

# Carl Jung's Concepts of the *Anima* and the *Animus*, and the Artifice of Stereotypical Gender Constructions in Aidoo's *Changes: A Love Story*

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## Abstract

*Ama Ata Aidoo is a West African female writer from Ghana. As such, her works have largely been interpreted within the matrix of African/postcolonial feminist aesthetics. But how Carl Jung's psychoanalytic concepts of the anima and the animus can be related to her feminist aesthetic vision has remained unexplored. In this paper, using these concept of Jung as a hermeneutic tool for the actions and inactions of Esi and Oko (Aidoo's major male and female characters in **Changes: A Love Story**), I argue that what Aidoo explores with her novel is the artifice of stereotypical gender constructions. As such, I contend that these concept of Jung are crucial/critical to Aidoo's imaginative work because they allows her to portray her two major characters as androgynous/hermaphrodite beings as a means of complicating and problematizing normative gender boundaries.*

**Keywords:** Jung, anima, animus, stereotypical, gender, Aidoo, *Changes*

## Introduction

Ama Ata Aidoo is a West African female writer from Ghana. In fact, her novel, *Changes: A Love Story*, relates the story of three working class Ghanaian/African women: Esi, Opokuya, and Fausena in terms of how they negotiate and renegotiate the conflict between their traditional roles as African women and their new role as career women occasioned by African modernity. In narrating their story, however, Aidoo highlights three levels of consciousness. On one extreme is Esi who wholly buys into and sustains her new role of a modern and independent African woman in the face of African modernity as against Fausena at the other extremity who uncritically upholds the traditional role assigned to African women. In between is Opokuya who tries as much as possible to synthesize the two polemical positions. Apparently relying on the synopsis of this novel which is very much the same to a more or less degree with the other creative works of Aidoo in which her major female characters are often confronted with the conflict between traditionalism and modernism, Aidoo's works have largely been interpreted within the matrix of African/postcolonial feminist aesthetics.

Waleska Saltori Simpson, for instance, inserts Aidoo's works within the framework of this matrix when she remarks that Aidoo "is a celebrated writer and critic, as well as an African nationalist and feminist" who "has focused much of her work on the portrayal of African female identity in literature" (155). As is already too obvious, Simpson imbricates Aidoo's works within the framework of an African feminist aesthetics. Relying heavily on Aidoo's claim that her aesthetic vision is to carve out a new image of independent womanhood for the African, Simpson in her essay sets out to show how Aidoo uses Esi to illustrate what this new independent womanhood might entail and its attendant consequences for the African woman in the sphere of romantic love. Engaging Kirsten Holst Petersen's argument that Aidoo employs the traditional Akan dilemma tale to defend "romantic love" and "the right to live through the heart ...in a Western sense," Simpson argues otherwise that Aidoo's deployment of the Akan dilemma tale in *Changes* "is not a clear endorsement of romantic love," but "an enquiry into what constitutes the appropriate kind of love for an African woman like Esi." (157). Although Simpson insists that by writing about love, Aidoo also writes about politics, and that she is not just concerned about the romantic life of her protagonist, but also with other issues that arise from it (158), the fact remains that far from investigating how Aidoo uses Esi and Oko to problematize and complicate gender stereotypical roles as I intend to do in this paper, Simpson interrogates the new image of the African woman in the sphere of romantic love.

As might also be already obvious, Kirsten Holst Petersen's "Antagonistic Feminisms and Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes*" with which Simpson's paper engages in an intertextual debate is very much the same like the latter's intervention. Petersen, for instance, sees Aidoo's *Changes* as a "provocation that works between and against the various positions of African and Western feminisms to explore the question of modern-day African female identity" (qtd in Simpson 156). Petersen's and Simpson's works are very much the same to the extent that they both interrogate how Aidoo employs her novel to create a new image for/of the African woman. If there is any difference, it is the fact that while Petersen focuses on the tension between African and Western brand of feminism in the creation of this new African female identity, Simpson concentrates on the dilemma confronting the new African woman in the sphere of romantic love.

It is also the dilemma confronting the modern and independent African woman that Nada Elia takes as her subject in the analysis of Aidoo's *Changes*. But while Simpson's engagement is with the modern African woman's predicament in the

context of romantic love, Elia's interpretative lens focuses on the quandary of the African working woman. As she herself remarks, "whereas Western feminism tends to focus on working women chafing under the glass ceiling, Aidoo presents us with the more concrete reality of African woman's limiting factors, an unadorned portrayal of the complex web of frustration making up the everyday lives of contemporary West African women" (136). The plight of contemporary West African women with which Elia is concerned within the imaginative world of Aidoo is not that of women in general in the West African sub-region, but that of working class women who have to combine their domestic duties with their secular job responsibilities. Elia affirms this perspective as the focus of her analytic lens when she notes that "the traditional division of labor within the household allocated the bulk of the chores to women, thus placing extreme time constraints on working women" (136). She insists that in *Changes*, Aidoo "does not pretend to represent all West African women in Accra" (137), rather what Aidoo presents to her readers are three different middle-class working women: "the secular, divorced professional (Esi); the wife/mother/nurse/midwife, also secular (Opokuya); and the contemporary Muslim, veiled, running a successful business and extremely bitter about polygyny (Fausena)" (137 – emphasis added). Certainly, what engages the attention of Elia as in the intervention of Simpson and Petersen is not that with which I am engaged in the present critical endeavour. As is apparent, especially in the case of Elia, what attracts her interrogation is the dilemma confronting African middle-class working women represented by Esi, Opokuya, and Fausena; and their different levels of feminist consciousness: and not the artifice of gender stereotypical roles/construction that attracts my hermeneutics in this paper. While I am concerned with the dilemma confronting Esi, it is not as an African middle-class working woman but as a hermaphrodite or anthropomorphic being who walks in and out of female and male gender roles. Moreover, as against Elia's focus on the three major female characters in Aidoo's narrative, my concentration is just on Esi in contrast to her husband, Oko.

