

THE ARCHETYPAL PSYCHOLOGY OF JAMES HILLMAN  
AND THE INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY OF C. G. JUNG:  
COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

RUNNING HEAD: Hillman, Jung, Comparisons and Contrasts

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## ABSTRACT

The task I set before myself in this essay is to differentiate the archetypal psychology of James Hillman from the Integral psychology of C. G. Jung. A key difference lies in the phenomenon of the Self in Jung's psychology, which he sees as the integrating centre of personality. There is no centre of personality as such in Hillman's scheme, although he exhorts his audience to deepen its relationship with the archetypal image in search of a "theos" inherent in each event. Jung essentially posits an ego-Self axis, where the individuation process leads to increasing sacrifice of the ego to the Self. Hillman is interested in the polytheistic psyche and a repressive ego that needs to get out of the way to allow its fuller expression. Jung also encourages a polytheistic psyche but, in addition, a transformation of personality that goes beyond the exercise of the ego getting out of the way and loosening attachments. Hillman's psychology can be characterized as an aesthetic psychology, whereas Jung puts more weight on the ethical nature and conflicts of duty, which are resolved by what he calls the transcendent function. Another way of putting it is Hillman has a process-oriented psychology of the three, and Jung's psychology is a psychology of the three and four, which means both process and the incarnation of the Self in life. The way Jung sees dreams and the way Hillman sees them are different due to their different assumptions on the nature of the psyche. For Hillman there is no hierarchy in the psyche including in dreams, whereas for Jung there is, along with the suggestion that the hierarchy mounts in a spiritualization process of transformation of all aspects of nature. With his aesthetic psychology, Hillman, in contrast, is seeking detachment from the world with a kind of American Zen. On the same lines, with regard to the inferior order of the psyche, Hillman calls on the need for a deepening process he calls pathologizing, whereas Jung refers to the shadow and the inferior function, calling for their transformation, eventually for the sake of incarnating the Self.

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Introduction

Surely, one of the most difficult tasks for the depth psychologist is to differentiate the psychology of James Hillman from that of C. G. Jung. To do any justice to such an endeavour, one must begin with each man's basic assumptions on human nature, either implicit or explicit – that is their assumptions on what human nature is and what it is in the process of becoming. As Hillman was nurtured on Jung's analytical psychology, there is much in common. In fact, he argues that the latter's most important contribution to psychology is the discovery of the archetypal basis of human nature (as reported in Samuels, Andrews, 1986), while archetypal images lie at the very core of Hillman's own approach to psychology.

To search for significant differences is like swimming in a dark sea of similarities, with areas of different shadings, colourings and temperature. Hillman, himself comes to our aid, however, with his unbecoming attacks on Jung and on Jungian psychology in an attempt to establish his own brand. Each man's psychology is, in fact, his own subjective confession (Hillman, James, 1975). My interpretation of each of their works is, likewise, a subjective confession. Although I find Hillman stimulating, my sympathies lie squarely with Jung.

I begin at the centre, weaving my way inward and outward from there and examine assumptions by way of comparison and contrast. I propose to show that there are

greater differences between these two approaches to psychology than first meets the eye. While Jung's approach is more integral, Hillman challenges certain shadow tendencies in the former's psychology. In addition, he formulates a psychology that may particularly well fit the needs of some people. Moreover, they are both consistent in determining their different visions.

#### Jung's Self vs. Hillman's Deepening

The centre of personality, for Jung, is the supreme archetype, the Self, which can be defined as paradoxical wholeness, "with a centre that is everywhere and circumference that is nowhere" (Hull, R. F. C., and McGuire, William, editors, 1980). It is not only the centre of the unconscious itself, but includes all nature as well. It is a God image, containing all opposites, at once the most individual while at the same time "a mirror of total reality" embracing all humankind (von Franz, Marie Louise, 1980). Finally, the Self is fourfold, grounding its expressive nature in the four functions of consciousness and the two attitudes. Directly related to the Self is the concept of the mandala, the unus mundus or unitary world, synchronicity or meaningful coincidence and individuation which has its goal, "the coming to be of the Self" (Jung, C. G., 1968).

