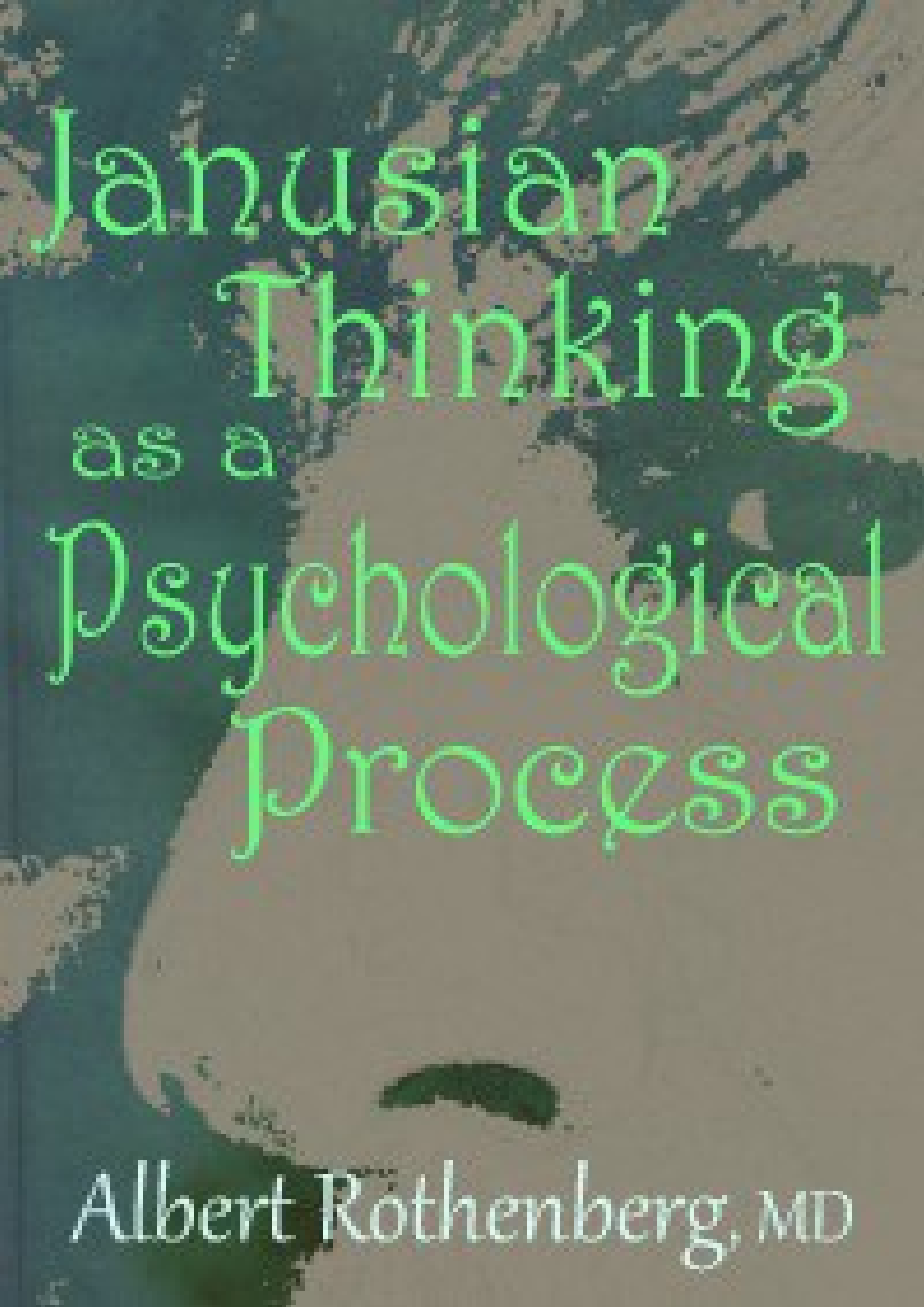
Janusian Thinking as a Psychological Process



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JANUSIAN THINKING AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS

Throughout this book, I have emphasized the psychological status of janusian thinking as a conscious, intentional process and as a special type of secondary process cognition. This emphasis has been necessary because, in Freud's description of the more primitive form of thought, primary process thinking, equivalence of opposites was a definite feature.[1] Freud's own recognition of this feature of primary process thinking, this creative leap on his part, was a product, I would now suggest, of janusian thinking.[2] While there is no reason to doubt the validity of Freud's specific formulation,[3] psychoanalytic theorists and practitioners have unthinkingly tended to relegate all psychological references to opposition to the primary process realm. Freud himself made this error in his small but enthusiastic work, "The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words,"[4] written ten years after his monumental work on dreams. Finding what he thought were numerous instances of words having bimodally antithetical meanings—for example, "cleave," meaning both to separate and to join, "altus," meaning both high and low—in primitive or historically older languages, he believed he had discovered additional evidence for equivalence of opposites in primitive or primary process thought. Not only were his conclusions incorrect from the point of view of linguistics and etymology (i.e., words such as "cleave" and "altus" were not initially bimodal in meaning, such words had homographic homophones—identical in both spelling and sound—with different etymological roots), but he was also unaware of the rather adaptive and sophisticated nature of the linguistic categories used by so-called primitive peoples. The latter has since been impressively demonstrated by modern anthropologists such as Levi-Strauss.[5]

Freud's errors can certainly be excused on the basis of incautious zeal in a great first explorer, and buttressed by our understanding of the complexities and abstractions involved in the conceptualization and manipulation of opposition, it should now be easier to see how conceptualization of simultaneous opposites belongs in the realm of high level secondary process thinking. But more clarification is still needed. Other types of psychological phenomena, including modes of cognition, affects, psychological structures, and dynamisms, bear some resemblance to janusian thinking and, in order to establish the psychological dimensions of the thought process distinctly, it is necessary to consider several of them. In this chapter, I shall discuss the following: Jungian psychology, dialectical thinking, dualistic thinking,

conflict, and ambivalence. In order to avoid extensive digression, my discussion will be, in some cases, cursory and brief. I shall, however, show some outstanding points of dissimilarity and similarity or contact with the janusian process.