Another work that has analysed Aidoo's *Changes* is Maria Olausen's "About Lovers in Accra – Urban Intimacy in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes: A Love Story*" in which she asserts that Aidoo's texts "deal with a postcolonial reality where both customary and common law rules of marriage apply" (61). She insists that Aidoo's *Changes* "is both a continuation of and a challenge to the well-known theme in African women's writing of women's suffering and confusion due to changing ideas of marriage and motherhood" (61). It is evident that, like in Simpson's, Petersen's, and Elia's readings; Olausen's concentration in Aidoo's

*Changes* is not on the artifice of stereotypical gender construction, but its thematic preoccupation on the changing ideas of marriage and motherhood as a result of the African encounter with colonialism. Her work is, therefore, very much in the mould of that of Simpson, Petersen, and Elia since what she examines is the plight of the African woman in the face of colonial/African modernity, which translates to the plight of the modern and independent African woman.

In addition to the foregoing readings is that of Ginette Curry which investigates “the various social, economic, and cultural conflicts and challenges Ama Ata Aidoo’s female characters experience” in Ghana “in their post-independence urban environment...” (179). Relying on an interview with Ada Uzoamaka Azodo in which Aidoo remarks that “I called the book *Changes*, because I see primarily a character like Esi the protagonist as being a part of those who are trying to define, or even redefine woman as a lover, as a wife, as a mother, as a daughter, even as a granddaughter....That’s why I called the book *Changes*” (qtd in Curry, 179), Curry sets out to interrogate the challenges faced by Aidoo’s three major female characters, and their different responses. Concentrating on the twin theme of love and career, Curry sees *Changes* as a novel that “addresses the issue of a woman’s life, her loves, career and so on and how they change” (181). Thus, how Carl Jung’s psychoanalytic concepts of the *anima* and the *animus* can be related to Aidoo’s feminist aesthetic vision has remained unexplored. In this paper, using these same Jung’s concepts of the *anima* and the *animus* as hermeneutic tool for the actions and inactions of Esi and Oko (Aidoo’s major female and male characters in *Changes*), I argue that what Aidoo explores with her novel is the artifice of stereotypical gender roles/constructions. As such, I contend that these concepts of Jung are crucial/critical to Aidoo’s creative/imaginative work because they allows her to portray her two major characters as androgynous/anthropomorphic/hermaphrodite beings as a means of complicating and problematizing normative gender boundaries. Yet their being anthropomorphic/hermaphrodite beings is not owing so much to the fluidity of their actions and inactions as it is the fact that as female and male, they are still able to demonstrate characteristics that are antithetical to their gender within the expectations of the environment in which they operate.

### **Jung's Concepts of the *Anima* and the *Animus***

However, the point needs to be stressed that Jung's concepts of the *anima* and the *animus* have been heavily criticized by feminist critics. For instance, it is the view of Naomi R. Goldenberg that:

No amount of hymns to woman's marvelous Eros can cover the insult to the female mind which lies at the base of the anima-animus theory. Although Jung and Jungians swear that the theory is 'scientifically' true and that the resulting feminine caricature is drawn from fact, they are touting an unproven fantasy constructed with questionable logic and little evidence. (725)

As far as Goldenberg is concerned, Jung's concepts of the *anima* and *animus* are unscientific and unproven fantasy which are not fair to the representation of the image of women. To her, what Jung's concepts promotes is women as primarily emotional beings with very little reasoning capacity or women as partial men who on rare occasions can aspire to be like men (725).

In a similar vein, Susan Rowland criticizes Jung with what she calls hysteria in Jung's theory (qtd in Jean Kirsch, 16). According to her, "We may say that Jungian writings contain a powerful misogynistic drive to collapse women into animas. Such theoretical hysteria significantly threatens to appropriate 'the feminine' rather than to allow the Other a voice" (16). Although she says this as a background to her onslaught of initiating the process through which the Jungian theory can be absorbed into modern critical discourse taking into account its marginalized garb in comparison to Freud's theory, the fact remains that she echoes the general reservations of feminists against Jung's theory.

But in this paper, Jung's concepts of the *anima* and the *animus* are not seen in the foregoing negative light. Rather they are seen with/from a positive lens. In contrast to Rowland's observation, for instance, I see Jung's theoretical concepts as giving women a voice rather than silencing them; and as empowering women rather than disempowering them. If a woman has as part of her traits that of a man, and a man has as part of his traits that of a woman; it then means that there is nothing with which a man can pride himself over a woman, and that there is no reason why a man should be privileged over a woman. Moreover, in contrast to Goldenberg's assertion that Jung's concepts present women as partial men, I argue that it is in the same vein that the same concepts present men as partial women. Therefore, contrary to most feminist reservations, what Jung's concepts

of the anima and the animus advance is not a one-sided privileging of one over the other; rather it is a two-sided or simultaneous privileging of the animus over the anima in the case of a male character, and the anima over the animus in respect of a female character. As Jung himself states “[t]he effect of anima and animus on the ego is in principle the same” (*Phenomenology of Self*, 16). Granted this argument, Jung’s concepts of the anima and the animus cannot be said to be misogynist. Although the masculine aspect represents high potentialities in Jung’s concepts, the fact remains that both men and women are embodiments of these potentialities; and as would be seen shortly, it is a woman in the character of Esi who demonstrates these high potentialities more than her husband, Oko, in Aidoo’s *Changes*. According to Jung, every male or female have both male and female tendencies. While a man also has his feminine side, a woman also has her masculine side (Edward Glover 48); and it is this feminine side of a man and the masculine part of a woman that is appellated as Jung’s concepts of the *anima* and the *animus*. Carl Jung himself describes the anima and the animus as the feminine aspect of a man and the masculine persona of a woman respectively. According to him:

