

The Inner Conflict and Shadow Self in Estella's Identity in *Cruella* (2021): A Jungian Literary Film Analysis

Farah Nurkumaila

Department of English Education, FITK, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

farahnoer55@gmail.com

Reza Anis Maulidiya

Department of English Education, FITK, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

reza.anis@staff.uinjkt.ac.id

Abstrak

Film *Cruella* (2021) menampilkan tokoh utama Estella yang mengalami konflik batin dalam pencarian jati diri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konflik identitas dan proses transformasi Estella menjadi Cruella melalui teori Shadow Self dari Carl Jung. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengkaji dialog dan adegan kunci dalam film sebagai data utama. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Estella menolak sisi liar dan ambisius dalam dirinya, namun pada akhirnya menerima dan memanfaatkannya sebagai bagian dari identitas penuhnya. Studi ini memberikan pemahaman baru mengenai bagaimana penerimaan terhadap bayangan diri (*shadow*) dapat membentuk kekuatan personal dalam narasi karakter.

Kata kunci: Shadow self; identitas; konflik batin; jungian; cruella

Abstract

The film *Cruella* (2021) portrays the main character Estella as she navigates an inner conflict in her quest for identity. This research aims to analyze Estella's identity struggle and transformation into Cruella through Carl Jung's theory of the Shadow Self. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study examines selected scenes and dialogues from the film as primary data. The findings reveal that Estella initially rejects her clever and ambitious side, but later embraces it as an integral part of her identity. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how accepting one's shadow can lead to personal power and narrative complexity.

Keywords: Shadow self; identity; internal conflict; jungian; cruella

INTRODUCTION

The question of identity has long captivated scholars and storytellers alike, often emerging in narratives where individuals grapple with internal conflict and social expectations. Rather than being merely about name or appearance, identity involves a deeper psychological tension between how a person views themselves and how society demands they behave. This theme frequently appears in both literature and film, particularly when characters must navigate between conflicting cultural values, personal desires, and imposed roles (Jung, 1959; Bibi, 2024).

The 2021 Disney film *Cruella*, directed by Craig Gillespie, offers a compelling portrayal of this internal struggle through the character of Estella. Gifted with exceptional creativity and intelligence, Estella finds herself torn between her natural instincts and the need to conform to societal norms. As she evolves into the persona of Cruella, the film reveals a rich psychological transformation that reflects deeper issues of selfhood, rebellion, and suppressed identity. Her shift from a rule-abiding young woman to a bold and unapologetic figure

mirrors the universal human experience of reconciling inner conflict.

To better understand Estella's transformation, this study adopts Carl Gustav Jung's concept of the Shadow Self. Jung (1959) argued that every person harbors unconscious traits that are hidden due to their incompatibility with societal standards. These shadow traits, often misunderstood, represent the authentic parts of ourselves that are repressed over time. Casement (2006) highlights that real psychological growth, or individuation, occurs when these traits are confronted and integrated into the conscious self. This integration is not only a personal victory, but also reflects emotional maturity and self-acceptance (Powell, 2017; Azgin, 2024).

While many film analyses have explored *Cruella* through themes of fashion, feminism, or style, there remains limited scholarly discussion of the character's psychological evolution using a Jungian lens. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by focusing on how Estella's internal conflict and emerging shadow traits reflect her journey toward individuation.

Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study examines selected scenes and dialogues to trace Estella's

psychological development. The analysis aims to provide deeper insight into how repressed identity elements can shape behavior and decision-making in the face of trauma, power, and personal transformation. By doing so, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of character formation, particularly in modern cinematic storytelling that revisits classic figures with renewed psychological depth.

Theoretical Framework

Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung introduced the idea of the Shadow Self, a component of the unconscious mind that holds repressed traits and desires, often those that the conscious ego refuses to acknowledge due to their socially unacceptable nature (Casement, 2006). These hidden aspects are usually suppressed because they conflict with societal norms or ideals.

Jung emphasized that embracing and integrating the shadow is crucial for achieving personal development and psychological completeness, a journey he referred to as *individuation*. Ignoring or denying the shadow can lead to inner turmoil, projecting negative traits onto others, and experiencing a fragmented sense of identity.