Jung and Opposites

So prominent is opposition in the psychological theory propounded by Jung that his work should properly be cited, along with that of the philosophers in the last chapter, as a major instance of Western intellectual thought emphasizing opposites.[6] Though initially a follower of Freud, Jung eventually developed a related but alternate psychological theory that has wide influence today. As an attempt at scientific psychology, Jung's theory properly belongs in the realm of Western intellectual thought, but it also shows the strong influence of Eastern philosophy and mysticism. And, to a certain extent, it is from Eastern thought that Jung derived his emphasis on opposites.

A basic tenet of Jungian psychology is the psychic struggle to achieve reconciliation of opposites. Many aspects of human psychological structure are, according to Jung, in opposition to each other and reconciling opposites is a major motivating force for behavior. In opposition are the attitudes he called introversion and extroversion, functions he distinguished as thinking and feeling, intuition and sensation, the principles of Logos and Eros, archetypes of anima and animus, and inner and outer worlds. While each of the two attitudes of introversion and extroversion as well as the four psychological functions often characterize or define particular "psychological types" such as the introvert, the extrovert, or the feeling type, a cardinal point in Jungian psychology is that no person is ever completely of one defined type. The introvert has an extroverted side, for instance, and vice versa, and between these sides there is an interplay and a struggle for reconciliation.

Emphasis on opposites in Jungian theory is most fully realized in the formulations about the anima and animus archetypes. Anima is the male soul image and animus the female one. Not only are these images or archetypes considered unequivocally opposite to each other, but Jung intentionally inverted the usual Latin endings for male ("us") and female ("a") in applying these terms in order to make clear that the anima was the female aspect of the male psyche and the animus the male aspect of the female psyche. The female soul image represents unconscious forces, such as tendencies toward close

interpersonal relationships (unconscious Eros), that were often opposed to and in conflict with conscious forces (conscious Logos) in the male. Conversely, the male soul image represented unconscious forces that were often in opposition to conscious female strivings.

The notion of an interplay between the anima and animus archetypes was the basis for a good deal of Jung's theorizing about the relationship between the individual and the culture. He became quite interested in the Taoist symbol of the t'ai-chi tu, the symbol discussed earlier (fig. 5) which represents the mystical relationship of male and female forces in the universe and is the central Taoist symbol of the nature of all things. This symbol pictorially represents both the opposition and the close affinity—with an almost fluid interaction— between the male and female principles or forces. For Jung, also, there was often a close affinity between these and other opposites. Another symbol depicting a relationship between opposites and dating hack in origin as far as paleolithic times, is the mandala or magic circle. Mandalas generally represent the transformation of opposites into a third term or uniting symbol, the phenomenon called *coincidentia oppositorum.* Jung often used the mandala as a specific representation for his construct of the Self, and it commanded his interest so much and in so many different ways that he and others have sometimes considered it a symbol for his entire psychology.

Janusian thinking and the pervasive opposition in psychic nature emphasized by Jung are not the same. Janusian thinking is a distinct cognitive function operating particularly in the creative process. It is not involved in other types of processes, nor does it depend on, and necessarily arise from, human psychic structure as composed of opposites. Surely there is some compatibility between the construct of janusian thinking and the Jungian theoretical formulations. If, for example, Jung were correct that psychic life is perfused with various types of opposites, janusian thinking would have specially extensive penetration and power, particularly when its effects are overtly manifest in a completed work of art. Simultaneous oppositions directly presented in artistic works would embody many of the salient elements of psychic life, and give an appearance, though not necessarily a realization, of the reconciliation of opposites.[7]

Janusian thinking does not, however, arise from a general force motivating everyone toward reconciliation of opposites. Janusian thinking is a particular characteristic of the creative process and therefore is a function of the psychological structure of creative persons. As there is no reason to assume

that all persons have the capacity to use this type of thought or, at least, there is no evidence that ordinarily they do use it, the thinking does not arise directly from a general force present in everyone. Moreover, janusian thinking is not motivated by a need to reconcile opposites, nor do janusian constructs and formulations represent *realized reconciliations* of opposites. Janusian thinking posits temporal and functional *coexistence* of opposites within a single framework or context and the possibility of *simultaneous validity* of antithetical entities or constructs, but as a form of cognition it does not reconcile these antitheses or oppositions. Janusian thinking may provide a basis for reconciliation surely, a step toward reconciliation more exactly, but actual reconciliation is carried out by other thought processes such as induction and logic. These statements will gain strength and clarity when the precise meaning of reconciliation is considered in connection with the dialectic presently.

Jung's interest in the t'ai-chi tu and the mandala, and his recognition of similarities, confluences, and interrelationships among oppositions great and small are related to factors in the janusian process. As a creative theorist, many of his concepts pertaining to opposition, and to other factors also, may have arisen from his own janusian thoughts and constructs. However, although psychic life, even cosmic forces, might conceivably operate as Jung suggests through the confluence and antagonism of opposites, that alone would not account for janusian thinking as a creative form of cognition, though it might account for some of its power.