The projection-making factor is the anima, or rather the unconscious as represented by the anima. Whenever she appears, in dreams, visions, and fantasies, she takes on personified form, thus demonstrating that the factor she embodies possesses all the outstanding characteristics of a feminine being. She is not an invention of the conscious, but a spontaneous product of the unconscious. Nor is she a substitute figure for the mother. On the contrary, there is every likelihood that the numinous qualities which make the mother-*imago* so dangerously powerful derive from the collective archetype of the anima, which is incarnated anew in every male child. (*Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, 13-14).

Since the anima is an archetype that is found in men, it is reasonable to suppose that an equivalent archetype must be present in women; for just as the man is compensated by a feminine element, so woman is compensated by a masculine one. (*Phenomenology of the Self*, 14)

If every man or woman has within him/herself the traits or persona of a woman or man from a collective unconscious, it then means that every man or woman is half masculine and half feminine.

Charles Rycroft affirms this in his *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* when he notes that the anima and the animus are “Jungian terms describing the unconscious female image in men and the unconscious male image in women” (7). Similarly, in his own *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, Andrew M. Colman explains that the anima is “the feminine principle as represented in the male unconscious” (38); and that the animus is “the masculine principle present as an archetype in the female collective unconscious” (39). It is, therefore, in the foregoing sense that every man or woman within the framework of the Jungian anima and animus is an androgynous and hermaphrodite being. G. Adler says as much when he defines the anima and animus concepts as “the feminine and masculine psychic powers, the unconscious and conscious poles of the personality,” which “are united in a psychic totality to which – to use the language of alchemy – we could apply the symbol of the hermaphrodite” (qtd in Glover 49). Difficulties, however, arise when a woman allows her animus (masculine part) to overshadow her anima (feminine nature) or when a man allows his anima (feminine aspect) to overshadow his animus (masculine side). In the words of Glover, the anima and animus concept “represents not crude sexual elements but rather what might be called *tertiary* sexual characteristics, refined and elevated to an archetypal plane from which nevertheless it may on occasion exercise an influence sufficiently potent to disrupt the psyche. In general, the anima is viewed as the mysterious, veiled female form, a kind of idealized, sometimes admonitory figure” (48) to the man, just as the animus is the veiled male idealized figure to the woman.

Closely linked to Jung’s concepts of the anima and the animus is his (Jung’s) concepts of the Eros and the Logos. According to Jung, “The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros” (*Phenomenology of Self*, 14); and in the same way with the concepts of the anima and the animus, the Jungian Eros and Logos are the possession of both the man and the woman. Jung himself remarks that “Just as the anima becomes, through integration, the Eros of consciousness, so the animus becomes Logos; and in the same way that the anima gives relationship and relatedness to a man’s consciousness, the animus gives to a woman’s consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge” (*Phenomenology of Self*, 16). As can be seen, while Eros is the female principle or persona in man; Logos is the male persona in woman. Therefore, whatever explanation of Eros and Logos that is provided illuminates the understanding of what the concepts of the anima and animus are all about. Moreover, whenever Jung or any other critic speaks of Eros

and Logos, they are in the same sense/breath speaking of the concepts of the anima and the animus.

### **The Artifice of Gender Construction**

With the concepts of the anima/Eros and the animus/Logos, Jung however hints at the artifice of stereotypical gender construction. Jung himself insists:

I see in all happenings the play of opposites, and derive from this conception my idea of psychic energy. I hold that psychic energy involves the play of opposites in much the same way as physical energy involves a difference of potential, which is to say, the existence of such opposites as warm and cold, high and low. (*Modern Man*, 138)

The “opposites” of which Jung speaks within the anima and animus archetype is not so much the binary opposition of the Deconstructionists in which the first item in the binary opposition is the privileged one in relation to the other. Rather it is the opposites or polemical nature that exist within/in every man and woman, which makes them hermaphrodite or androgynous beings. Although Chris Ackerley sees it as an anthropomorphic insolence, when Protagoras insists that “man is the measure of all things” (81), he (Protagoras) hints at the anthropomorphism which is the lot of man. Man is both good and bad, strong and weak, nature and nurture, spirit and body; and if the expression man is to be used in a generic sense, man is both man and woman as woman is both woman and man. Not surprisingly, De Man insists that “anthropomorphism is not a trope like metaphor and metonymy, for it assumes an entity that precedes substitution” (qtd in Sara Guyer, 39). Used in this sense, anthropomorphism is not so much the relationship between two opposites or the meaning potential an entity in a binary opposition provides for the other entity, but the existence of two opposites or what has been described as dualism in a single entity.