For Hillman (as reported in Miller, David, 1981 and as reported in, Samuels, Andrew 1985), the Self as he experiences it is repressive, a kind of moralistic superego. It is for him, therefore, not the centre of personality, but an influence to be undermined inasmuch as it does not allow for the free expression of the archetypal dynamic. Likewise, he considers the ego, the ethical attitude, the spirit as a transcendent factor

and dogmatic religion are all repressive modes of being, to be loosened from their tenacious grip on the psyche. In Hillman's polytheistic psychology, there is no one centre of personality, but a multiplicity of ever present, interacting centres, the archetypal images which inform personality (as reported in Samuels, Andrew, 1985). In fact, Lambert contends that the goal of archetypal psychology is to abandon ego altogether.

Hillman emphasises a passionate deepening of relationship to the archetypal image, "allowing each event," which has a "theos," to show "its own face" (as reported in Miller, David, 1981). He eloquently requests the reader to suspend belief in such concepts as synchronicity, individuation, unity, stages of development and so on, seeing them as a "fantasy of individuation" (as reported in Samuels, Andrew, 1986). They may comprise a fantasy, but so does Hillman's approach to psychology. Moreover, his own fantasy lacks a synthesising all embracing centre like Jung's Self, forcing the conclusion that, conceptually, the archetypal or god images of his polytheistic psychology give way to a void.

Consistent with his view of the Self as the centre of the unconscious, Jung (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) posits the existence of an ego as the centre of consciousness. As the conscious representative of the Self, it is both condition and content of consciousness, suggesting that for an aspect of the psyche to be conscious it must be related to the ego. As condition of consciousness the ego can be described as an aspect of the Self involved in nature, similar to the Hindu purusha, as described

by Sri Aurobindo (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990). Content of consciousness refers to the ego's conscious attitudes, values, beliefs, as well as cognitions that are grounded on the archetypes. In one definition, Jung observes that ego consciousness is surrounded by "a multitude of little luminosities or *scintillae*," which he equates with the archetype. The ego, therefore, in his view is grounded on both the Self *per se* as well as being related to all the other archetypes. This allows for ego relatedness to both a synthesising centre and multiplicity.

Finally, Jung posits an ego-Self axis, where individuation unfolds as "the centre shifts from the ego to the Self" and, increasingly, the ego "finds itself in the role of the passive observer" ... "because due considerations give it pause." The shift from ego to the Self suggests a detachment of ego as *purusha* from the workings of nature or psyche, a position described by Jung, (1965) in his old age when he said that "I am not that stream, I am at that stream, but I do nothing." As the ego becomes *purusha*, there is more genuine spontaneity as the play of multiplicity is allowed a freer reign.

Like Hillman, Jung allows for a polytheistic psyche and, for me, he gives a more satisfactory account of what is involved in attaining such a state. Moreover, in addition to detachment and a less repressive mode of being, like Hillman's goal there is, according to Jung (1970), a "metamorphosis of the gods -- an expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing." For Jung, unlike Hillman, there is not only psychic multiplicity and psychological becoming, but in-depth personality transformation.

### The Ethical and Aesthetic Natures

As I indicated earlier, Hillman views the ego, particularly the heroic ego, as repressive, favouring a conception of the psyche as consisting of various archetypal styles with patterns of interactions between them. He appears to be urging the reader to “let soul speak,” that is soul-making without any repressive influences including that of a central ego. Related to this is his preference for an aesthetic attitude to an ethical one, which he conceives as being inhibitory and repressive.

Such a view can be characterised as a kind of American Zen, where the ideal state is a spontaneous uninhibited action of the archetypal image through its animal or instinctual vehicle -- a “no-mindedness.” It is noteworthy that Zen is an offshoot of *Mahayana* Buddhism which views the world as an illusion or relative reality, based on a void (Swearer, Donald K., 1977). It is difficult not to conclude that Hillman implicitly makes the same assumption.

In contrast to Hillman, Jung (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) puts considerable emphasis on the ethical nature and the need to make ethical decisions based on conflicts of duty. Such conflicts, in Jung’s view, can only be resolved by a third factor, the Self’s transcendent function. In the same vein, von Franz, (as reported in Johnson, Robert, 1986) argues that there is an ethical obligation to translate inner experiences through dreams and/or active imagination into real life decisions. Jung (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) also writes disparagingly about an aesthetic attitude to life, as “it always averts its face from everything evil, ugly and difficult.” Jung’s emphasis on

Eros and feeling and his own art, sculpting and writing, however, indicate that the need to become conscious of a deepened aesthetic sensibility is an integral part of his psychology. Moreover his approach to active imagination requires both an aesthetic attitude and an ethical one.

