

“Laban’s Goddess and Demon – healing parities of power”

Conference Proceedings, *Bratislava in Movement*, Bratislava, SK 2009

An extract from *Anima and Animus Embodied: Jungian Gender and Laban Movement Analysis*
“Body, Movement, Dance and Psychotherapy” Journal of Research, Theory and Practice, Vol. 4.
©July 2009 Taylor and Francis
By Janet Kaylo

The following paper will serve as a template for a two-part practical workshop. It is extracted from elements contained in a longer article, published July 2009 online, December 2009 in print. The original article outlines polarized features of Jung’s theory of contrasexuality – in the Anima and Animus – then correlates binary movement qualities found in Laban Movement Analysis with these archetypal figures as per Jung’s description, with other feminist commentaries, and contemporary perspectives on Jung’s gendered theory. Finally, it is suggested that working to equalize movement value, and encouraging all qualities of movement mastery in both sexes could begin to challenge what we may still perceive through a patriarchal cultural lens as strength and power. Many of these concepts have been challenged in contemporary culture, but few have included movement characteristics that might accompany them. The intent of this movement correlation is to present dynamically oscillating attributes which can be accessed through movement experience: as a means of supporting personality integration; deepening understanding of the ‘meaning’ of movement; as well as initiating a movement proposition to promote greater parity in expressions of power. A general outline of qualities which accompany Jung’s and Laban’s masculine and feminine polarities will appear as annotations at the end of this paper.

Carl Jung carried on a life-long love affair with his anima (or internal feminine figure), utilizing this inner presence as a bridge to his creative unconscious. From these inner experiences, he elaborated a theory of Anima and Animus operating in all human psyches, thus contributing another theory of opposites which are interwoven with his typology and other archetypal groundwork in Analytical Psychology. As archetypal figures associated with ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ qualities, Anima and Animus appear as significant constellations of human expression, both impacting and being impacted by the vagaries of a particular time and culture. While the archetypes are themselves timeless and unchanging, their manifestations can reflect the prejudices of the time, individual experience, and various interpretations of the conscious mind (Douglas, 1985).

Personified roles of Anima and Animus Jung delineated as innate, contrasexual complementarities present in the unconscious of each gender: the ‘feminine’ anima in a man’s, and the ‘masculine’

animus in a woman's. Jung saw the contrasexual qualities of anima and animus – also drawn from qualities of Eros and Logos – as avenues to the unconscious for each sex, specifically providing access into undeveloped parts of ourselves. Integration of these characteristics Jung considered one of the greatest tasks along the path of individuation, including the practice of vigilance to their appearances in our lives. He claimed that without allowing these polarities of quality into conscious identity and expression, the anima or animus is of necessity projected onto others – to the detriment of both sexes.

In Jung's cultural milieu, he saw this projection taking place when a woman projects her unconscious animus onto men, and a man his unconscious anima onto women. When projected rather than acknowledged and integrated as an innate contrasexual quality, the projection contains aspects born from unconscious fantasy, as well as seeming to fall within 'negative' cultural stereotypes associated with that gender and related to the individual's experiences. Furthermore, when either a man or a woman becomes 'possessed', as Jung referred to an overtaking of one's mentality by an unconscious complex, and the contrasexual quality is dissociated and personified, a man's behavior might be characterized, for example, by the negative feminine's 'touchiness, sentimentality, and resentment', while a woman's response might express a negative male's 'assumptions that lay claim to absolute truth'. Thus, a man possessed by his anima would exhibit negative qualities of the 'female' [in his culture?], and the response in a woman would likewise manifest as a negative version of a male. Still, as living, independent figures in the collective unconscious, the Anima and Animus Jung considered available to every man and woman as a vital connection for balance and integration, summarizing with the radical statement: a man is 'also a woman, and a woman also a man' (Jung cited Douglas, 2000).

Since Jung's time, social roles for men and women (and their corresponding movement characteristics) have expanded considerably – but certainly not entirely, just yet. James Hillman carried Jung's theory of the contrasexual archetype into a more modern context, by suggesting that a sexually-defined, social polarization in quality could be repressed by *either* sex: for example, a more animus-like woman might repress her anima-like traits, while an anima-like man might repress his (socially inscribed?) animus characteristics. In either case, the repressed, socially-gendered characteristics for each sex would fall under the 'shadow', and a therapeutic approach would include working to integrate these hidden qualities for either gender.

Particularly in Depth Psychology, therapeutic treatment would include, for either the man or the woman in this case, working to integrate necessarily the 'other' or disowned sexual characteristics which remain outside conscious identity: that is, integrating qualities more closely associated with the positive female [in the culture?], and those with the male, regardless of sex. While this transposing requires a leap from Jung's initial definitions – which were associated specifically within biological identity – Hillman's move takes the anima/animus theory into a contemporary western social context, while still focusing on integration of repressed masculine or feminine aspects of the personality. Hillman suggests, for example, “when a man's ego shows a preponderance of classical anima traits, then the unconscious is represented by the chthonic male shadow” (Hillman, 1985). These unconscious traits might be slowly drawn into consciousness through (movement) work that identifies these opposite, repressed qualities within, and creates greater access to them.