Dialectical Thinking

The greatest source of confusion about janusian thinking concerns its relationship to dialectics. Many of the finest philosophers, theorists, scientists, and other outstanding thinkers characteristically have applied a dialectic approach to some of the most difficult conceptual problems, and the value of such an approach has been demonstrated over and over throughout the history of thought. Moreover, the dialectic approach, as a style of writing or of presenting arguments, is a notably effective one: criticisms and counter arguments are considered before they are raised by a reader or by an opponent, polarities are appraised, and this mode of presentation is often emotionally stimulating and dramatic.

Though the term "dialectic" has been used in different senses and in different ways by different philosophers, it is, in its lexical sense, merely the word for logical discourse or argument. I am here,

however, specifically referring to a type of thinking that has long been recognized and used in intellectual circles, and was first systematically described and used by Hegel.[8] According to Hegel, this type of thinking proceeds by means of a sequence of steps: an assertion of a thesis or statement of a position, point of view, problem, or series of facts, followed by the statement and discussion of the antithesis, the contrary or opposite position or point of view, or the denial of the thesis,- followed by the synthesis, the combination of the partial truths of the thesis and antithesis into a higher stage of truths. Once arrived at, of course, the synthesis can serve—according to Hegel, it always serves—as a thesis for further progressions.

Now, janusian thinking differs from this type of progression in two major ways: (1) it does not involve a synthesis; (2) it does involve simultaneity of opposites or antitheses rather than sequence. The Hegelian formulation of synthesis is quite specific and clear: elements of the thesis and antithesis are *combined* to form another, presumably more valid, position. Such a combination brings about a reconciliation of opposites because, as the word reconciliation implies, opposing positions are brought into harmony with each other and conflicting aspects are resolved. Characteristically, the synthesis is achieved in one or more of several different ways as follows: showing that all of the elements in the conflicting positions are not and never were truly antithetical; demonstrating that many of the conflicting elements can be logically combined with each other; or, by taking advantage of the contextual relativism of oppositions discussed in the last chapter, showing how opposites may not be antithetical in another, presumably higher, context. Synthesis and reconciliation of opposites are strongly related and interconnected; synthesis produces reconciliation of opposites and such reconciliation is, in turn, an aspect of the wider synthesizing function.

But janusian thinking is not the same as reconciling or as synthesizing opposites; if it were, it would hardly be a new discovery. The assertion that a pair or group of antitheses while being in conflict are yet all valid at the same time does not obliterate or compromise the identity or the integrity of the component antitheses. No combination or reconciliation is indicated. In many cases, the assertion can and does lead, by means of logical processes, to the formulation of a synthesis or reconciliation, but the janusian construct is not the same as that synthesis or reconciliation. The construct may stimulate and facilitate synthesis, sometimes in a crucial way, but it is not itself a synthesis. As a facilitating factor, janusian thinking may enter into a dialectic sequence and procedure, particularly a creative one. But

synthesis, and especially combination of antithetical elements, is not a necessary outcome of janusian thinking; the janusian thought may consist of positing a paradox which is *intrinsically* unresolvable, unreconciliable, and unsusceptible to synthesis.

It may be further helpful to consider in some detail the difference between the factors of combination and integration. Combination involves the bringing together of entities, or parts of entities, to form another entity in which the original entities no longer retain their individual properties. Thus, in the classically described case, atoms such as hydrogen and oxygen are brought together to form water, a compound having none of the properties of the original atoms. Integration, on the other hand, involves the formation of an entity different from its components in which the properties of the original components are still *manifest* or *operative.* A characteristic example of an integration is shown by a poetic metaphor such as Sylvia Plath's "How long can my hands be a bandage to his hurt?"[9] This metaphor is a total entity conveying an overall meaning and impact while the properties of the individual elements are neither obliterated, nor compromised, nor submerged. All aspects, whole and part, contribute to the effect and sense. The idea of the protection and the dependency of another person stimulates numerous associations and thoughts and the specific elements of hands, bandage, and hurt all arouse specific associations as well. "Hurt" suggests psychological suffering as well as physical injury; "hands" are gripping, or supplicating as well as protective, "bandage" is a covering, not a cure. Furthermore, there is interaction between, and mutual modification of elements: the hands take on some of the soft, swathing and encircling qualities of the bandage, and the bandage takes on the strength and adherence of the hands. Rather than combination of a hand and a bandage, we experience an active integration of these elements with the overall sense. Both overall meaning and individual components operate to produce the integrated entity, here, the metaphor. Janusian thinking is more intrinsically related to such an integration than it is to combination and synthesis. In janusian constructs, opposites retain their antithetical qualities while being simultaneously valid or operative; they thereby readily form the basis for an integrated product.[10]

I shall not draw hard and fast distinctions between the synthesis aspect of the dialectic and janusian thinking because products of the latter can and do lead to syntheses, especially in science, and dialectic syntheses can be elaborated into integrations. Distinct from the factors involved in janusian thinking, however, are the combination or reconciliation effect and the highly generic principles of the

dialectic. When janusian constructs enter into the dialectic process, they may, once they are formulated and proposed, be subjected to and elaborated by a dialectic analysis, but the analysis does not generate them.

