that the eyes are the windows of the soul, then Martell's soul as revealed by his eyes appears to be both 'hungry' and 'vulnerable'. In fact, there are a number of other adjectives which describe Martell, and among them are the terms reckless, impulsive, intense, and passionate. In *The Watch that Ends the Night*, MacLennan has created a character who is larger-than-life, solidly and unmistakably human, and wholly acceptable as real to both the characters in the novel and to MacLennan's readers as well. Stewart realises Martell's special qualities from the very beginning of their friendship when he says of Martell that he "seemed [...] more like a force of nature than a man" (150). As a result, Martell comes across to readers and to Stewart almost like a mythical figure; as opposed to being a man, he seems to be *all* men. Cameron writes: "In Jerome, consequently, are combined all the qualities associated with the man of action. He is at once MacLennan's doctor father and all fathers - powerful, larger than life, courageous, intelligent, primitive" (284). George Woodcock's description of Martell in *Hugh MacLennan* (1969) expresses this same opinion: "In *The Watch That Ends the Night*, the wanderer, the wise old doctor, the primitive giant are finally united in that super-Odysseus, Jerome Martell" (59-60). As such, Martell's innate and unwavering strength of character in the novel is in direct contrast with his friend George's vulnerability. As opposed to

Martell, George is cautious, wise and faithful, and his “rock and reason for being” (101) is Catherine, his wife who suffers from a rheumatic heart, the same woman whom Martell had himself loved years earlier and left. Keith explains: “Jerome and George are traditional opposites, the former apparently representing the heroic, the active, the adventurous, with the latter personifying the non-heroic, the contemplative, the domestic” (32).

Although Stewart, the narrator, is a key figure in the novel, Martell as his counterpart in Catherine’s life surpasses him in sheer depth and complexity, in a manner parallel to that in which Kurtz surpasses Marlow. Indeed, whenever Martell is present, Stewart cannot help but feel set aside and ignored, for Martell has a “singular capacity to set a room on fire” (146), a capacity which George lacks. Not surprisingly, it is only once Martell has gone to Spain and is later presumed dead that George can finally assert himself and marry Catherine, the woman whom he has loved since childhood, the same woman who first married Martell and gave birth to their daughter, Sally. But in spite of Stewart’s momentary determination, it is Martell who determines the course of events in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, for his miraculous return from the dead after twelve years is what precipitates the events of the novel. His return provides the narrative context in which George appears as a passive observer, and Jerome with his “violent vitality” (33) is the active participant and the flawed hero.

In his role of a dominant and domineering character in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Martell is a symbolic character who, from the reader's first contact with him, represents life as an accomplished and competent doctor. His medical competence appears superhuman and Jack Christopher, his colleague, is aware that Martell manifests an almost spiritual capacity to heal: " ...he's got a mysterious power very few doctors possess. I can't describe it exactly [...] some medical men have more powers of healing than others. In that respect, Jerome's unique" (231). Indeed, according to Stewart, Martell is not a common man any more than he is a common doctor. In fact, he believes that "Jerome... could never belong to any particular group of human beings; he belonged to humanity itself" (157). But it is not only in other people's perceptions of him that Martell is great. Indeed, he also has a philosophy that characterizes him. He explains that: "A man must belong to something larger than himself. He must surrender to it" (270). Consequently, the picture that is created of Martell in the novel, both by himself and the other characters, is that he is a spiritual person who has the capacity to heal and to provide light, as opposed to death and darkness. Moreover, because of his numerous experiences, he is also a man who changes profoundly on a psychological level, and his dramatic return to Montreal is a result of the repercussions of the inner journey that these experiences provoked in him.

As a symbol created by the perception of the other characters in the novel and by his own philosophy, Martell is a force that moves and shapes people. He has the effect of an instrument of fate who returns to change the lives of George and Catherine, and subsequently, his own daughter, Sally. At the same time, Stewart is very aware of the potentially destructive powers of fate and truth in Martell: "Must one remember or is it better to forget? [...] Must one remember or can one forget?" (5) His declaration rings as Marlow's belief that "the inner truth is hidden – luckily, luckily" (36) because, like Marlow, Stewart does not want to face who he is, and nor does he have the strength to do so. Both Stewart and Marlow, at the beginning of the novels, are content to live relatively satisfying lives, without probing too deeply within themselves, and they might even be thought of as unconscious that there are people who probe within themselves and attain a profound depth of self-awareness. But as both novels progress, through their relationships with Kurtz and Martell respectively, Marlow and Stewart change dramatically in significant ways. Without Kurtz and Martell in their lives, Marlowe and Stewart surely would have known themselves at a much less profound level of consciousness than that to which they are driven. In *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Marlow and Stewart represent ordinary men who want nothing more in life than to reach a level of satisfaction, one through adventure, the other through love, but who possess nevertheless a strong critical and rational sense. As such ordinary

men, with a critical sense, Marlowe discovers who he really is because of Kurtz, and because of Martell, Stewart learns how to accept who he really is.

In Marlow's and Stewart's respective backgrounds, however, it can be argued that Kurtz is a much darker character than Martell is. Admittedly, although Martell is certainly not a flawless hero, he does not become inherently evil or destructive the way Kurtz becomes. According to MacLennan, Martell is not a destroyer or potential killer in the fashion that Conrad draws Kurtz. He explains this in a letter to John Gray: "If the public can't feel any sympathy or pity for Martell, all I can say is that they refuse to look at their own souls. He is, in some ways, a great man. The same force which gives life also destroys it, and then rebuilds it" (Cameron 291). In this respect, Martell is different from Kurtz because the latter is, for many, a destroyer. Kurtz is corrupted by his experiences in the jungle, and from them he learns how to corrupt others.

As Kurtz's story unfolds, we learn that he originally embarked for the jungle in the pursuit of ivory, and not because he was intent on discovering his true primitive nature and learning how to destroy others with it. However, he is quickly seduced by the savagery of the jungle and stripped of his inhibitions because of his inner journey. But this is not the unrelieved picture that is drawn of Martell, as he is not seduced by anything outside him in any significant fashion. The parallel that exists between Kurtz and

Martell rests not in savagery but in their life confrontations with their capacity for good and evil. Despite being “a remarkable man” (69) as Marlow describes him, Kurtz’s most primitive passions and desires overpower him, whereas in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, when Martell leaves Catherine to become an army doctor in Europe, he does so because the war in Spain has become his own personal crusade where he thinks he can do good. Because of this, Martell, like Kurtz, is at the mercy of the forces which drive him, but the force is passion rather than power. As Stewart points out, Martell “...had always been a man who lived passionately because that was the only way he had been able to function [...] passionate, rash and irrefragable strength [...] he had never learned or been taught how to adjust” (23). Martell acts out of good faith and a certain idealistic naïveté, but also out of a firm conviction that he has no choice but to leave, notwithstanding his wife and her sickness, his daughter and the family life that they share. In *Moral Vision in the Canadian Novel* (1979), Dooley argues that Martell departs for Spain “in spite of himself, in spite of his own apparent best interests, in spite of his wife and daughter, because he has to; he is called away on a personal Odyssey” (85).

Marked by life because of the compulsions that drive them, and perhaps even able to fulfil their lives because of these compulsions, Martell and Kurtz can sometimes be described not only by the passages in the novels in which each appears, but by passages in both novels at once.

Attributed to Martell, MacLennan's lines could easily be mistaken for a description of Kurtz: "His own impetuosity, his own generous, reckless way of throwing himself into a moment and responding to the emotions of others – all this sucked him out of any restraint he might otherwise have had" (248). In this description, Martell resembles Kurtz, who is the most poignant example of what happens to a man who loses his restraint and his "precarious grip on existence" (42). However, it must be pointed out that the fundamental difference between Kurtz and Martell is nevertheless always present in each of the novels in which they appear respectively. The difference resides in their ability to feel. While both men are passionate, Kurtz lets himself be ruled strictly by his passions but Martell ultimately succeeds in guiding his passions to his advantage. Necessarily then, Kurtz has a heart of darkness that blinds him while Martell has a heart of darkness which drives him at least sometimes to heal. Whereas Kurtz never appears to succour anyone and he destroys himself, Martell uses his powers to help, and not hurt, his patients, notably Catherine. Martell saves his former wife and helps Stewart accept her inevitable death, even if this death does not occur as such in MacLennan's pages. By contrast, Kurtz forgets his fiancée in England almost completely and begins a relationship with another woman in the jungle.

Yet, each in his respective context, Kurtz and Martell are characters who struggle painfully against inner and outer forces. Among the inner

forces with which they contend, they themselves and their true natures are their biggest challenges. Conrad and MacLennan condition the appearance of these challenges by demonstrating that the basic human struggle is essentially a person's need to follow the conventions established by society while at the same time fighting the innate desire to break free from them deliriously or destructively. Most people, like Marlow and Stewart, are content to abide by society's rules and never bother to discover who they really are. On the other hand, there are people in society such as Martell and Kurtz, who give free reign to the passionate and primitive feelings which rage within them, because their desire for complete liberation is too strong to be tempered. As a result, once they look within and face their true nature, they realise who they are rather than who they *thought* they were. It is only in their inner depths that Martell and Kurtz are capable of discovering and beginning a symbolic journey of self-discovery. This journey, while painful, is also highly illuminating to themselves and it takes a courageous person in MacLennan's and Conrad's narratives to undertake it successfully. In *The Watch that Ends the Night* and *Heart of Darkness*, Martell and Kurtz are brave men who embark on an illuminating journey of self-discovery.

In bringing to light the presence of existential parallels between Kurtz and Martell, as well as the sometimes similar character of their inner journeys, it is obvious that each in his respective novel is a symbolic figure

who nevertheless remains fully human. Their separate experiences, while different in context, both have profound effects on them and on those who come into contact with them and who at the same time highlight rather than obscure their humanity. Of those affected by this mixture of symbol and humanity, this is particularly true of Marlow and Stewart. However, why is it that Kurtz and Martell have so much depth and complexity? Why is it that their personalities and inner psychological makeup suggest that they are closer to the inner truth than only a handful of people will ever know? It takes a separate chapter to answer this question.

CHAPTER II:

KURTZ AND MARTELL: PSYCHOLOGY AND PERSONALITY

The most striking similarity between *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* is that their respective heroes leave on physical journeys, Kurtz, to the jungles of the Congo, and Martell, to fight the Civil War in Spain. Kurtz's journey leads him to the heart of the jungle and Martell's journey eventually leads him into China and Russia. However, the movements of both men are not solely geographical. In fact, their physical journeys contain significant parallels between their respective spiritual journeys from one state of consciousness to another. Since Kurtz and Martell's inner journeys are similar in nature, it follows that in terms of personality and psychology, they share a number of comparable character traits which permit them to undergo these journeys. The inner journey portrayed in both of the novels is commonly called a quest for self-knowledge and it is defined by its state of completeness, which means that the end result of the journey provides the individual with a feeling of wholeness. In works of fiction as in the real world, however, this journey is not experienced by the majority of individuals, but rather by unique individuals such as Kurtz and Martell. Conrad and MacLennan describe their characters as having the exact types of personalities which allow them to experience a spiritual awakening as it is indeed their personalities which

compel them to go beyond the beaten path of society and to discover themselves.

However, the journeys undertaken by the protagonists in the novels differ decidedly in their final outcome. For Kurtz, his path towards self-knowledge is marred by the more primitive side of his personality which completely overwhelms him, leaving no room for logic and healthy spiritual growth. Once faced with his true nature, Kurtz, Conrad writes, is simply unable to “keep [hold] on the redeeming facts of life” (22). Quite contrary to Marlow, who is able to cope with the forced introspection that the journey in the jungle causes, Kurtz, under the very same conditions, prefers to plunge into the depths of his dark soul in which he becomes completely deluded. Martell, on the other hand, undergoes an enlightening inner journey and he uses his wisdom and strength to help, in a life-changing manner, those around him. Martell is able to exploit fully the consequences of his inner journey and the final result is not inimical, but rather quite beneficial, for himself as well as for Stewart and Catherine. But even if the journeys differ, Kurtz and Martell are certainly comparable characters with similar personalities.

A first reason for this similarity is that in each novel in which they appear, Kurtz and Martell are depicted as men who are unwilling to submit to social constraints. Due to their strong personalities, they both opt for a

distinct role in the world which few individuals choose – or want – to adopt. It is therefore apparent that although the excesses of their inborn desires to follow their own paths cause them pain and suffering, especially in Kurtz's case, they remain, at all times, characters who are believable and human. Consequently, their unpredictability and unconformity in the said contexts in which they develop are qualities that make them worthy of critical attention and also admiration rather than disapproval. It is in this light that Graver explains Kurtz's appeal: "Kurtz resembles a familiar type in the literature of the past two hundred years – the presumptive outlaw who gains a degree of admiration by crossing the boundaries of conventional morality and exploring the possibilities of living on the other side" (85). In other words, despite Kurtz's corruption and downfall, he is different from most people, especially when contrasted with a man such as Marlow, in the manner in which Conrad draws him exceptionally well. Similarly, in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, it is also easy for MacLennan's readers to admire and respect a man like Martell who is an adventurous and turbulent individual who strives, at all times, to do what he believes must be done. Martell's desire to discover who he is and his place in the world is compelling and magnificently rendered by MacLennan. Martell, like Kurtz, is a man of great proportions who, according to Stewart, "could never belong to any particular group of human beings; he belonged to humanity itself" (157), a sentiment that is also expressed by Marlow, who feels that Kurtz "won't be forgotten. Whatever he was, he was not common" (50). Both

Marlow and Stewart are characters overshadowed in their respective novels and they are therefore humbled before the men they meet, yet they describe them in the same terms.

