

# From Identification with the *Anima* to Dialogue with Emotions: A Case Study in Analytical Psychology

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## Abstract

This article analyzes a series of recurring dreams from a fictitiously named patient, Miguel, an adult man facing emotional conflicts, symptoms of irritability, and shortness of breath. Based on Jung's symbolic hermeneutics, the study proposes the hypothesis that a recurring unknown and possessed female figure in the dreams acts as a mediator between consciousness and repressed emotional contents, indicating a compensatory process of the unconscious. This figure is interpreted as a manifestation of the *anima* as an autonomous complex, whose constellation reveals an ongoing unconscious affective dynamic. The analysis aimed to understand the characteristics and effects of the phenomenon of identification with the *anima* in the patient's psychic life, describing how the emerging symbolism of the dreams fostered a gradual approach to his affects. A reduction in symptoms and an improvement in emotional regulation were observed, suggesting a process of psychic differentiation in development. The interpretative approach adopted in this study is grounded in Jung's foundational formulations, in line with Shamdasani's (2003) observation that many Jungian concepts have been displaced from their original contexts in contemporary reinterpretations of analytical psychology.

## Conflicts of interest:

The author states no professional or personal interest that may create a conflict of interests regarding this manuscript.

## Descriptors

Complex, junguian psychology, individuation (psychology).



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## Da identificação com a *anima* ao diálogo com as emoções: um estudo de caso em psicologia analítica

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### Resumo

Este estudo de caso analisou uma série de sonhos recorrentes de um paciente ficticiamente chamado Miguel, um homem adulto que enfrenta conflitos emocionais, sintomas de irritabilidade e falta de ar. Com base na hermenêutica simbólica de Jung, o estudo propôs a hipótese de que uma figura feminina desconhecida e possuída, presente nos sonhos, atua como mediadora entre a consciência e os conteúdos emocionais reprimidos, indicando um processo compensatório do inconsciente. Essa figura é interpretada como manifestação da *anima* enquanto complexo autônomo, cuja constelação revela a dinâmica afetiva inconsciente em curso. A análise buscou compreender as características e efeitos do fenômeno da identificação com a *anima* na vida psíquica do paciente, descrevendo como o simbolismo emergente dos sonhos favoreceu uma aproximação gradual com seus afetos. Observou-se uma redução dos sintomas e uma melhora na regulação emocional, o que sugere um processo de diferenciação psíquica em desenvolvimento. A abordagem interpretativa adotada neste estudo teve como base as formulações fundacionais de Jung, em consonância com a observação de Shamdasani, que aponta o deslocamento de muitos conceitos junguianos quando retirados de seus contextos originais nas releituras contemporâneas da psicologia analítica.

### Descritores

Complexo, psicologia junguiana, individuação (psicologia).

## De la identificación con el *anima* al diálogo con las emociones: un estudio de caso en psicología analítica

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### Resumen

Este estudio de caso analizó una serie de sueños recurrentes de un paciente a quien se le dio el nombre ficticio de Miguel, un hombre adulto que enfrenta conflictos emocionales, síntomas de irritabilidad y falta de aire. Teniendo como base la hermenéutica

simbólica de Jung, el estudio propuso la hipótesis de que una figura femenina desconocida y poseída, presente en los sueños, actúa como mediadora entre la consciencia y los contenidos emocionales reprimidos, indicando un proceso compensatorio del inconsciente. Se interpreta a esa figura como la manifestación del *anima* como complejo autónomo, cuya constelación revela la dinámica afectiva inconsciente en marcha. El análisis procuró comprender las características y efectos del fenómeno de identificación con el *anima* en la vida psíquica del paciente, describiendo cómo el simbolismo emergente de los sueños facilitó la aproximación gradual con sus afectos. Se observó una reducción de los síntomas y una mejora en el ajuste emocional, lo que sugiere un proceso de diferenciación psíquica en desarrollo. El enfoque interpretativo adoptado en este estudio se basa en las formulaciones fundamentales de Jung, en línea con la observación de Shamdasani, que señala el desplazamiento de muchos conceptos junguianos cuando se los extrae de sus contextos originales en las relecturas contemporáneas de la psicología analítica.

### Descriptor

Complejo, psicología junguiana, individuación (psicología).