An even more critical distinction between the dialectic and the janusian process involves the temporal factors of sequence and simultaneity. In the former, opposites or antitheses are treated sequentially and in the latter, simultaneously. Because the dialectic is a logical discursive process, it requires the sequential weighing and analysis of antithetical or conflicting propositions, points of view, or facts. Only when each of the opposing positions are carefully and separately considered is it possible to propose a synthesis or, viewed more impressionistically, only then does a meaningful synthesis become immanent or apparent. But janusian thinking is, if you will, significantly more impatient; opposites and antitheses are proposed as being *simultaneously* valid. While the initiator of the janusian thought is also aware of the logical possibilities of the proposition, they are neither fully in his mind nor has he worked them out beforehand. At different points, janusian thinking involves the positing of a problem and the finding of a solution. Again, Sartre may very well have realized, in a single moment, that both Being and Nothingness were essential and were irreducible in a meaningful ontology and, following that, turned to a long and brilliant dialectical process to work out his previously arrived at solution. So, too, a scientist may interpret his data in terms of simultaneous opposition, say, proposing that entities behave simultaneously as particles and waves. For him this is an early formulation of a problem. After a laborious series of procedures—involving observations and experiments as well as dialectic and other types of analysis—he discovers how particles and waves operate simultaneously. This is not tautological; the solution and the problem are both janusian formulations but a good deal of exegesis lies between.

In a given dialectical account, it is always difficult to know whether the thinker developed either or both his problems and solutions in the manner as presented to "the world," so to speak. Frequently it is difficult for the thinker himself to remember the exact steps and sequences and he cannot report about this. Simultaneous antitheses and oppositions especially are difficult to keep in mind and simultaneity soon gives way to sequences and to the demands of logic, factors that begin the dialectic process. Positing for instance that sex and death are the same, or that they coexist simultaneously in the same process, leads rather quickly to a separate consideration of the attributes of various aspects of sexuality followed

by a separate consideration of the attributes of death.[11] Sexual intercourse involves spasmodic bodily movements, a sense of release, a loss of individuality or a self-annihilation, and a profound relaxation. Death involves release, an annihilation of self, and dying can involve spasmodic movements and total relaxation. With further contemplation, aspects of one are compared to aspects of the other in a continuing sequence. The requirements of writing something out and putting it on a page inevitably produce a sequence, for that matter. Initially simultaneous conceptions are made sequential, straightened out, or otherwise submerged. Only careful retracing of steps, requiring careful and sometimes dogged questioning or analysis, will reveal the original structure of the thought.

Certain types of sequences occur in the janusian process, but sequential analysis of the nature of the oppositions is not one of them; that is part of the dialectic. One type is a sequence starting with general interest in and attraction to antitheses and oppositions, then recognition and specification of particular opposites, then formulation of simultaneous opposites. Another type is careful preparation for and development of a task, extensive assessment and data gathering, and formulation of hypotheses, all carried out without any attention to opposition until, at the final moment in the sequence, opposites are specified and conceptualized simultaneously.

Janusian constructs are way stations toward integration of opposites and antitheses. Although conceptualization of simultaneous antitheses or opposites is not the same as integration of these entities, it sets the stage or provides the basis for a subsequent integration. Usually, homospatial thinking functions to produce such integrations, but dialectic thinking or analysis can serve in some fashion also. Although characteristically oriented toward synthesis and combination, dialectic thinking can facilitate integration of opposites and antitheses, especially in science and philosophy. Dialectic analyses and syntheses of the elements in a janusian construct could function as steps toward integration and they could function to integrate janusian formulations into larger theories or analyses. Examples of the latter might be Freud's or Sartre's use of dialectic thinking to integrate Conscious/Unconscious or sex/aggression and Being and Nothingness, respectively, into comprehensive systems. As some persons who employ janusian thinking also tend otherwise to think in dialectical terms, there surely are some close relationships between the two forms of thought despite the separation and distinctiveness of their functions with respect to creativity. While janusian thinking is intrinsic to the creative process, effective dialectical thinking, like any other form of effective thinking, sometimes plays a role. Cardinally shared

by both janusian and dialectical thinking is a concern with opposition and antithesis, and future exploration may reveal other interesting and important connections.

Dualistic Thinking

Because janusian thinking is a step toward integration of antitheses and opposites, there is really little reason to confuse it with dualistic thinking, the tendency to formulate concepts or systems in terms of two exhaustive categories. However, confusion could arise because of common elements between janusian and dialectical thinking. Dialecticians are particularly prone to formulating dualisms and, in assessing a particular dialectic system of thought, it is often hard to judge whether fondness for duality or the saliency of the dialectic method has been primary. To this day, there is still much controversy about the presence of dualistic thinking in the works of such influential giants as Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Leibniz, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. Are they, for instance, limited by such dualisms as real and ideal, matter and mind, mind and body, reason and faith, material and spiritual, and so forth? Are two alternatives or factors emphasized and considered on the basis of economy, symmetry, or merely simplistic and limited conceptualizing? And, from a more profound point of view, philosophers and theologians often wonder about a metaphysical basis for dualistic versus trinitarian religions and systems of thought.[12]

Although the dialectic method is often associated with dualistic formulations, there is no necessary reason that it must be so. Moreover, janusian thinking, which occurs in conjunction with many other types of thinking beside the dialectic one, need hardly share any guilt by association. Nevertheless, both janusian thinking and dialectics are based in part on opposition, and opposition, it will be remembered, is often conceived in binary or dichotomous terms. Binary oppositions such as sex and aggression or material and spiritual are surely dualisms. How does dualism actually fit in? In no intrinsic or direct fashion. In the first place, dualisms only logically enter the picture when certain types of opposites are formulated; scalar or polar opposites (based on continuities) do not lend themselves to dualistic descriptions because no two exhaustive categories are formed. It would be totally inappropriate, for instance, to propose that all color is based on a dualism of black and white because it is clearly necessary to take account of the scale of various grades of gray. Indeed, attempting to make a dualism out of black and white has figuratively come to represent poor thinking and perception, "seeing things in black and

white" is the exemplar of a pejorative reference to dualism.

