# L'Envoi:

## Psychodynamics of the Creation of a Poem

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Now that various connections to the poet's life and to his psychological preoccupations have been revealed, revealed not merely to satisfy curiosity-seeking into the affairs of the outstanding, and surely not for the purpose of debunking or reducing the creative process to some simplistic series of formulations, I shall give this necessarily disjointed narrative some coherence and order. I shall recapitulate the information pertaining to the creation of "In Monument Valley" and provide some additional information about the poet's thoughts pertaining to the poem, information that will fill some of the gaps produced along the way. I shall, in essence, tell the story of the creation of this poem—the psychological story—to the extent that such a story can be told.

First, to review the pertinent life history and factual circumstances concerning the writing of the poem, as follows:[1] approximately six months after the trip and encounter with a horse at Monument Valley, the poet was expecting a visit from Miriam, a friend who had also been a guest at J.T.'s house in the southwestern United States. On the morning prior to her visit, the poet formulated specific poetic lines about a horse appearing suddenly among Monument Valley rock formations.

During the writing of these preliminary lines, he thought of a poem by Edwin Muir pertaining to horses and human survival, the idea of a horse as emblematic of the modern age, and he conceived of horses sharing and figuratively living human lives while remaining beasts and not-humans. After writing some tentative formulations, he stopped working on the poem for the remainder of the day.

While asleep that night, he had two dreams in sequence. The first manifestly portrayed both J.T. and Miriam, and the persons in the second were the poet's mother, his grandmother, and, represented by a picture, an old male friend of the family. In the second dream, the poet's mother carried his grandmother on her back, much as a horse carries a rider.

The next morning, the poet thought of the horse in the poem and a visual image briefly came to mind of both a riderless horse and a horse with a rider. He decided to incorporate this image into the fabric of the poem and, as a means of establishing a prior relationship between the horse and the human

meeting in Monument Valley, he began to include a previous experience of riding. He did some preliminary work on this idea that day and on the next, beginning to connect a happy period of his own life with the riding of the horse. Temporarily discontinuing his work on the poem because of a visit of several days to a nearby city, he resumed on his return following a night of dreaming about Elizabeth Bishop, Marianne Moore, and an old unidentified lady. At that point, he constructed its overall final structure as follows: the first two stanzas were to describe the rider and horse on an idyllic ride in a pastoral setting and the last three were to describe the meeting of horse and man in Monument Valley. He essentially finished the poem within the next few days and briefly returned to it some months later for some minor final changes.

With respect to the relationship between the poem and the poet's life, it is certain that the poem was derived from the actual incident of meeting a lone horse at Monument Valley and that it had connections to both his friends, J.T. and Miriam. Although the poet consciously focused both on the incident at Monument Valley and on J.T. during the writing of the poem, he did not think at all about any connections with Miriam. Only after he had virtually completed the poem, during his conversation with me, did he connect together his dream about Miriam and her indirect association with the incident at Monument Valley by virtue of being a guest at J.T.'s house. Then, he began to consider her prospective visit to his home to be the probable instigation for the writing of the poem. This, of course, should be no surprise. The poet was consciously after other game than thinking through or even expressing something about his relationship to particular friends, he was writing a poem concerning a meeting with a horse and making a statement having universal effect and meaning.

The poet's relationship to me also constituted a connection between the poem and his life, although very indirectly so. Here, too, he did not at all consciously focus on me or on anything he and I had discussed while he was writing the poem, but, when analyzing his dreams and relating them to the poem, he thought of an issue he and I had been discussing previously, the burdens parents impose on children.[2] Underlying all these connections to the poet's life—both direct and indirect connections—was the relationship between the poem and the poet's unconscious feelings about his mother and his grandmother. Strong evidence for this assertion consists of the manifest appearance of his mother and grandmother in his dreams and the detailed collaborative analysis of the poet's associations and of the meaning of those dreams.

So far, I have added no new information or formulations to the account. I have brought together some disconnected data pertaining to the writing of the poem in order to pave the way for an exposition of the psychodynamics of the poem's creation. Before that, I will briefly mention some other pertinent facts.

In addition to the poet's closeness to his grandmother throughout his youth, another factor in that relationship bears on the creation of this poem. When his grandmother died, several years after the gratifying period of summers of regular and intensive contact, the poet had his very first direct experience with death. Prior to the burial, the grandmother's body had been dressed in a red velvet gown and lay in stately splendor in the bedroom of her house. Here, the poet visited her and, never having seen a dead body before, he remembered thinking about how prettily she had been made up. While telling me his associations about his grandmother, he also described undergoing the very disturbing experience of sitting alone beside her bed for many, many hours, imagining to himself that she wasn't dead.

The psychological theme of a parent becoming a burden to a child had deep roots in his actual life experience. He witnessed such a relationship between his mother and his grandmother. Failing gradually during her last years, the grandmother had imposed a heavy physical and psychological burden on the poet's mother. The latter cared for the grandmother constantly and bore the burden well, but it was an extraordinarily difficult time for all, including the poet.