In addition to the characteristics of the social misfit that Kurtz and Martell share, one of their significant similarities is their ability to talk convincingly. Kurtz and Martell both master fully the art of oral communication, and as a result of this ability, they are able to charm and convince others, which explains, in part, why they are in positions of authority. Their public speaking ability is important in that it demonstrates the influence that they exert over their entourage. In *Heart of Darkness*, it is Marlow who explains the power of Kurtz's speech:

The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out preeminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words – the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of fight, or the deceitful flow of an impenetrable darkness (48).

Marlow is not the only character who is struck by Kurtz's unforgettable ability to talk. For instance, at the very end of *Heart of Darkness*, a man claiming to be Kurtz's cousin tells him: "[...] how that man could talk! He electrified large meetings. He had faith [...] he could get himself to believe

anything - anything. He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party" (72).

Similarly, in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, as in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, one of Stewart's most poignant memories of Martell is when the latter, often involuntarily, took center stage thereby becoming "the center of rabid discussions in apartments" (12). Martell is not a timid man, and in a scene with Clifford, an English journalist who "had been in the middle of an explanation when Jerome had entered and broken it up" (143), becomes highly annoyed with Martell's presence. In fact, Martell's ability to take over the conversation, completely oblivious to Clifford's disapproval and frustration, highlights the ease and comfort that he instills into a group of people as the center of attention. In fact, he is so convincing a speaker that he persuades Catherine, who had been told that it would be almost impossible to have a child due to her rheumatic heart, to conceive an infant with him. If it had not been for Martell, it seems unlikely that Catherine would have risked her health, and her life, to have a child.

Moreover, yet another similarity between Kurtz and Martell is their seductive appeal since it is clear that both Kurtz and Martell are highly attractive to members of the opposite sex. Kurtz, who has his Intended in Brussels, also seems to have an intimate relationship with a native woman in the jungle. As for Martell, he also has a number of admirers, including

Norah Blackwell, a nurse, who “stared at Jerome as though he were a god” (146). Her attraction to Martell seems to be understandable since MacLennan describes him as “the most attractive male animal in Montreal” (121). Indeed, in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, MacLennan points out that Martell is a very good-looking man with a “prize-fighter’s body” (159) who has “always attracted women and [...] never seemed able to protect himself against them” (96). This physical description of him corresponds with his character trait that he has never been able to guard himself from outer and inner forces and has always been particularly vulnerable to exterior influences. Even his wife Catherine is aware that other women are interested in her husband. When she meets Norah Blackwell, it is clear that she knows they are having an affair, yet she does not say anything: “The two women greeted each other formally, but behind Catherine’s easy courtesy was an alertness which made Norah uncomfortable” (143). Yet, Catherine refuses to jeopardize her marriage with her husband by confronting him with his infidelity. Moreover, she even seems able to accept and justify her husband’s relationship with Norah. In fact, she tells Stewart: “I don’t like her, but how can I blame her. She’s not responsible. How can I blame Jerome? He can’t help this thing inside of himself. How can I blame myself?” (241).

In *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz’s physical appearance, although not described in detail, does seem to suggest that he too is particularly

attractive to women. For instance, upon his arrival, Marlow is greeted by “a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman” (60), described by Conrad as “savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent” (61). It is Kurtz who has won her. Moreover, the image of “the barbarous and superb woman” who “stretched tragically her bare arms” (67-8) after Kurtz’s departure is highly evocative. This description of her extraordinary anguish suggests that Kurtz had a certain seductive appeal with women. Even Kurtz’s Intended, his fiancée, who remained in England throughout the duration of his absence, is distraught over his death and is convinced that he remained faithful to her as she did to him. Marlow tells his readers that a year after Kurtz’s death, she was still in mourning “as though she would remember and mourn [Kurtz] forever” (74). The power of Kurtz’s appeal as a man and as a lover seems therefore to be a part of his personality.

Consequently, in the roles they have in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Kurtz and Martell are, compared to the other characters, memorable men who are able to talk convincingly and who are charming and seductive. Even more importantly, they are also depicted as authority figures. As the most efficient ivory trader in the jungles of the Congo, Kurtz is a leader and an example for the other traders because he “[s]ends in as much ivory as all the other [traders] put together” (18). Martell, for his part, is “a very good doctor [and] a very brave man” (21), highly respected by the upper middle-class citizens of Montreal. Because of

his double role as an accomplished doctor, and later as a member of the Communist party, in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, he flourishes in his role as leader and guide. However, though Kurtz and Martell are in positions of strength and are both feared and respected by those who come to know them, their power is not merely advantageous to them. Undoubtedly, it can also be a menace to them. As Norman Tallent explains in his book *Psychological Perspectives on the Person* (1967), individuals in positions of authority are in danger of letting their positions convince them that they are better and more untouchable than they actually are. In a significant manner, this is what happens to Kurtz and Martell. Consequently, as a direct result of what they deem to be their singular importance, they are easily tempted to control or regulate those in their entourage, or, as Tallent writes, “[p]eople who are in authority positions seek recognition, even admiration, for their powers. This places them in a position of dominance over others” (196).

Clearly, in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Kurtz and Martell want to be recognized and admired. Unfortunately though, with this power comes the danger of being corrupted and used, which is what befalls Kurtz and Martell respectively. Indeed, once Kurtz establishes himself in the jungle and assumes a position of ivory trader and spiritual leader, he succumbs to the dark side of primitiveness and corruption which, in turn, causes him to be destroyed by his lack of

restraint. Martell, comparatively, is used as a member and potential leader of the Communist party in Montreal. In fact, his blinding idealism prevents him from seeing that he is being exploited for the cause, and he also loses the respect of his colleagues and his wife, Catherine. Clearly, Martell's naïvete harms him both personally and professionally. Ultimately, as a result of his political affiliation, he loses his position at the hospital. Nevertheless, he is convinced that the war in Europe is his personal crusade and claims that his wife Catherine is unable to understand his need to leave and fight. Martell feels compelled to do his duty and tells Stewart, "it's got into my bones" (162). But although his self-sacrificing nature is indeed commendable to a certain extent, he is also blind to what his actions will lead him to do. He attempts to defend himself against Stewart's accusations that he is being irresponsible, but, as Stewart describes him, Martell is full of contradictions: he "was so boyish yet [...] so competent, [...] so rugged and yet so vulnerable, so intelligent in some things and yet so naive in others" (163).

Besides the parallels that exist between the personalities, the motives and actions of both Kurtz and Martell, there are also similarities in their respective worlds outside them. Indeed, Kurtz and Martell give up what they have in search of something else, perhaps even unaware of the consequences of their actions. For instance, Kurtz leaves his fiancée and his life in England to go to the Congo where he becomes an ivory trader, while

Martell leaves his wife and daughter to fight overseas because, in his opinion, “[n]o civilization has a chance unless it has civilized men in it who can and will fight when they have to” (270). According to Keith, Martell is a man depicted as “abandoning domesticity for a second journey of adventure and suffering” (32), and also as a figure who “is running away from himself, finding lofty reasons to indulge a selfish heroism” (82-3). Although it would be mistaken to claim that like Martell, Kurtz is “running away from himself”, since nothing is known of what he had before he left for the Congo, it would be accurate to claim that he too left something behind, in search of adventure and exploration in the jungle. Marlow does learn later on that Kurtz went to the jungle because of “impatience of comparative poverty” (75). Presumably, Kurtz left what he had because he was either unhappy or unsatisfied with his life and was in search of a challenge. It seems likely then that, in some ways, Kurtz and Martell are the victims of the personalities which incite them to explore both their inner selves and their outer worlds.

How much, and in what way, Kurtz and Martell are victims of their respective personalities and motivated by them at the same time, can perhaps be rendered at least in part to us by Carl Jung, the psychologist who worked with Sigmund Freud before branching out into his own theories of archetypes. In fact, both novels can be interpreted from a similar psychological standpoint, which is yet another basis of comparison between

them. For Watts, "Sigmund Freud's emphasis on the divided self, on the striving, lustful, anarchic id seeking gratification despite the countervailing pressure of the ego or super-ego, had been anticipated in the depiction of Kurtz's ferocious fulfillments in the Congo" (50). In his novel, Conrad explores ethical questions of good and bad and his two protagonists, Kurtz and Marlow, each represent different aspects of human personality. In terms of Freudian psychology, Marlow is the 'ego' which represents reason and rationality whereas Kurtz represents the 'id', which is associated with man's primitive urges and desires, as explained by Watts. Similarly, in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Martell is the 'id' and Stewart is the 'ego'. In addition to Freud, Jung might be said to play an even greater role in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*. In fact, Robertson Davies in a review of the novel describes Catherine as "a true heroine, and in Jungian terms the soul of the hero" (Keith 20). Davies' reference to Jung is not surprising as he himself was a devoted follower of Jungian psychology. Elsewhere, the influence of psychology in MacLennan's novel is confirmed by Alec Lucas who writes that MacLennan "is always aware of the dark force that lies below the surface in man, inditing the scenes in which his characters play out their lives as if Freud, Jung and Calvin were whispering to him as he wrote" (26). More specifically, Paul Goetsch mentions how Jung's process of individuation is central to the novel. He writes "it is convenient to interpret the novel [...] as analogous to Jung's analytic technique - as an individuation process, in which the contents of the

unconscious are assimilated with the conscious to effect a harmonization of the psyche” (Woodcock, *Odysseus Ever Returning*, 110).

In terms of his psychology, Jung was particularly interested in the manifestations of the adult personality in the human psyche. In his work on personality types, he was concerned with unique individuals who attempt to uncover their true nature. Jung based much of his work on a theory he called the process of individuation, which is the psychological process by which an individual attempts to discover his inner self, his actual personality and how it affects him. In his book on Jung’s writings, *The Essential Jung* (1984), Anthony Storr explains the connection between personality and Jung’s process of individuation:

Jung affirmed that personality was manifested by ‘definiteness, wholeness and ripeness’ (CW 17, par. 288). He considered personality to be an achievement, not something given. Moreover, it was essentially an achievement of the second half of life. In the first half of life, a person is, and should be, concerned with emancipating himself from parents and with establishing himself in the world as spouse, parent and effective contributor. In the modern world, especially, a certain one-sidedness might be needed to fulfill these conventional demands; but, once a person had done so, then he could and should look inwards. Jung called this journey toward wholeness the ‘process of individuation’ and it is toward the study of this process that the thrust of his later work is directed (18-19).

What exactly is this process of individuation? It is, in many respects, simply an individual's ability to look within and uncover his true personality. Although at first glance this process seems to be within reach and commonly achieved, it is not. In fact, many individuals can go through life without ever really knowing themselves or being incited to do so. For example, before Martell's return from the dead, Stewart has never felt the need to discover himself. Instead, he has been content to live a quiet, comfortable life with Catherine. More specifically, Stewart has let his life revolve around her, therefore neglecting his own needs and desires. Because of her sickness, Stewart has had to concentrate on his wife more than on himself. When Martell resurfaces though, his return has a number of noticeable effects on him. He experiences different feelings and is unable to cope with Martell or with Catherine's approaching death. It is Martell who must help him, comfort him and lead him towards the truth about himself, thereby increasing his potential for growth as a human being.

The process of individuation, as Jung sees it, can be accomplished only when an individual decides – consciously or not – to embark on an inner quest to become whole. Although the process of individuation is crucial in order to know oneself truly, Jung noted that only a select few ever have the strength to fulfill the demands required of this type of psychological transformation. According to Storr, Jung believed that “the process of individuation is a path followed by the few rather than by the

many" (226). Due to his lifelong work on the meaning of self-knowledge and those who attempt a journey within themselves, Jung became fascinated by highly individuated people. As Storr explains, Jung's fascination and professional concern with those who have discovered themselves were profound:

Jung of course accepted that man is a social animal, and realized that the majority of mankind are content to live in accordance with the collective, social conventions of their time. But the people who really interested him were not those who were thus adapted, but the exceptional individuals whose own nature compelled them to reject conventional ways and discover their own path. [...] The development of individuality, the discovery of what an individual really thinks and feels and believes, as opposed to the collective thoughts, feelings and beliefs imposed on him by society becomes a quest of vital significance (191).

In light of Storr's description of Jung's view of the human being, Kurtz and Martell must thus be considered as "exceptional individuals" who, as a result of their inner journeys, discover their individuality and effect their own individuation. Consequently, the other main male characters in the novels contrast with this. In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is known to his fellow seaman for "his propensity to spin yarns" (5) as well as a person of "inclusive experiences" (7), but he is not a character who experiences any significant change in terms of personality or perspective as a result of his own inner journey. Instead, what Marlow learns is directly related to his

brief yet significant contact with Kurtz, occasioned by being the ultimate witness to Kurtz's descent into his self. As for Stewart, in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, he feels that he is simply a "creature of habit" (16), and is described rather plainly by his friend Adam Blore as "middle class to the bone [...] a nice guy" who simply wants "a nice little wife and a nice little apartment and a nice little job" (132). Hence, though they deserve great sympathy from the reader, Marlow and Stewart do not correspond to Jung's definition of an exceptional individual. Instead, Conrad and MacLennan appear to have depicted Marlow and Stewart at least partly as foils to Kurtz and Martell, and as individuals who are eager to conform and willing to become part of the common patchwork that makes up humanity. In *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Marlow and Stewart do not undergo the process of individuation, but instead see, rather than provoke, its manifestations as a result of their relationships with Kurtz and Martell. Stewart, for example, is enlightened by Martell's return after a twelve-year absence and his life does change profoundly, but it is Martell who is the catalyst for these changes.