Within the film *Cruella* (2021), Jung's Shadow Self theory serves as a useful tool to understand Estella's shift into her alter ego, Cruella, as she begins to accept and embody the parts of herself that had previously been silenced.

When analyzing films, the Shadow Self concept offers a valuable perspective in exploring intricate character arcs and reveals tensions between societal expectations and an individual's true self.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design, which is widely used in film and literary research because it allows for in-depth exploration of symbolic, emotional, and psychological elements (Azgin, 2024). Qualitative research emphasizes understanding human behavior and the meaning behind actions, making it ideal for analyzing the psychological development of a character like Estella. As noted by Ratner (2023), qualitative methods are particularly effective in exploring subjective experiences such as identity, inner conflict, and emotional transformation, which are central to Jungian psychoanalysis.

In the context of this study, the qualitative approach enables the researcher to interpret how Estella's Shadow Self emerges and transforms through dialogue, visuals, and dramatic events in the film *Cruella* (2021). Unlike quantitative research, which relies on numerical data, this

method captures nuanced psychological shifts that occur within the narrative structure.

Research Subject

The primary subject of this study is Estella, the main character in *Cruella* (2021), directed by Craig Gillespie. The data are drawn from the film's narrative, visuals, dialogues, and character interactions. Because this is a qualitative literary film analysis, no population or sampling techniques were used in the conventional sense.

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the main tool for interpreting and extracting meaning from the data. The film was watched repeatedly to ensure a nuanced understanding of the character's development. Each scene involving identity tension or symbolic imagery related to the unconscious was noted, interpreted, and cross-checked with relevant Jungian theory.

Data Collection Technique

The primary data source consists of scenes, visuals, and character dialogue taken directly from the film. The researcher identified significant moments that illustrate Estella's inner conflict and emergence of the shadow self.

The following steps were taken during the collection process:

1. Identifying scenes where Estella's internal conflict emerges.
2. Transcribing key dialogues.
3. Annotating visuals and symbolic cues relevant to Jungian concepts.

A data table was created to align each scene with its corresponding psychological theme, character transformation, and relevant theory.

Location and Duration

All research activities were conducted in Tangerang, Indonesia, between April and May 2025. The analysis was carried out using a legally obtained copy of the film and supported by electronic journal access for theoretical references.

Data Analysis Technique

This study uses interpretive content analysis, guided by Carl Jung's Shadow Self theory, especially his ideas on individuation and unconscious integration (Jung, 1959). The researcher identified recurring themes in character development, symbolic patterns, and emotional shifts.

Through categorization and interpretation, deeper meanings of psychological transformation were explored.

To strengthen the credibility of analysis, the researcher also referred to studies that have applied Jungian theory in film analysis, including:

- Azgin's (2024) Jungian interpretation of character transformation and persona dissolution in *Encanto*.
- Powell's (2017) exploration of shadow integration through narrative development.
- And Casement's (2006) foundational explanations of Jung's shadow theory.

These comparative sources helped inform the researcher's perspective on how hidden traits and identity tension manifest in cinematic storytelling.

Data Validation

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation by comparing the findings with existing Jungian literature and prior studies, including works by Casement (2006), Powell (2017), and Bibi (2024). Peer debriefing and consultation with academic advisors were also employed to enhance the reliability of interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Emergence of Shadow: Estella's First Rebellion

At the outset of the film, Estella exhibits signs of rebellion, challenging societal norms and expectations even before experiencing the significant traumas that shape her later life. One illustrative moment occurs on her first day at primary school, when her classmates taunt her by calling her a "skunk" due to her distinctive hair. Rather than internalizing the insult, Estella replies with confidence and sarcasm, signaling her unwillingness to let others define her.

A key piece of dialogue in this scene is:

Anita: "Ignore them."

Estella: "Just did."

This interaction underscores Estella's early sense of self-awareness and her resistance to conforming. Her bold response to ridicule reveals the early presence of her Shadow Self. Traits like assertiveness, sarcasm, and nonconformity that contrast with conventional expectations of femininity and "proper" behavior.