Rudolf Laban, a movement theorist and contemporary of Jung's, similarly schematized polarities of power and expression, notably in his 'idealized' movement descriptions of 'the Goddess and the Demon' – with still obvious gendered inference. Like Jung, Laban promoted availability for both

ranges of expression (masculine and feminine, goddess and demon), encouraging both men and women to develop mastery of the polarities in movement: for balance of the personality, as well as having a broad range of expressive potential in life and in art.

Laban and Jung were equally interested in the values and qualities of the 'feminine', from both psychological and physical perspectives. Both were living in times when opening to the unconscious as Eros – the artistic, expressive, nature-centered, feeling side of human nature – was the theme of exploration in psychology and the arts. Thus, identifying Eros or Anima qualities of expression in art, the unconscious, *and* in life held a place of passion for each of them. (One cannot forget, as well, that these were men creating theories of polarity and power specifically within their cultural norms, which included interpreting Eros from a 19th century Romantic perspective.) For Jung, these polarities are distinctly drawn from within patriarchal splits between Thinking and Feeling, Logos and Eros, and then correlated with men and women.

Perhaps in Laban's artistic (rather than psychological) environment, men and women could more easily choose to draw on a varied expressive palette than they could in Jung's. However, Laban seemed no less taken with 'the feminine' than Jung was: it was clearly his way of life to have relationships with many women, at different times in different places, sire children and, even, oftentimes, to leave them. His associations with women were distinctly creative, and seemed to inspire particular developments of his work. Jung's long-standing extra-marital affair with Toni Wolff, who appears to have carried for Jung many of the positive aspects of his internal anima, likely helped him to stay 'alive' in the flesh with the mysterious and inspiring influences he ascribed to his anima. While Laban, no doubt, had more social freedom in Bohemian and artistic circles to express an attraction and appetite for anima qualities in the flesh - particularly in terms of sheer quantity –

Jung built a large part of his psychological framework with the help of his internal anima's influence and effect.

As one part of his forays into polarized movement dynamics, Laban utilized a depiction of the mythological Goddess and Demon to exemplify *fighting* and *indulging* qualities in movement, terming this dynamic palette of opposing qualities *Antrieb*, or in English translation, *Effort*. Effort qualities manifested in these idealized figures as *States* and *Transformation Drives*, combining with predominantly fighting qualities in the Demon, and indulging qualities in the Goddess. Laban stated that “[a]ll effort action or reaction is an approach towards values, the primary value being the maintenance or achievement of the balance needed for the individual's survival” (Laban 1988). The movement qualities expressed in a ‘multiple interplay of effort patterns’ also demonstrate the motives behind behavior: in fighting against or indulging attitudes towards the motion factors of weight, space, and time. As basic aspects of value, these movement qualities polarize for Laban in psychological attitudes of ‘hatred and love’ – with the relationship between those two poles mirrored in a character or individual's behavior. The Goddess as an idealized character would express the emotion of love in fundamental movement behavior that demonstrates tolerance and acceptance in weight, time, and space, with movement mainly deriving from a basic effort action of what Laban termed *Float* – that is, movement with predominantly gentle, sustained and flexible elements. ‘Hatred’ he symbolized with the image of a *thrusting* demon who fights against weight, time, and space with movements that are predominantly strong, sudden, and direct.

A ‘mere mortal’, Laban explains, will also demonstrate various admixtures of these elements, while carrying more complex variations; but, still, there will be qualities that tend to repeat themselves or that one continually returns to more frequently, depending on what is inherently valued in that

individual or character: qualities of hatred or love/fighting and indulging. These elements can be seen easily in interactions where values are polarized, even when they momentarily take on their opposite: as when a more fighting individual works to manipulate an indulging one, and there is a momentary expression of softness followed by a return to the fighting qualities once a desire to communicate tolerance, for example, is expressed. Likewise, a more indulging character may utilize fighting elements momentarily – to make a point or to defend against attack – but, overall, will move with qualities that demonstrate an inner attitude of ‘smoothing out the effects of strife and discord’, (Laban, 1988) rather than by holding hard against them, or continuing to stir them up.

Laban acknowledges that these are ‘crude simplifications’, but considers them useful for understanding aspects of characterization. Further to the purpose of our movement explorations in polarized figures, even in the case of the stereotyped goddess and demon Laban states that one can begin to see mutations in their effort qualities, where movement adaptations ‘can establish meeting points with their opposites’.

