

## **Anima and Animus Notes**

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### Defintion

Every man carries within him the eternal image of the woman, not the image of this or that woman, but a definite feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, an hereditary factor of primordial origin. (CW17:338)

Woman is compensated by a masculine element and therefore her unconscious has, so to speak, a masculine imprint...and I have called the projection-making factor in women the animus...The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos (or mind) just as the anima correspond to the maternal Eros (or relatedness). (CW7:347 & CW9ii:28)

Both the anima and animus are experienced as mysterious and numinous. They therefore possess great power. The more unconscious they are, the more likely that they will be projected onto another person. This is the energy behind "falling in love."

The anima and animus differ in the ways they manifest, or show themselves. However, they do have characteristics in common. Both spring from a basic configuration common to all humans and are therefore archetypes. Both are psychic images. They are fundamental energies that are opposites – feminine and masculine energies. Both exist below consciousness and function in the unconscious psyche. Both can be of benefit; both pose danger to the ego if they remain unconscious.

For instance, if related to, the anima brings vitality and "soul" to a man's actions and relationships; if neglected, he becomes seduced by inferior people and forms meaningless attachments. The animus, if befriended, makes a woman wise through the ability to reflect on and understand what comes to her via instinct and intuition; if ignored, he turns the woman into a managerial, obstinate crusader of unrelated convictions that have been gathered from here and there.

Being archetypes, the anima and animus are inherited possibilities of ideas. They are given form by our experiences. Our first conscious experiences come through our parents. As we grow older, we accumulate experiences of other men and women. Together with the collective and timeless imprints of Man and Woman that have been passed on to us by virtue of being human, these influence the form and contents of our personal anima and animus.

However, their functions remain the same. Both act as mediators or connectors or bridges between the ego and the unconscious, also sometimes referred to as the Self. It is through these autonomous and powerful functions within our psyches that we come to know the depths of ourselves and live true to ourselves.

### Anima

The anima personifies itself in a single figure. (CW7:332) This is due to the fact that a man's conscious world is made up of collective concerns, such as the nation, the state, business concerns, etc. The general is more to him than the personal. (CW7:336)

The anima is personified in dreams by images of women ranging from seductress to spiritual guide. It is associated with the eros principle, or the principle of relatedness. Therefore a man's level of anima development is reflected in how he relates to women.

Most men who have any psychological insight at all will know what "She-who-must-be-obeyed" means. (CW7:298 and referring to Rider Haggard's book *She*)

Woman, with her very dissimilar psychology, is and always has been a source of information about things for which a man has no eyes. She can be his inspiration; her intuitive capacity, often superior to man's, can give him timely warning, and her feeling, always directed toward the personal, can show him ways which his own less personally accented feeling would never have discovered. (CW7:296)

Just as the father acts as a protection against the dangers of the external world and thus serves his son as a model persona, so the mother protects him against the dangers that threaten from the darkness of his psyche. (CW7:315)

This characteristic of the mother protecting the son from his inner world of feelings and emotions sets him up to expect likewise from other key females in his life. Most women are aware of the common advice to handle a man's ego with kid gloves, that a man's ego needs to be coddled, protected.

While a man doesn't verbally ask the women to take on the mother-caregiver role, his behaviour invites it. Men typically avoid conversations about their feelings, and about the state of their marriage. When things go awry at work or when their wife says something that hurts their feelings, they may become sulky, unapproachable. Born into a world in which a woman (or women) typically take care of his needs – emotional as well as physical – a boy grows up to expect his female counterparts to carry and manage and look after those needs for him.

The anima is a factor of the utmost importance in the psychology of a man wherever emotions and affects are at work. She intensifies, exaggerates, falsifies and mythologizes all emotional relations with his work and with other people of both sexes... When the anima is strongly constellated, she softens the man's character and makes him touchy, irritable, moody, jealous, vain and unadjusted. He is then in a state of "discontent" and spreads discontent all around him. (CW9i:144)

Jung says that these moods are generated by the inner woman who is neglected. When a man neglects the relationship with his wife or daughter or mother, she becomes cool toward him, or acts out emotionally, or bugs him to talk. So it is with his inner woman. She expresses herself through him, turning him into a unpleasant woman. If he wants to

be a whole man, he has to establish a relationship with his anima. For a man living in a patriarchal society where initiative, activity, logic and strength are valued, listening to his inner woman feels loaded with danger. The anima will connect him with his feelings and emotions, and what will that do to his reputation as a cool-headed, take-charge man?