As Carl Jung (1959) describes, the Shadow represents repressed elements of the personality that conflict with one's internalized social values. Recognizing and embracing these traits is essential to individuation, a psychological journey toward becoming a whole, authentic individual.

Rather than suppressing her uniqueness to fit in, young Estella chooses to lean into her identity. This moment reflects an early emergence of her Shadow and

serves as a foundation for her later evolution into Cruella. Her refusal to be diminished by bullying reveals not just a defensive reaction but a natural expression of inner strength and individuality.

This reading is supported by Bibi (2024), who notes that Shadow traits can manifest in childhood, particularly when individuals experience social alienation. It also aligns with Maree's theory (2021), which asserts that identity conflict often begins when a person's true self diverges from societal norms.

Thus, this scene represents more than a schoolyard encounter. It initiates Estella's deeper internal struggle and foreshadows her eventual transformation through the integration of her Shadow Self.



Figure 1. Estella asserts her individuality by responding confidently to school bullies (00:02:05)

Table 1. Estella's Initial Rebellion

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella faces bullying on her first day at primary school
Film Dialogue	"Ignore them." – "Just did."
Shadow Trait	Defiance, confidence, resistance to conformity
Minute	00:02:05 – 00:02:30
Theoretical Insight	Estella's early awareness of her unique identity marks the surfacing of her Shadow traits (Jung, 1959; Bibi, 2024)

Early Shadow Awakening with Jasper and Horace

Shortly after the traumatic death of her mother, young Estella finds herself alone in London, hungry, grieving, and desperate. In a twist of fate, she ends up at a public fountain, where she joins two young boys, Jasper and Horace, stealing coins from the water. Their act draws the attention of the police, and the three flee together through alleyways and markets in classic chase fashion.

Estella instinctively follows them into their hidden shelter, observing how they live, steal, and survive. Jasper, the sharp-minded one, notices her cleverness, while Horace remains wary. Still, they allow her to stay, not out of pity, but because they sense she could contribute. This marks the beginning of Estella's psychological shift: from a scared child into a cunning survivor. She's not adopted, she inserts herself into their world.

According to Jung (1959), the Shadow Self contains aspects of ourselves that are suppressed or socially discouraged like rule-breaking, deceit, or aggression. Estella's decision to stay and join their lifestyle is not evil, but a necessary awakening of those shadow traits for survival. Casement (2006) highlights that such transitions occur when a person must reinvent themselves after loss or trauma.

Fatihah & Mustofa (2022) further explain that embracing one's shadow can be empowering, especially when done through companionship and mutual trust. Estella's alignment with Jasper and Horace becomes her first step toward individuation using rebellion, not innocence, to adapt and rebuild herself. Her grief transforms into action, and her childhood ends at that fountain.



Figure 2. Estella meets Jasper and Horace after escaping the police, choosing survival and forming her new identity (00:12:02)

Table 2. Shadow Emergence through Loss and Street Companionship

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella meets Jasper and Horace after stealing coins from a fountain
Film Dialogue	“My mom just died.” / “I think she should stay here.”
Shadow Trait	Survival instinct, suppressed defiance, early rebellion
Minute	00:12:02-00:15:40
Theoretical Insight	Jung (1959); Casement (2006); Fatihah & Mustofa (2022): Shadow traits emerge through traumatic separation and alliance

Shadow-Inspired Creativity: Drunken Window Display

In one pivotal scene, Estella, disheartened and drunk, is left alone in the Liberty department store where she works. After a frustrating day and with her creative energy repressed, she impulsively destroys the store's prim and proper window display. Fueled by frustration, alcohol, and buried ambition, she replaces it with a chaotic yet bold design made from mannequins, newspaper, and graffiti.

This moment becomes the accidental birth of her Cruella persona. Though Estella is not fully conscious of

her transformation, her raw, unapologetic creativity explodes into public view. The next morning, her daring display attracts the attention of the Baroness, who immediately recruits her. It's a scene of transformation driven not by logic but by unfiltered instinct, precisely what Jung (1959) described as the moment when the unconscious Shadow breaks through the constraints of the persona.

