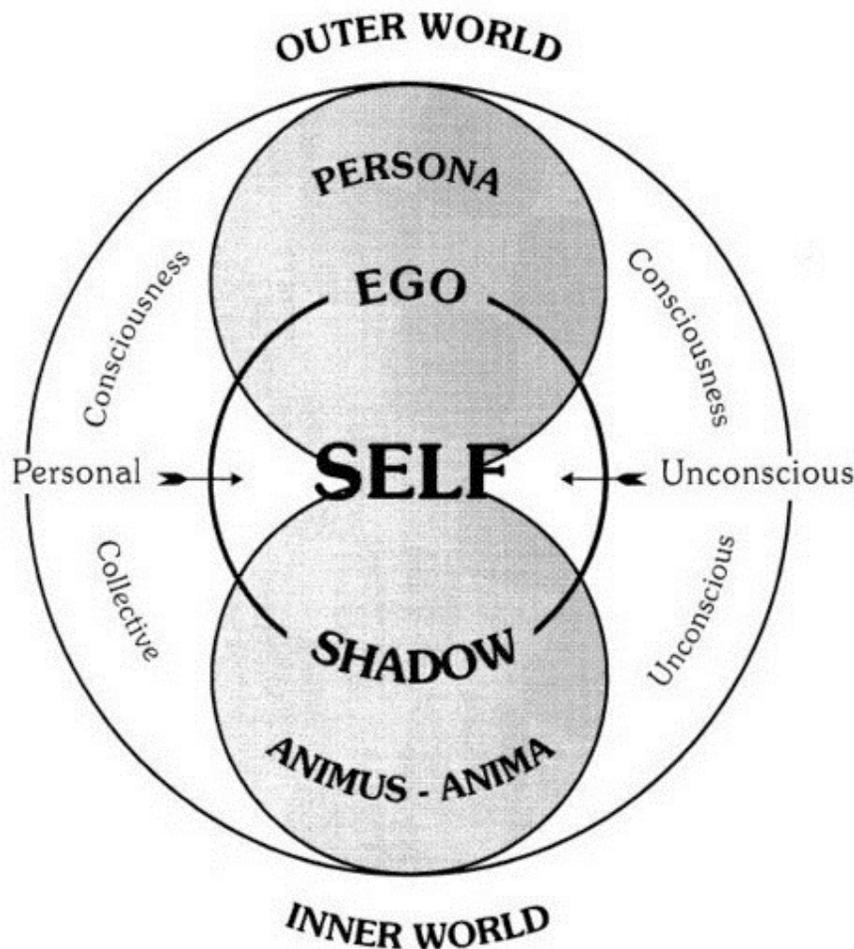


Anima and Animus

Within each of us lies a psychic energy that is opposite to our biological gender. The contra-sexual element in our psyche complements the natural bent toward consciousness that each gender carries. By nature, women are visionary, instinctual and communal. Men are naturally focused, objective and separate.

Jung called the feminine side of a man the anima; a woman's masculine side he called the animus. Both are archetypes and therefore can only be related to by the ego. They cannot be integrated into consciousness but must become known by each individual.

The anima/animus stands in direct relation to the persona. While the persona corresponds to a person's habitual outward attitude, the animus or anima reflects the habitual inner attitude. Both the persona and anima/animus perform a mediating function between the ego and their respective world: the persona facilitates the ego's connection to the external world and the anima/animus provides a bridge between the ego and the interior world.



The Anima

“..the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros...”
 “the anima is the archetype of life itself”
 (Jung, CW9ii, para. 28 and 9i, para. 66)

In psychological terms, Eros is the function of relationship. Woman’s consciousness is characterized by the connective quality of Eros. The capacity to relate is an expression of woman’s true nature. In man, Eros is usually less developed than Logos, which is characterized by discrimination and cognition.

The anima is the inner feminine side of a man. It is an archetypal image of woman in the male psyche. An unconscious factor incarnated anew in every male child, it is responsible for the mechanism of projection. Initially identified with the personal mother, the anima is later experienced not only in other women but as a pervasive influence in a man's life. ‘The anima is the archetype of life itself’ (CW9i, para. 66).