What it will do is temper that cool-headed man to a related one. Polish those take-charge edges to a smoother texture. His reputation will take on flesh, not just bones. He will do things with "soul," with personal connection and feeling.

The function of the anima is to facilitate conscious relationship. (CW7:336)

### Animus

Just as a woman is often clearly conscious of things which a man is still groping for in the dark, so there are naturally fields of experience in a man which, for woman, are still wrapped in the shadows of non-differentiation, chiefly things in which she has little interest. Personal relations are as a rule more important and interesting to her than objective facts and their interconnections. The wide fields of commerce, politics, technology and science – the whole realm of applied masculine mind – she relegates to the penumbra of consciousness; on the other hand, she develops a minute consciousness of personal relationships, the infinite nuances of which usually escape the man entirely. (CW7:330)

If I were to put in a nutshell what characterizes the animus as opposed to the anima, I could only say this: as the anima produces *moods*, so the animus produces *opinions*. As the moods of a man issue from a shadowy background, so the opinions of a woman rest on equally unconscious prior assumptions. (CW7:331)

The tricky thing about animus opinions is that they are often correct or right at some level, yet slightly miss the mark. This often makes them a bit off in relevance to what is being discussed. This can shut down conversations, veer things off-topic or exasperate others to a point of avoiding the woman.

The animus does not appear as one person, but as a plurality of persons. (CW7:332)  
This is because her conscious attitude is personal in that her world is generally made up of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, husbands and children. (CW7:336)

The animus is rather like an assembly of fathers or dignitaries of some kind who lay down incontestable, "rational" judgments. On closer examination these exacting judgments turn out to be largely sayings and opinions scraped together more or less unconsciously from childhood on, and compressed into a canon of average truth, justice, and reasonableness, a compendium of preconceptions which, whenever a conscious and competent judgment is lacking instantly obliges with an opinion. (CW7:332)

The appearance of the animus in dreams is sometimes in the form of groups of men: judges or a male jury, thugs, rapists, a group of teenage boys. A client recently dreamt of a team of moving men who were taking the furniture out of her house.

The animus also manifests as critical self-talk, the nature of which is “Who do you think you are?” “You don’t know enough.” “You’re not good enough.” “You don’t really have anything to say.” Messages such as this carry a collective feel, communicating the attitude that family or church or society have taken toward women’s nature, intelligence, capabilities, etc.

The animus is the deposit of all woman’s ancestral experiences of man; he is also a creative and procreative being in the sense that he brings forth what could be called the spermatic word. (CW7:336)

Feminine creativity usually comes from intuition and plays out in interpersonal ways, and in response to the moment. The spermatic word of the animus means that as a mediator between the unconscious and the ego, the animus brings creative seeds in terms of ideas and projects.

The animus functions in a woman like an unconscious mind. It is a psychological factor behind a woman’s commitments, beliefs and inspirations. These elements are influenced by the father, both the personal and universal father. The contents of a woman’s animus are shaped by collective attitudes and values, including religious teachings about God and women in relation to God.

The animus manifests negatively as fixed ideas, collective opinions and *a priori* assumptions that take on an air of absolute truth. This can be particularly potent in the context of marriage, for the animus is adept at putting an unexamined opinion in place of the reality of who the man/husband actually is, The man is then held to an ideal that he can’t fulfill and is subsequently subjected to sharp criticisms.

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 animus becomes helpful when a woman is able to tell the difference between opinions generated by the autonomy of the animus-archetype and what she herself thinks.

The function of the animus is to facilitate relations between the woman’s ego and the unconscious. (CW7:336)

### Bridges to the Unconscious

Both anima and animus are mediators between the ego and the Self. Remember, the Self is the centre of the entire psyche, and its function is to bring a balance between who we are in the outer world and who we are in our natural inner being. The Self

functions to bring us to, and keep us in, a state of congruence throughout our whole being.

The Shadow often obscures the activity of the anima and animus. The Shadow is made up of two kinds of contents. One are personal characteristics that we were once aware of and chose to deny or repress. The other is things we have never been aware of but which could come into our awareness.

For example, we might suppress our anger, or neglect our creativity. For most of us, anger and imagination were spontaneously expressed as children. As we grow up, we may begin to guard against those things in ourselves because they have been externally censored over and over; they have gotten us into trouble or brought misunderstanding or ridicule.

An example of a shadow content that we've never been aware of but which could potentially come into consciousness would be a pattern of passive-aggressive behaviour, or a natural leadership ability.