Second, and especially pertinent to janusian thinking, there is no intrinsic reason for any opposites, whether dichotomous (cut) or scalar, to be considered as dualistic pairs. When real and ideal are considered as opposites, many other oppositions are possible as well: real and unreal, real and supernatural, real and fantastic; also, there is ideal and flawed, ideal and low, ideal and ordinary, and so on. For sex and aggression, there are virtually unlimited possibilities: aggression and docility, aggression and peace, aggression and conciliation, sex and chastity, sex and death, sex and abstinence, sex and religion, and many, many others depending on which of the manifold aspects of these concepts are considered. Multiple oppositions of this sort are characteristically involved in janusian thinking and, for that matter, they are often involved in other advanced types of thinking about opposites, in science and in dialectic thinking as well. But the sine qua non of janusian thinking is multiplicity and multiple opposition involving the multiple and varied nuances of words, concepts, and sensory phenomena. Therefore, no intrinsic dualism could be at all involved in the janusian process. To say that multiple opposition could be ultimately reduced to a dualism—that is, multiples of two are binary or dualistic in basic structure, multiples of three are treble in structure—is begging the question because multiple oppositions are rich and complex and not systematically related to each other.

Conflict

While dualism, dialectic thinking, and the Jungian structure of the psyche have no intrinsic or direct relationship to janusian thinking, conflict is connected to this process in a major way. Conflict instigates and generates the process of janusian thinking, and conflict is manifest, or at least influential, in the products and results. Both scientific and artistic creations retain an element of conflict—psychological, aesthetic, and/or intellectual—in their substance and structure. The impulse to create arises from psychological conflict, conflict that is necessary for the antithetical structure of janusian thinking. One of the reasons janusian thinking plays such a large role in creations is that it helps produce the sense that we treasure so highly in art of both tension and conflict together with balance and harmony. In science, it produces both intellectual discovery and resolution together with a sense of discrepancy, an intellectual tension and conflict that propels the creative scientist to search further. Although conflict is necessary for janusian thinking, it is not sufficient to produce the process. The

janusian process is not merely a direct or an indirect manifestation of psychological conflict.

Psychological conflict is universal and ubiquitous in human experience. To say that psychological conflict is necessary for janusian thinking and for both the artistic and scientific creative processes is not to connect psychopathology with creativity. Psychological conflict is not intrinsically pathological or inevitably connected to illness. Indeed, such conflict is so ubiquitous and, in some ways, such an appropriate response to the complexity and flux of human experience that it is objectively best described only as a state of being. This state of being is not much different for the creative person than it is for the rest of us: it is experienced both consciously and unconsciously as a sense of particular inner forces in opposition with each other, an opposition that sometimes abates, or is shunted away, or is resolved, or is replaced, or continues throughout the course of life. What may be different about the creative person is his capacity to embody this inner psychological conflict in janusian constructs and formulations. For, in structure, such constructs and formulations are either or both the expression of conflict or the wished-for resolution of conflict. Formulating two or more specific opposites or antitheses coexisting simultaneously embodies and expresses conflict. As the coexistence and cooperation obviates total and intolerable contradiction or; at the very least, mutual annihilation, a sense of resolution is also expressed. In short, the janusian thought is emotionally coordinate with the idea of having one's cake and eating it, too.

If janusian thinking were merely an expression of the emotional wish to have one's cake and eat it too, if it were only the hoped-for magical resolution of conflict, it would be a direct manifestation of primary process thinking. Such, however, is not the case. Powered and motivated by emotional conflict and unconscious wishes, janusian thinking is a form of conscious abstract formulating and conceptualizing that produces creations. It is, again, a form of secondary, not primary, process cognition. Although the elements of an unconscious conflict may appear in the context of a janusian construct, the defense mechanism of negation is operating rather than either primary process thinking or an eruption of unconscious conflict into consciousness. For the creative person, negation and janusian thinking are special ways of dealing with unconscious conflict. Conscious conflicts also are at times involved. Seldom, however, does the janusian process function to resolve conscious or unconscious conflicts directly, but such conflicts may be resolved as a result of their externalization in the creative process and the concomitant operation of other types of cognitive and emotional factors, creative and otherwise.

In producing creations, janusian thinking brings conflictual elements—intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional—together and into juxtaposition with one another. This in itself helps reduce certain types of conflict maintained by lack of comprehension and understanding; in other cases, juxtaposed elements are rendered more susceptible to comparison and integration as well as resolution. Despite its potential for integration and harmony, however, the janusian construct and concatenation of opposites and antitheses is itself always fraught with a sense of discord and tension. The thoughts and ideas are subjectively uncomfortable to formulate and they produce an intense quality of what Festinger called cognitive dissonance,[13] or a feeling of cognitive conflict.