While it is tempting to label Marlow and Stewart as bland and unremarkable individuals, it would be wrong to condemn them for their innate desire to be like everyone else. In fact, most individuals resemble more closely Marlow and Stewart than their unconventional counterparts. Individuals such as Marlow and Stewart conform merely because the lure of

conformity is very strong, especially since they do not consider themselves worthy of special attention. Since they do not want to draw any unnecessary attention to themselves, they never attempt to act differently from the mass. On the contrary, they are quite content to be and act as does everyone else. Tallent explains their conduct by referring to their desire for security since “[c]onformity promises the security that stems from being part of a powerful structure” (60). The structure Tallent alludes to here is evidently society, and as “ordinary” individuals, it follows that Marlow and Stewart are eager to feel secure. This desire for security is in direct contrast with how Kurtz and Martell are characterized. The latter are confident men, filled with idealism and passion; in fact, it is their passion which perhaps defines them most. As MacLennan explains very importantly of Martell and perhaps indirectly also Conrad of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, “[p]assion has a way of spilling over into all aspects of the human mind and feelings. It is the most dangerous thing in the world whether it focuses itself on love, religion, reform, politics or art. Without it the world would die of dry rot. But though it creates it also destroys” (224). What distinguishes Kurtz and Martell from Marlow and Stewart therefore is that they are passionate male heroes who have the type of personality required to embark on a spiritual quest for self-knowledge. Comparatively, Marlow and Stewart do not have that strength or capacity, and they would have remained completely ignorant of the necessity of such a journey if they had never come into contact with men such as Kurtz and Martell. Thus, it is the meeting of Marlow with Kurtz and

of Stewart with Martell that *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* explore in depth.

Martell becomes the unforgettable person that he is in *The Watch that Ends the Night* due to a number of factors. If childhood experiences and events are what contribute largely to shaping an individual, in Martell's case, his childhood was exceptional as he had a particularly unconventional one. As a young child, he lived in a lumber camp with his mother who was the cook. More significantly, she was the only woman in the camp and he, the only child. Moreover, Martell never knew who his father was, and his mother was a difficult woman, cold and mean towards the men for whom she cooked. According to Martell, his mother "hated men as a group and despised them, too" (176). She had sexual relationships with some of the men and treated them dismissively with hatred and contempt, humiliating them and refusing to offer them any sympathy or compassion even when she was having sexual relations with them. When he is ten years old, one of his mother's lovers, the Engineer in the camp, murders her out of rage and, "with the instinct of an animal" (182), Martell flees from the camp fearing for his life. This scene is for many one of the most memorable scenes in Canadian fiction; Woodcock describes it as "powerfully thrilling" (*Hugh MacLennan* 102) and Keith indicates that "Jerome's escape down the river as a small boy [...] is generally regarded as a high point in the novel and as one of the most memorable scenes in all of MacLennan's fiction" (71).

Perhaps more than any other single scene in the novel, it epitomises Jerome's courage and strength. Although he does survive the trying circumstances of his mother's murder, and his escape is successful, his attitude and outlook are undeniably affected by these events.

At the end of his escape, Martell leaves the river and wanders for shelter into a Moncton railway station and is picked up and harboured by Gilles Martell, a clergyman and his wife, Jo, who adopt him and raise him as their son. However, his childhood experiences at the lumber camp and his suspense-filled flight from the camp remain horrifyingly unique and disturbing. Indeed, the scene of that escape symbolizes the psychological adversity that Martell, then only a child, had to face, and ultimately in adulthood has to overcome. Stewart, on the other hand, who had a more traditional Montreal English-Canadian bourgeois upbringing, never experienced such horrifying psychological stress. Simply put, Stewart was a relatively happy child, raised by two inept but well-meaning parents, and he becomes a fairly conventional adult, with modest needs and desires. In fact, the novel opens with Stewart's musings; he tells readers that he wants nothing more than to be happy with the woman he loves and have "peace and quiet" (29). Moreover, he is painfully aware of the feelings of insecurity and inadequacy which gnaw at him relentlessly. As both Stewart's and Martell's backgrounds are considered, therefore, the two men are inherently different not only because of their past experiences, but also because of

their personalities and psychological makeup. Moreover, Stewart is very conscious of this difference: "...I was certainly not a man people notice in a crowd. I was no Jerome Martell, whom everyone had noticed wherever he was" (15). In terms of personality, as John Moss points out in his work *Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel*, these two characters are poles apart:

George is sensitively aware, but passive to the point of sometimes appearing insipid, particularly in comparison with Jerome Martell, with whom he sustains a symbiotic rapport. Martell is of heroic proportions – almost mythic in drive and achievement yet all too human in his capacity to hurt and to suffer. He is an urge, a force, searching desperately for an adequate vocation (96).

It is indeed engrossing to notice in MacLennan's narrative how different Stewart and Martell really are. The two men are motivated by very opposing impulses stemming from distinct levels of human consciousness. While Martell makes certain things happen, he also prevents them from occurring, and herein lies the very essence that differentiates the two characters in terms of personality. Stewart describes Martell's life in great detail and even though the novel is ostensibly Stewart's story, Martell is always present. Martell is a man of mythic proportions and by contrast, Stewart, "the person who wished he was a hero" (66), never becomes one in the literal sense of the word, even though he finds his hero when he meets Martell. In fact, when Stewart first comes face to face with Martell, after having heard a great deal about him, he is amazed by the power of Martell's

personality and is immediately reduced to admitting: "I felt his personality strike me with an almost physical impact" (138). Even more importantly, both men are driven by opposing desires. For instance, Stewart is deeply troubled by his love for Catherine and is "resentful of the bondage in which [his] love for her had held [him]" (136). Martell's bondage, on the contrary, is not caused by a woman or an unwanted situation. Instead, his bondage is his own frailty: "The weakest excuse a man can give is that he can't help himself. But what else can I say but that? For sometimes I can't" (243). As an immeasurably strong individual, Martell must struggle against himself and his "despair at his own helplessness against inner forces" (243) while Stewart, on the other hand, has only to fight against his distorted love for his wife.

A similar pattern of strength and weakness can be perceived in Kurtz and Marlow. In *The Art of Joseph Conrad, A Critical Symposium* (1960), Stallman refers to this pattern in some detail: "The causes of Kurtz's tragedy are within – in his towering ambition, and his rootless idealism" (156). Because of the power of these inner forces, the realization that he is able to discover himself through his inner journey comes too late for Kurtz. Marlow, when he prevents Kurtz from escaping, realises this: "I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly within itself" (66). Significantly, Marlow in his own self is bound by restraint, faith and fear, and the act of seeing another

human being so completely liberated and primitive astounds him profoundly.

For Marlow, work is a form of restraint; work, or the repetitive acts necessary in the completion of a task, is essentially a shield against introspection. As Marlow comes to believe that “the mind of man is capable of anything” (36), he also realizes that, in order to survive outside the borders of what is called civilisation, a man must “face truth with his own true stuff – with his own inborn strength” (36). In fact, Marlow is not weighed down by the moral implications of his journey into the jungle and his meeting with Kurtz, but rather, perhaps even perversely, he flourishes under these circumstances. Marlow displays high moral integrity and a general sense of responsibility and in his speech there is an undercurrent of morality. He insists that “little things make all the great difference. When they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness” (49). In addition, he seems to take for granted that all men are born with the type of inborn strength that he himself has and he claims that all individuals have the capacity to avoid inner assault. Yet, in spite of these reflections that can be made concerning Marlow, Conrad unmistakably proves that he lacks the ultimate strength of character that a complete morally successful journey into the inner self requires. In *The Watch that Ends the Night* we see a similar variety of inner strength and yet a failure of ultimate moral resolve in Stewart. Stewart, like

Marlow, feels that a person is responsible for his acts, and he sees Martell as a man who “was not wise; [...] not shrewd; [...] not even clever; he had never learned nor been taught how to adjust” (23). But in the final analysis of his estimate of Martell, Stewart is unable to understand or appreciate his drive.

Unfortunately, unlike MacLennan in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Conrad gives no clues as to the nature of Kurtz’s childhood which, it may be supposed, most certainly played a crucial role in the development of his personality and of the adult self that Conrad describes in *Heart of Darkness*. But even though nothing is known of Kurtz’s childhood, his path towards self-destruction through long appropriated inner forces is clearly depicted in the novel. The first reference to Kurtz is made by Marlow, who with an understatement decides to tell his fellow seaman on board the *Nellie* about “the poor chap” (7) whom he encountered, namely Kurtz. The second reference to Kurtz is made by the Company’s chief accountant, who describes him as “a very remarkable person” (18) who “will go far, very far” (19) as he is “of the greatest importance to the Company” (22). Indeed, the accountant is impressed by Kurtz because he is remarkably efficient and returns an important amount of ivory to the colonial headquarters. In addition, before even meeting the man who will change his life, Marlow is informed by the company manager that Kurtz is nothing less than “an exceptional man” (22), and finally, the brickmaker of the Central Station

qualifies Kurtz with adulatory awe as “a universal genius” (27). As a result of this series of intriguing comments by different characters in the novel, Marlow becomes more and more curious about Kurtz whom he has yet to meet. Quite simply, he becomes fascinated by what he has heard and “rather excited at the prospect of meeting Kurtz” (33). He is “curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with morals of some sort, would climb to the top after all...” (30), and is intrigued by Kurtz’s reputation, in the same way that Stewart is in awe of Martell and somewhat spellbound by his reputation. As Graver explains in *Conrad’s Short Fiction*, “Marlow is ready to swear eternal loyalty to a man he has never seen” (83).

How much Kurtz’s inner journey influences the psychological view that is held of him by other characters in the novel is remarkable. In *Heart of Darkness*, the terms “placable” and “inscrutable” are used over and over again by Marlow when recounting his tale. These terms suggest that there is a psychological barrier which surrounds the man whom he is to bring out of the jungle which most people are unable to penetrate. This barrier surrounds the psychological space in which Kurtz exists and that is why nobody can get to him. Marlow sees that Kurtz has stepped outside the boundaries of morality, but that it is not because he is cut loose from any sense of common morality that he is an evil man. What makes him evil is the fact that he lets himself be seduced by all the possibilities that the jungle offers him and he does not seem to resent the jungle’s influences in

any way. Marlow, on the other hand, because he comes back to tell Kurtz's story is shown to retain his European sense of morality. The world's memory of Kurtz becomes Marlow's narrative simply because Marlow is able to distance himself from what he sees. As a result, his limitations and strengths are what save him. Marlow learns all too quickly that civilisation is simply the process of attaching a function to something; what was once meaningful for Kurtz becomes meaningless. Critic Edward J. Gordon states that Marlow discovers that "what is called civilisation is a veneer that cracks under pressure" (219). He learns how primitive civilized man really is, and how dark and potentially dangerous his true nature is. Ultimately though, Marlow is able to emerge from this triumphant because he recognizes the nature of Kurtz's fall.

In light of all the adventures that befall them in both novels, Kurtz and Martell are, at the beginning, blind to their sense of individuality. They are ostensibly very preoccupied by their daily lives and even though they are in positions of power at the beginning of the narratives, they certainly do not know themselves and what they are capable of doing. As a result, both men embark on a journey of self-discovery which will show them very different things about themselves. Kurtz's psychological weakness, his lack of restraint, causes him to act immorally; and his innate evil incites him to commit "unspeakable rites" (50) and use "unsound methods" (62). It is only towards the end of his life, and thus in the depths of his misery, that he

realizes what he has become, and this realization, succinctly expressed in his famous words "The horror, the horror!" (69), evoke his sense of helplessness at what he has seen, but especially at what he has become. These words are highly accurate in that they illustrate that Kurtz never knew who he was and only somehow realizes too late what he had become. Kurtz is brought to the depths of his ruin and his feelings of complete despair surface only moments before his death. The contrast of Kurtz's development compared with Martell's is of course overwhelming.

Martell's behavior at the end of the novel is psychologically as well as spiritually healthy, and he becomes a selfless and thoughtful individual. He grows infused with an inner light which incites him to reach out and try to better the lives of those around him, or at least make their lives bearable. He seeks this by sharing wisely his newfound knowledge of himself and his understanding of his relation in the world and his faith in God. Martell can therefore be considered as pursuing his journey and attempting to understand the human condition in all its dimensions. Essentially, he teaches Stewart how to stop being afraid of death and of dying and he helps Stewart and Catherine accept and understand their mortality. Martell can achieve this because his experiences during the war, especially as a concentration camp survivor, have taught him an immutable meaning to life. Since he learns that his suffering makes sense to him in the grand scheme of things, he is then able to make life have meaning for his friends.