A specific association to a line in the completed poem connects that line directly with the poet's mother and indirectly with his experience with his grandmother's death. With no prompting from me, he at one point began to wonder and to talk about the line, "Brief, polyphonic lives abounded everywhere." He felt it had some particular emotional importance to him. After some tentative attempts to connect the line to other poems he had written, he suddenly realized that the idea related specifically to his mother. Remembering an incident when he was fairly young, he became aware that the idea of brief lives connected to the word "ephemeral," a word that had strong associations with his mother. Never having heard the word before, he had been introduced to it in a conversation with his mother about insects. He asked her at that point what it meant. When she told him, spontaneously and forcefully he said to her, "I'm glad you're not ephemeral." She was, he said, enormously pleased and he had always remembered

the incident with great pleasure himself. It is of special interest—exactly why I will explain shortly—that the conversation in which this word came up pertained to insects. The idea of insects had played a role in his thinking of the phrase "brief polyphonic lives" during the creation of the poem. In arriving at the final poetic line pertaining to this remembrance, the poet progressed through the following formulations, all after the line, "Burdened by thick hedges of invisible lilac" (sequence numbering added):

1. A frog unheeded sang 'Plaisir d'Amour . . .'

2. The katydid sang Plaisir d'Amour

3. Tree toads in thin polyphony sang 'Plaisir d'Amour'.

4. Where lives abounded, brief and polyphonic.

Another sequence in the creation of the poem that I have not mentioned previously, but is of interest, pertains to the very first thoughts the poet had about the poem. On the morning he wrote the first lines about the incident of the horse appearing while he was picnicking at Monument Valley, the poet was reminded of Edgar Allan Poe's story, "The Fall of the House of Usher." He thought that the horse appearing suddenly on the scene was reminiscent of the figure of Madeline Usher in that story looming up suddenly from the dead, looming up while the House of Usher was destroyed. In the margin of his notebook he wrote the words "House of Usher." He even tried to include the idea of the "House of Usher" directly in the poem, using it in a few early versions as the name of one of the monuments along with the "Three Sisters." For example, he tried:

> Hot pumice blew in one unending gust
>
> Causing the 'House of Usher' and the 'Three Sisters' to shriek.

But he abandoned the idea rather early and did not return to it.

## Psychodynamic Formulation

Both the first idea, consisting of the words and thought instigating this particular poem, and the inspirations occurring during the course of the writing, consisting of the thoughts that solve aesthetic

problems and generate further activity, are indirect and figurative representations of the poet's unconscious preoccupations and conflicts. The initial thought of the horse looming up like Madeline Usher, the janusian thought of the horse as not-human and not-beast, and the homospatial thought of the riderless horse and the horse and rider occupying the same space are all embodiments and representations of unconscious material as well as elements directly contributing to the creation of the poem. With respect to the janusian thought of the horse as not-human and not-beast, I have already spelled out how that formulation figuratively represented the poet's unconscious preoccupation, his conflict between wanting to be free and independent and to be cared for by his mother. With respect to his homospatial thought, I have pointed out how it represented the poet's unconscious oedipal wish as well as a merging of his sexual and aggressive impulses. The initial ideas, inspirations, and metaphorical constructions incorporated into a poem are themselves indirect and figurative representations of unconscious material and, in the mirror-image process of creativity, they are way stations on the path to uncovering and revealing this material more directly. The poetic creative process facilitates the development of psychological insight, the rendering of the unconscious into consciousness, to a certain degree.[3]

The impending visit of the poet's friend Miriam was the preconscious and immediate stimulus for the writing of the poem. She stirred up feelings and thoughts about the incident at Monument Valley, an incident indirectly associated with her. But his first thoughts about the horse, the poetic thoughts and words beginning the poem, point to his deeper unconscious concern. In the light of all the information now derived about the poet's unconscious contents, it is possible to see that his first thoughts about the poem were figurative representations of his concern about his grandmother and his mother.

It is not necessary to trace the connections between Miriam and the poet's mother and grandmother. Such details would be unnecessarily revealing, and, for the present discussion, they would add little to understanding the relationship between the poem and the poet's psychological processes. But his thoughts of "The Fall of the House of Usher" and of the horse appearing on the scene like Madeline Usher looming up should certainly bring into bold relief the associations about his dead grandmother just described. Sitting by his grandmother in her bed, the first dead person he had ever seen, he imagined her to be still alive. The image of Madeline Usher, a literary prototype of the living dead (a female as well) was doubtless related to these remembrances about his grandmother. In the major dream of the

night after starting the poem, his grandmother rose to meet him at the door much as Madeline Usher loomed up from the burning house.

In the earliest draft of the poem, the poet referred to a monument he called "The Three Sisters," and this reference, surviving all revisions, was incorporated into the final version of the poem. The phrase did not refer to an actual remembered name of a rock formation in Monument Valley. Like all of his other names for monuments in the poem, those of the final version as well as earlier drafts, he wasn't sure whether there was such a designated formation at the actual geographical site. There might have been one called "The Two Sisters," he said to me at one point, but he wasn't sure.[4] Why did he decide to refer to the "Three Sisters"? He said he was thinking of Chekhov's play of the same name, and there is no reason whatsoever to doubt such a conscious intent. The conscious intent, however, points also to a probable unconscious connection. In the light of the other data and associations about this poem, the idea of "three sisters," three closely related women together, refers also to the time of his life when he was the center of attention of three figurative sisters, his grandmother, his grandmother's sister, and his mother. Chekhov's play, in fact, concerns three mature women living together and takes place in the summertime, circumstances very similar to the ones in the poet's past that were so closely associated with this poem.