It is this same meaning that the term hermaphrodite conveys. Simply put, a hermaphrodite being is a person or animal having both the female and male organs. Derek Badenbaugh describes a hermaphrodite body as “neither wholly male (nor) female” (414). It is apparent that it is because of the presence of both the female and male characteristics in a single body that Badenbaugh argues that such body is simultaneously not female or male. And writing about the aesthetic function such a body can perform, Badenbaugh argues that Laurence’s (the protagonist’s) hermaphrodite body in Julia Ward Howe’s *The Hermaphrodite* “destabilizes his culture’s assumed cohesion between gender, sex, and sexuality”



(416). It is the same assumption of the cohesion between gender and sex that I see the Jungian concept of the anima and the animus destabilizing as well as problematizing. In this way, Jung appears to posit that if in addition to normative biological and societal gender traits, a man or a woman also has what can be considered antipathy and conflicted gender traits; it then follows that there is no need of having strict gender stereotypical roles or gender binaries.

Jung himself admits to having repeatedly advised husbands that “Look here, your wife has a very active nature, and it cannot be expected that her whole existence should centre round housekeeping” (*Modern Man*, 97); and Cary Levine describes traditional women work as sewing, cleaning, cooking” (82). Thus, housekeeping that is generally regarded, especially within the African socio-cultural milieu, as a woman’s sole responsibility is here being overturned by Jung. Without specifically saying so, Jung might as well have been advocating that a man can carry out housekeeping duties as much as a woman. If a woman whose active nature overrides her passive one cannot be expected to solely carry out domestic chores, it concomitantly stands to reason that for a man whose passive nature dominates his active one, his entire existence would revolve around housekeeping. It is in this context that Jung’s concepts of the anima and animus are related to the artifice of gender stereotypical construction/roles.

### **The Artifice of Stereotypical Gender Construction in Aidoo’s *Changes: A Love Story***

This artifice of gender construction is particularly evident in the characterization of Esi in Aidoo’s *Changes*. Jung holds that the unconscious has the power to either hinder or reinforce conscious intentions (*Modern Man*, 90). In the case of Esi, her unconscious strongly reinforces her conscious intentions. Having experienced the inferior position of girls/women to boys/men in her family, she consciously/unconsciously allows her animus to influence her action more than her anima. According to Simpson, Aidoo’s “writing has involved the reworking of previous, usually male-authored, literary stereotypes into believable characters, as well as an exploration of new, more complex roles for her female characters” (155). The new and complex role that Esi appropriates in all her actions to herself having seen the diminished position of women in her society is phallocratic privileges and authority. Not only does she “put her career well above any duties she owed as a wife” (*Changes* 8), but there is role reversal in everything between her and her husband.

The first of such role reversal is the work she does in comparison to her husband. Whereas she works as a statistician/data analyst, which is a senior staff position in a government establishment; her husband works as an “ordinary” teacher in a school. Within the framework of African modernity, Esi as a wife is the one who is supposed to work as a teacher in contrast to her husband who is supposed to be a senior staff in a government establishment. Nada Elia in her reading of Aidoo’s *Changes* appears to support this argument when she observes that “[w]hile their (women’s) economic contribution to the household is often vital to the well-being of their families, few women are formally employed, and most work in service industries. Seeking a career – rather than merely a second income – is thus viewed as unnatural, especially when that career is not itself in a primarily ‘feminine’ field” (136 – 137). Opokuya in *Changes* even acknowledges this as the phenomenon in the face of African modernity when she observes that: “Look, quite often, the first thing a man who marries a woman mainly for the quickness of her brain tries to do is get her to change her job to a more ‘reasonable’ one ... The pattern never, never changes. And then a ‘reasonable’ job is often quite dull” (45). So, even within African modernity, there are masculine as against feminine fields of work. While men are expected to be engaged in/with exciting and challenging jobs, women are to be engaged in/with jobs that do not task their intellect.

This is somewhat evident in the relationship between Ali and Fausena (his wife) in the same Aidoo’s *Changes* wherein Fausena is a petty trader in relation to her husband who is a businessman. Simpson even describes Fausena as a woman who although educated, “has had to lapse into the more traditional role of the woman trader and feels diminished by it” (155). Also, in the same *Changes*, Opokuya is a nurse/midwife in comparison to her husband who is a surveyor in a government establishment. Thus, Esi in contrast to Fausena and Opokuya breaks with traditional gender roles by taking up a male job in relation to her husband who takes up a “female” job. In this way, while Esi allows her animus to influence her actions more than her anima, Oko is dominated more by his anima (the unconscious female aspect of his being). If Aidoo’s position as a “female university teacher and writer is extremely uncommon” (Elia, 137), it is even more so for Esi as a Statistician/data analyst in a government establishment.

Esi’s animus (male potentialities) takes on different accretions as the story of the novel unfolds. It is by this token that the kind of training or education that Esi and Oko acquire to do the kind of job that they do also takes on ideological significance in Aidoo’s narrative, especially within the framework of Jung’s

concepts of the anima and the animus. The masculine or the feminine side of an individual is crucial in the individual's search for identity or fulfilment. In line with the Jungian theory, Joan-Mari Barendse latching on H. P. Van Coller and A. van Jaarsveld appears to see this oppositional side of a man or a woman as the shadowy aspect, "the dark side of the individual that is essential in the search for the self" (23). Although Barendse writes specifically about the situation of the Opperman family, and sees the darkness in them as their fear and loss which prevent them from being unwilling to change to meet up with the transformative demands/requirements of post-apartheid South Africa as depicted in Koos Kombius' *Raka die roman*, her hermeneutics in general can be said to be that humans "need to recognize the darkness in themselves in order to create a new identity" (23). While this darkness in Barendse's interpretation carries a negative foreboding, it is not so much so in the Jungian concepts of the anima and the animus. Rather what Jung seems to push for in his ruminations is that whatever an individual becomes within the framework of these concepts is predicated on how s/he negotiates her/his dark/opposite sides to forge a perceived wholeness in her/his identity. Therefore, the shadowy or dark aspect of a woman or man is so described not because it is negative or unknown by any given character so involved, but because it is supposed to be the less obvious personality.