## Introduction

**This case study** in analytical psychology focused on the analysis of a series of six dreams of an adult patient fictitiously named Miguel, who is undergoing psychotherapy with weekly 50-minute sessions. Miguel lived in a family environment where he could not express his emotions without receiving reprisals and negative remarks. This occurred specifically in relation to his sexuality - as a homosexual man, he reported having suffered from family homophobia for a long time, which impacted the way he experienced his sexuality and his emotional relationships. The consequence was a repressed and unfulfilled sexual life, compounded by the constant anger he felt in his family environment. His relationship with his mother was also marked by emotional challenges, as he perceived her as a frequently irritable and depressive woman with whom he could not engage in dialogue without the eruption of sudden emotions, such as anger.

The patient began psychotherapy due to constant irritability and recurrent shortness of breath, symptoms that emerged when he started his professional and conjugal life. Miguel underwent medical examinations, such as spirometry, which ruled out any mechanical alteration in the lungs, as well as any other physical health problems. Based on the medical results, the symptoms were analyzed from a psychological perspective, in which the dreams revealed

personifications of the phenomenon of identification with the *anima*.

The dream series that will be reported demonstrated the interrelationship between the dreams and the evolution that unfolded in the manifestation of symbolism in the patient's unconscious. In this sense, this qualitative case study encompasses a descriptive research approach which, following Gil's (2008) definition, aims to describe the characteristics of a given phenomenon. Accordingly, the objective of this work was to describe the characteristics of the phenomenon of identification with the *anima* and its consequences on the patient's emotional and psychological life, as well as to describe the process of emotional integration facilitated by the dreams.

### **The empirical concept of the *anima***

This article was developed based on the work of C. G. Jung (1875–1961) and on the initial formulations of his empirical concepts, drawing on Shamdassani's (2003) observation that many of these concepts undergo displacement when removed from their original contexts in contemporary reinterpretations. Although such reinterpretations have contributed to bringing analytical psychology closer to current debates, they often distance themselves from the empirical and descriptive foundations that supported Jung's studies - an aspect that, from the perspective of this work, raises an important epistemological question. In view of this, the present study makes use of the concept of *anima* as developed by Jung, understanding it as a psychic function that, in men, mediates between consciousness and the collective unconscious.

When employing the term "feminine" in reference to the *anima*, it is necessary to clarify that it does not refer to a biological or sociocultural dimension of gender, but to the psychic function related to the principle of *Eros*, which establishes a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious in the male psyche. According to Jung (1951/2021a), the *anima* corresponds to the psychic image of the feminine that a man carries in his unconscious, without referring to a literal or essentialist understanding of femininity. Considering the broadening of the concept in current discussions, this distinction becomes crucial to delineate the focus adopted in this study, which concentrates on the original formulation of the concept as it appears in the symbolic manifestations of the unconscious, emerging spontaneously in Miguel's dreams.

The dream series analyzed seems to corroborate this hypothesis: the figure of the possessed woman repeatedly acts as a mediator of

the bond between consciousness and unconscious contents, performing a relational function that evokes the dynamics of Eros, as described by Jung (1951/2021a). Thus, the understanding of the *anima* as a psychic function finds, in this case, empirical support in the symbolism that emerges from the dream material.

Jung (1951/2021a) observed that the masculine consciousness is oriented by the differentiating principle of *logos*, while the unconscious harbors a compensatory feminine principle, termed *anima*. This psychic function places man in contact with unconscious contents through the principle of *Eros*, being especially activated in moments of affective mobilization. When constellated with intensity, the *anima* tends to dramatize affects, generating emotional instability - particularly when, in his adaptive process, a man represses aspects such as sensitivity and affectivity, which are often culturally devalued in masculine identity.

This repression accumulates an inferior femininity in the unconscious, attracting the presence of an internal feminine figure. Jung (1964/2022) affirms that, when tracing the origin of uncontrolled emotions in a man, we frequently find the autonomous activity of the *anima* as a psychic personality. This autonomy can lead to possession, when thoughts or affects dominate consciousness, representing, according to Jung (1959/2020c), the ego's identification with a complex. In this state, the *anima* mobilizes emotions in an autonomous and inferior way, interfering with the individual's psychic stability.

Jung (1928/2015b) warns that, as long as it remains an autonomous complex, the *anima* hinders the development of the personality; however, when its personal aspects are brought to consciousness, its personification dissolves, and it begins to function as a mediator between consciousness and the unconscious. As Moura (2022) highlights, this internal exchange may foster the individuation process - an aspect that will be examined, in some of its properties, in this study through the analysis of the dream series.