Casement (2006) argues that creativity often emerges when repression collapses. Estella's intoxicated act is a manifestation of long-suppressed artistic defiance. Rather than complying with the elegance and conformity of Liberty's aesthetic, she lets her true expression take over. The result is messy, rebellious, and groundbreaking, exactly the energy of the Shadow in its creative mode.

Her transformation in this moment is not complete, but it's catalytic. The fusion of pain, frustration, and talent begins here. Estella's creative brilliance is no longer filtered to fit expectations. Instead, it breaks boundaries and opens doors, even if unintentionally.

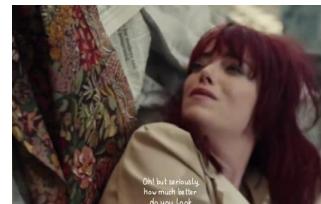


Figure 3. Estella's chaotic but brilliant display catches the Baroness's attention (00:19:21)

Table 3. Shadow-Inspired Creativity and Unconscious Expression

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella redesigns the store window while drunk
Film Dialogue	“Oh! But seriously, how much better do you look.”
Shadow Trait	Unrestrained creativity, suppressed expression
Minute	00:19:21
Theoretical Insight	Jung (1959); Casement (2006): Shadow emerges through creative impulse

Secret Rebellion While Working for the Baroness

During her employment under the Baroness, Estella plays the part of a loyal and disciplined fashion assistant. Outwardly, she follows orders, speaks respectfully, and maintains the image of a grateful protégé. However, beneath the surface, she grows increasingly disillusioned with her superior's manipulative behavior. As time passes, Estella begins crafting her secret identity, Cruella, and plans an elaborate form of resistance.

This period represents a silent revolution. Estella doesn't lash out immediately, but her internal discontent simmers with growing intensity. She meticulously observes the Baroness's tactics, learns from them, and mirrors her authority while disguising her own strength. Her evolution is subtle yet powerful. Instead of emotional outbursts, she uses fashion, creativity, and deception to undermine the Baroness's dominance, proving that rebellion doesn't always have to be loud, it can be elegant and strategic.

Carl Jung's Shadow theory (1959) explains that the parts of ourselves we repress or ignore eventually push to be recognized, especially under continued emotional stress. Estella's inner conflict arises from suppressing her ambition and originality to fit into the system controlled by the Baroness. This ongoing repression causes her Shadow traits, pride, rebellion, confidence to surface through her secret planning. Casement (2006) also asserts that when creativity is stifled, the psyche fights back by expressing suppressed traits in indirect, symbolic ways.

The line "Sorry. Slight tone delivery problem" reveals a crack in her polite mask. Delivered with barely hidden sarcasm, it shows that Estella is no longer afraid to express herself, albeit in coded language. This moment is not just about clever dialogue, it's a cue that her transformation is progressing and that her obedience is becoming performance. She is still Estella on the surface, but the spirit of Cruella is awakening underneath.

This duality reflects the tension between her persona (the socially acceptable mask) and her Shadow (her repressed potential and rage). As her rebellion grows, the distinction between the two identities begins to blur, setting the stage for her full transformation.

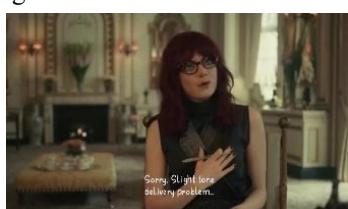


Figure 4. Estella hides her real motives behind a polite façade (00:34:26).

Table 4. Internal Rebellion and Masked Identity.

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella responds carefully while hiding her true feelings
Film Dialogue	"Sorry. Slight tone delivery problem..."
Shadow Trait	Concealed ambition, internal disobedience
Minute	00:34:26-00:45:45

Theoretical Insight	Casement (2006) links hidden rebellion to shadow pressure
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Estella's Realization of the Baroness's Cruelty

As Estella continues her daring schemes against the Baroness, she unexpectedly uncovers a disturbing truth: the Baroness had trained her Dalmatians to obey a silent dog whistle, revealing that her beloved mother, Catherine, was not killed by accident, but on command.