Ambivalence

The relationship between ambivalence and janusian thinking is highly complex. Consideration of this relationship leads to the labyrinthian realm of topics such as creativity and schizophrenia, and creativity and general psychopathology. I shall not attempt here to pursue the latter issue to the extent it deserves, but instead I shall touch on some highlights pending a fuller discussion in the future.

The term "ambivalence" was first applied to psychological phenomena by Eugen Bleuler in 1919. Derived from chemical terminology, the root, valence, denotes the "value" or combining power of an atom. By "ambivalence," Bleuler intended to designate the tendency of his schizophrenic patients to "endow the most diverse psychisms with both a positive and negative indicator,"[14] and he distinguished three types: affective ambivalence, ambivalence of will, and intellectual ambivalence. Although he provided rich and detailed descriptions of apparent instances of the three types in schizophrenia, Freud and other clinicians restricted the use of the term to one type, affective ambivalence, and proving more useful and precise, such restricted use has persisted in contemporary psychiatric practice.

Affective ambivalence consists of the tendency of persons suffering from schizophrenia—and, as we now know, a wide range of other types of illness are also included, notably the obsessive compulsive neurosis—to possess strong contradictory feelings, such as love and hate, toward a single person or object. With respect to janusian thinking, an immediate and sharp distinction obtains. Janusian thinking involves simultaneous and conscious cognitions, and it is the nature of affects that they can neither be experienced definitively and precisely nor simultaneously on a conscious level. Affective ambivalence is

always inferred from a person's behavior by an observer; the person himself does not consciously experience defined contradictory affects simultaneously, he feels only a general sense of uncertainty and indecisiveness. For an observer, the uncertainty is manifest in the person's actions, and affective ambivalence is assumed to be the cause. Eventually, concrete feelings such as love and hate may come alternately into the ambivalent person's awareness, and he then may come to understand the roots of such uncertainty. It is at that point described in conceptual terms, such as, "I have mixed feelings," or "I think I both love and hate my mother." In Bleuler's original description of affective ambivalence, he cites the example of a patient referring to her lover in the following way: "You devil, you angel, you devil, you angel."[15] Sequential feelings oscillating between opposite poles are represented. If the patient were able to say, "I feel you are both a devil and an angel," or even, "I both love and hate you," she would be making abstract inferences from her own concrete feelings and behavior.

This is not a hair-splitting distinction: it is based on an important difference between affects and cognitions and helps to specify a probable connection between affective ambivalence and janusian thought. Affective ambivalence, like conflict, is very likely one of the motivating forces leading to janusian thoughts. This should not be surprising, because ambivalence and conflict are highly interrelated with one another: ambivalence leads to conflict and conflict produces various types of ambivalences. Thus, ambivalent feelings may instigate the janusian process, but particular janusian constructs do not themselves consist of feelings or concrete experiences, they consist of abstract conceptualizations. Experience with creative people does indicate that they are in fact often highly ambivalent in many areas of their lives.[16] But, although ambivalent feelings may instigate the janusian process, such feelings, unlike the more general factor of conflict, are not continually involved.

But what of the other types of ambivalence described by Bleuler, ambivalence of will and intellectual ambivalence? As an example of ambivalence of will, Bleuler describes a patient who clamors for release from the institution and then violently and abusively resists when informed that he is about to be discharged. Here, again, there is a sequential oscillation informing an observer that contradictory tendencies exist. To draw a meaningful distinction between this type of ambivalence and the previous affective type is actually quite difficult. Will, in the sense described, is quite close to affect; we could easily say, for example, that the patient *feels* ambivalent about going home. Bleuler *himself* realized this similarity between the types. Because the types are similar, ambivalence both of will and of affect are

essentially distinct from janusian thinking in a similar way. Bleuler's ambivalence of will should more appropriately be considered to be a form of conflict which, in modern terms, would be designated as a conflict of motives. In that case, it would have the same relationship to janusian thinking as other forms of conflict.

Seldom is the term ambivalence applied nowadays to the type of behavior exemplifying Bleuler's third type: intellectual ambivalence. Here, the patient says, "I am a human being like yourself even though I am not a human being."[17] But regardless of what it is called, such behavior is still found in schizophrenic patients and it requires careful analysis because in form it is close to the conceptualization of simultaneous antithesis of janusian thinking.

The patient's statement, "I am a human being like yourself even though I am not a human being," taken by itself appears to have all the features of a janusian formulation. As an assertion of simultaneous antithesis, it seems pregnant with meaning and somewhat poetic. Taken figuratively, it suggests many levels of meaning: the patient knows that he is human, but he doesn't feel human; he is at war within himself, a human aspect clashing with what he considers to be a nonhuman aspect; you, the other person, do not treat him as a human being; something about him is lacking; you and the patient both belong to some mystical or superordinate category where humanness is beside the point. As a psychotherapist working with this patient, all of these figurative meanings of his statement should be taken as potentially relevant. Presenting one or more in the form of an interpretation of what the patient is really "saying" can lead to an engagement, an inroad into the patient's emotional life that produces further clarification and exploration. But is it correct to say that the patient had all these meanings consciously in mind when he made the statement? In answering this, I do not mean to presume that I know exactly what goes on, at any given moment, in a schizophrenic patient's mind. Nevertheless, I believe I can answer it on the basis of what is currently known about schizophrenia from various types of clinical observations. No, it is highly unlikely that the patient has these meanings consciously in mind when he makes the statement because that would require a conscious intention for the remark to be taken *figuratively*. In order for the patient to intend figurative meaning, it is necessary that he be aware of the contradictory elements in the statement.[18] He must know (and believe) that he is expressing a literal impossibility because such impossibility alone denotes figurative intent (for the person speaking as well as the person spoken to). But, there is little reason to believe that the schizophrenic person making such a

remark is aware of the impossibility and contradiction. In fact, quite the reverse applies: the patient believes in the literal truth of the statement that he is both a human being and not a human being at the same time. This type of equivalence of opposites is a criterion attribute of primary process thinking; such literal equivalence characterizes schizophrenic thought. The patient in this instance has not formulated a janusian thought at all; he cannot use the thought for creative production because it is conceptually meaningless and idiosyncratic, rather than profound. Referring to my discussion of opposition in the previous chapter, it appears that the patient thinks only of the similarities rather than the contradictions in opposites.