These shadow contents are personal; they are specifically about the individual. The contents of the anima and animus are archetypal, not personal. Therefore, as we become aware of, and come to accept, some of our shadow traits, the shadow becomes less dense. This opens the way for the archetypal energy to move and frees the archetypal role of the anima and animus to connect our ego with our Self.

Saying that the anima and animus provide a bridge between the ego and Self is true in a general way, but they fulfill that role differently.

The anima specializes in helping the man perceive unconscious contents. It usually does this through images. Just as a man is often first drawn to a woman through her physical appearance, or as a man is hooked by pornographic images, or as a man portrays a bigger (or prettier) than life image of Woman in his artistic endeavours, so the anima presents herself to him through those same avenues, or in dream/fantasy images.

When freed up to perform as a bridge to the Self, the anima brings the warmth of relatedness to a man and his relationships. The anima connects him to his inner life; this animates his outer activities and interactions.

The anima 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. If not related to, she can draw a man into ruin and despair. 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:24)

The animus helps the woman understand the unconscious contents that present themselves to her. Woman "sees," so to speak. Women are born with a natural intuitive faculty. (This sometimes gets brushed into the Shadow, depriving a woman of an

important source of information that could be of benefit to her.) Woman's vision and thinking are not keenly focused. This gifts her with an awareness of things that are obscure. This ability gives her the power to see what is hidden from a sharper eye. (Emma Jung, pp. 25-26) In its role as a bridge to the unconscious, the animus moves her to reflect on what comes to her from those depths. Reflection then brings understanding and meaning to what she sees.

The animus who is blocked by the personal repressions and denials that make up a woman's shadow turns negative. It hounds the woman's ego with messages that shut her down. Or it possesses her.

In the former – the animus hound – an inner voice criticizes her relentlessly, questioning the worth of her ideas, her gifts, her perceptions, what she said...on and on. In the latter – animus-possession – the woman is argumentative, has to be always right, spouts opinions that she has heard or read without reflecting on them to find her understanding and position in relation to them.

In both cases, the animus reveals a collusion with the culture/society in which the woman lives. The inner talk that paralyzes her with self-judgment and self-doubt is spouting the attitude that values masculine qualities over feminine qualities. The outer talk of animus-possession turns a woman into an annoying parrot that reinforces the collective devaluation of the archetypal feminine.

When freed up to perform as a bridge to contents of the unconscious, the animus brings meaning to a woman's knowing. It enables her to develop her natural gifts and offer them to the outer world in her own particular way.

The animus gives to a woman's consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation and self-knowledge. (CW9ii:33)

In summary, the primary quality of the masculine is Logos, or mind. A healthy animus is therefore typified by the creative word; a wounded animus produces the crippling word.

The primary quality of the feminine is Eros, or relatedness. In her healthy state, the anima animates a man's life; a wounded anima creates a pattern of animosity in his relationships.

Another way in which both anima and animus make themselves known is projection.

### Projection

The persona is the conscious correlate of the anima and animus. (CW7:359)

The persona is the face we turn outward. The anima or animus is the face we turn inward. Because our personas portray our sex – a woman develops a feminine persona and a man creates a masculine persona – the face we present to our inner or unconscious realm is contra-sexual. These inner faces are archetypal...the animus and

the anima. They are inherited possibilities of ideas and they are given form through projection.

In other words, the face that we show to the outer world has a complementary or opposite face that is shown to the inner world. A woman's persona or conscious face is feminine; the face then that she presents to the inner world is masculine – her animus. And vice versa. A man displays his masculine persona outwardly and his inner woman faces the unconscious.

These two figures from the dark hinterland of the psyche are the semi-grotesque “guardians of the threshold” between the life of the unconscious and the conscious ego. They inhabit the twilight sphere. They are independent and autonomous inner personalities which complicate our lives and relationships. They cannot be integrated into consciousness while their contents remain unknown. (CW7:339)

How do we come to know the contents of the contra sexual parts of ourselves? One way is through dreams and fantasies. Another is through projection.

Jung observes that “the archetype is an indefinite structure which can assume definite forms only in projection.” (CW9i:142) That is the value of projection. It offers us a picture of something unconscious within us. It is difficult, though, to recognize projection because what we see in the other person is so obviously real and true, in our experience of that person. When we are sure about something in another person, it's a good idea to step back and ask ourselves, “Are you sure??”

As long as the anima/animus is unconscious, everything that they stand for is projected.

### Stages of Development

Jung noted that there are four stages in the development of the anima throughout life. The developmental level of a man's anima shows up in dream images and in the kind of woman that attracts him. These stages are identified with women's names: Eve, Helen of Troy, the Virgin Mary and the biblical Sophia.