Although Estella has not yet discovered that the Baroness is her biological mother or that the necklace belonged to her, this moment profoundly alters her motivations. What was once a playful rebellion now intensifies into a deeper, more personal vengeance. The shift in Estella's emotional drive marks a pivotal step toward the integration of her shadow traits, particularly her sense of justice twisted by betrayal and grief.

Carl Jung (1959) noted that the unconscious shadow often emerges in moments of emotional upheaval, when a person confronts a truth that forces them to reevaluate their identity and purpose. Estella, no longer driven by performance or provocation, begins to embody her darker traits as Cruella which is strategic, vengeful, and daring.

This realization does not yet complete her transformation, but it ignites the inner turmoil that fuels her evolution into Cruella. Her desire for justice becomes laced with the shadow's hunger for dominance and retribution, revealing how trauma and suppressed anger can begin to distort one's sense of self (Azgin, 2024; Bibi, 2024).



Figure 5. Estella learns that her mother's death was orchestrated by the Baroness using a whistle command (00:55:48)

Table 5. Emergence of Cruella

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella discovers the Baroness used a whistle to command the dogs to kill Catherine
Film Dialogue	"The Baroness blew the whistle. The dogs didn't act on their own."
Shadow Trait	Betrayal, suppressed rage, vengeful instinct, loss of trust
Minute	00:55:48 – 00:56:08
Theoretical Insight	According to Jung (1959), moments of emotional shock can trigger the

	surfacing of the shadow. This event marks Estella's internal turn from playful rebellion to a darker, driven persona (Bibi, 2024; Azgin, 2024).
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Cruel Strategy Emerges

After discovering that the necklace once owned by her mother has been taken, Estella begins planning her revenge with increased intensity. In one of her most chilling moments, she orders Jasper and Horace to kidnap the Baroness's Dalmatians in hopes of retrieving the stolen heirloom. The way she delivers this command coldly and without hesitation marks a significant departure from her previous emotional tone.

This shift in behavior signals that Estella is allowing her Shadow traits to dominate. She moves from being emotionally reactive to being strategically ruthless. Her empathy diminishes, and her focus is sharpened by a sense of betrayal and urgency. The Estella who once sought justice now adopts more aggressive, even morally questionable tactics.

Fatihah & Mustofa (2022) discuss how individuals under emotional duress can experience a reconfiguration of their identity, especially when pain is internalized. Estella's decision here isn't just impulsive, it's calculated. Her Shadow isn't just reacting anymore; it's strategizing. This evolution shows that her grief and anger have become tools for manipulation.

Jung (1959) noted that when a person stops resisting their Shadow, it doesn't necessarily result in chaos, it often results in a new sense of control, albeit one shaped by darker motivations. Estella's cruelty in this moment is not blind rage but deliberate action, indicating that her Shadow Self has started to guide her decisions.

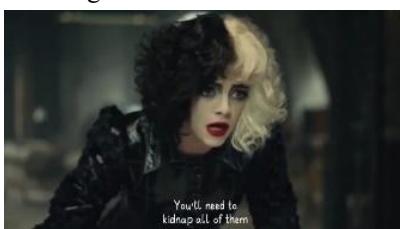


Figure 6. Estella gives a cold directive to kidnap the dogs, revealing her cruelty (00:58:45)

Table 6. Estella's Transition to Calculated Cruelty

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella orders her team to abduct the dogs
Film Dialogue	"You'll need to kidnap all of them."
Shadow Trait	Ruthlessness, loss of empathy
Minute	00:58:45-01:02:54
Theoretical Insight	Fatihah & Mustofa (2022): Shadow dominates amid emotional disruption

Near-Death Revelation and Turning Point

In one of the most pivotal scenes of *Cruella* (2021), the Baroness sets Estella's room ablaze while she is tied to a chair and unconscious. Estella had been drugged and left helpless, unable to save herself. As the flames grow, she's rescued just in time by John, the Baroness's trusted valet, who reveals the shocking truth: the Baroness is her biological mother.

This scene marks more than a physical rescue, it is the turning point of Estella's identity crisis. She not only survives death, but she learns that everything she believed about herself was a lie. According to Jung (1959), such near-death experiences and emotional shocks can awaken the Shadow Self, the unconscious side of personality that contains suppressed truth and traits.