Martell, who has probed more deeply into his inner self than Stewart ever has, allows his consciousness of himself to surface. His acceptance of his real nature replaces his primary concern for recognition and admiration from others, and he thereby embarks on a path towards serenity. Yet, this serenity can only be achieved by confronting Catherine and Stewart. Martell realizes the existence of good in the world and becomes a better, more enlightened human being by accepting the part of goodness that is within him, but Kurtz becomes fully aware of the existence of evil in the world and its potential in him, which he explores.

CHAPTER III: THE INNER JOURNEY

FROM INNOCENCE TO EXPERIENCE

It is now necessary to expand upon the idea of Kurtz's and Martell's inner journey in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*. What is it, why is it important to the development of the individual's potential for growth and maturity, and how do Conrad and MacLennan portray it? In simple terms, the inner journey in both novels is a psychological process through which an individual gains an extraordinary amount of insight into his own life and, concurrently, the human condition. It is, of course, closely related to Jung's process of individuation dealt with in Chapter II. Commonly referred to as a spiritual journey of self-discovery or self-knowledge, the inner journey and the effects it has on individuals are the subject of numerous works of fiction. One example of this is found in Margaret Atwood's classic novel *Surfacing*, where the unnamed female narrator learns about who she is as a result of her inner journey. Her psychological transformation, although successful, is described as a rather dramatic one since it occurs while she is alone in the woods of Northern Quebec searching for her father who is presumed dead. The narrator eventually loses her grip on rationality and becomes animal-like in her behavior, unable to speak to humans yet able to communicate with the gods whom she believes surround her. At the very end of the novel, she emerges

from her journey triumphant and is ready to return to society as a healed, and whole, individual.

However, not all inner journeys are necessarily as traumatic; in fact, some are experienced by the individual quite peacefully. For instance, in Robertson Davies' *Fifth Business*, another important Canadian novel, the protagonist, Dunstan Ramsay, encounters a number of individuals who guide him towards the truth about himself and infuse him with the wisdom necessary to become an individuated person. It is only towards the end of his life, at the age of seventy-two, that he realizes his own importance and the roles that he has played – willingly or not – in other people's lives. Assuredly, Ramsay's inner journey is long and entirely enlightening, not to mention quite beneficial to his long-term happiness.

In *Surfacing* and *Fifth Business*, Margaret Atwood and Robertson Davies therefore portray different yet equally important and generally similar types of inner journeys. As a matter of fact, the nature of the inner journey is in a sense less important than the reasons for which it is undertaken as well as the consequences it has on the individual's life and how he chooses to live it. In other words, the inner journey is an illuminating discovery, yet what the individual does afterwards with his new-found knowledge of himself is of capital importance. But why is it that only certain individuals are able to plunge to the depths of their souls?

What do they need to know in order to escape the mundane details which preoccupy them daily, in the hope that another, more profound dimension of their personalities will be uncovered? What prompts individuals like Kurtz and Martell to go on such a voyage of self-discovery and at what point in their lives does it befall them? Storr explains:

According to Jung, every individual reaches a point in his or her life where it is necessary to turn away from the outside world and consider the inner world of the psyche or mind; in this consideration, the individual has to learn to recognize the function of the archetypes in his or her own life; afterwards, if the process is properly carried out, he or she will be better balanced psychologically. For this process, Jung used the metaphor of the journey or quest to the underworld and back for treasure (38).

In fact, the inner journey is likely to happen after a particularly traumatic event which normally occurs in middle-age or even later. Indeed, the young are spared the need to journey to their “underworld” simply because they are unprepared and ill-equipped to do so. However, it is important to note that most of the time, an individual does not make a conscious decision to know himself completely; rather, a person is usually forced by circumstance to “turn away from the outside world and consider the inner world”. In Kurtz’s case, it is clear that he never chooses to embark on an inner journey, but that it is directly provoked by the influence of the environment on his personality and what it subsequently unleashes within him. Critic Morton D. Zabel believes that Kurtz is but one of Conrad’s

characters who embarks on a voyage of self-discovery which is not of his own volition. Zabel writes: “[t]he conditions that mark the plight of a Conrad character who is caught in the grip of circumstances that enforce self-discovery and its cognate, the discovery of reality or truth, is consistent throughout his books” (Dean 73). This is why Zabel argues that “Conrad’s sense of moral isolation and recognition in which the individual meets his first full test of character is repeatedly emphasized in his novels” (72, Dean). In fact, it is quite clear that Kurtz does not succeed his “first full test of character” because he never realises his true nature and his capacity for evil until the very last moments of his life. If his unforgettable words “The horror! The horror!” (69) are considered a form of self-realisation, then he never reaches the “treasure”, to use Storr’s term, which was within him.

As for Martell in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, his inner journey does not occur as a result of his physical environment, but is instead due to his life experiences, especially those involving the First and Second World Wars. Indeed, MacLennan describes Martell as a man whose process of individuation is the logical result of what he has gone through in his life. Like Conrad’s heroes, many of MacLennan’s heroes also embark on spiritual journeys in an attempt to become whole and individuated. Robin Mathews explains that MacLennan in *The Watch that Ends the Night* “is haunted by the individual human transience, and [...] sees human salvation in the almost private realization of the individual” (75). This explains why “Jerome,

Catherine, and George are studies of the life force, the spirit, and the mind within the process of man's maturing" (Lucas 22). Consequently, MacLennan is concerned with the development of the individual and his capacity for growth and Martell's journey – as well as the effects it has on Stewart – are therefore MacLennan's primary concern in the novel.

The focal points of *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* are undoubtedly Kurtz and Martell and their processes of individuation, or their journey towards self-knowledge. As mentioned in Chapter II, Jung believed that only "exceptional individuals" such as Kurtz and Martell are able to undergo the process of individuation. Storr explains Jung's philosophy as follows:

Jung believed that only exceptional individuals reached the peaks of individual development. Individuation means parting company with the crowd; and this at first accentuates loneliness, and may seem alarming. Most human beings are content to remain safely with the majority, conforming to the conventions and beliefs shared by members of their family, church or political party. But exceptional individuals are impelled by their inner nature to seek their own path [...](20).

Yet, although those who undergo an inner journey are certainly commendable individuals whose progress as humans is significantly more profound than most, it is important to clarify certain points. First of all,

though it is true that a considerable number of individuals are ignorant of the necessity of an inner journey in order to become complete, self-actualized individuals, others are quite conscious of the dangers of looking within. In fact, some people are fully aware that there is something within which needs to be addressed, but they prefer to overlook or even consciously ignore it. Although there are a great number of factors which prevent individuals from experiencing a spiritual transformation, it is quite disconcerting to admit that perhaps some people choose to neglect consciously a crucial facet of their personalities. Evidently, for many the strain of uncovering their true nature via a psychological process is simply too much to handle. This explains why most people choose not to go down the path that Kurtz and Martell do; presumably, these people know that they are not strong enough to survive the consequences that such introspection demands. For others, the inner voice which whispers to them is a menacing one; this then causes them to assume that the path to enlightenment is simply too painful and too dangerous to undertake. Jung writes:

The fear that most people naturally have of the inner voice is not so childish as might be supposed. The contents that rise up and confront a limited consciousness are far from harmless. [...] What the inner voice whispers to us is generally something negative if not actually evil. This must be so, first of all because we are usually not as conscious of our virtues as of our vices, and then because we suffer less from the good than from the bad in us. The inner voice [...] makes

us conscious of the evil from which the whole community is suffering, whether it be the nation or the whole human race. But it presents this evil in an individual form, so that one might at first suppose it to be only an individual characteristic. The inner voice brings the evil before us in a very tempting and convincing way in order to make us succumb (208).

In light of the aforementioned quotation, Kurtz's inner voice is a dangerous one since evil is brought to him "in a very tempting and convincing way". As for Martell, his behavior throughout *The Watch that Ends the Night* is not psychologically healthy, yet it is obvious that his inner voice does not tempt or convince him to commit evil acts. He does, however, admit to Stewart in the still early stages of the novel, "I don't know who I am" (169), which means that his true personality is for the time unknown to him; fortunately, at the end of his process of individuation, Martell will have learned who he really is. In *Heart of Darkness*, in contrast, Kurtz embarks on a self-destructive path and the realization of his true nature comes too late.

Kurtz's and Martell's inner journeys therefore differ for a number of reasons, including the fact that their inner voices do not whisper the same things to them. Martell remains strong, and overcomes the evil that is within him, which Kurtz is simply unable to do. It can therefore be surmised that in light of their differences in personalities, as well as what they are propelled to do by their inner voice, Kurtz and Martell are not the same type

of individuals even though they both undergo a generically similar inner journey. In fact, Kurtz is much more of a destroyer than anything else, while Martell is more of a healer, because Kurtz becomes a part of the savagery which surrounds him while Martell refuses to succumb to violence and self-destruction. However, it can be assumed that Kurtz was not perversely affected by his surroundings at the beginning of his symbolic journey into the jungle. For instance, the report that he was asked to write by "The International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" is a pertinent example of the dedication that he demonstrated in the task he was sent to accomplish. In fact, when Marlow comes across the report, he describes it as "eloquent" (49), a "beautiful piece of writing" (50), ostensibly composed before "his nerves went wrong, [which] caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites" (49-50). The fact that Kurtz is compelled to end the report with the haunting postscriptum, "Exterminate all the brutes!" (50), suggests that he reaches a level of perversion and degradation which completely erases any thoughts of rationality or responsibility that he might have formerly had. Kurtz is clearly no longer the "emissary of pity, and science, and progress" (25) who Marlow had been told he was. Instead, Kurtz "has stepped outside the boundaries of moderation, having crossed the dividing line between humanity and the pursuit of the dream of strange knowledge" (Tucker 34).

Yet, Kurtz is not the only important character who crosses “the boundaries of moderation”. A famous example is found in William Golding’s novel *Lord of the Flies*, where a group of young English boys, stranded on a desert island, quickly reduce themselves to a primitive, animal-like state. The novel, which won Golding the Nobel Prize for literature, is a chilling account of the boys’ savagery and it depicts, in the same way *Heart of Darkness* does, what exactly happens to man once he is removed from society and its numerous constraints. The jungle, according to Marlow, is “pitiless to human weakness” (55) and, with regards to *Lord of the Flies*, this definition can be extended to include any geographical area outside the boundaries of what we refer to as “civilisation”. In the opening pages of *Lord of the Flies*, the boys are tempted to kill a pig simply for fun, but still know instinctively that it is wrong to do so “because of the enormity of the knife descending into the flesh and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood” (34). In this scene, they have still managed to retain their sense of right and wrong. As the story progresses though, they begin to fear one another. One of the boys, Jack, who is more rational than the others, admits, “we’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages” (47). Jack, like Marlow, is aware that in a primitive environment, it is easy to get “carried away by a sudden thick excitement” (126) when driven by an overwhelming desire to “get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh” (126). As with happens to Kurtz in the jungle, the boys, alone on an island, quickly

cast off the rules that govern society: “The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away. Once there was this [...]; and now [...]” (99).

At the end of Golding’s novel, after two boys have been killed, the rest of the group sets fire to the island. Luckily, help arrives; if not, they would have perished through their own volition. The officer who saves them is stunned by what he sees; he exclaims unbelievably, “I should have thought that a pack of British boys [...] would have been able to put up a better show than that” (222). The same can obviously be said of Kurtz who, Conrad is careful to point out, was a child of “civilization” since “[a]ll Europe contributed to [his] making” (49). Interestingly, Ralph, one of the boys, weeps once he is saved “for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart” (223). In this respect, both *Lord of the Flies* and *Heart of Darkness* describe a journey from innocence to experience. The message in *Lord of the Flies* is similar to the one expressed in *Heart of Darkness*: if man’s primitive instincts are not controlled by what society dictates, then man will not only succumb to temptation, but will destroy himself in the process.

Despite the fact that what happens to Kurtz is not the only literary depiction of what befalls a man who returns to a primitive state, his behavior is still highly puzzling. Should he be blamed because he was an evil man, pitied because he was a weak man who lacked restraint, or commended for having the strength to bring his journey to its logical end?

The answer to this question depends on how Kurtz's personality is interpreted. Indeed, Kurtz is charismatic, brilliant yet entirely fascinating and, according to Frederick R. Karl, in him "we sense the allure of great power" (28). For certain critics such as Graver, Kurtz is nothing less than a hero because, "in a world filled with rudimentary and greedy egoists, Kurtz – despite his charlatanism – at least has the imagination to conceive of greatness and the single-mindedness to carry his dream to its inevitable, terrifying conclusion" (85). For others, though, the causes of Kurtz's downfall lay within him, and he alone has the power to overcome them in order to avoid being guided by his primitive urges; the blame, in this case, can only be placed on him rather than on his environment. William S. Sakakian offers an interesting psychological interpretation in *Psychology of Personality: Readings in Theory* (1974) which can be quite accurately attributed to Kurtz:

It is often tragic to see how blatantly a man bungles his own life and the lives of others yet remains totally incapable of seeing how much the whole tragedy originates in himself, and how he continually feeds it and keeps going. Not *consciously*, of course – for consciously he is engaged in bewailing and cursing a faithless world that recedes further and further into the distance. Rather, it is an unconscious factor which spins the illusions that veil his world. And what is being spun is a cocoon, which in the end will completely envelop him (58).