In her explanation of how patriarchal programming works in any given society, Lois Tyson observes that "little girls have been ... told early in their educational careers that they can't do math. If not told so explicitly in words ... they are told so by the body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions of adults and peers" (83). Hence, every man or woman in any given society knows the persona as a collective that is becoming or unbecoming of a man or woman even if it is through the process of patriarchal programming. Esi in the aesthetic world of Aidoo is no exception. In relation to her career, the course that she chose to study in the university is neither accidental nor coincidental. It is a course she chooses with her eyes wide open so that she could compete with men and even excel over them. Colman asserts that the Jungian animus is "characterized by focused consciousness, authority, and respect" (39). By the course she consciously study, Esi appropriates to herself the authority and respect of maleness despite being a female. As a master's degree holder in Statistics (*Changes*, 40), there is no equivocation that Esi undertakes an exclusively male course of study, as noted by Tyson, in contrast to that of her husband. Accordingly, even in the choice of their course of study there is role reversal between Esi and her husband. She assumes the role of the man in comparison to her husband; while her husband assumes that of the woman.

Moreover, the bungalow in which Esi and her husband live belongs to her. It is part of the pecks of her office. In fact, it comes bundled together with her foreign trips to attend conferences and workshops as privileges of her office. Curry observes that “[t]he living arrangements of Esi and Oko represent a break in tradition. In the city of Accra the husband is usually expected to be in control of the living accommodations in a marriage and to support his wife or wives” (185). Whereas this is the case in the relationship between Kubi and Opokuya on one hand, and Ali and Fausena, on the other, in which both men provide the living accommodation of their families, the reverse is what is portrayed in the marriage of Oko and Esi. Instead of Oko being in control of their living accommodation, it is Esi who provides their accommodation of/over which she is in control. Thus, after their divorce, instead of Esi moving out of the house as it is the norm in most African societies, Oko, her husband, is the one who packs out. Additionally, instead of Esi being the one waiting for the arrival of her husband, it is her husband who sits at home to await her arrival from foreign trips.

Furthermore, in a typical African society, the man decides how many children he wants his wife to give birth to, but this is not so in this novel. According to the narrator:

(Esi) was on those dreadful birth control things: pills, loops or whatever. She had gone on them soon after the child was born, and no amount of reasoning and pleading had persuaded her to go off them. He (Oko) wanted other children, at least one more...a boy if possible. But even one more girl would have been welcome. (8)

While this passage can be read as a form of protest or resistance in terms of a woman’s right to decide whether to bear children or not, another way to see it is Esi’s quest and desire to appropriate to herself male role and authority. In this way, Esi transgresses her feminine personality and nature to acquire for herself masculine traits and behaviour, thereby manifesting the fluidity that can be associated with strict gender categorization. It is obvious that it is because her active personality dominates over her passive one that she decides not to have even one more additional child. Having another child would definitely interfere with and be an obstacle to her career development, and it is this that she cannot even countenance or contemplate. Unsurprisingly, Oko, Esi’s husband, would himself admit that his wife

was very much respected by her colleagues and other people who knew the work she did. So she should not really be trying so hard to impress: leaving the house virtually at dawn; returning home at dusk; often bringing work home. Then there are all these conferences. Geneva, Addis, Dakar one half of the year; Rome, Lusaka, Lagos the other half. Is Esi too an African woman? She not only is, but there are plenty of them around these days. (8)

Oko's question as to whether Esi is an African woman is borne out of his acknowledgement that the latter, in his own perception, is not living the way a woman, especially an African woman is supposed to live her life. Jung notes that "A woman possessed by the animus is always in danger of losing her femininity" (*Jung Lexicon*). He also observes that "In a woman who is identified with the animus (called animus possession), Eros generally takes second place to Logos" (*Jung Lexicon* – emphasis in the original). This is particularly true of Esi. She chooses a career not merely to assist her husband in providing a second source of income, but to forge a sense of identity that provides her with a handle to compete favourably with men, and even excel above them. As already stated, Elia observes that "Seeking a career – rather than merely a second income – is thus viewed as unnatural" for women. This is the view Oko appears to have of Esi. It is as if she has lost her feminine or womanly essence or as Jung puts it her femininity by putting her career ahead of her family.