## Archetype and complex: a brief differentiation

Throughout this study, the *anima* will be analyzed both in its manifestation as an affective complex and as an archetype of the collective unconscious. According to Shamdasani (2003), for Jung the archetype is understood as a universal and innate psychic structure that guides human experience through formal predispositions that organize affects, fantasies, and behaviors. In this sense, Jung conceived archetypes as a priori conditions of the psyche, similar to Kantian categories. As his research progressed, he distinguished the archetype in itself - unrepresentable and psychoid

- from its manifestations in archetypal images, which emerge clothed in cultural and personal contents, as noted by Shamdasani (2003).

This differentiation makes it possible to understand that archetypes are not inherited images, but structural forms that organize psychic and symbolic content, conferring upon them a typically human form. According to Jung (1954/2017a), the complex consists of an autonomous and affect-laden psychic formation that emerges from the interaction between the archetype and personal experiences. In the case analyzed, the image of the possessed woman expresses an autonomous complex constellated in Miguel's psyche, linked to the archetype of the *anima*, which simultaneously functions as a content that structures and organizes his symbolic imagination.

## Method

The dreams analyzed were recorded by Miguel in a dream journal, following the guidelines of analytical psychology. The entries were made according to the model suggested by Jung (1934/2024), with the page divided into three columns: (1) dream description, faithfully transcribing the dream content; (2) context, with associations and emotions evoked; (3) personal interpretation, intended for spontaneous reflections on the subjective meaning of the dream experience. The dreams were recorded over the course of one year of clinical follow-up and organized in chronological order. Six dreams were selected to ensure a balance between analytical depth and feasibility.

The analysis was based on the symbolic hermeneutics proposed by Jung and further developed by Penna (2009), who also emphasizes the symbol as the best possible formulation of an unconscious factor. The author states that the symbol's dual nature (conscious and unconscious) constitutes the object of study of analytical psychology and demands a specific interpretative attitude: symbolic thinking, which articulates directed thinking and fantasy thinking. From this perspective, hermeneutics is configured as a reading of the unknown through analogies and comparisons, with every interpretation being a hypothesis and a provisional attempt to translate the unconscious into the language of consciousness. As Pinheiro (2021) points out, Jung's empirical concepts are intended, pragmatically, to serve as instruments rather than fixed answers. For this reason, in this study they were used not as rigid theoretical presuppositions, but as descriptive tools evoked from the patient's symbolic experience.

To deepen the meaning of the images, the method of amplification was employed (Jung, 1987/2023), which operates through concentric movements around the symbolic image by means of personal amplifications and mythological and archetypal resonances, aiming at greater clarity of its content. The interpretation of the dreams considered both the object level, when the images refer to external situations, and the subject level, when they express internal aspects of the personality. The prospective and retrospective dimensions were also taken into account: while the former reveals potential directions for the development of the psyche, the latter illuminates past experiences that have not yet been integrated, showing the rooting of the symbol in the dreamer's personal history.

The analysis initially prioritized listening to the emotions, memories, and associations mobilized in the patient. The concepts addressed in this study function as tools for the understanding and description of the presented material and were evoked by the empirical content itself - rather than applied externally to Miguel's experience. Throughout the dream series, it is possible to observe that the image of the unknown and possessed woman recurs in all dreams, with a coherent symbolic constellation. From this pattern, the mediating function of the unconscious and the emotional relations involved, the concept of *anima* will be employed as a means of describing Miguel's experience, relating it to what Jung has already observed and described about this phenomenon. This methodological stance toward the symbol is emphasized by Pinheiro (2021).

According to Jung (1954/2017a), every psychological observation presupposes the personal equation of the observer. Therefore, the understanding of Miguel's dream material depended on the relationship I have with the constitution of my personality and own unconscious. Acknowledging this fact does not invalidate the analysis but emphasizes that it developed from a dialectical encounter between the researcher and the phenomenon. In this sense, the analysis of the material that follows is not definitive but rather a reflection of my individual experience with the patient.

## **Ethical considerations**

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under CAEE: 86745425.2.0000.5221. The patient understood and signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF). No information that could identify him will be disclosed, and the clinical discussions were limited to the analysis of the dream material. Details regarding the psychotherapeutic process were not included.

