

# Anima and animus

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The **anima and animus** are described in Carl Jung's school of analytical psychology as part of his theory of the collective unconscious. Jung described the animus as the unconscious masculine side of a woman, and the anima as the unconscious feminine side of a man, each transcending the personal psyche. Jung's theory states that the anima and animus are the two primary anthropomorphic archetypes of the unconscious mind, as opposed to the theriomorphic and inferior function of the shadow archetypes. He believed they are the abstract symbol sets that formulate the archetype of the Self.

In Jung's theory, the anima makes up the totality of the unconscious feminine psychological qualities that a man possesses and the animus the masculine ones possessed by a woman. He did not believe they were an aggregate of father or mother, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, or teachers, though these aspects of the personal unconscious can influence a person's anima or animus.

Jung believed a male's sensitivity is often lesser or repressed, and therefore considered the anima one of the most significant autonomous complexes. Jung believed the anima and animus manifest themselves by appearing in dreams and influence a person's attitudes and interactions with the opposite sex. Jung said that "the encounter with the shadow is the 'apprentice-piece' in the individual's development ... that with the anima is the 'masterpiece'".<sup>[1]</sup> Jung viewed the anima process as being one of the sources of creative ability. In his book *The Invisible Partners*, John A. Sanford said that the key to controlling one's anima/animus is to recognize it when it manifests and exercise our ability to discern the anima/animus from reality.

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## Origin

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## **Anima**

Anima originated from Latin, and was originally used to describe ideas such as breath, soul, spirit or vital force. Jung began using the term in the early 1920s to describe the inner feminine side of men.<sup>[2]</sup>

## **Animus**

Animus originated from Latin, where it was used to describe ideas such as the rational soul, life, mind, mental powers, courage or desire.<sup>[3]</sup> In the early nineteenth century, animus was used to mean "temper" and was typically used in a hostile sense. In 1923, it began being used as a term in Jungian psychology to describe the masculine side of women.<sup>[3]</sup>

# **Levels of anima development**

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Jung believed anima development has four distinct levels, which in "The psychology of the transference" he named *Eve*, *Helen*, *Mary* and *Sophia*. In broad terms, the entire process of anima development in a man is about the male subject opening up to emotionality, and in that way a broader spirituality, by creating a new conscious paradigm that includes intuitive processes, creativity and imagination, and psychic sensitivity towards himself and others where it might not have existed previously.

### **Eve**

The first is *Eve*, named after the Genesis account of Adam and Eve. It deals with the emergence of a man's object of desire.

### **Helen**

The second is *Helen*, an allusion to Helen of Troy in Greek mythology. In this phase, women are viewed as capable of worldly success and of being self-reliant, intelligent and insightful, even if not altogether virtuous. This second phase is meant to show a strong schism in external talents (cultivated business and conventional skills) with lacking internal qualities (inability for virtue, lacking faith or imagination).

### **Mary**

The third phase is *Mary*, named after the Christian theological understanding of the Virgin Mary (Jesus' mother). At this level, women can now seem to possess virtue by the perceiving man (even if in an esoteric and dogmatic way), in as much as certain activities deemed consciously unvirtuous cannot be applied to her.

### **Sophia**

The fourth and final phase of anima development is *Sophia*, named after the Greek word for wisdom. Complete integration has now occurred, which allows women to be seen and related to as particular individuals who possess both positive and negative qualities. The most important aspect of this final level is that, as the personification "Wisdom" suggests, the anima is now developed enough that no single object can fully and permanently contain the images to which it is related.

# **Levels of animus development**

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Jung focused more on the man's anima and wrote less about the woman's animus. Jung believed that every woman has an analogous animus within her psyche, this being a set of unconscious masculine attributes and potentials. He viewed the animus as being more complex than the anima, postulating that women have a host of animus images whereas the male

anima consists only of one dominant image.

Jung stated that there are four parallel levels of animus development in a woman.<sup>[4]</sup>

## **Man of mere physical power**

The animus "first appears as a personification of mere physical power - for instance as an athletic champion or *muscle man*, such as 'the fictional jungle hero Tarzan'".<sup>[5]</sup>

## **Man of action or romance**

In the next phase, the animus "possesses initiative and the capacity for planned action...the *romantic* man - the 19th century British poet Byron; or the *man of action* - America's Ernest Hemingway, war hero, hunter, etc."<sup>[6]</sup>

## **Man as a professor, clergyman, orator**

In the third phase "the animus becomes the *word*, often appearing as a professor or clergyman...the bearer of the word - Lloyd George, the great political orator".<sup>[6]</sup>