Esi's animus reverberates all through the narrative that she does not even mind if her husband chases after other women. The personal vanity and touchiness that Jung associates with the anima/Eros instinct is nowhere present in Esi in her relations with her husband. In a very revealing dialogue between Esi and her best friend, Opokuya, it is noteworthy that after being asked by Opokuya whether the reason for her break-up with Oko is because he is chasing other women; Esi's response is that "Oh no. To be fair to old Oko, it was never that. In fact, sometimes I wished he could behave like other men in that respect" (44). And in response, because "Opokuya truly couldn't believe her ears," she declares: "Esi you are mad"! (44). Even before this exclamation by Opokuya, Esi's mother and grandmother have also declared her mad for wishing that her husband chases after other women. Jung argues that "No matter how friendly and obliging a woman's Eros may be, no logic on earth can shake her if she is ridden by the animus" (*Phenomenology of Self*, 15). Esi's mother and grandmother as well as Opokuya cannot understand Esi's logic or stand because as women they have not allowed their animus/Logos to overshadow their anima/Eros. Conversely, in spite of the

efforts of Esi's mother, grandmother, and Opokuya to change Esi's logic and decision, she stands her ground because, in the words of Jung, "she is ridden by the animus." Thus, what Opokuya as well as Esi's mother and grandmother do not understand is that Esi is not mad. Rather she is reacting to an unconscious stimulant (which she [Esi] herself might be unaware of) – one in which her animus/Logos has become stronger than her anima/Eros. It is even for the same reason (this lack of understanding of the unconscious force responsible for Esi's action) that Esi's mother and grandmother cannot even fathom why a woman would decide to divorce her husband on the ground that he devotes so much time to her.

Yet, by divorcing her husband, Esi also shows that she has lost her femininity. Aidoo recounts her own experience that "she is condemned...to ostracism because she refuses to consider marriage the only way to live" (qtd in Elia, 143). In Africa, marriage is something a woman craves for and preserves at any cost. This thinking is what Esi's animus in sync with that of her imaginative creator rejects. Conversely, in her analysis of Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Geneva Cobb Moore argues with her deployment of the Jungian theory that "Tashi (the heroine of Walker's novel) on the journey to self, reveals the animus stage of her development when she murders M'Lissa, the tsunga" who circumcises women when they come of age in the novel (120). Moore here sees the act of murder as being masculine. Although Esi does not physically murder her husband, she symbolically does so by divorcing him. By so doing, Oko is dead to Esi, and can never have access to her or her eroticized body. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that Elia would argue about the scene in which Oko's mother shows up at his doorstep with "a very beautiful and very young girl" that what Oko's mother is oblivious of is the fact that Oko does not miss just a vagina, but Esi (145) - to whom he no longer exists.

Jung asserts that the animus is behind a woman's desire for independence and a career of her own" (*Jung Lexicon*); and apparently in his own explanation of this phenomenon in a woman, Glover maintains that "by Jung's refined categories the masculine side of a woman represents only her 'higher' potentialities, e.g., fitness for a career or for 'inner' development" (48). Although Glover takes a swipe at this concept that it is unscientific and "deliberately sidesteps the major problem of infantile sexuality and its profound influence on mental development" (50), I maintain in this paper that though in Jung's theory it is through a collective unconscious that these male and female tendencies are acquired, it is through the social interaction of a boy or girl as he or she grows up within a family setting

that the anima and animus tendencies are developed. So sharpened is Esi's animus that even after her divorce, instead of taking care of her only daughter as would be expected of a woman (especially an African woman), she parcels her (the daughter) out to her ex-husband's mother so that she can devote more time to her career. Although Curry asserts that "it seems that the only time Esi is happy is when she is a single woman" (181), her happiness does not just derive from the sexual freedom she enjoys as Curry rightly notes, but also the time available to her to put into her career so as to achieve upward social mobility. Responding to Opokuya's advice that she "should have tried to squeeze out some time for him (Oko, who is her husband)," Esi cries out:

How? How could I have done more than I did as a wife and a mother and still be able to compete on an equal basis with my male colleagues in terms of my output? How can I do more than I'm already doing and compete effectively for promotion, travel opportunities and other side benefits of the job? (50)

Jung insists that "the animus gives to woman's consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self knowledge (sic)" (*Phenomenology of Self*, 16). It is because Esi has reflected, deliberated, and has become aware of what she wants to accomplish in her career development that makes her not to devote as much time as she should to her husband. It is also for the same reason that she parcels her daughter out to Oko's mother rather than taking care of her. Accordingly, still implicated in Jung's theory is how childhood experience affects adult behaviour. Esi as a result of her social interaction comes to see her career as a means of achieving male potentialities despite her femaleness; and as would be expected this results in anxiety and conflict for her. She complains to Opokuya that what is she expected to do? Which man will accept her as she is? These questions are borne out of her internal conflicts as well as her realization that she is transgressing the gender roles her society has assigned to her.

Esi also symbolically grows a penis in her relationship with her husband by also deciding when and how her husband makes love to her. For not being the one who initiates their sexual encounter, and by not consenting to the encounter; she accuses her husband of marital rape (11). In Africa, "[s]ex is something a husband claims from his wife as his right. Any time. And at his convenience"(12). But Esi rejects this norm. According to Benedict Nweke, "Esi perceives the culture in which she finds herself as male dominated and one in which the woman is a 'not-all.' Being a 'not-all' suggests incompleteness ... She does not represent that

wholeness, that Other which Esi would have loved to attain and become” (119). Since Esi through her social interactions realizes that it is male authority that makes one whole, she allows her animus to overshadow her anima. Esi’s characterization can, therefore, be seen as Aidoo’s subtle narrative strategy of complicating normative stereotypical gender roles. By so doing, Aidoo subtly rejects and encourages her readers to also reject fixed gender categories and identities.

This is also obvious in Aidoo’s characterization of Oko, who is supposed to be the husband of Esi. The turn of events in the novel leaves readers wondering as to who is the husband or wife in their domestic interactions. Oko, as already indicated, lives with his wife in her bungalow rather than the other way round. In this context, it is as if it is his wife who proposed to marry him, and then invited him to leave his parents’ house to come live with her. But by agreeing to come and live with his wife in her apartment rather than the other way round, it can be argued that Oko allows his anima to dominate his actions and inactions more than his animus. Although the anima “is necessary to compensate the dominant conscious attitude” (Daryl Sharp), when it exerts an overwhelming influence on the man, according to Jung, it softens him (7) and makes him to live regressively (11).