In Conrad's narrative, Kurtz does indeed "bemoan and curse a faithless world" for he is enveloped within his own "cocoon": "You should have heard

him say [...] My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my' -. Everything belonged to him" (48). It is highly apparent that at this point, on the verge of death, he still feels that he is untouchable. Undoubtedly, Kurtz believes in himself, in his capacities as a god hero-worshipped by his followers who adore him. His inner journey has brought him to a place so dark and immoral that he can no longer see beyond himself and his own desires. On the boat, he tells Marlow: "I had immense plans [...]. I was on the threshold of great things " (65-66). What matters to him the most now is his grandiose ambition, and to where he is willing to be led.

In fact, once Kurtz is in the jungle, he rejects conventional society and the norms that he has presumably hitherto respected. He sheds his inhibitions and embraces the depravity which with he is faced. His acts, such as placing skulls on poles, are, according to our standards, immoral and barbarous and Marlow is compelled to admit that Kurtz "had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land" (49). *Heart of Darkness* shows how man's inherent weaknesses are exposed in the jungle, and how these same weaknesses often occasion man's complete and utter degeneration because he can no longer impose limits on himself and his desires. As Marlow realises, "Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts" (58), which is what causes his downfall. In fact, Nic Panagopoulos claims that Kurtz is a symbol of man's weakness in the jungle: "*Heart of Darkness* implies that the potential to become like Kurtz is present in all 'civilized'

men for his complete abandon to every form of savagery and lust has clearly come about as a result of his total estrangement from everything that constitutes civilized society" (83).

In *The Watch that Ends the Night*, the effect of the loss of the restraining force of civilization on Martell is far different from its effect on Kurtz. Martell becomes a whole personality because of the way in which he experiences his inner journey. He undergoes a far-reaching experience of self-development and inner exploration. In fact, he is so grateful to be alive that he is almost dismissive of the horrors that he has endured; for example, he tells Stewart calmly "[w]hat happened to me happened to millions of others" (10). Compared to Kurtz, Martell is now able to recognise the good within and around him because he knows what evil is but has rejected it. Essentially, Martell had to know evil and his penchant for it and finally to experience it, in order to understand his own personality. Consequently, Martell becomes a much more virtuous person than his counterpart in *Heart of Darkness* because, having come face to face with his own darkness, he is able to abstain from it. Martell does not lack restraint in the way Kurtz does, even if MacLennan describes him as a self-destructive, dangerously idealistic person. According to Lazenby, a minor character in the novel, Martell is "a fanatic [...] a lone wolf out of line with everyone" (97). But in light of his later restraint, we may ask, what

happened earlier to Martell before the novel opens, why is he bent on self-destruction, and what is the force that drives him?

When Martell goes to fight in the First World War, the experience profoundly and negatively affects him, which explains why afterwards he is “for ever restless, reacting violently on the spur of a moment, unbelieving but searching for a belief” (Goetsch 109). Two particular incidents in the war have long lasting effects on his beliefs. The first occurs when he tries to get himself killed in battle because he learned that he had contracted gonorrhoea following a liaison with a prostitute. At this point, he was so deeply ashamed, he “felt the brand of Cain was visible on [his] forehead” (167). Rather than getting himself killed as a means of self-inflicted punishment, he distinguishes himself instead and earns a medal for his fearlessness and bravery. The second incident occurs when he goes into shock after killing a man with a bayonet and spends ten hours in a shellhole with his body. Thereafter, in the hospital, the guilt-ridden Martell meets a young Jewish boy who tells him that it was actually the capitalistic system that killed the boy, and not he, for he was just a puppet, and his master was the political system. Subsequently, Martell’s faith in God is not only shaken, but destroyed because the real world is so unlike everything that he had been taught to believe in by his religious foster parents. Martell tells Stewart, “I believed in God till I met Aronson” (167). It is at this point in his life that he decides to become a doctor, presumably in an attempt to replace his faith in

God by faith in the healing powers of medicine. His war experiences are also surely the source of his almost desperate need to “belong to something larger than himself” (270). Years later, however, Martell is compelled to return to the front lines because he feels that it is his duty as a citizen. According to Hermann Boeschstein, “Jerome bids farewell to bourgeois security and respectability and places his great skill as a surgeon at the service of the Spanish Loyalists” (Goetsch 50). Martell is horrified by fascism and describes it as “the organisation of every murderous impulse in the human being” (244). Because of this horror, although Spain is “a crusade” (239) for him, it also becomes “an escape” (261). MacLulich explains:

...fighting in the First World War destroys Jerome’s religious faith for the war totally contradicts the rosy picture of the world his foster-parents have taught him to believe in. In his quest for an alternate faith, Jerome becomes a doctor and tries to serve humanity. His search for meaning and goodness takes him first into marriage with Catherine and subsequently into service on the republican side in the Spanish Civil War (89).

Martell returns from Europe after an absence of twelve years with one specific goal, namely to see his former wife, Catherine. Unbeknownst to him, however, Catherine is now Stewart’s wife, having married in 1941, the year they had been informed that Martell had been tortured to death by the Nazis. Yet, Martell is not a vindictive or a cruel man who is determined to destroy a marriage; rather, he is simply human, and as such, despite the

lost years, he is still in love with his former wife and wants to see her and his daughter. He even says that “the thing that kept him alive” (327) throughout twelve years was “the thought of Catherine and Sally” (327). Instead of being a “tired, beaten man” (31), returning “home like a lost dog to his basket” (31), which is what George wrongly assumes he is, Martell returns a better and stronger individual. He is a healer and a life-force as opposed to Kurtz who can be referred to as a destroyer-killer. He has confronted death and emerged triumphant. As Woodcock writes in *Hugh MacLennan*, “Jerome goes boldly through the agony like a legendary hero [...] and emerges transfigured because he has suffered it all, has accepted it all, and has been purged of the guilt which the First War laid upon him” (107). Moreover, Woodcock adds that Martell is “luminescent with the ‘cool, sweet light’ of spiritual victory [as] he no longer belongs to the world he revisits” (107).

The most significant example of Martell’s power as a spiritual healer, which is a direct result of his inner journey, occurs at the end of the novel when he intervenes to save Catherine’s life. Martell’s majestic return takes place at the hospital when he sees death in Catherine and tells her, reassuringly, “In time it will come to you, Kate. Soon it will come to you. Believe me, I know that” (330). Martell listens to her heart and, quite mysteriously, feels her presence and “no words were necessary, for he knew what she knew” (331). Comparatively, Stewart, with his limited knowledge of

life and death, does not understand that in order to survive, Catherine must be allowed to live her own death. Stewart feels painfully alienated from Catherine and resents both her and her illness because he does not want to be left alone. However, once he is with Martell who is now spiritually blessed, he is filled with a feeling of serenity which replaces his helplessness and even his rage. According to MacLulich, “[i]t is Jerome who pulls George back from the brink of mental disintegration” (90). Martell has been spiritually enlightened by his inner journey and where it has taken him. The passage which follows describes Martell’s powers as a healer :

Jerome’s face lifted, he saw me, he rose, I stepped forward, I looked into his eyes. Suddenly I went numb and strange. I had never in my life seen an expression like his. His face seemed white, very lined but the lines finely drawn, the eyes very large. His whole face seemed transparent. And in his eyes was an expression new and uncanny. They seemed to have seen everything, known everything, suffered everything. But what came out of them into me was light, not darkness. A cool, sweet light came out of them into me then. It entered me, and the murderous feeling went out, and I was not afraid anymore (361).

Consequently, Martell, through whose face transpires nothing “but an absolute serenity, a total sureness” (362), uses his powers to influence Stewart and to help him allow Catherine to live her own death. Apparently, and in direct contrast with what happens to Kurtz, Martell is “transformed by some sort of mystical illumination” (Keith 79). Unlike most mortals,

Martell no longer fears death, but is able to accept it as a fact of life. Martell's inner journey infuses him with wisdom and compassion. Presumably, his faith in God has not only been restored, but strengthened. For the critic Dooley, Martell is "living testimonial to human strength and potentiality. He can help others because he himself has the courage to be. He is a witness to the power of the human spirit to endure the virtually unendurable, and to gain strength from trials which would be expected to crush it" (90).

Despite what Kurtz and Martell are, do or say, they are men deserving of the greatest respect because they go to the limits of their desires, and at least one of the two comes out of this transformation triumphant. It is important to remember that the inner journey is a spiritual journey and the individual who undertakes it is faced with two choices: either he uses the opportunity to become a better, more complete individual, or he faces the evil within himself and fails to rise to the challenge of overcoming the darkness emanating from that evil. In *The Canadian Novel; Modern Times*, Cameron explains: "It is man's prerogative, however, within any particular arena, to choose the direction his energies take: every man has the opportunity to resolve within himself the great conflict between his destructive urges and his creative powers" (124-5). In *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Martell's strength is tested and he rises to the challenge for he is able to recognise his own inclinations and desires. Moreover, he is able to

identify his unique gifts in order to understand his behavior and his motivations. Although all individuals struggle with the opposing forces which drive them, some individuals struggle helplessly against forces that they simply cannot control. In Kurtz's case, his corruption is a result of his own weak personality, and in Martell's case, his success is a result of his inner strength and his strong desire to heal himself and others. Certainly, both heroes' struggles are extraordinary and unforgettable, but Martell is the better, more worthy individual because of his contribution to humanity, in large measure because he uses his inner journey to become a more charitable man, while Kurtz uses it as an excuse to do things he would seemingly never have done in society. In his desire to go to his absolute limits in terms of personal satisfaction, Kurtz crosses the boundaries of generally accepted morality, although in this respect, both Kurtz and Martell lose their innocence to the detriment of experience.

Essentially then, both novels deal with the theme of self-discovery through knowledge, and this knowledge is a result of the process of individuation or the inner journey. The manifestations that the inner journey has on those who experience it at first hand, namely Kurtz and Martell, are important, yet equally significant are its effects on those who witness the transformation of the two heroes. Indeed, Marlow and Stewart are the unwilling participants in the events narrated in both novels, but they are evidently the inheritors and sharers of the experience at second

hand. Consequently, in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* Marlow and Stewart change because of Kurtz and Martell's inner journeys, and this is what will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV:

THE EFFECTS OF THE INNER JOURNEY ON STEWART AND MARLOW

In *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Conrad and MacLennan portray Marlow and Stewart as men who are not complete individuals. In order to fill their spiritual void, they must discover who they really are and what men are capable of doing under certain trying circumstances. In other words, both Marlow and Stewart must undergo a process of individuation which will enable them to discover themselves fully and wholly. In order to do this, they need to come into contact with men like Kurtz and Martell whose own experiences can help them in a positive and life-affirming way. Indeed, it seems rather unlikely that Stewart and Martell would have undergone an inner journey under their own volition. Unlike their counterparts, Marlow and Stewart are ordinary men who possess a strong critical and rational sense; accordingly, they do not have the type of personality required to embark on the process of individuation that both Kurtz and Martell undergo. As a result, they would have been unable to come to the conclusion on their own about what it means to be a fallible human being because they, like most people, do not have the capacity to turn away from pressing everyday issues and look within. In fact, in both novels, Stewart and Marlow are described as individuals who seem more concerned with their physical than their spiritual welfare. Consequently, it

seems probable that they would never have completed the process of individuation latent in them had they not met men like Kurtz and Martell who experience it at first hand and who are able to show them the path to spiritual growth.

Compared to Kurtz and Martell therefore, Stewart and Marlow are very different for they have never been troubled, to the extent that their lives are never wholly re-cast by questions of mortality, spirituality or self-knowledge. Moreover, they have never been forced to abstain from the temptation to be immoral. They have led relatively sheltered lives, and consequently, they have never been forced to encounter absolute forms of evil within themselves. On the other hand, their integrity is insipid and unworthy of praise precisely because it has never been tested. Yet at the same time, their lack of self-knowledge offers them a form of protection, if not self-delusion. Indeed, Marlow and Stewart cannot discover themselves fully because their protective barrier prevents them from knowing their inner selves. Although their untested strength offers them an extraordinary amount of protection and security against dark forces, the same dark forces which wreak havoc on Kurtz and Martell, it also prevents them from uncovering their true selves. Lillian Feder, in an insightful essay titled "Marlow's Descent into Hell", claims that "the voyage into the heart of darkness is, on one level, a symbolic representation of an exploration of the hidden self and therefore of man's capacity for evil" (Stallman 162). It is

therefore apparent that Marlow and Stewart explore “the hidden self” only once they reach a crisis point which essentially forces them to look at the inner truth as a direct result of what happens to each one of them in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*. Undeniably then, both Marlow and Stewart must go beyond what they know to be true and must leave themselves open to temptation. For Harold R. Collins, there is a distinct difference between those who are vulnerable to temptation and those who are not. He explains:

A fool or a saint, Marlow tells us, would be safe, thus deprived of social sanctions. Kurtz, however, is vulnerable. He is impulsive, self-centered, anxious for power, fame, and glory, full of humanitarian illusions, blessed or cursed with a remarkable gift for eloquence. Conrad would have us believe that a terrible enemy lies in ambush for men like Kurtz, an enemy that puts them to an inexorable test, for which no adequate preparation is possible (Dean 151).