## Results

### First dream

I dreamed that I was in a room with an unknown woman, dressed in white and a virgin. She was possessed by a demon, and I could not see her face. I approached this woman to talk, and she looked at me; then the demon said: "I need the blood of a virgin so that the Antichrist can be born." Upon hearing this, I was startled and realized that there was also a priest in the room with a Bible, who merely observed [sic] (patient Miguel).

Dreamer's amplifications: the room reminded him of a place of intimacy. The possessed and unknown woman made him think of his mother, who also has frequent outbursts of anger. The statement "I need the blood of a virgin so that the Antichrist can be born" frightened him greatly, since the Antichrist, for him, represents evil and all that is corrupted. Regarding the priest with the Bible, what caught his attention was his apathetic and passive demeanor.

### Analysis

It is possible to observe in this dream a significant psychological mobilization being prepared in Miguel's inner world. The birth of the Antichrist from the blood of a virgin may represent a conflict between opposites - in contrast to Christ, who was born immaculately, the dream presents the emergence of the Antichrist from virginal blood and flesh. Jung (1951/2021b) recognizes that the traditional figure of Christ constitutes an image of the psychological manifestation of the self, while the Antichrist represents the shadow side of this archetype: the undifferentiated and obscure counterpart of the human personality. By emphasizing the one-sidedly perfect figure of Christ, Jung highlights the need for a psychic complement that aims at balance, when he states: "The coming of the Antichrist is not just a prophecy of a prophetic nature, but an inexorable psychological law" (Jung, 1951/2021b, para. 77, p. 58).

In Miguel's dream, the coming of the Antichrist, through the sacrifice of the virgin, can be understood as an image that evokes the emergence of the self in its destabilizing aspect, heralding a moment of psychological crisis and transformation. According to Edinger (1985/2006), the classical victim of sacrifices, in mythological terms, is usually something pure and immaculate, representing the process of sacrificing the innocent state of

consciousness. Von Franz (1993/2010) states that this process only becomes possible through a split in consciousness, which brings about a corresponding emotional disturbance and compels the individual to examine his inner nature. In this case, the task seems to be mediated by the figure of the *anima*, who conveys an enigmatic statement to the dreamer and establishes a bridge of dialogue with unconscious contents. The association made between this figure and his mother is relevant, since, as Jung (1959/2020b) reported, the relationship of the *anima* to the mother is not limited to projection but also involves the introjection of maternal values and affects that shape the way men deal with their own emotions. Therefore, based on the dreamer's associations and the dream images, it can be considered that the emotional character of his possessed *anima* is related to emotional aspects tied to the maternal figure.

The apathetic priest seems to personify a spiritual crisis and the absence of an inner authority figure capable of assisting in the conflict. In psychological terms, the dream also evokes the transformation of Miguel's religious function, which will be reorganized on other symbolic foundations throughout the course of the dream series.

## Second dream

I am with the possessed woman, whom I do not know. I was a doctor, and I was taking care of her and trying to place her on a stretcher to restrain her, because she was out of control in the hospital. Two other women who were nurses were with me. The possessed woman emanated some kind of energy that was very strong, and I began to feel weak. I felt that I was fainting (patient Miguel).

Dreamer's amplifications: he associated the possessed and unknown woman with his irritable mood. The nurses and the hospital reminded him of a place of healing and care. The loss of consciousness in the dream reminded him of his moments of outbursts of anger.

## Analysis

It is interesting to note that Miguel's amplifications are in harmony with the psychic movement mobilized by the dreams, suggesting the beginning of a possible process of transformation of the principle of *Eros*. In contrast to the previous dream, the dreamer, in the role of a doctor responsible for caring for the possessed woman, adopts a more active stance toward the image of the *anima*. Such

a configuration may indicate the beginning of a dialogue and receptivity to this inner figure and to the emotions she personifies.

However, the presence of the *anima* as an autonomous complex carries an intense emotional tone, which causes the dreamer to faint. This points to the strength that this complex exerts over his consciousness, since, in his altered state of mood, there seems to be an unconscious factor directly influencing his emotions and reactions. At the time he had this dream, Miguel reported frequently experiencing shortness of breath and recurrent irritability.

### Third dream

I am in my mother's house, in her living room. The possessed woman appeared; she was in the bathroom of the house. I tried to keep her contained in the bathroom using the strength of my mind. But that was not enough, because the woman managed to get out of the bathroom. Then I picked up a magic wand and cast the *expecto patronum* spell to restrain her. I succeeded and put the woman back inside the bathroom. At the moment I entered, I noticed that she was wearing a white tank top and jeans, and I could see her face. I looked at her face and said: "Now you will fall asleep" [sic] (patient Miguel).