This is the problem with Oko; not that he has the anima/Eros but that he allows it to exact an overwhelming influence on him. As Jung puts it, Eros “belongs on one side to man’s primordial animal nature which will endure as long as man has an animal body. On the other side he is related to the highest forms of the spirit. But he thrives only when spirit (Logos) and instinct (Eros) are in right harmony” (*Jung Lexicon*). For Oko, his anima/Eros and his animus/Logos are not in right harmony since in his unconscious he is controlled more by the aforementioned rather than the latter. For example, in a marriage (especially one of many years), it is the wife who usually complains of neglect and abandonment owing to the busy schedule of the husband. This is even evident in Kubi’s and Opokuya’s marriage in the same *Changes*. In fact, there is a sense in which it can be argued that Aidoo deploys their marriage relationship to further illuminate the role reversal that has taken place in the marital relationship between Esi and Oko. In Kubi’s and Opokuya’s union, for instance, it is the latter rather than the aforementioned who is portrayed to want to whine about her husband’s work schedule and frequent trips. According to the narrator:



She (Opokuya) never let herself worry about Kubi's chronic lateness; whether it had to do with normal office affairs or indeed any kind of affair or affairs. For instance, he could be taking a woman or women with him on his bush trips. She was aware that most men in his position did. Again, she had taken some time to think seriously through it. The only conclusion she had arrived at about that too was that, short of insisting on going with him on every trip, a very silly and unlikely thing for her to do, she would never know the truth. So again she asked herself, why worry about it. (55)

While Opokuya resolves not to complain and whine, the fact remains that it is a resolution she makes for convenience's sake. But deep in her mind, she still worries about her husband coming back late from work, and his frequent trips.

This is at variance with the relationship between Esi and Oko. Instead of Esi in a similar vein with Opokuya being the one complaining of neglect and abandonment owing to the busy schedule and frequent trips of her husband; it is Oko the husband, unlike Kubi, who complains and even whines. Jung remarks that when the anima overpowers a man, "his initiative as well as his staying power are crippled..." (*Phenomenology of Self*, 12). Oko shows that his initiative and staying power are crippled because apart from repeatedly complaining, he does nothing else to change his situation. For instance, he repeatedly complains and whines that Esi does not spend much time with him because of her career. He whines regularly about Esi leaving house very early, working late into the night, and even bringing back work to the house. Coupled with this, are her frequent foreign trips to attend conferences. Oko also complains about these conferences in "Geneva, Addi, Dakar one half of the year; Rome, Lusaka, Lagos the other half" (8). In fact, the text appears to insinuate that among the reasons for which Esi divorces Oko is because the latter whines too often like a woman. For example, after being told by Opokuya that she (Esi) cannot stay alone forever, and that there is the need to remarry, it is revealing that Esi exclaims "I could not bear it ... Another husband to sit on my back all twenty-four hours of the day? The same arguments about where a woman's place is? Another husband to whine all day about how I love my work more than him?" (46-47). In this scene, it is not difficult to see that while Esi allows her animus to overshadow her anima, it is Oko's anima that overpowers him more than his animus. The image conveyed by Esi's exclamation is that her husband sits all day doing nothing else apart from whining about how he has been neglected and abandoned by his wife.

Jung observes that “Men can argue in a very womanish way...when they are anima-possessed...With them the question becomes one of personal vanity and touchiness (as if they were females)” (*Phenomenology of Self* 15; emphasis in the original). This appears to be the image of Oko that is conveyed by Esi’s exclamation that he sits all day whining about how he has been neglected and abandoned. While in the English Renaissance courtly love tradition as well as in Restoration comedy, the male predator is expected to “whine” as a manner of address to convey his distress and eagerness to win the affection of his object of love, whining in general terms is associated with women and is seen as a sign of weakness. Daniel Harris in his article entitled “Whining” suggests this to be the case when he observes that “Whining as a concerted strategy is a relatively recent development in the history of mankind since the reward for weakness in the prehistoric lives of the hunter and gatherer, who either ate or were eaten, would almost certainly have been abandonment to hungry predators” (168). It is certain that Harris, here, equates whining with weakness; and sees a whiner as being vulnerable. This is the situation of Oko in relation to Esi. By whining, he does not just assume the role of the weaker sex; he also betrays his personal vanity and touchiness and thus becomes womanish in his behaviour in comparison to his wife who assumes the masculine role of authority and respect.

Even in his relationship with his mother and sisters in relation to his actions and inactions with his wife, Oko in a sense shows that his anima dominates than his animus. According to Jung, when the anima “makes demands on the masculinity of a man...in the realm of his psyche there is an imago not only of the mother but of the daughter, the sister, the beloved, the heavenly goddess, and the chthonic Baubo” (*Phenomenology of Self*, 12-13). The point that Jung makes is that for a man in whom the anima is stronger than the animus, he would unconsciously idealize and imbibe the personality traits of all the women in his life. This, however, should not be taken to mean that such a man idealizes and imbibes the different personal idiosyncratic characteristics of his mother, daughter, sister, and the beloved. Rather, what Jung implies is that such a man becomes the aggregation of the peculiar womanish behaviour exhibited by all the women in his life. As Jung himself notes “Every mother and every beloved is forced to become the carrier and embodiment of this omnipresent and ageless image” of the woman (13). This is true of Oko. The only difference is that the unconscious idealized mental image he constantly has before him is not that of his beloved/wife, but that of his mother and sisters. While his mother, sisters, wife, and daughter in one way or another are embodiments of the ageless image of the woman; in relating with his wife, though, Oko always thinks of what his mother and sisters say or would