Indeed, in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, the “terrible enemy” lurking in the jungle is the nature of Kurtz’s identity as a human being: his dark, unexplored self. Although Marlow also has an enemy within him whose presence he eventually meets once he accepts his mission to journey into the jungles of the Congo, he is blissfully unaware of the profound changes which lie in store for him. Indeed, Marlow does not grasp the deeper issues that are at stake because he accepts his mission with a flippant attitude bordering on nonchalance and restlessness. In fact, at the beginning of

Heart of Darkness, Conrad describes Marlow as a wanderer, an adventurer in search of a new challenge more to make himself look good than to confront absolute evil, “a natural egoist who desired only to prove himself in an arduous situation” (Graver 83). Paradoxically, Marlow’s lack of avarice and greed, combined with his commendable amount of restraint, are certainly what save him from succumbing to the dark side that Conrad suggests every human possesses.

But, as has been alluded to in Chapter II, Marlow is immediately intrigued by Kurtz’s reputation and therefore wants to meet this man of mythic proportions. Tucker explains that “Kurtz fascinates Marlow because Kurtz is different from other men” (34). Something within Marlow has been piqued – his curiosity, obviously, but also his desire to meet someone so fundamentally different from himself. Moreover, from the onset of his journey, it takes months for him finally to reach Kurtz and this suggests that the journey, both physical and spiritual, is a long and challenging one. According to Graver, “Marlow is going up a river where the inner truth is hidden, toward his nemesis at the inner station, where his innate strength will be finally tested” (79). For Marlow then, the inner journey is entirely enriching, for once he reaches his goal, namely retrieving Kurtz, he has witnessed vicariously the depths of human despair and depravation in another person. Consequently, the physical journey into the Congo becomes a spiritual one of self-discovery in spite of Marlow himself. Guerard

explains: "Marlow reiterates often enough that he is recounting a spiritual voyage of self-discovery. He remarks casually but crucially that he did not know himself before setting out" (38).

When Marlow tells the story to his shipmates on board the *Nellie*, he relives it too. For his captivated listeners, the story he tells is a fascinating one as it is the account of his own individual growth as a direct result of his meeting with Kurtz. Indeed, what happens to Marlow in the jungle can certainly be qualified as eye-opening and life-changing. If *Heart of Darkness* is essentially a novel about the need to look within yourself, then it is apparent that the consequences of not looking within, or at least not looking in correctly, are illustrated in the person of Kurtz. Marlow, comparatively, is an example of how looking within is a sign of human growth and responsibility. More specifically, in *Heart of Darkness* Kurtz is the epitome of self-deception and self-deceit as he does not ask himself any moral questions while Marlow, who has a critical sense, is able to prevent himself from becoming deluded by his primitive surroundings. Although Marlow cannot turn back, he can control himself, and though "Marlow is drawn to him" (Tucker 34), he is also fully aware that Kurtz's destruction could have been prevented had he exercised more self-control.

Throughout his journey and especially afterwards, Marlow absorbs significantly more than the essential; he fully realises the extent to which he

has learned something fundamental. One of the most remarkable changes in his attitude is how he does not blame or condemn Kurtz for what happens to him in the jungle. On the contrary, Marlow is able to accept and understand that Kurtz was a weak man who was helpless in his surroundings. Marlow has gained insight into human nature and now has enough self-knowledge to realize that what happened to Kurtz could have happened to him as well. As a result, Kurtz's final words will haunt him forever and serve as a reminder of what could have happened to him had he been a different man:

Kurtz's last cry takes us to the meaning of the whole African venture for Marlow, the illumination he receives. [...] It is for Marlow a terrible illumination, for in Kurtz Marlow discovers not simply one man become evil, but a universal possibility. Deprived of the insulation of society, the protecting surface, faced with the terrible challenge, we discover that we are free; the very fact is terrifying, for in that choice lies the unpredictable, even the Kurtzian (Dean 164).

In light of the aforementioned, Marlow's final assessment of Kurtz is an overwhelmingly positive one, and in what we might consider as the general understanding of human experience, and this is to his credit. In fact, the majority of individuals who had seen what Marlow did would have been quick to assume that Kurtz was an insane, barbaric animal. However, Marlow tells his listeners on board the *Nellie* that Kurtz had lost his reason despite the fact that "his intelligence was perfectly clear" (66). In addition,

Marlow is able to go above and beyond blaming Kurtz with superficial judgements of morality. He realises that he has been permitted to know what most people will never have the chance to understand, much less know. Although Marlow knows more about man and what he is capable of doing, this knowledge also makes him feel superior to the individuals he sees who go about their daily lives, completely oblivious to the truth, to the evil tendencies which are within them. He “cannot stand the smug faces of the people walking down the streets, unaware of the challenge and the danger. [...] They do not know that they are and therefore they are not. Marlow scorns them because in his quest for Kurtz he has discovered the dreadful burden of human freedom” (Dean 166).

Unlike the Russian who is the clown figure in Conrad’s novel and who admires Kurtz as a godlike figure, Marlow is able to see Kurtz for who he really is: a weak man. He realises that Kurtz is a slave to his passions. He admits, “his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad. I had – for my sins, I suppose – to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself” (66). Because of his capacity to remain objective, Marlowe is profoundly and irremediably affected by his short experience with Kurtz and is compelled to think about his life in larger terms. “Destiny. My destiny! Droll thing life is – that arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself – that comes too late – a crop of

inextinguishable regrets" (70). Moreover, while Marlow abhors what happens to Kurtz, he admires him for he learns that he too, who only "peeped over the edge" (70), could have succumbed to temptation under different circumstances:

I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. Since I had peeped over the edge myself, I understand better the meaning of his stare, that could not see the flame of the candle, but was wide enough to embrace the whole universe, piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness. He had summed up – he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man (70).

Marlow does not want to go on the path to self-destruction, and it is obvious that he never will for, as Billy points out, he "survives what Kurtz had failed to endure in the heart of the wilderness" (75). For Marlow then, Kurtz's inner journey is one that he will never have to take because he has seen the depths to which a man can plunge without having to do anything himself. He knows that the jungle had exerted too powerful a hold on the man he has been sent to save, which is why he is able to return to Europe a better man. However, it is clear that Marlow also realises – perhaps for the first time – that not all men are created with the same capacity to resist temptation. Indeed, when Marlow returns to the city, to the civilized world he had left behind, he is struck by the shallowness and the smugness of the people who walk down the street, oblivious to the truth, the truth he has

encountered in Kurtz, and, concurrently, within himself. Billy explains that “Marlow takes offense at the ‘irritating pretense’ of perfect security reflected in the faces of the insignificant citizens” (69). Marlow admits that the people around him are “insignificant” simply because they are unaware of what they are capable of doing: “They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating presence, because I felt sure they could not possibly know the things I knew” (71).

Marlow’s thoughts are clearly not those of a simple man who has misinterpreted his experiences in the jungle. Instead, his thoughts are those of a man who has faced the truth about himself, about others and about humanity. As Marlow has been privy to man’s heart of darkness, he is no longer content to skim simply over the surface of things. Instead, he feels the need to probe deeply within himself. Marlow now seeks wholeness which is, according to Jung, the goal of every adult, yet, unfortunately, one which few attain and Marlow is one of the few. It is apparent that he successfully completes his process of individuation as a result of his meeting with Kurtz. Because of his individual growth, Marlow is much more conscious of man’s limitations, as well as of man’s ability to hurt and sometimes destroy himself. Consequently, although *Heart of Darkness* describes how Kurtz becomes corrupted in the jungles of the Congo, it is also about how Marlow grows as a person because of what he witnesses. Essentially then, Kurtz’s downfall makes Marlow a better, more complete individual. For Gordon,

Marlow progresses “from a civilised world to a barbaric one, from illusion to reality, from ignorance of himself to self-knowledge” (217). He adds that both men “learn something they had not known before. They discover what it means to be a man and what happens if primitive instincts are not controlled by restraint and compassion” (Gordon 217).

Although Conrad does not describe in a detailed fashion Marlow’s life after Kurtz, the final scene of the novel does strongly suggest the extent to which Marlow has changed as a direct result of his inner journey. In fact, Marlow’s visit to Kurtz’s fiancée is a key scene in *Heart of Darkness* as it underscores his new found knowledge of himself. For instance, when the woman enters the room dressed in black, Marlow is impressed by her faithfulness to Kurtz; in addition, her “look of awful desolation” (74) deeply affects him. When she pleads with him to know the nature of Kurtz’s last words, Marlow admits to himself that he “could not tell her. It would have been too dark – too dark altogether...” (77). In his desire to protect the woman from the terrible truth surrounding Kurtz’s demise, Marlow lies to her and instead tells her that the last words Kurtz spoke were her name.

Marlow’s omission of the truth to Kurtz’s fiancée is the most pertinent example of his faith in himself and in his integrity as a person; after witnessing Kurtz’s fall, he is able and willing to live with the appalling truth as well as his own lie. He does not need to unburden himself on Kurtz’s

fiancée as he is able to see beyond his own concerns and take into consideration another person's feelings. Likewise, Marlow has reached a profound level of self-awareness and self-knowledge, which he uses to make Kurtz's fiancée's life more bearable without the man she obviously loved. Apparently, she does not need to know the truth; what she needs is the reassurance only Marlow can provide. As a result, Marlow fulfils his duty as a messenger conveying the "fatal yet reassuring lie" (Billy 53).

A number of critics have argued about the significance of Marlow's lie to the woman. Is Conrad suggesting that Marlow lies to her because she is a woman and as such, simply cannot handle the appalling truth? Or rather, is Conrad illustrating the extent to which Marlow is a changed man, if one assumes that at any other point in his life he would simply have told her the truth regardless of her subsequent suffering? When analysing the nature and the reasons for Marlow's lie, it is easy to dismiss the importance of Marlow's behaviour towards the woman and claim that he was simply being a gentleman. It is obvious that while he does want to protect this innocent woman, it is certainly not due to her female helplessness, but rather her human helplessness. Since *Heart of Darkness* is "the record of a descent into the center of things, into the darkness at the core of existence" (Tucker 29), then Marlow wants to spare her this knowledge as he knows she cannot handle it. Marlow is fully aware that she would be even more distraught if she knew that Kurtz's last words were actually "The horror! The horror!" (69)

rather than her name. In addition, he knows that she needs to continue to believe in Kurtz as a great man. For Billy, “Marlow finally accepts the burden of insight as a permanent part of his psyche. Marlow must live with the memory of Kurtz’s horror for the rest of his life” (70-1). According to Dean, in *Heart of Darkness* “Conrad is depicting Marlow’s discovery of evil and the responsibilities to himself and to others which this knowledge places upon him” (162). Necessarily then, Marlow accepts the responsibility with which he has been entrusted.

If one assumes that Marlow lied because he is a good man who is now aware of the depths to which a weak person can fall, his lie is also an indication of how much he has learned in the jungle. Whereas he was once oblivious to the cruelties of life and human weaknesses, he now knows the limitations of being human. For Lillian Feder, Marlow “discovers the potential hell in the heart of every man” (Stallman 169), which explains why he becomes a better, more enlightened individual after his contact with Kurtz. Thale explains that although Marlow is allowed to re-enter society, “he learns wisdom at a price” (169). Indeed, Marlow understands that he too has evil tendencies to control. For Thale, “Marlow learns about his own capacity for evil and his capacity to resist it. He realises that without involvement, there is no restraint, and he makes his choice of ‘nightmares’” (169).

As for Stewart in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, MacLennan portrays him as a good man who is neither remarkable nor especially noteworthy in any way. Since he is an ordinary man with uncommon desires and aspirations, it is easy for most readers to identify with him. Unlike his heroic counterpart Martell, Stewart is an Everyman figure, one to which MacLennan refers to elsewhere in the novel, precisely because he represents common man. Dooley explains that Stewart is “representative man, twentieth-century man, in his lack of confidence in himself, his world, and his destiny” (81). Although initially Stewart does not actively participate in his growth as an individual, he learns from Martell and becomes a more complete individual in the same way that Marlow is educated about life by what happens to Kurtz in the Congo. Similarly, like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, Martell in *The Watch that Ends the Night* plays a pivotal role in the novel as he alone is able to change Stewart’s attitude towards life and death. He is therefore the driving force in Stewart’s life since it is he who changes the course of his life. Nevertheless, although Martell is the only truly dominant character in the novel, both literally and figuratively, his inner journey does have profound repercussions on Stewart and subsequently provokes within him his own journey.

When Martell leaves Catherine to join the troops in Spain, Stewart steps in and offers her security, companionship, and of course, love. Though their marriage is based on friendship rather than passion, they claim to be

happy together. However, and very significantly, Stewart admits that he feels alienated from his wife because of her illness and its “odd effect of excluding [him], as though she had gone to some place to which [he] would eventually arrive and knew all about it, while [he] did not” (27). Unconsciously, Stewart blames and resents Catherine for being sick. As his happiness is dependent on hers, this places an enormous burden on her shoulders and also on their marriage. Moreover, despite his claim that the years have been “good years, rich years, wonderful years” (320), spiritually, Stewart is an empty man. He does not have any faith in religion which means he has no strength to draw upon to help him deal with his wife’s illness. He claims that “on account of Catherine [he] could not believe that if there is a God He is just” (6). According to Lucas, since Stewart’s “faith in man [is] undermined by the Depression, [he] tries to find security through withdrawal into a private world” (22). If Stewart is able to regain his faith in himself and in religion at the end of *The Watch that Ends the Night*, it is because Martell has more strength of character and more life experience. The latter is able to share with and infuse in Stewart what he knows to be true and he enables him to grow as a man, and teaches him to let Catherine “live her own death” (364). Granted, though Stewart does initially struggle, he quickly realises how beneficial Martell’s advice is and yields to his wisdom. Stewart, thus prepared, is ready to embark on his own journey towards self-knowledge.