Dreamer's amplifications: the possessed and unknown woman represents his current emotional condition. The *expecto patronum* spell is a cultural element he knows from the Harry Potter saga, being a magic used against the Dementors - creatures that drain people's energy until death (Rowling, 1999). His mother's living room represents a place of comfort but also of many conflicts. The bathroom refers to a place of purification. From these images, the patient began to recount his relationship with his mother and the emotional conflicts between them. Miguel said that he constantly saw his mother irritated and that he also felt the same emotion toward her, but until then had never had the opportunity to speak about it.

### Analysis

I observe that, in this dream, the image of the *anima* enters Miguel's family intimacy. The attempt to exorcise the possessed woman returns and suggests an effort to expel emotional contents that seem to compromise his psychic balance. The dreamer manages to contain the woman through a magical resource rather than by the force of his mind, which may indicate that his conscious efforts

to deal with this inner figure are not sufficient, making it necessary to resort to archetypal elements mobilized by the unconscious.

The use of the *expecto patronum* spell ("I summon a guardian") is especially significant, since in the Harry Potter saga it is used against creatures that drain the characters' vital energy (Rowling, 1999). Psychologically, Miguel seems to be seeking a symbolic way to protect himself from the complex constellated in the unconscious. According to Jung (1954/2017a), a negative and autonomous complex tends to limit the freedom of the ego, diverting psychic energy from consciousness to itself. This process may manifest in automatic behaviors or intense emotional states, such as those experienced by Miguel.

Finally, the possessed woman rests in the bathroom, a place that can symbolically be associated with purification, following Miguel's amplification. She now has a visible face and wears ordinary clothes, which suggests a more personal image. These elements indicate a possible process of differentiation and incarnation of the *anima* figure, with the fact that she falls asleep at the end of the dream being interpretable as an act of care by the dreamer toward the feminine aspect of his inner life.

#### Fourth dream

I was with my mother, and we entered a wooden house together. It was a dark, old, and messy place. We encountered the possessed woman. My mother became frightened and tried to leave the house, but she could not open the door. I also tried to open the door but could not. The possessed woman came up to me and said: "Do you know what will happen if you marry her?" She looked at me with a macabre smile, and her face was rotten. Hearing this, I became very irritated and began again to try to exorcise her. I stretched out my hand toward the woman and asked Jesus Christ to help me, but nothing happened, and she became increasingly aggressive. Realizing this, I said that I would invoke the goddesses of the Great Mother, and I asked Hecate to help me. I spoke her name countless times, and the demon was expelled. Afterward, I saw the woman lying on the ground unconscious. I felt compassion for her and stretched out a white mantle to cover her (patient Miguel).

Dreamer's amplifications: the old and messy house reminded him of an episode when, stressed, his mother locked him alone inside the house and left without saying where she was going. He recalls feeling desperate, trying to open the windows and doors of the

house, but they were all locked. He does not remember how the situation ended. The possessed and unknown woman referred him to his emotional world. Jesus Christ reminded him of the divine and spiritual. He reported not having a spiritual relationship with Hecate but said he knew she was a goddess of nocturnal terrors. Regarding the statement of the possessed woman - "Do you know what will happen if you marry her?" - Miguel felt it was a warning, indicating that he could not marry someone under those conditions, especially since the woman's face was rotten.

### Analysis

The memory evoked by this dream suggests a negative aspect of the maternal complex that still influences Miguel's emotions, contributing to a state of psychic disorganization symbolized by the old house. In the dream, the mother also attempts to flee, which may personify an aspect of maternal Eros that avoids confronting the constellated inner conflicts. The confrontation with the *anima* manifests once again through the enigmatic statement of the possessed woman. According to von Franz (1970/1999), an *anima* that expresses itself through riddles has not yet found its place in the psyche, requiring a conscious effort for its contents to be understood - a process that already seems to have begun with Miguel. Regarding the marriage with the *anima*, Jung states: "Marriage with the *anima* is the psychological equivalent of complete identity of consciousness with the unconscious. Since such a state is only possible in the case of a total absence of psychological self-knowledge (. . .)" (Jung, 1954/2018, para. 433, p. 109). Thus, in Miguel's case, to unite symbolically with the figure of the possessed *anima* could bring serious psychological implications, as the dream itself warns.