say. This cannot be otherwise since his wife, Esi, always allows her animus to influence her actions more than her anima. The point, therefore, is that in Oko's unconscious, while his mother and sisters are manifestations of the collective archetype of the anima; Esi is not. It is for this reason that the narrator notes that "The fact that his (Oko's) mother and his sisters were always complaining to him about the unsafety (sic) of having an only child only made him feel worse" (8). In this excerpt, the antagonism within Aidoo's narrative world is between a representational collective archetype of the anima and that of the animus. Although "[p]atriarchy (especially within the African socio-cultural milieu) generates a strong desire for large families...and ensures that women are continuously kept busy with child rearing and desire large families with as many sons as possible" (Omondi-Odhiambo, 29), it should be noted that Oko deploys the mental disposition of the collective archetype of the anima symbolized by his mother and sisters in antagonizing his wife's unconscious animus. Having more than one child that Esi's animus sees as an obstacle to her career development is seen as an advantage by Oko's anima represented by his mother and sisters. In this context, therefore, it can be argued within Aidoo's narrative that Oko's need for another child has been informed even more by his anima rather than his animus.

Yet, Esi remains a woman, just as Oko is still a man – at least outwardly. Hence, it is expected that they will continue to experience what Cary Levine describes as a "clash of 'womanly' sensitivity and supposedly virile expressiveness" (75), what Jung sees as the continuous negotiation between the anima and the animus persona until wholeness is achieved. It is against this background, then, that Oko's "rape" of Esi, and Esi's decision to marry Ali almost immediately after her divorce finds amplification. A man who is anima-possessed more than being animus-possessed should not ordinarily be associated with male aggression. But by raping his wife, Oko exhibits male aggression. In fact, his rape of his wife is a momentary conquest of the anima in him by the animus. It is, therefore, significant that after the rape the narrator observes that:

He (Oko) got out of bed, taking the entire sleeping cloth with him. Esi's anger rose to an exploding pitch. Not just because she was feeling uncomfortably wet between her thighs. What really finished her was her eyes catching sight of the cloth trailing behind Oko who looked like some arrogant King, as he opened the door to get to the bathroom before her. (10)

Oko looks and walks like some arrogant king because his rape of Esi affirms to him his own masculinity. And granted this line of thought in the face of his being over-determined by his anima/Eros, Oko is a hermaphrodite being who oscillates between the female and male gender roles, even though momentarily.

Alice Dreger has noted “[t]he capacity of the hermaphrodite to ‘pass’ as one sex or the other” (qtd in Badenbaugh, 417). This is clear in the character of Laurence in Howe’s *The Hermaphrodite*, with whom Emma falls in love as a “he.” But as a “she,” she is fallen in love with by Roland. According to Badenbaugh, although he identifies himself as male in tandem with the masculine identity his parents want him to assume, all through the novel he “inhabits both male and female gender roles” (414). Similarly, although Oko is male, and therefore masculine; because he is in the better-part of the narrative anima-possessed, he also inhabits both female and male gender roles in Aidoo’s novel.

Esi is also a spectrum of a hermaphrodite being as much as Oko. Despite being animus-possessed, she is still a woman. It is this that accounts for her marriage to Ali shortly after she divorces Oko. Writing about this strange development, Elia asserts that “Lonely and feeling defeated in her attempt at independence, Esi enters into a polygynous relationship. Such a decision comes as a disturbing surprise to her friends and family as well as the reader. We can only presume that Aidoo is trying to illustrate the extreme difficulty, may be even the impossibility of women’s independence in Accra” (143). There is nothing disturbing or surprising in Esi’s decision to enter a polygamous relationship. In addition to illustrating the extreme difficulty or impossibility of women’s independence on the African continent, what is also being dramatized is Esi’s hermaphrodite nature which creates for her the dilemma between her femininity and masculinity, what Petersen describes glibly as the dilemma between “her desire to have both a career and a man” (qtd in Simpson, 156). Thus, like Oko, Esi also vacillates between female and male gender roles. It is, however, more through her characterization that Aidoo highlights gender fluidity.

### **Conclusion**

Yet, Jung’s archetypes of the anima/Eros and the animus/Logos are not an end in themselves. Rather, they are means to an end. They suggest a process of negotiation and renegotiation through which individual characters achieve individuation or harmonious/homogeneous being. As Geneva Cobb Moore persuasively argues “If (the Jungian) ‘individuation’ means the becoming of a homogeneous being, then the process of becoming begins with a psychic trauma

or wounding of the spirit” (112). Although Aidoo’s novel ends with her two major characters (Esi and Oko) still engaged in the process of negotiating and renegotiating the conflict between their anima and animus persona so as to achieve individuation or wholeness, it is noteworthy that whether it is the process or end result, the man and the woman in the Jungian archetype of the anima and the animus are still embodiments of both the feminine and masculine gender traits. The only difference is that during the process stage, there can be balance or no balance between the two gender roles, while at the end stage, there is certainly balance/harmony. Thus, from whatever perspective, what is manifested and dramatized in/with the relationship between Esi and Oko in Aidoo’s *Changes* is the artifice of gender stereotypical roles.

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