Some factors operating with this patient can perhaps be made clearer in terms of Lidz's recent and salient formulations about the nature of schizophrenic thinking. Tracing the origin of cognitive deficit in schizophrenia to childhood egocentricity (as the term is used by Piaget), Lidz describes a resulting difficulty in conceptual category formation as the hallmark of the illness. "Categories," he says, "are formed by selecting common attributes of things or events to bestow some degree of equivalence to experiences that can never be identical."[19] Necessary to such category formation is the capacity to discern and define boundaries between elements of experience and to distinguish the essential from the nonessential. Category formation, therefore, is the basis for abstract thinking. Typically, Lidz points out, the schizophrenic has difficulty forming such categories, both in language and in thought, and becomes preoccupied with what Lidz terms, "the intercategorical realm."[20] This realm consists of fantasies about fusion of the self and the mother, intersexuality, and other matters lying between the ordinary boundaries of experience and thought.

Consistent with this view; a difficulty in forming categories involves a fluidity and a lack of distinction among opposites and contradictions. Essential to forming categories is the capacity to separate both elements that belong together and those that do *not* belong. Therefore, recognition of contradiction is a crucial factor. Persons suffering from schizophrenia, however, have enormous difficulty in just this area, they cannot eliminate contradictory elements and they include inessentials (overinclusion)[21] in the categories they form. Opposites and antitheses are therefore often considered equivalent or identical because of superficial resemblances. Such superficial resemblances usually have some egocentric relevance, and when we explore the basis for equating a particular pair or group of opposites, we often learn a good deal about the patient's preoccupations and concerns.

The basis, then, of statements by schizophrenic persons demonstrating what Bleuler called intellectual ambivalence is this significant difficulty in recognizing contradictions and in forming appropriate categories, along with egocentric preoccupations and concerns. This is a far cry from janusian thinking, where the creative person is acutely and sharply aware of the contradictory elements between a particular pair or among a series of opposites or antitheses and he nevertheless posits that they are equivalently valid or simultaneously operative for the purpose of attaining aesthetic effects and higher truths.

With respect to affective ambivalence and ambivalence of will, lack of contradiction also plays a role. When the schizophrenic patient utters a series of remarks suggesting affective ambivalence or when he first asks to leave the hospital and then resists discharge the next day, he is also *not* aware of the contradictory nature of his behavior. This is not to say that the patient lacks an experience of conflict; quite the contrary. A constant and recurrent feeling of conflict without awareness of the nature of the conflict is particularly marked in schizophrenia. But the patient does seem unable to understand and to formulate conceptually at that moment that he has said something contradictory or behaved in a contradictory fashion. When he becomes able to say, "I have mixed feelings" about someone or something, this usually means that he has come to acknowledge and/or recognize contradiction. As therapists, we acknowledge this achievement by saying that the patient has attained insight.

Though I have devoted the major part of this discussion to a consideration of ambivalence in the schizophrenic condition, severe and persistent ambivalent feelings also occur in a large number of clinical conditions. Furthermore, ambivalent feelings are involved, though less severely and persistently, in a wide variety of interpersonal relationships; they occur in the healthy as well as the sick. In none of these cases are such feelings necessarily connected with janusian thinking. As feelings, they are neither experienced simultaneously nor do they necessarily become translated into the special conceptual configurations, nor become applied to the special contexts, of the creative process. When Bleuler's type of intellectual ambivalence becomes manifest in schizophrenia or in other conditions such as the obsessive compulsive neurosis, it is a product of primary process rather than janusian thinking. When a person with an obsessive compulsive neurosis believes that he can both decide and not decide, or can leave his wife and not leave her, we have little trouble recognizing the inability to acknowledge contradiction and the emergence of primary process thought. Sometimes, such ambivalent feelings could provide a basis for

a janusian formulation, even constructed by the obsessive compulsive or schizophrenic, but in such cases a specific recognition of logical contradiction—the intervention of abstract thinking and insight—has invariably occurred.

In sum, janusian thinking is a cognitive process involving high degrees of abstraction. Not based on or derived from an oppositionally structured psyche or a type of dialectic discourse or method, it is a special type of secondary process thinking. Arising always from psychological and intellectual conflict, janusian thinking embodies and presents conflicts and provides a means to their resolution. Sometimes the janusian process is associated with ambivalence, but it always involves strong appreciation of the contradictory nature of opposites and antitheses. As a process, janusian thinking involves specification of opposites or antitheses, presentation or postulation of opposites or antitheses existing or operating simultaneously, application in a creative context with elaboration, and frequently some type of later transformation. Experientially, the process is often truncated and a janusian formulation arises as a leap of thought that overcomes apparent contradictions and both initiates and facilitates the construction and development of creations.