### On The Dream

Regarding dreams, there is again a characteristic difference between Jung's view and that of Hillman (as reported in Samuel's, Andrew, 1985). Jung sees the dream as compensatory to conscious attitudes, values, beliefs, cognitions, etc., and stresses the need to relate the dream experience to life, which requires an ethical attitude. Hillman, rather, emphasises the need to deepen relationships to the dream that, in his view, has a reality and purpose of its own. Accordingly, for Hillman, there is a dying to defensive attachments to life and a deepening unto death. For Jung (as reported in Samuels, Andrews, 1985) too, not only do dreams have a purpose of their own, but during the second half of life, there is a dying to life. For him, there is potentially also an in-depth creative transformation of the psyche.

Again, consistent with his view of loosening any attachment to repressive modes of being, Hillman (as reported in Miller, David, 1981) argues against any notion of a hierarchy of the psyche. For him, it is simply a question of deepening relationship to the archetypal image through soul--and through mythological associations, particularly Greek, opening soul to a wider culture (Samuels, Andrew, 1985). Jung (as reported in Hillman, James, 1985), in contrast, observes that there is a hierarchy of the psyche that

becomes conscious through different anima figures, from Eve to Helen to Mary to Sophia, that is to say, from an earthy reality to wisdom. There is both a deepening through experiencing *esse in anima*, and a potentially spiritual transformative process. Jung is not advocating gravitation to a more spiritual psyche but an eventual integration, and spiritualization of all aspects of the psyche. His process of individuation calls for an all-embracing spiritual transformation and not just detachment.

#### Hillman's Pathologizing and Jung's Shadow and the Inferior Function

Hillman, (1975) seeks a deepening what is there by means of personifying different aspects of the psyche. The starting point, for him, lies with "pathologizing" or "falling apart" and experiencing dissolution and psychic disintegration. Accordingly, he disparages any notion of integrated states, wholeness and other spiritual assumptions that, in his experience, are suppressive mental constructs.

However, people have such experiences and they cannot be gain said. In fact, Jung understands feelings of wholeness to be actual numinous experiences of the Self and not mental constructs. The practical consequence of such experiences is that the person feels centred and integrated, at least for a time. Jung also acknowledges experiences of dissolution, chaos, darkness and disintegration as integral to the process of individuation, as is obvious in his writings on alchemy (Jung, C. G. 1970, 1977) and elsewhere.

On the surface, both Jung and Hillman appear to have similar positions regarding the need to accept the inferior side of one's nature. According to Jung (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) one experiences the collective unconscious through the inferior function. Likewise, Hillman (1985) envisions pathology as the locus of healing. There is a basic difference in assumption, nonetheless.

Jung's inferior function is related to the shadow and the question of evil (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990). Although Jung accepts the cultural relativity of good and evil he observes that there is an active force or archetype of evil in the world, with which individuals participate through the personal shadow. Hillman, (as reported in Samuels, Andrew, 1985), appears to relativise evil altogether, arguing that each archetypal image contains a light and a shadow or dark aspect, that is its own pathology, in addition to a built in inhibitory impulse. Individual shadow behaviour, for Hillman, (1983), seems to be the result of literalizing the image rather than relating to it imaginally. There does not seem to be any concern about ego complicity with archetypal evil as such.

Although Hillman's position on evil and the shadow side of life has an intellectual logic to it, while being consistent with his other views on the nature of the psyche, it is for me unsatisfactory for several reasons. It does not acknowledge either mainline or occult tradition throughout the world on the reality of evil. Moreover, it appears to overlook individual and collective experience with evil. Finally, it lacks a practical dimension that appeals to the heart.

Jung, (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) argues that, in the final analysis, evil is a dissociated force, a power driven complex usurping the position of the Self. A principal task of individuation is to integrate personal shadow and aspects of the collective shadow into consciousness and one's experience of the Self, at which time a transformative process ensues. Something like this may be Hillman's intent. If so, for my taste, he jumps too quickly to such a realisation. Why, one may ask is it necessary to split the ethical instinct into prohibition that comes from the outside and inhibition that is part of each archetype (as reported in Samuels, Andrews, 1985). This seems to contradict Hillman's own assumption on the nature of the archetype. It is not possible for there is to be both an ethical archetype as such and inhibitory aspects of each archetype?