The trauma of betrayal, the fury of near-death, and the confusion about her origins trigger a deep psychological transformation. Estella begins to understand that to survive and overcome the Baroness, she can no longer remain the obedient and kind version of herself. Powell (2017) notes that in Jungian individuation, real growth often begins after destruction, symbolic or literal.

This moment is the catalyst for Estella to fully step into her shadow: not to become evil, but to claim her power, rewrite her story, and rise as Cruella.



Figure 7. Cruella nearly being burned alive (01:29:11)

Table 7. Near-Death Revelation

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Estella is tied to a chair as the Baroness sets fire to her room
Film Dialogue	"Goodbye Cruella."
Shadow Trait	Identity shock, suppressed rage, awakening through trauma
Minute	01:29:11-01:30:14
Theoretical Insight	Jung (1959); Powell (2017): Shadow awakens through betrayal and near-death

Identity Revelation: Estella Learns the Truth

In this particular scene, Estella bound to a chair and facing imminent danger, is unexpectedly saved by John, the Baroness's faithful servant. John discloses a shocking truth: the Baroness is Estella's biological mother, while Catherine, whom Estella had always believed to be her real mother, was actually a servant who protected her from being murdered by the Baroness.

This revelation deeply unsettles Estella, confronting her with the reality that her sense of identity has been founded on deception. According to Carl Jung's (1959) theory of the Shadow Self, the path of individuation involves becoming conscious of and integrating the hidden or darker aspects of the psyche.

In this context, Estella is forced to acknowledge her biological connection to the Baroness, implying that some of her own traits, such as ambition and cunning, may stem from this lineage. However, instead of allowing these darker traits to dominate her, Estella chooses to merge them with the virtues she inherited from Catherine, such as compassion and fairness.

This moment reflects Estella's success in undergoing individuation. Rather than rejecting or being consumed by her shadow, she accepts it as part of her identity and harmonizes it with the values that shape her moral compass. This integration is in line with the idea that healthy identity formation requires the reconciliation of one's internal contradictions, a theme widely echoed in film narratives that explore psychological development (Jeffrey, 2024; Iaccino, 1998).



Figure 8. Estella learning the truth about her real mother from John (01:31:33)

Table 8. Truth About the Baroness

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	John reveals that the Baroness is Estella's biological mother
Film Dialogue	"She gave birth to you. I was there when you're born."
Shadow Trait	Trauma, identity confusion, inherited darkness
Minute	01:31:33 – 01:33:42
Theoretical Insight	Shock activates deep internal reflection and confrontation with shadow origin (Azgin, 2024; Powell, 2017)

Integration of Shadow: Rebirth as Cruella

At the film's climax, Estella carefully executes her final plan for vengeance against the Baroness. She invites the Baroness to Hellman Hall, her childhood estate, and subtly manipulates the confrontation to provoke a violent outburst. As anticipated, the Baroness pushes Estella off the cliff in full view of the assembled guests, echoing the moment when she caused the death of Estella's adoptive

mother years before. But this time, Estella is prepared. Concealing a parachute beneath her dress, she survives the fall and vanishes from the public eye, effectively ending her existence as Estella and emerging entirely as Cruella de Vil (Ratner, 2023).

A pivotal moment in this scene occurs during a brief dialogue exchange:

Estella: "You're not going to push me off the cliff, are you?"

Baroness (to the guests): "She jumped! She jumped! She tried to drag me with her!"

This sequence marks the peak of Estella's psychological transformation and the successful integration of her Shadow Self. As Carl Jung (1959) suggests, genuine individuation requires acknowledging and harmonizing all aspects of one's psyche, including those that are repressed or socially unacceptable (Powell, 2017). Estella's evolution is not a descent into villainy, but rather a deliberate reclamation of personal identity and autonomy.

By this point, Cruella is no longer a mere alter ego or façade. She represents the fully realized self, merging Estella's compassion and moral grounding with the assertiveness, strategic thinking, and flair that had long remained suppressed. Rather than rejecting her past, she reclaims and redefines it, symbolizing a state of psychological wholeness and inner authority.