As a teacher and radio commentator who looks forward to a drink at home in front of the fireplace every evening, Stewart is presented as an uncomplicated individual. In fact, Stewart is a man with simple desires which explains why he tells readers in the opening pages of *The Watch that Ends the Night* "That evening I was happy" (1). However, when he receives Martell's telephone call at the university where he teaches, he is "shocked and startled" (8). The opening pages of the novel are highly significant for Stewart's peaceful days are now threatened by Martell's telephone call which "represent[s] a voice from the past that is immediately recognized as a threat within the present" (Keith 50).

The voice, of course, is Martell's and his telephone call becomes the catalyst which causes Stewart to retreat back to his childhood, and, at the same time, within his unconscious self. Woodcock explains in *Odysseus Ever Returning* that Stewart suddenly "finds himself in the echoing tunnel that leads towards a past he had thought done with forever" (21). Stewart immediately tells Martell not to call Catherine in an attempt to protect her fragile health; he does not want him to "drain her vitality" (29). Clearly though, he also has selfish reasons to discourage Martell from seeing Catherine. Indeed, Stewart is fearful of the potentially disastrous consequences Martell's return could have on his marriage. Though he claims that Catherine's love for her former husband "had gone down like a wounded living thing to the floor of the sea [which] time had covered" (321),

he is also painfully aware that “Jerome was a part of her core, the great part of her life as a woman, and now he was alive and life is dangerous” (93). According to Woodcock, “after Martell’s return, George realizes how insecure, in the spiritual sense, his position really is; for there is one point after all in which past and present meet” (*Odysseus Ever Returning* 109).

When Stewart and Martell meet again at the hospital, Stewart assumes that Martell will bear the expression of someone destroyed by life. Instead, “[i]t is soon he who is the tired, beaten man, when the embolism produced by Jerome’s return drives Catherine back into the hospital” (Dooley 89). Stewart is a “tired, beaten man” because he must now deal with the seriousness of his beloved wife’s condition as well as with Martell, who is now wiser and more sure of himself than he ever was before. Consequently, Martell is more of a menace than ever and Stewart feels threatened by him. When Stewart enters the hospital room following Catherine’s embolism – for which he blames Martell – and sees Martell at her side, he “felt like murder with the blood pounding in [his] head” (359). He is filled with rage and suddenly realizes that he “hated them both” (360). Where does this intense hatred come from? Stewart admits: “But my maturity was gone and my subconscious had taken over. I was Everyman and every frightened boy and everything and everyone but myself” (339). He had thought he was strong, but the possibility of losing his wife – his greatest fear – sends him on a downward spiral characterised by

helplessness and despair. He begins to question himself, his marriage, his place in the world. He no longer trusts that everything will work out because he realises that he is alone, and is frightened at the thought that what he had always known to be true is, perhaps, devoid of meaning and significance at this point in his life:

Oh, pity every man who comes hard to the knowledge that underneath his bright, sure conscious he is not himself but Everyman. Fate, I thought. Who is equal to it? For to be equal to fate is to be equal to the knowledge that everything we have done, achieved, endured and been proud and ashamed of is nothing (341).

Undoubtedly, his fear and hatred come from the unacknowledged dark side of his personality which is “not simply evil [but] inferior, primitive, [...] childlike, powerful, vital, spontaneous” (Wood 60). In Jungian terms, this part of human nature is referred to as the shadow. Although Stewart is a kind, caring, civilized man, he is incomplete, and his incompleteness causes him pain and suffering. His unconscious thoughts have been suppressed for too long and as a result his shadow is threatening to overpower him completely. In *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction* (1992), author and critic Ursula Le Guin explains that the shadow is more than our dark thoughts; it is, in fact, all the thoughts we do not even want to admit we have in the first place. She claims that the shadow is “the dark brother of the conscious mind” (Wood 59). It is, moreover, “all the qualities and tendencies within us which have been

repressed, denied, or not used [...] The less you look at it [...] the stronger it grows, until it can become a menace, an intolerable load, a threat within the soul" (Wood 59).

Stewart, alone and frightened, is reeling from the shock of the unexpected, the unwanted, the unknown. He is lost, as lost as Kurtz and Marlow were in the jungles of the Congo and his soul is, to paraphrase Le Guin, intolerable and threatening. In order to conquer this test of strength, Stewart must learn to accept his dark feelings and inclinations which are buried within him; he must accept that his shadow is an integral part of his personality. Since he has ceased to believe in anyone or anything, Stewart naturally finds himself unable to draw upon his own innate strength. Unlike Martell who had always claimed that "A man must belong to something larger than himself" (270), Stewart is pained by his feelings of aloneness. He feels a threat within himself because he has never confronted the dark side of his personality, his shadow, and as such, his reaction is a strong and violent one. The following passage testifies to the type of man Stewart is before being blessed with self-knowledge :

Little did I know – though I believed I knew all about it – how little I actually knew of the enormous and terrible implications of absolute finality.

The shark in the ocean may be invisible, but he is there. So also is fear in the ocean of the subconscious.

A man standing on a rock may believe himself strong enough to stand there forever. But if an earthquake comes, where is he? *What* is he? (324)

Indeed, it is difficult for him to respond to emotions such as rage and fear because he has never allowed himself to acknowledge them in the first place. For Cameron, “George plumbs the depths of human despair and feels every lust and murderous impulse of which man is capable” (*The Canadian Novel* 122). Stewart has failed to look within, he has failed to ask himself the right questions, and he has failed to undergo a process of individuation. His “greedy, lustful, infantile subconscious” (343) rises up in him and he is completely astounded at his own insignificance:

Then a man discovers in dismay that what he believed to be his identity is no more than a tiny canoe at the mercy of an ocean. Shark-filled, plankton-filled, refractor of light, terrible and mysterious, for years this ocean has seemed to slumber beneath the tiny identity it received from this dark river.

Now the ocean rises and the things within it become visible. Little man, what now? The ocean rises, all frames disappear from around the pictures, there is no form, no sense, nothing but chaos in the darkness of the ocean storm. Little man, what now? (343)

As a result of the fear of losing his wife and the threat of Martell’s return, Stewart embarks on an inner journey that MacLennan describes in a very poetic and haunting manner. Once Stewart comes into contact with himself, he is finally (for it is never too late) able to look within and realise

that he needs to accept his shadow in order to be a serene and self-actualised individual. Although he struggles, he grows and begins his journey into his inner self, which will allow him to gain peace, understanding, and self-knowledge. More importantly, Stewart comes to terms with his Everyman status and this helps him accept the fact that “no one is equal to life, no one is equal to fate” (Dooley 89).

Indeed, Stewart’s struggle to accept that he is not equal to anything is very well-described in *The Watch that Ends the Night*, and MacLennan draws an accurate and convincing picture of how Stewart grows as an individual. He becomes “Everyman” which means that he loses himself – his fears, his hopes, his very identity – within himself. He realises that what has hitherto guided his life, namely superficial concerns about jobs and finances, are devoid of meaning in the grand scheme of things. He comes to understand, always as a result of what Martell has provoked within him, that his identity is changeable, that time is fleeting, and that death awaits everyone. Stewart comes to the conclusion that although he loves his beloved Catherine, he must stop living for her. In addition, if he wants to be able to love himself at all, he must love his wife as an individual, separate from himself. As Martell has “renew[ed] his belief in the spiritual as the way of salvation” (Lucas 23), so Stewart learns the same lesson. Evidently, he also comes to the frightening yet entirely valuable conclusion that self-knowledge is crucial to a man’s sense of well-being. In order to attain real community, he must turn

inwards, away from the outside, which is, of course, the goal of the process of individuation. Stewart reflects: "Here, I found out at last, is the nature of the final human struggle. Within, not without. Without there is nothing to be done. But within" (343). For Woodcock, the reunion between Stewart and Martell is a highly spiritual one and it has beneficial effects on Catherine as well. Woodcock writes: "the returning wanderer has enabled [Catherine] and George to find themselves, to face their pasts, and to wait tranquility in a world of gathering shadows for death" (*Hugh MacLennan* 103).

Consequently, Stewart is deeply transformed after his encounter with Martell at the hospital. On the surface level of things, he is able to accept Martell and the place he will always have in Catherine's life, but, on a deeper level, he becomes infused with Martell's positive energy, that "strange mysterious power of his" (361). Undoubtedly, Martell provokes in Stewart a reaction which illustrates that only by accepting his limitations can he be a happy, and whole, individual. As for Dooley, "[h]is new joy and confidence are founded on the idea that the final sanction of human existence is the divine mystery surrounding us" (90). Indeed, when Stewart leaves the hospital, he no longer sees his physical environment with the same eyes. Stewart discovers the joys of a spiritual re-awakening which are a result of the healing powers of self-knowledge:

Light seemed to be shining inside of me when I stepped outside and walked down the driveway toward the city [...] The chaos which had

been dark within me for days had disappeared and my soul was like a landscape with water when the fog goes and the moon comes out [...] (369-370).

At the end of *The Watch that Ends the Night*, Stewart plunges to the depths of his soul and emerges triumphant. Although he had feared Martell, the latter did not destroy his life, but in a very real sense, saved it. Like Marlow, he is now a better man because of what he has learned about himself. For Keith, “the final pages of the novel records his successful emergence on the other side of the dark night of the soul” (96). After witnessing his spiritual revelation, it is clear that Stewart will benefit tremendously from his new attitude and outlook on life. Stewart now knows himself and he is whole; his process of individuation is therefore a successful one. In *Patterns of Isolation in English-Canadian Fiction*, Moss states that Stewart “has seen far more of what he is and has been” (223). Consequently, due to his relationship with Martell, Stewart changes, in much the same way that Marlow is changed forevermore by his brief contact with Kurtz.

In fact, Kurtz and Martell’s discovery of themselves are paralleled in Marlow and Stewart’s discovery of themselves. All four individuals accept the existence of the Jungian shadow and man’s natural inclination towards evil. They reach different yet equally valuable conclusions about what it means to be human, full of strengths and weaknesses. Stewart and Marlow

have grown because they are now aware of the existence of evil both within and without themselves. They have completed their processes of individuation because they witnessed its effects on Kurtz and Martell. Whereas their growth as individuals was once stunted because they had not even begun an inner journey into their unconscious selves, they embark on the path to true individuality, following in the footsteps of Kurtz and Martell. Now that Marlow and Stewart know themselves, they can continue to exercise self-control, but no longer to the detriment of their self-knowledge.

CHAPTER V:

KURTZ , MARTELL AND THE SHADOW

The concepts of the inner journey and the subsequent discovery of the self are crucial in order to understand as well as fully appreciate Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and MacLennan's *The Watch that Ends the Night*. By the same token, the process of individuation as put forth by Jung's theories is a central theme in both novels. In fact, through the characters of Kurtz, Marlow, Martell and Stewart, Conrad and MacLennan illustrate how man needs to know himself wholly and completely in order to be fulfilled, content, and at peace with himself. In fact, as the process of individuation is at the centre of both novels, then it is apparent that man's growth to maturity and self-knowledge is a major consideration. Conrad and MacLennan also place importance on the fact that all individuals have a Jungian shadow which is an integral part of their personality and which must be understood and accepted. As a result of these considerations, it is apparent that both novels are intensely psychological in breadth and scope as they shed a fascinating light on human nature.

Indeed, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* raise compelling questions about human nature, and among these questions is one concerning human characteristics. For instance, if Conrad and

MacLennan suggest through their characters that all men share common traits such as reason and intellect which distinguish them from animals, then they also imply that humans share other darker traits such as lust, greed, and the desire to inflict pain on others. These traits are what many individuals do not want to admit they have, and as such, they are a part of man's inner shadow that we might describe as his capacity for evil. Although the shadow is hidden from the immediate surface of things, it is always there and is an important facet of human nature. As a result, both novels demonstrate that it is necessary to control and accept the shadow even though it is the dark side of our personality. In "The Child and the Shadow", Le Guin offers the following interpretation of a children's story written by Hans Christian Anderson which is significant for our purposes because of her description of the shadow:

The man [in the story] is all that is civilized – learned, kindly, idealistic, decent. The shadow is all that gets suppressed in the process of becoming a decent, civilized adult. The shadow is the man's thwarted selfishness, his unadmitted desires, the swearwords he never spoke, the murders he didn't commit. The shadow is the dark side of his soul, the unadmitted, the inadmissible (Wood 55-6).

Le Guin continues, claiming that "Anderson is saying that this monster is an integral part of the man and cannot be denied" (Wood 56). This same statement can certainly be applied to what Conrad and MacLennan were trying to say in their novels for they too, in different ways, illustrate how

man is, at times, “a monster”: weak, easily tempted and inclined to self-destructive acts.