1. Eve represents all that is natural, instinctual and biological. Here the anima is tied up with the image of woman as faithful provider of nourishment, security and love. The man often chooses a woman who gives him no psychological space to discover himself emotionally. She either pampers him or hen pecks him. Home is his castle or prison and does not challenge him to grow up. The man with this kind of anima cannot function well without a vital connection to a woman, and he is easy prey to being controlled by her. The role of mother is projected onto the significant woman in his life.
2. Helen of Troy personifies a collective sexual image of Woman. This is a romantic and aesthetic level that still includes sexual elements. Other women that could represent this stage of anima development are Marilyn Monroe, Madonna, Angelina

Jolie, Melania Trump. The “hot” trophy wife brings the man value in the outer world. Threatened by a woman’s substance, this man prefers superficiality in the relationship. The man under this anima-spell is often a Don Juan who engages in repeated sexual adventures. These will invariably be short-lived for two reasons: 1) the man has a fickle heart, and 2) no real woman can live up to the expectations that go with this unconscious ideal image.

3. Virgin Mary raises Eros, or love, to the heights of spiritual devotion. The chivalry of King Arthur’s knights portrays this attitude. Devotion was sworn to an individual woman and did not necessarily include sexual consummation. Today this anima stage manifests in religious feelings and a capacity for genuine friendship with women. A man with an anima of this kind is able to see a woman as she is, independent of his own needs. He can differentiate between love and lust, and is not driven by his sexual needs. His connection with his inner woman makes him secure in his masculinity. He knows what he is about – knows his personal feelings, his strengths, and what is important to him personally. Because of this inner security, he can perceive a woman’s essence and not be threatened by it
4. Sophia is called Wisdom in the Bible. Here the man’s anima functions as a guide to his inner life. Sophia is behind his need to grapple with the grand philosophical issues of life and the search for meaning in life. She is the creative muse in an artist’s life; the man can receive the creative impulses that rise from his unconscious. Wisdom is the natural mate for the archetypal Wise Old Man in the male psyche. (Man and His Symbols, p. 195)

Stages of animus development are described by qualities rather than figures. These levels can be tracked by what kind of man attracts a woman, or through her dream images.

1. The man of physical power, such as Tarzan, James Bond or an athletic champion who personifies mere physical power. Here the woman sees the man as her stud-muffin and uses him to make babies, to satisfy her and protect her. She will attract and be attracted to an unconscious man. The abandoned/neglected animus acts out through laying down the law, harping on principles, arguing and domineering behaviours. This produces a disagreeable, irascible, emotional atmosphere.
2. The man of action, such as the war hero, the hunter or Mr. Fixit. This man displays initiative and has the capacity for planned action. The woman with this animus development expects her man to fight her battles for her, be they of a relational nature or tending to domestic problems like leaky faucets and paying the bills. She projects the role of the father onto him.
3. The man of the Word – the orator – shows up in dreams as a professor or priest, clergyman or statesman. Obama has appeared in many women’s dreams as an animus figure. A woman with this level of animus development has a high regard for traditional learning; she is able to sustain creative work and looks for ways of



exercising her mind. She can relate to a man not only as a husband and father, but also as a lover and individual in his own right.

4. The wise guide to spiritual truth is represented by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Dalai Lama. This kind of animus gives the woman spiritual firmness, an invisible inner support that compensates for her outer softness. This firmness combined with her feminine connection to the psychic depths makes her more receptive than a man to new creative ideas.

When the anima/animus remain unconscious and unrelated to, men have irrational moods, women have irrational opinions. (CW9ii:35) Men must take their moods and feelings seriously. Women must examine their opinions for their personal stance.

The animus carries the Logos energy, which is associated with the Word, or mind. Therefore his activity happens in the mind of a woman, delivering either a crippling word or a creative word. Through dialogue, she must instruct him about what is important to her, what she values and what she stands for. In her inner world, the crippling word then transforms into the creative word, supporting her perceptions, inspirations and talents. So enlivened, her presence enlivens others.

The anima brings Eros, or relatedness, to a man. A devalued anima injects animosity through emotional touchiness; a valued anima animates a man's relationships. If he interacts with the anima out of authentic respect and curiosity, she will lead him to understand his moods and feelings. When connected with his emotions, he can relate to others with warmth and can access the Self within. This transforms animosity into a masculine presence that animates life in himself and in others.

Bringing the contents of these archetypes into awareness transforms their projection-making natures into bridges to the Self. It is from the Self that we receive guidance toward greater wholeness, which is the goal of individuation. We will look at individuation next week.