Although the exorcism begins with a prayer to Jesus Christ - a figure that, for Miguel, evokes spirituality and protection - it is only effectively completed with the invocation of Hecate. According to Neumann (1959/2021), Hecate is a lunar goddess linked to shadowed pathways, restless spirits, and the deepest aspects of the unconscious. Her presence in the dream suggests that the transformation of the *anima* will require Miguel to establish a relational contact with his shadow contents, pointing toward a possible healing of the feminine through the principle of Eros evoked by Hecate. The final gesture of covering the woman with a white cloth, which Miguel associates with purification and care, indicates a movement of receptivity and may represent a more integrative approach to the figure of the *anima*.

## Fifth dream

The possessed woman was determined to take her own life. She was on the balcony of my mother's apartment, and I watched everything from the garden until I once again tried to exorcise the woman by extending my hands toward her. She became even more irritated with my attempt at exorcism and threw herself off. As she fell and hit the ground, the demon that was inside her left her body and ended up in the Garden - it was a child. I went down to the garden to look at the situation more closely, and the woman said to me: "The child you loved now smells of death." The demon-child then began to run toward my mother's house. I went again to the woman - who was no longer possessed - to see how she was, and she told me that she wanted to go to my mother's house to take care of that demon/child who was her son [sic] (patient Miguel).

Dreamer's amplifications: his mother's house represents a place of conflict. The possessed and unknown woman reminded him of his emotional state. The suicide made him think of the ending of a cycle, while the enigmatic statement uttered by the woman about the child brought reflections on his childhood and the conflicting emotions he felt toward his mother. Regarding the end of the dream, he expressed surprise that the woman wanted to care for the demon after everything that had happened, but he felt that it was the right thing to do.

## Analysis

It can be noted that the figure of the *anima* appears disorganized and sensitive to the dreamer's attempts at exorcism. As he seeks to elaborate and assimilate the contents mobilized by the dreams, there also seems to be an intensification of the unconscious reactions. The suicide of the possessed woman can be understood not only as a symbol of transformation but also as an expression of emotional impulsivity that requires attention and discernment. At the time Miguel had this dream, he reported that his emotional impulses were strongly tied to sexuality in a compulsive way, which brought him significant relational and affective difficulties.

On the other hand, it is possible to identify a movement of unconscious self-regulation when the demon separates from the figure of the *anima* and begins to seek care. Such an image suggests that emotions previously undifferentiated are beginning to acquire their own form. Jung (1954/2017b) observes that demons often represent personified affects: "(. . .) In the pre-psychic stage, and even today in poetic language, which owes its strength to its

vital primitivism, emotions and affects are frequently personified in the form of a demon (. . .)" (para. 627, p. 285).

The fact that this demon assumes the form of a child and is welcomed by the woman who was previously possessed - who now appears maternal - indicates a possible symbolic shift. The archetypal image of the child functions as a preparation for the future - one of its central meanings, according to Jung (1959/2020a) - and suggests that Miguel's personality may be reorganizing to allow for future transformations. When the *anima* declares that "the child you loved now smells of death," this may be interpreted as a rupture with immature aspects of the personality. Although Miguel still presents emotional reactions associated with childhood, one may observe in the unconscious a movement toward the acceptance and development of these emotions. It is important to emphasize that the figure of the *anima* assumes its maternal aspect and makes its own *Eros* available to care for that which once tormented him, showing that the dreamer seems to be entering into relation with contents that had previously been unconscious and distressing.

### Sixth dream

I find myself in the living room of my mother's house, conducting a psychotherapy session with an unknown woman, and I was her therapist. I remember that she was very sad and downcast. I told her that we needed to talk more about anger, since anger would be the guiding thread of the therapy (patient Miguel).

Dreamer's amplifications: Miguel said that the unknown and sad woman is related to his own emotional state, revealing that he felt very tired and even more irritated with his mood swings. Seeing himself in the role of therapist, he reported that he considered this a positive position, since he was undergoing an analytic process. Once again, he emphasized that his mother's house in the dream referred to his repressed emotions from the time he lived there, and that only now was he realizing how much that place had impacted his mind.

### Analysis

Miguel's associations are increasingly related to the psychic process unfolding within his inner life. This dream reveals an advance compared to the previous ones: the woman is no longer possessed by a demon, she acquires a human character, and she appears in analysis with the dreamer, who assumes the position of therapist

rather than exorcist. The scene suggests that Miguel is beginning a dialogue with the unconscious, represented by the figure of the *anima*, with whom he specifically addresses the issue of anger - the central emotion in the constellated complex.