In light of the aforementioned, it seems quite clear that all individuals need to confront their shadows, or their capacity for evil, for a number of valid reasons. On the one hand, if they do not, the shadow will eventually completely envelop them, which is precisely what happens to Kurtz. On the other hand, when an individual chooses to neglect his shadow, or deny its very existence, which is what Marlow and Stewart initially do, then this same person is lost, incomplete and uncompleted because “...the shadow stands on the threshold [to] true community, and self-knowledge, and creativity” (Wood 60). However, if a person is able to master his dark self, then he becomes a better, more enlightened individual – he becomes, in a sense, like Martell. Whatever the case may be, the shadow is always present and must be acknowledged.

As far as *Heart of Darkness* is concerned, Conrad’s vision of humanity is a dark one and man’s shadow is depicted as being particularly dangerous. In a review of the novel entitled “Mr Conrad’s New Book: Youth A Narrative; and Two Other Stories” Edward Garnett wrote in 1902 that

...the art of *Heart of Darkness* – as in every psychological masterpiece – lies in the relation of the things of the spirit to the things of the flesh, of the invisible life to the visible, of the subconscious life within

us, our obscure motives and instincts, to our conscious actions, feelings and outlook (Dean 146).

Indeed, in the novel there is a clear division between man's unconscious, symbolized by Kurtz, and man's consciousness, represented by Marlow, since the former is guided purely by his subconscious thoughts and desires while the latter refuses to confront them, preferring to remain rational at all times. As Graver points out, "Marlow [...] comes to the wilderness protected by certain defences against the darkness" (87). It is obvious that Marlow acts the way he does out of fear, yet his fear or cowardice is not unfounded or irrational. On the contrary, Marlow's desire to remain in control is commendable; in addition, it is important to point out the majority of people would do exactly what Marlow does in order to avoid letting themselves become overpowered by their shadow, notwithstanding the fact that this means that they would also deny themselves self-knowledge. Thale explains that "... the discovery of the self is the discovery of one's freedom. Away from the grooves that society provides for keeping us safely in a state of subsisting, we can discover that we are free to be, to do anything, good or evil" (163).

Consequently, after having seen Kurtz's downfall, Marlow knows that all human beings are free to do "good or evil" and he does not want to take the chance that his shadow might incite him to do evil as opposed to good. As Tucker explains, Conrad created a novel which "...is the record of the

descent into the center of things, into the darkness at the core of existence” (29), and this “darkness” is, undoubtedly, Kurtz’s confrontation with his evil tendencies, the impulses brought about by his shadow. Marlow is very lucky, though, since he is able to grow as a person because of what he witnesses without needing to confront his shadow. As has been dealt with in Chapter IV, Kurtz’s inner journey has profound repercussions on Marlow for he embarks on his own journey as a direct result of what he has seen.

More specifically, in *Heart of Darkness* Marlow’s naive idealism is replaced by a burning conviction that man is capable of anything, and this causes him to question his own values and the values propounded by society, a society which he now believes to be relatively corrupt. In some ways, Conrad suggests that the Western World is greedy and misguided due to its supposed superiority. Above and beyond being an attack on imperialism though, *Heart of Darkness* is an attack on a western civilization that prefers to ignore its sins, with Kurtz as its primary example of human weakness and decadence.

In the same way that many critics argue that *Heart of Darkness* is a critique of imperialism rather than a psychological study, many critics consider *The Watch that Ends the Night* to be an historical rather than a psychological or social novel. The novel does in fact deal with a significant number of historical events such as the Depression, both World Wars and

the Korean War. In fact, for Keith, the novel's appeal lies "in its moving and impressive analysis of the way in which individual human beings get caught up in cataclysmic historical events over which they have not control" (13). Although this is certainly true, the novel's power surely lies in its psychological rather than its historical depth. As far as MacLennan is concerned, there is a lesson to be learned in *The Watch that Ends the Night* which is not about history, but rather humanity. In his essay "The Story of a Novel" (1960), MacLennan explains that "the conflict [in the novel], the essential one, [is] between the human spirit of Everyman and Everyman's human condition" (Cameron 278). Nowhere is this intensely revealing conflict more apparent than in the character of Martell who enables Stewart to grow as a person. Indeed, on a spiritual level, the effects of Martell's inner journey on Stewart are almost palpable. In fact, the last part of *The Watch that Ends the Night* is completely devoted to Stewart's reflections on the most pressing issues every man deals with as he learns about the meaning of life and his place in it. More importantly, however, Stewart owes his newfound awareness of himself and his Everyman status to Martell who is "living testimonial to human strength and potentiality [who] can help others because he has the courage to be" (Dooley 90).

Consequently, Stewart's spiritual reflections are the most profound and the most unforgettable part of the novel and many critics affirm that the epilogue is what makes *The Watch that Ends the Night* the great novel it

is, while others find it too personal to be convincing. However, it is without a doubt that although the epilogue reads at times like MacLennan's own personal testimony, it is certainly moving. Although the novel revolves around death and dying, the final message is one of acceptance and spirituality, as represented by Martell and Stewart who benefit greatly from their spiritual journey of self-discovery. Just like the troubling questions Marlow asks himself in *Heart of Darkness*, Stewart asks himself questions which are equally troubling and equally important. Moreover, the period of darkness which Stewart goes through "offers a convincing portrayal of the redemptive value of suffering" (MacLulich 30). In fact, Stewart's suffering is necessary because it is the step which precedes the process of individuation. Cameron explains:

Like Marlow in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, one of the books MacLennan was teaching at McGill and which in its psychological theme was one model for his own book, George plumbs the depth of human despair and feels every lust and murderous impulse of which man is capable. He travels down into the evil in his own soul, knows chaos, and, despite the temptation to commit suicide in the face of nihilism, chooses form, morality and love (*Modern Times* 122).

As a result of his inner journey, Stewart realizes, among other things, the following fundamental fact:

there is no simple explanation for anything important any of us do, and [...] the human tragedy, or the human irony, consists in the

necessity of living with the consequences of actions performed under the pressure of compulsions so obscure we do not and cannot understand them (274).

In Chapter III, William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* was cited as an example of a novel in which a group of young English boys are overpowered by these very same "obscure compulsions" as described by Stewart, and who must live with the consequences of their actions. The power of *Lord of the Flies* lies in its unforgettable psychological depiction of boys who exhibit troubling behavior because there are no social constraints to restrain them. Like Kurtz in the jungles of the Congo and Martell on the battlefields of Europe, the boys on the island become overpowered by their Jungian shadow.

For Golding, writing *Lord of the Flies* was something he felt he had to do. In an essay titled "Fable" which appeared in *The Cool Web: The Pattern of Children's Reading*, he explains: "I decided to take the literary convention of boys on an island, only make them real boys instead of paper cutouts with no life in them, and try to show how the shape of the society they evolved in would be conditioned by their diseased, their fallen nature" (Meek 219). The term "real" is significant for it also applies to the characters created by Conrad and MacLennan. And perhaps, after all, that is what makes the characters in *Heart of Darkness*, *The Watch that Ends the Night* and *Lord of the Flies* so remarkable; they are weak, they lack self-knowledge; they are

tempted to give in to their shadows. If being human necessarily means being fallible, weak and tempted to hurt others, then it follows that despite the fact that individuals try so hard to *be* good and to *do* good, sometimes the shadow is simply more powerful than questions of right and wrong. For example, Golding insists that the boys in *Lord of the Flies* are not simply victims of their physical environment, but also victims of their own psychological makeup. He writes: "So the boys try to construct a civilization on the island; but it breaks down in blood and terror because the boys are suffering from the terrible disease of being human" (Meek 230).

"The terrible disease of being human" is a strong and unforgettable statement, and it suggests that at times man is more of a primitive animal than most would care to admit. Significantly though, Conrad, MacLennan and Golding show how once man listens to his shadow, accepts it while continuing his journey to enlightenment, then he will subsequently embark on an inner journey which will give him enough self-knowledge to be able to deal with the darker aspects of his personality, and therefore to overcome the evil which lies dormant in the shadow. Le Guin offers a significant interpretation of what all individuals require in order to be complete:

We need knowledge; we need self-knowledge. We need to see ourselves and the shadows we cast. For when we can face our own shadows, we can learn to control it and to be guided by it, so that when we grow into our strength and reason as adults in society, we will be less

inclined, perhaps, either to give up in despair or to deny what we see, when we must face the evil that is done in the world, and the injustices and greed and suffering that we must all bear, and the final shadow at the end of all (Wood 66).

“The final shadow at the end of all” is, obviously, death. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* are about death and dying. Instead, the novels are about having the strength to undergo an inner journey in order to make decisions that are sound and meaningful. As Cameron points out, “it is man’s prerogative [...] to choose the direction his energies take: every man has the opportunity to resolve within himself the great conflict between his destructive urges and his creative powers” (*Modern Times* 124-5).

Moreover, although the future of Marlow, Martell and Stewart remains mysterious, readers feel that these characters will be able to resolve any future inner conflicts since they have undergone a process of individuation, they have confronted and accepted their shadows, and they are now blessed with self-knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Admittedly, not every reader is as intensely affected as I was – and still am – by the psychological depth of *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night*. Yet, since these two works of fiction continue to be worthy of praise, study and analysis, then it is surely in large part due to Kurtz and Martell who undergo inner journeys. These inner journeys are compelling and prove that Conrad and MacLennan explored the intricacies of human nature in a thought-provoking way.

As far as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is concerned, the novel is an undisputed classic of English literature and of the 20th century. Even if it was first published as long ago as in 1902, a century ago now, it has been the focus of a considerable amount of literary criticism and still continues to arouse academic and public interest. Indeed, its influence on fiction is almost incalculable. Like all great works of fiction, *Heart of Darkness* is capable of many different interpretations and as Billy points out, “[t]he grand fecundity of scholarly commentaries on *Heart of Darkness* testifies to Conrad’s genius in crafting such a multi-facted jewel for meticulous appraisal” (77). For Frederick R. Karl, “*Heart of Darkness* is possibly the greatest short novel in English, one of the greatest in any language, and now a twentieth-century cultural fact” (28). Elsewhere, Walker has claimed

that “Conrad’s vivid story of Kurtz’s African adventure [has] immense range and lasting resonance as a work of art” (xiv).

As far as *The Watch that Ends the Night* is concerned, MacLulch feels that it is “MacLennan’s most mature and self-confident fictional statement, his most eloquent affirmation of the significance of human life” (2). Like *Heart of Darkness*, MacLennan’s novel continues to fascinate critics and readers alike. The psychological aspect of the novel has been addressed by a number of critics including Keith who writes, “Jerome’s dark journey [...] is not just an exciting episode in the plot; it is an imaginative pattern that raises the whole novel to a higher level of fictional subtlety and significance” (76). Although it is a popular Canadian novel, and arguably MacLennan’s best and most ambitious work, and even though it earned him his fifth Governor General Award and brought him a certain amount of success and literary acclaim, *The Watch that Ends the Night* does not enjoy the worldwide popularity that Conrad’s novel does. But, despite the fact that it is not as well-known as *Heart of Darkness* is, it is a highly complex novel and if *The Watch that Ends the Night* is so fascinating, it is due in large part to Martell, whose complex personality prompts readers to associate him with Kurtz. Both characters are powerful men and their respective descents into the inner depths illustrate their greatness and fascinating appeal.

Man's preoccupation with the inner journey and the far-reaching beneficial repercussions it has on individuals continue to have an important place in modern literature. In fact, there are numerous works of modern fiction which deal with the inner journey. In recent times, the novel *The Beach* (1996) by Alec Garland is, like Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, an account of the inner journey and everything it entails. In *The Beach*, which was recently made into a popular movie, a young man stumbles upon a secret paradise in Asia – a private, secluded island inhabited by a small group of westerners seeking a different kind of life. At first, the main character, Richard, is completely enthralled by the paradisaical beauty of the physical environment that envelops him. However, once he is cast away from the group as a punishment for his wrongdoings, he finds himself alone in the forest with his dark thoughts. As a result, with nothing to distract him from the pursuit of pleasure, he loses his precarious grip on reason and, like Kurtz, chooses to cross the boundaries of mental equilibrium as he embraces his shadow and comes dangerously close to losing his mind. Unlike Kurtz though, Richard is able to overcome the temptation to inflict pain on others and on himself and is able to return to civilization with a new outlook on life.

In conclusion, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* are, like *The Beach*, compelling novels which deal with the necessity of undergoing an inner journey in order to gain self-knowledge and a deeper,

more spiritual awareness of the meaning of life. Undeniably then, Conrad and MacLennan have effectively shown that “to attain real community, [the ego] must turn inward, away from the crowd to the source” (Wood 58). Because of this, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* are memorable works of fiction and the characters that breathe life into these novels are truly unforgettable. Moreover, although Kurtz and Martell are truly the heroes, Marlow and Stewart are still noteworthy individuals as they become better and stronger people as a result of their inner journeys. In fact, all four individuals are the type of men who leave an indelible mark on readers. Psychologically speaking, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Watch that Ends the Night* show readers the high price we will have to pay if we do not undergo an inner journey or a process of individuation. Following our own private paths to wholeness is the only way we can ever be completely fulfilled:

Individuation is essentially a spiritual journey.[...] By paying attention to the voice within, the individual achieves a new synthesis between conscious and unconscious, a sense of calm acceptance and detachment, and a realization of the meaning of life” (Storr 19).

And surely that is what we all strive for: serenity and self-knowledge.

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