Notes

1 Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams."

2 W. Sledge and I have identified numerous instances of simultaneous antithesis in Freud's formulations. Freud's brilliant analysis of the nature of the uncanny as comprised of two antithetical aspects, *"heimlich"* or familiar and "*unheimlich"* or unfamiliar, is an especially noteworthy instance of a janusian conception; see S. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" (1919) (London, 1955), 17:217-52.

3 As I discuss in the final chapter here, the operation of janusian thinking in producing artistic creations and their aesthetic appeal supports and lends increased weight to Freud's formulation about primary process.

4 S. Freud, "The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words" (1910) (London, 1957), 11:153—62. Freud based this analysis on the work of a German philologist, Karl Abel.

5 C. Levi-Strauss, "The savage mind is logical in the same sense and in the same fashion as ours, though as our own is only when it is applied to knowledge of a universe in which it recognizes physical and semantic properties simultaneously" *(The Savage Mind* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966], p. 268).

6 See The Collected Works of C. G. Jung (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series, 1966), esp. The Psychology of the Unconscious, vol. 7; Psychological Types, vol. 6; The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, vol. 8.

7 Some others who have strongly emphasized the importance of reconciliation of opposites, in art and/or in life are Coleridge (probably the first), Eli Siegel, and Cyril Connolly. For Coleridge's discussion of poetry as a reconciliation of opposites, see esp. chap. 14 in

Biographia Literaria. The English critic Connolly said the following: "To attain . . . truth we must be able to resolve all our dualities [opposites]" *(The Unquiet Grave* [London: Hamish Hamilton, 1945], p. 85). Siegel, who founded a movement called "Aesthetic Realism" states as a manifesto: "The resolution of conflict in self is like the making one of opposites in art," and "All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves"; see, e.g., E. Siegel, *The Aesthetic Method in Self Conflict* (New York: Definition Press, 1965), *Psychiatry, Economics, Aesthetics* (New York: Definition Press, 1946).

8 See G. W. F. Hegel, "The Science of Logic," in *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* trans. W. Wallace (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). For a good discussion of Hegel's dialectic, see J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-Examination* (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

9 S. Plath, "Three Women," *Winter Trees* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), p. 50.

10 The consideration here should also clarify the relationship of janusian thinking and syncretism. Syncretism, the attempted reconciliation or union of different or conflicting principles, practices, or parties, usually involves logic, compromise, or a process of accretion such as the gradual incorporation of tenets and rites from different religions into a single religion. While janusian thinking could play a role in developing a particular syncretic result, syncretic thinking and approaches proceed along many and varying paths. Also, Arieti's theory of creativity as a "magic" synthesis of primary and secondary process does not take into consideration the difference between integration, which is more intrinsic to creativity, and synthesis (see Arieti, *Creativity*).

11 Connections between sex and death have a long mythopoetic history. McClelland has discussed these connections in the theme of the harlequin figure which he traces to a time prior to the commedia dell'arte in the eleventh century. Also, he cites earlier connections in Greek mythology; see D. W. McClelland, "The Harlequin Complex," in *The Study of Lives,* ed. R. W. White (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), pp. 94—120. Also, Professor Toby Olshin has called my attention to the widespread tendency among Renaissance poets, particularly John Donne, to equate sexual orgasm and death in both punning and serious contexts. This long-standing mythic and literary background has not detracted from the impact of new constructions equating sex and death.

12 Koestler's emphasis is on dualistic factors both in the concept of bisocia- tion and in his recent use of the metaphor of the god, Janus. He focuses on a two-faced god rather than on opposition *[Janus).*

13 See L. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, 111.: Row, Peterson, 1957). Cognitive dissonance consists of a relation of discrepancy or lack of fit between two items of knowledge or conceptions held at the same time. Festinger emphasized that such discrepancy produced discomfort and a motivation toward reduction or resolution. This motivating effect of cognitive dissonance applies to the stimulating quality of janusian formulations, the motivation and instigation to consider further and to seek further information when exposed to such formulations. With the simultaneous antitheses and oppositions, there could hardly be a form of cognition that is manifestly more discrepant or dissonant.

14 E. Bleuler, *Dementia Praecox or the Group of Schizophrenias,* trans. J. Zinkin (New York: International Universities Press, 1950), p. 53.

15 Ibid.

16 See earlier psychodynamic formulations about the author of "In Monument Valley"; see also Rothenberg, "The Iceman Changeth," and "Poetic Process and Psychotherapy."

17 Bleuler, *Dementia Praecox,* p. 54.

18 In referring to absence of figurative intent, I do not mean to invoke the complicated and controversial issue of whether schizophrenics

think concretely rather than abstractly, nor do I mean to propose a systematic formulation about figurative thinking in schizophrenia. It is well known that persons suffering from schizophrenia do think abstractly, sometimes "over- abstractly," and that they are also capable of speaking and thinking both figuratively and metaphorically. I have suggested some formulations about schizophrenic production of metaphors elsewhere (A. Rothenberg, "Poetry in the Classroom," *American Poetry Review* 3 [1974] :52-54), and a full discussion of the matter must be postponed for other communications.

19 T. Lidz, *The Origin and Treatment of Schizophrenic Disorders* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 59.

20 Ibid., pp. 85 ff.

21 "Overinclusion" was first introduced by Norman Cameron,- see his "Schizophrenic Thinking in a Problem-Solving Situation," *Journal of Mental Science* 85 (1939) :1012-35.