There is [in man] an imago not only of the mother but of the daughter, the sister, the beloved, the heavenly goddess, and the chthonic Baubo. Every mother and every beloved is forced to become the carrier and embodiment of this omnipresent and ageless image, which corresponds to the deepest reality in a man. It belongs to him, this perilous image of Woman; she stands for the loyalty which in the interests of life he must sometimes forego. She is the much needed compensation for the risks, struggles, sacrifices that all end in disappointment; she is the solace for all the bitterness of life. At the same time, she is the great illusionist . . . who draws him into life with her Maya and not only into life's reasonable and useful aspects, but into its frightful paradoxes and ambivalences where good and evil, success and ruin, hope and despair, counterbalance one another. Because she is his greatest danger she demands from a man his greatest, and if he has it in him she will receive it. (CW9ii, para. 24)

The anima is personified in dreams by images of women ranging from seductress to spiritual guide. It is associated with the eros principle, hence a man's anima development is reflected in how he relates to women. Within his own psyche the anima influences his ideas, attitudes and emotions.

The anima . . . intensifies, exaggerates, falsifies, and mythologizes all emotional relations with [a man’s] work and with other people of both sexes. The resultant fantasies and entanglements are all her doing. When the anima is strongly constellated, she softens the man's character and makes him touchy, irritable, moody, jealous, vain, and unadjusted. (CW9i, para. 144)

As an inner personality, the anima is complementary to the persona and stands in a compensatory relationship to it.

The persona, the ideal picture of a man as he should be, is inwardly compensated by feminine weakness, and as the individual outwardly plays the strong man, so he becomes inwardly a woman, for it is the anima that reacts to the persona. But because the inner world is dark and invisible . . . and because a man is all the less capable of conceiving his weaknesses the more he is identified with the persona, the persona's counterpart, the anima, remains completely in the dark and is at once projected, so that our hero comes under the heel of his wife's slipper. (CW7, para. 309)

Hence the character of the anima can generally be deduced from that of the persona; all those qualities absent from the outer attitude will be found in the inner.

The tyrant tormented by bad dreams, gloomy forebodings, and inner fears is a typical figure. Outwardly ruthless, harsh, and unapproachable, he jumps inwardly at every shadow, is at the mercy of every mood, as though he were the feeblest and most impressionable of men. Thus his anima contains all those fallible human qualities his persona lacks. If the persona is intellectual, the anima will certainly be sentimental. (CW6, para. 804)

Jung distinguished four broad stages of the anima, analogous to levels of the Eros cult described in the late classical period. He personified them as Eve, Helen, Mary and Sophia. (CW16, para. 361)

In the first stage, Eve, the anima is indistinguishable from the personal mother. The man cannot function well without a close tie to a woman. In the second stage, personified in the historical figure of Helen of Troy, the anima is a collective and ideal sexual image. The third stage, Mary, manifests in religious feelings and a capacity for lasting relationships. In the fourth stage, as Sophia (called Wisdom in the Bible), a man's anima functions as a guide to the inner life, mediating to consciousness the contents of the unconscious. She cooperates in the search for meaning and is the creative muse in an artist's life.

The psychological priority in the first half of life is for a man to free himself from the anima fascination of the mother. In later life, the lack of a conscious relationship with the anima is attended by symptoms characteristic of "loss of soul."

Younger people . . . can bear even the total loss of the anima without injury. The important thing at this stage is for a man to be a man. . . . After the middle of life, however, permanent loss of the anima means a diminution of vitality, of flexibility, and of human kindness. The result, as a rule, is premature rigidity, crustiness, stereotypy, fanatical one-sidedness, obstinacy, pedantry, or else resignation, weariness, sloppiness, irresponsibility, and finally a childish *ramollissement* [petulance] with a tendency to alcohol. (CW9i, paras. 146f)

Jung suggested that if the encounter with the shadow is the "apprentice-piece" in a man's development, then coming to terms with the anima is the "master-piece." (CW9i, para. 61)

The goal is transformation of the anima from a troublesome adversary into a function of relationship between consciousness and the unconscious. The anima then becomes 'a psychological function of an intuitive nature, akin to what the primitives mean when they say, "He has gone into the forest to talk with the spirits" or "My snake spoke with me" or, in the mythological language of infancy, "A little bird told me."' (CW7, para. 374)

The Animus

“...the animus corresponds to the paternal Logos
of discrimination and cognition...”
(Jung, CW9ii, para. 29)

Logos is the principle of logic and structure, traditionally associated with spirit, the father world and the God-image. The paternal Logos eternally struggles to extricate itself from the maternal womb of the unconscious. Jung intuitively equated masculine consciousness with differentiation, judgment, insight.