## **Man as a spiritual guide**

"Finally, in his fourth manifestation, the animus is the incarnation of *meaning*. On this highest level he becomes (like the anima) a mediator of...spiritual profundity".<sup>[7]</sup> Jung noted that "in mythology, this aspect of the *animus* appears as Hermes, messenger of the gods; in dreams he is a helpful guide." Like Sophia, this is the highest level of mediation between the unconscious and conscious mind. In the book *The Invisible Partners*, John A. Sanford said that the key to controlling one's anima/animus is to recognize it when it manifests and exercise our ability to discern the anima/animus from reality.<sup>[8]</sup>

## **Anima and animus compared**

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The four roles are not identical with genders reversed. Jung believed that while the anima tended to appear as a relatively singular female personality, the animus may consist of a conjunction of multiple male personalities: "in this way the unconscious symbolizes the fact that the animus represents a collective rather than a personal element".<sup>[9]</sup>

The process of animus development deals with cultivating an independent and non-socially subjugated idea of self by embodying a deeper *word* (as per a specific existential outlook) and manifesting this word. To clarify, this does not mean that a female subject becomes more set in her ways (as this word is steeped in emotionality, subjectivity, and a dynamism just as a well-developed anima is) but that she is more internally aware of what she believes and feels, and is more capable of expressing these beliefs and feelings. Thus the "animus in his most developed form sometimes...make[s] her even more receptive than a man to new creative ideas".<sup>[10]</sup>

Both final stages of animus and anima development have dynamic qualities (related to the motion and flux of this continual developmental process), open-ended qualities (there is no static perfected ideal or manifestation of the quality in question), and pluralistic qualities (which transcend the need for a singular image, as any subject or object can contain multiple archetypes or even seemingly antithetical roles). They also form bridges to the next archetypal figures to emerge, as "the unconscious again changes its dominant character and appears in a new symbolic form, representing the Self".<sup>[11]</sup> - the archetypes of the Wise Old Woman/Man

# Jungian cautions

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Jungians warned that "every personification of the unconscious - the shadow, the anima, the animus, and the Self - has both a light and a dark aspect....the anima and animus have dual aspects: They can bring life-giving development and creativeness to the personality, or they can cause petrification and physical death".<sup>[12]</sup>

One danger was of what Jung termed "invasion" of the conscious by the unconscious archetype - "Possession caused by the anima...bad taste: the anima surrounds herself with inferior people".<sup>[13]</sup> Jung insisted that "a state of anima possession...must be prevented. The anima is thereby forced into the inner world, where she functions as the medium between the ego and the unconscious, as does the persona between the ego and the environment".<sup>[14]</sup>

Alternatively, over-awareness of the anima or animus could provide a premature conclusion to the individuation process - "a kind of psychological short-circuit, to identify the animus at least provisionally with wholeness".<sup>[15]</sup> Instead of being "content with an intermediate position", the animus seeks to usurp "the self, with which the patient's animus identifies. This identification is a regular occurrence when the shadow, the dark side, has not been sufficiently realized".<sup>[15]</sup>

## References

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1. Jung quoted in Anthony Stevens *On Jung* (London 1990) p. 206
2. "The definition of anima" (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/anima>). [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com). Retrieved 2018-05-31.
3. "The definition of animus" (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/animus>). [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com). Retrieved 2018-05-31.
4. Jung, Carl. *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, Dvir Co., Ltd., Tel-Aviv, 1973 (originally 1917)
5. M.-L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation" in Carl Jung ed., *Man and his Symbols* (London 1978) p. 205-6
6. von Franz, "Process" p. 205-6
7. von Franz, "Process" p. 206-7
8. Sandford, John A. *The Invisible Partners: How the Male and Female in Each of Us Affects Our Relationships*, 1980, Paulist Press, N.Y.
9. von Franz, *Process* p. 206
10. von Franz, *Process* p. 207
11. von Franz, *Process* p. 207-8
12. von Franz, "Process" in Jung, *Symbols* p. 234
13. C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London 1996) p. 124
14. C. G. Jung, *Alchemical Studies* (London 1978) p. 180
15. Jung, *Alchemical* p. 268

## Further reading

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- *The Invisible Partners: How the Male and Female in Each of Us Affects Our Relationships* by John A. Sanford (Paperback – Jan 1, 1979).

## External links

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- Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism website (<http://aras.org/>)
- Sample image with scholarly commentary: Hall of the Bulls at Lascaux ([https://web.archive.org/web/20080616233747/  
http://search.aras.org/record.aspx?ARASNUM=1Cb.501](https://web.archive.org/web/20080616233747/http://search.aras.org/record.aspx?ARASNUM=1Cb.501))
- Jung on the anima (<http://psikoloji.fisek.com.tr/jung/anima.htm>) and animus (<http://psikoloji.fisek.com.tr/jung/animus.htm>)

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