Laban also qualified two of his Icosahedral spatial scales as being of a masculine and feminine quality, by altering phrasing that creates either a curving connection of movements in space, versus a sharper more angular phrasing. Performing the two different scales also tends to emphasize the two poles of Effort quality described in his fighting and indulging delineations.

When we move to the next generation of Laban-based movement theorists, we find Warren Lamb – one of Laban’s last protégés – identifying pairings of movement features in Effort and *Shape* which persist across cultures, and occur in different combinations in men and women. While Lamb’s are not ‘polarized’ qualities as Laban’s or Jung’s might have been – nor do they begin with a cultural

stereotype of men and women but come rather from actual observations of real people – they do still tell a story of a tendency toward *vulnerability* as recurrent combinations of elements for women, and the demonstration of *protection* or *safety* in repeating movement combinations for men. Lamb's observations include differences in *Flow – Bound* and *Free* – when combined with the motion factors of weight, space, and time; as well as including the body's *Kinesphere* growing with convex or concave shapes. Both men and women can and do these combinations, but Lamb has observed a decided tendency for men to combine Bound Flow with fighting Effort qualities, while women have a tendency to combine Free Flow with these same Effort qualities. He has also observed more frequently men will grow in the Kinesphere while creating concave Shape, while women tend to grow in the Kinesphere with more convex body Shape. When a woman grows with convex Shape, she is left vulnerable to the environment; a man's concave, or closing Shape combined with a growing Kinesphere remains more protected. In Effort, Binding Flow with fighting qualities (which he has seen as a tendency in men) creates an element of control, while moving with Freeing Flow and fighting qualities renders a movement expression with less precision.

Combined together, Jung's expressive Anima/Animus, the movement of Laban's Goddess and Demon and two spatial scales, and Lamb's observations of men and women present a detailed and differentiated framework for 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics worthy of closer examination. If particular movement qualities and combinations are utilized expressively in one gender with significant frequency over the other, it becomes especially important to flesh out further how these qualities might be socially construed and, even more importantly, might contribute to limitations of expression for each gender.

The two-part workshop will offer an opportunity to explore images and feelings associated with these qualities, individually and in storied interactions; including opportunities to discuss personal and collective interpretations of movement as demonstrations of power.

A general outline of the Laban's movement delineations annotated below, is followed by some versions of Jung's Anima and Animus as personified qualities.

The Goddess

Action Drive

The Demon

Float

Flexible, Gentle, Sustained

Thrust

Direct, Firm, Sudden

1st mutation

Glide

Direct, Gentle, Sustained

Slash

Indirect, Firm, Sudden

2nd mutation

Wring

Indirect, Firm, Sustained

Dab

Direct, Gentle, Sudden

3rd mutation

Flick

Indirect, Gentle, Sudden

Press

Direct, Firm, Sustained

Both move in Stable, Near, and Awake States, which are bridges to configurations of the Action Drive qualities above. Differences in their qualities appear in italics.

Stable State combinations

Gentle and Flexible

Gentle and Direct

Firm and Flexible

Firm and Direct

Gentle and Direct

Firm and Flexible

Near State combinations

Gentle and Sustained

Firm and Sustained

Gentle and Sudden

Firm and Sudden

Firm and Sustained

Gentle and Sudden

Awake State combinations

Flexible and Sustained

Direct and Sudden

Direct and Sustained
Flexible and Sudden

Direct and Sustained
Flexible and Sudden

In the other Transformation Drives, *Passion, Vision, and Spell*, Laban allows for the Goddess and Demon to be characterized with either Free or Bound Flow in varying combination of weight, space, and time.

In the first Transformation to Passion Drive, the Demon exhibits Firm and Sudden movement with Bound or Free Flow; while the Goddess demonstrates Gentle and Sustained with Bound or Free Flow.

In Vision Drive, the Demon demonstrates Direct and Sudden with any Flow quality, with the Goddess as choosing Flexible and Sustained with any Flow.

In Spell Drive, the Demon is shown with Firm, Direct, and any Flow; the Goddess with Gentle and Flexible with any Flow quality.

In the States associated with these three Drives, their qualities do not differ, as one element is always Flow, and each demonstrates one of each of the fighting and indulging attitudes towards weight, space, and time. (Laban, 1988)

Qualities of Jung's Anima and Animus

Anima

Irrational
Diffuse
Ambiguous
Submissive
Flexible
Relational
Feeling

Animus

Rational
Discerning
Judgmental
Assertive
Constrictive
Discriminating
Thinking

References

Douglas, C. (2000). *The woman in the mirror: Analytical Psychology and the feminine*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.com.

Hillman, J. (1985). *Anima*. Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.

Kaylo, J. (2009). *Anima and Animus Embodied: Jungian gender and Laban Movement Analysis. Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*, Volume 4.

Laban, R. (1988). *The Mastery of Movement*. Plymouth, UK: Northcote House Publishers, Ltd.