This brings us to another area of difference, the nature of the symbol. Jung, (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) defines the symbol, as the "best possible representation of something that is unknowable," "an unsurpassed container of meaning," and a "means of utilising the mere instinctual flow of energy for effective work," a source of psychological transformation. Hillman (as reported in Samuels, Andrew, 1983) assails symbols, arguing that they have become lifeless, a "stand in for the concept." He, instead, gravitates to what Jung once wrote that "images are life" and exhorts his reader to "stick to the image" and deepen relationship with it.

It is possible to argue that Hillman wishes to bring life back into psychology through the image, as there is a too mechanical application of dictionary symbols onto dream

interpretation. I believe, however, a deeper reason for his insistence on the image is that it fits his approach to psychology. After all, he could have insisted on the true meaning of the symbol, which is experienced through the image, as Jung defines it. But Jung's definition includes in-depth personality transformation, which, per se does not seem to interest Hillman. Nor is he so much interested in grounding (read use of symbol for effective work) the image but opening it up. His favourite vehicle for opening up the image is mythology, especially that of ancient Greece. Essentially, he assumes that repressive modes of life can dissipate by opening up to Hellenism and its imaginal tradition (Hillman, 1975).

#### The Psychologies of the Three and the Four

Although Jung sees life as being contained in the image, he recognises the need for grounding it in space and time. He even acknowledges danger in introverted intuitive types chasing "one image after another" (Jung, 1970). Moreover, judging from Jung's (1965) recorded experiences with Philemon, who comes from Alexander where the "east meets the west," one could argue that his approach to psychology is based on a search for a synthesis of Eastern spirituality and Western materialism. Jung goes beyond Greece to Alexandria, which was connected to the magico-religious world of ancient Egypt and influenced by spirituality from the Orient. This may explain why Jung's psychology includes grounding as well as a spiritually transformative process.

In confirmation of these observations, Hillman, (as reported in Johnston, David, 1990) acknowledges that his psychology, if anything, is based on the symbolic number three

and not the number four like Jung's. As Hillman sees it: "the third is the problem, the difficulty, the pathology itself" -- "prior to and governing relationships." For Jung, the number three represents the dynamic flow of psychic energy, while being related to the archetype and insight. It is not the problem in his view but, through the transcendent function, the resolution of conflict. Jung's understanding could explain Hillman's sensitivity toward time and the evolving zeitgeist, as well as his considerable insight. Moreover, it shows once again how the latter presents a consistent psychology based on fundamentally different assumptions than Jung makes.

Hillman's psychology can be characterised as being process-oriented opening to psychological becoming while encouraging a removal of restrictions. Accordingly, he discourages any notion of psychological development, arguing that it is too ego based (as reported in Johnston, David 1990). There is, by preference, a circular process where the archetypal images are ever present and interacting. At best, there is a filling in of lacuna in the psyche in the manner that he himself "ate the Renaissance."

Jung's fundamental assumption on the nature of the psyche is that it partakes of both the symbolic numbers three and four (Johnston, David, 1991). Three allows for connection to the archetype, insight and unfolding rhythmic process over time. The symbolic four brings concretisation, conscious experience of synchronicity and transformation of life. In this sense there is potentially a spiral like psycho-spiritual development which relates not to the ego as condition of consciousness [nor ego-purusha as awareness], but ego as content perhaps, better said, as an integral aspect

of a transforming psyche. Since, in Jung's (1974) view, the archetypes are psychoid, partaking of both a spiritual and physical nature as well as having a transcendent dimension, transformation for him touches the very core of life.

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In my opinion, Hillman's psychology appeals to a certain intuitive, intellectual, perhaps introverted mind and serves the purpose of loosening up or deconstructing certain mental and behavioural rigidities. For a lover of Jung like me, he brings enlightening insight and challenge to the shadow side of Jung's psychology, rather a repressive Jungianism. But Hillman's approach also has its shadow, which has the nature of a post-modern solipsistic nihilism. Moreover, at best, his psychology promotes a kind of three-fold individuation, in practical terms perhaps mainly of the intellect and intuitive functions as well as the aesthetic nature. What is missing is Eros-based feeling. Amongst the different approaches to psychology in the West, it is only Jung who promotes a fuller individuation, threefold in its becoming and fourfold in its completeness and depth.

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