Like the anima in a man, the animus is an archetypal image. Woman is compensated by a masculine element and therefore her unconscious has, so to speak, a masculine imprint. This results in a considerable psychological difference between men and women, and accordingly I have called the projection-making factor in women the animus, which means mind or spirit. The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros. (CW9ii, paras. 28f)

The animus is the deposit, as it were, of all woman's ancestral experiences of man; not only that, he is also a creative and procreative being, not in the sense of masculine creativity, but in the sense that he brings forth something we might call . . . the spermatic word. (CW7, par. 336)

Whereas the anima in a man functions as his soul, a woman's animus is more like an unconscious mind. It manifests negatively in fixed ideas, collective opinions and unconscious, a priori assumptions that lay claim to absolute truth. In a woman who is identified with the animus (called animus-possession), Eros generally takes second place to Logos. A woman possessed by the animus is always in danger of losing her femininity. (CW7, para. 337)

No matter how friendly and obliging a woman's Eros may be, no logic on earth can shake her if she is ridden by the animus. . . . [A man] is unaware that this highly dramatic situation would instantly come to a banal and unexciting end if he were to quit the field and let a second woman carry on the battle (his wife, for instance, if she herself is not the fiery war horse). This sound idea seldom or never occurs to him, because no man can converse with an animus for five minutes without becoming the victim of his own anima.(CW9ii, para. 29)

The animus becomes a helpful psychological factor when a woman can tell the difference between the ideas generated by this autonomous complex and what she herself really thinks.

Like the anima, the animus too has a positive aspect. Through the figure of the father he expresses not only conventional opinion but – equally – what we call "spirit," philosophical or religious ideas in particular, or rather the attitude resulting from them. Thus the animus is a psychopomp, a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious and a personification of the latter. (CW9ii, para. 33)

Jung described four stages of animus development in a woman. He first appears in dreams and fantasy as the embodiment of physical power, an athlete, muscle man or thug. In the second stage, the animus provides her with initiative and the capacity for planned action. He is behind a woman's desire for independence and a career of her own. In the next stage, the animus is the "word," often personified in dreams as a professor or clergyman. In the fourth stage, the animus is the incarnation of spiritual meaning. On this highest level, like the anima as Sophia, the animus mediates between a woman's conscious mind and the unconscious. In mythology this aspect of the animus appears as Hermes, messenger of the gods; in dreams he is a helpful guide. Any of these aspects of the animus can be projected onto a man. As with the projected anima, this can lead to unrealistic expectations and acrimony in relationships.

Like the anima, the animus is a jealous lover. He is adept at putting, in place of the real man, an opinion about him, the exceedingly disputable grounds for which are never submitted to criticism. Animus opinions are invariably collective, and they override individuals and individual judgments in exactly the same way as the anima thrusts her emotional anticipations and projections between man and wife. (CW7, para. 334)

While a man's task in assimilating the effects of the anima involves discovering his true feelings, a woman becomes familiar with the nature of the animus by constantly questioning her ideas and opinions.

The woman must learn to criticize and hold her opinions at a distance; not in order to repress them, but, by investigating their origins, to penetrate more deeply into the background, where she will then discover the primordial images, just as the man does in his dealings with the anima. (CW7, para. 336)

In his later writings on alchemy, Jung described Logos and Eros as psychologically equivalent to solar and lunar consciousness, archetypal ideas analogous to the Eastern concepts of yang and yin. Whatever terms are used, they refer to different qualities of energy. Eros is more specific to feminine consciousness, and Logos to masculine consciousness. Hence Jung attributed Eros in a man to the influence of the anima, and Logos in a woman to that of the animus. In a man, it is the lunar anima, in a woman the solar animus, that influences consciousness in the highest degree.

Lifted or paraphrased from *C. G. Jung Lexicon* by Daryl Sharp, pp. 51, 18-25, 81-82 and *The Psychology of C. G. Jung* by Jolande Jacobi, pp. 114-124.

Peggy Voth
November 2016