Thus, this transformation is not a descent into immorality, but a manifestation of self-mastery closely aligned with Jung's ideal of achieving inner balance and completeness through Shadow Integration.

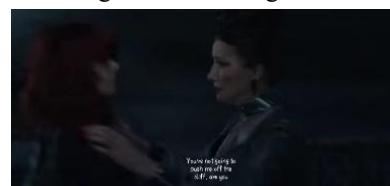


Figure 9. Estella is pushed off the cliff by the Baroness and reemerges as Cruella, embracing her true identity (01:59:18)

Table 9. Final Transformation into Cruella

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Hellman Hall – The Baroness pushes Estella off a cliff in front of the guests
Film Dialogue	Estella: "You're not going to push me off the cliff, are you?" Baroness: "She jumped! She tried to drag me with her!"
Shadow Trait	Strategic control, self-mastery, rebirth, full Shadow integration
Minute	01:59:18 – 02:00:20

Theoretical Insight	Estella's survival and reemergence as Cruella marks her psychological wholeness. By embracing both light and shadow within herself, she achieves individuation, an empowered and authentic self (Jung, 1959; Powell, 2017; Jeffrey, 2024).
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Minute	02:02:17-02:03:53
Theoretical Insight	Jung (1959); Powell (2017): Final integration of shadow and conscious self

Rebirth and Claiming Hellman Hall

In the final sequence of the film, Estella stages her own death and adopts her full Cruella persona permanently. After the Baroness is arrested, Estella holds a private funeral for her former self, complete with a black-and-white wig and dramatic flair. The guests at the gathering believe Estella has died tragically, just as planned.

At the funeral, Cruella reads aloud a fabricated will that transfers the Baroness's estate, Hellman Hall, to Estella's alias, Cruella de Vil. This moment is rich in symbolism: Estella buries her old self in the eyes of the world and emerges as someone reborn, empowered, and unapologetically authentic. The name "Hellman Hall" is cleverly transformed into "Hell Hall," reflecting the new owner's darker flair and embracing the shadow that she once concealed.

Jung (1959) described individuation as a complete union of the conscious and unconscious mind. Cruella's inheritance of the estate signifies not just wealth, but ownership of her past, her trauma, and her identity. It represents her final step in individuation where the shadow is no longer separate but integrated.

This conclusion also affirms the power of narrative control. By rewriting her story and orchestrating her own symbolic death, Cruella chooses who she becomes. Powell (2017) explains that in post-trauma shadow work, owning one's darkness can be a form of liberation.

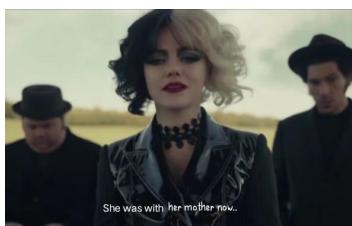


Figure 10. Cruella holds a funeral for Estella and claims Hellman Hall as her own (02:02:17)

Table 10. Rebirth Through Death and Legacy Claim

Aspect	Details
Scene/Setting	Cruella hosts a fake funeral and inherits Hellman Hall
Film Dialogue	"She was with her mother now. I'll take it from here."
Shadow Trait	Identity acceptance, narrative control, full individuation

CONCLUSION

The movie *Cruella* (2021) portrays the intricate psychological evolution of its protagonist, Estella, who struggles with a conflicted sense of identity before ultimately achieving full self-acceptance. Through the lens of Carl Gustav Jung's Shadow Self theory, Estella's change into Cruella represents more than just a superficial makeover or a new name. It signifies the integration of the darker aspects of herself that she had long denied.

Estella's journey illustrates that the Shadow is not inherently malicious, but rather a vital part of the psyche that must be acknowledged, comprehended, and incorporated into one's conscious self. This transformation unfolds gradually, beginning with her recognition of her differences, the creation of an alternate persona, confronting an identity crisis upon uncovering her true background, and culminating in the deliberate emergence of a renewed identity as Cruella.

By applying a Jungian framework to Estella's character, this analysis reveals how the film's depiction of internal struggle not only adds complexity to her personality but also invites a deeper understanding of themes such as self-acceptance, empowerment, and identity shaped through inner conflict (Casement, 2006; Powell, 2017).

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