According to Jung (1928/2015b), confrontation with the unconscious aims to achieve a mental state in which its contents no longer manifest as autonomous complexes, thus ceasing their expression as an *anima* phenomenon. In Miguel's case, the disorganized and impulsive emotions associated with this inner figure seem to be approached from a more conscious and reflective attitude. The fact that the dreamer assumes the role of therapist of the *anima* points to an attempt to receive and elaborate these contents in a more integrated way. Thus, this dream can be understood as the expression of a possible transition of the *anima* from an autonomous complex to a more assimilated psychological function.

## Discussão

According to the dream material, it is possible to formulate the hypothesis that Miguel was guided by a feminine figure who connected him to his repressed and undifferentiated emotional world. According to Jung (1951/2021a), this figure is the *anima*, which personifies the unconscious in the male psyche and functions as a psychological mediator between consciousness and the unconscious. Jung (1921/2023) states that we can infer the character of the *anima* from the character of the conscious attitude - that is, in Miguel's case, his external attitude was emotionally inexpressive, and despite the high irritability he was experiencing, he did not engage in dialogue with his emotions. In short, his inner attitude, personified by the *anima*, was possessed and was mobilized by the unconscious to compensate for the one-sidedness of his external attitude.

With regard to the levels of interpretation, there was a predominance of the subject level, since the analysis sought to understand the dreams in terms of Miguel's inner dynamics, especially his relationship with the *anima* and with the maternal complex. However, the object level of interpretation was also considered, insofar as his dreams referred to his relationship with his mother and the family environment. Miguel's amplifications were fundamental to this work, as they contributed to the understanding of the symbols at a deeper and more individual level.

The intense manifestation of the *anima* reveals the patient's prolonged state of stagnation and unconsciousness in relation to his emotions. Initially, Miguel's dreams disclosed an unconscious

reaction to emotional contents neglected and repressed since childhood, a process that triggered identification with the *anima* and manifested in excessive emotionalism, irrational sexual impulsivity, and mood swings. Another factor to be considered is the dreamer's relationship with his mother and the negative influence of the maternal complex, which shaped the way he experiences his emotions. This aligns with Jung's (1959/2020b) assertion that the *anima* is intermingled with the maternal image in the male psyche.

However, Jung (1928/2015a) emphasizes that the unconscious also has an autonomous and constructive function oriented toward the development of the self, often activated by the outbreak of neurosis, as seen in this case of identification with the *anima*. Beyond personal contents, the autonomous complex generated an intense emotional charge that connected his consciousness to the archetypal images of the Antichrist, Jesus Christ, Hecate, and the possessed and unknown woman. The recurring image of the possessed woman and the repeated attempts at exorcism suggest an intense process of differentiation of the *anima* as an autonomous complex. Regarding the importance of dreams in the identification of the complex, Jung states:

Dream psychology shows us, with complete clarity, that complexes appear in personified form when they are repressed by an inhibiting consciousness (. . .). In such cases, their assimilative power is revealed in a very particular way, because the unconsciousness of the complex even helps to assimilate the ego, resulting in a momentary and unconscious modification of the personality, called identification with the complex. In the Middle Ages, this thoroughly modern concept had another name: it was called possession." (Jung, 1954/2017a, para. 204, p. 45).

Jung (1959/2020c) observes that one of the characteristics of identification with the *anima* in the life of the individual is the modification of the inner structure of the personality, when the ego becomes identified with an autonomous complex and the archetype. However, by becoming aware of this process through his dreams, Miguel was able to establish a more reflective dialogue with his emotions, partially integrating these contents through the individuation process mobilized in the unconscious. Consequently, the symptoms diminished considerably; the difficulty in breathing gradually lost intensity after the last reported dream, suggesting that the autonomous *anima* complex may have catalyzed both psychic and physical reactions. Nevertheless, I advised the patient to seek medical follow-up should the symptom return, which so far has not been necessary. Emotional fluctuations still occur, but to a lesser

degree and without dominating the patient as at the beginning of psychotherapy. This has positively impacted his sexuality, helping him to discipline his emotions and to understand the space they currently occupy in his life. Regarding his mother, Miguel stated that the analysis of the dreams helped him to see her with greater empathy and humanity, as well as to better understand the influence of this relationship in his life.

It is important to emphasize that although the personal aspects constellated in the figure of the *anima* - as an autonomous complex - may be partially integrated into consciousness through the process of differentiation and symbolic elaboration, its archetypal dimension, by virtue of its psychoid nature, remains unrepresentable and therefore not assimilable into consciousness. According to Jung (1955/2020), archetypes are formal structures of the psyche that operate as organizing nuclei of the psychic system. Although they manifest in symbolic images, they are not capable of integration into consciousness.

From the synthetic-constructive method, it is possible to formulate the hypothesis that the symbols analyzed mobilize the recovery and integration of the feminine principle (*Eros*) in the patient's life, through a movement of compensation by the unconscious. This compensation, according to Jung (1928/2015a), should not be understood as a rationalist idea or theoretical construction applied to experience, but rather as a psychic phenomenon observed empirically. It is a process of self-regulation of the psyche, in which the unconscious acts in relation to the attitude of consciousness, seeking to restore an inner balance.

In Miguel's dreams, this compensatory function manifests through symbolic images that not only express repressed contents but also propose, in an irrational and creative way, new possibilities of relating to affects and to the unconscious. The analysis of the dream series shows that compensation does not operate as an intellectual correction, but as a psychic impulse that emerges from the autonomous dynamics of the psyche itself, requiring of consciousness a symbolic listening and an effort of integration, as Jung (1928/2015a) emphasizes.

As an analytical stance, I followed the tendency put forward by the unconscious, seeking to analyze the dynamics of the symbolic material together with Miguel. From this process, the recurring personification of the possessed woman in the dreams dissolved, giving way to other manifestations of the *anima* - the last dream in this study being an example. According to Jung (1942/2013), such movement reveals the necessity of "irrationalizing" the goals of analysis, setting aside previously established aims in order to accompany the spontaneous course of the unconscious. It is in

listening to this inner Direction - paradoxical, as it encompasses both the rational and the irrational - that Jungian analysis finds its strength, allowing the symbol to fulfill its transformative function by integrating opposites and reorganizing psychic life according to its own ends.

## Final considerations

From the analysis of Miguel's dreams, it was possible to formulate the hypothesis that the dream image of the possessed woman represents the presence of the *anima* in a state of possession, manifesting repressed emotions and the dreamer's unconscious feminine. This hypothesis emerged from the symbolic recurrence of this figure, from the personal amplifications, and from the animic movement identified in the dream series. Throughout the dreams, a process of approach, dialogue, and confrontation with this figure was observed which, although initially threatening, seemed to lead Miguel on a journey of psychic transformation.

The dreams analyzed not only reveal the psychological challenges faced by Miguel but also point to the healing potential that lies in the integration of unconscious contents. Symbolic interpretation, grounded in Jung's method, was an essential tool for mediating the relationship between Miguel and his unconscious, highlighting the clinical importance of this approach in the understanding of the processes that were mobilized.

This study also demonstrates, in an empirical way, the central function of the concept of the *anima* as a mediator between consciousness and the collective unconscious. Although contemporary discussions in analytical psychology emphasize the gender implications of the concepts of *anima* and *animus*, proposing important reinterpretations for the present time, one can observe a distancing from Jung's foundational formulations. As Shamdasani (2003) notes, many Jungian concepts have been removed from the contexts in which they emerged, acquiring high plasticity. This distancing sometimes weakens their descriptive power. In view of this, the present work chose to employ them in their foundational formulation, as elaborated by Jung, precisely because of their descriptive and organizational capacity.

Throughout the analysis of the dreams, fundamental aspects of analytical psychology emerged spontaneously: the personification of autonomous complexes, the identification of the ego with unconscious contents (or possession), the compensatory and prospective function of dreams, the mediating role of the *anima*, and the self-regulation of the unconscious. These phenomena were not theoretically projected onto the material but were drawn from

the symbolic listening and dialogue with Miguel's subjective experience.

The uniqueness of the patient's experience reinforces the importance of considering the psychic totality of each individual, respecting their history and personality. Analytical psychology, by valuing the dialectical relationship between consciousness and the unconscious, enables the analyst to understand that the individuation process is singular in each being. Thus, this study does not seek to universalize its findings but to offer a situated reading of an individual case. Finally, it is important to highlight Miguel's active role in listening to the symbols, in his amplifications and reflections, which was fundamental to the therapeutic process and to the construction of the clinical hypothesis sustained in this study.

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