These initial thoughts of the poet about the poem are not the same as the previously described unearthed unconscious material, revealed later in the course of writing the poem as a result of the mirror-image process of creativity. For the poet, the connections between these initial thoughts and his unconscious concerns remained quite remote throughout the creative process. He seldom became aware of such connections while writing. Consequently, I have not been able to cite any spontaneous confirmations from the poet himself about the foregoing, but I have had to guess and presume on the basis of similarity to other material and evidence.[5] This situation is due to the nature of the material itself rather than any fault in data gathering. The initial thoughts of a poem are disguised representations of unconscious material analogous to the disguised symbols and images of dreams. At this phase of the process, censorship more than revelation guides the formation. I designate these initial ideas as figurative representations of unconscious material rather than as symbols because they appear in consciousness rather than in dreams and, unlike symbols, they bear a complicated structural relationship to the material they represent.[6] Both the thought of Madeline Usher and of the "Three Sisters" pertain to the poet's conflict about caring for an aged parent, the experiences of the grandmother's death, and of the

constant summer contact.

Such representations characteristically instigate the creative process, not only in poetry but in diverse areas of creative activity. The creative person always becomes interested in an idea, an image, a life experience, or a scientific problem because it touches, in some way, on his unconscious concerns. The problem or idea and *how* he approaches it are always, in some respect, a figurative representation of the creator's personal conflicts and concerns. I emphasize manner of approach because often that is difficult to separate from the content of the problem or idea. For instance, it is hard to say whether the creator of "In Monument Valley" became interested in the horse incident because it immediately stirred up unconscious feelings at the site about his mother and grandmother, or whether the horse incident became an important vehicle for feelings and concerns primarily operating later at the time of writing, or whether both occurred. I think the distinction is not so important for our current purposes; in poetry, there is likely little distinction between these alternatives. With respect to this poem, all of these probably operated. When discussing a scientific creation (chaps. 5, 6, and 13 below), however, the distinction between the content of the idea and the manner of approach will be sharper and of greater significance.

To stipulate the overall psychodynamic development of the poem: the poet's thoughts at the time of the horse incident at Monument Valley and/or later thoughts about the incident touched aspects of his unconscious conflict about caring for an aged parent (or grandparent). Because of anxiety about the conflict (a factor that must be assumed) and the desire to create a poem, the poet became intrigued with the incident as an aesthetic problem. As he conceived of a poem, his first thoughts consisted of poetic phrases and ideas that were also figurative representations of his unconscious conflict. When he wrote them down and began constructing the specific poem, he simultaneously began a process of unearthing and uncovering his unconscious conflicts and concerns.

Following his writing a first version of the poem, the poet had dreams pertaining to the unconscious concerns represented in his poetic thoughts, the dreams bore a manifest structural resemblance to the poem and their latent content consisted of a wish to be cared for by his mother. The dream work continued the psychological process begun in the thoughts about the poem, in a disguised way, the dreams expressed the unconscious wish connected to the poetic ideas.

The poet had stopped working on the poem during that day at the point where he had formulated the line referring to the guiding idea of the horse as an emblematic beast of the age. Emblematic as an intermediary and a blend of species, the line was derived from the janusian formulation of the horse as simultaneously beast and human, not-human and not-beast. Following the dreams, the poet had a homospatial thought integrating the janusian conception of simultaneous antithesis.

The janusian and homospatial conceptions together functioned to bring the poet's unconscious wish closer to his awareness. When he returned to the poem, he thought of himself as being the horse's rider[7] and therefore put himself in the position of being physically supported and served by the horse rather than, as up to that point, only surprised, troubled, or emotionally burdened by it. He referred to a specific time in his life when the condition of being cared for by maternal figures came close to being realized. Although he ultimately changed the lines referring to the time before he "went off to study or to war," which suggested that period of his life, and gave a slightly different temporal reference,[8] the wish-fulfilling quality of his feelings associated with this period came to dominate the entire first two stanzas of the poem. The janusian thought and the homospatial thought, especially the latter because it more closely preceded the event, served to unearth a memory as well as a wish-fulfilling effect related to the initial idea of the poem.

As he continued to work on the poem, there was a further unearthing of unconscious material when he became conscious of some erotically tinged feelings while writing about the rider on the horse's back and then changed the horse's sex to female, designating the horse to be a "mare." This followed directly from his working on another janusian construction of simultaneous antithesis. Although the underlying connection of this poem to feelings about his mother was beginning to approach the poet's consciousness at that point, it had not yet come to awareness. The poet was primarily aware of thoughts about a poem he admired by a much respected colleague, Elizabeth Bishop.

After the several days interruption of work on the poem, the unconscious connection to his mother was represented in a dream manifestly concerning Elizabeth Bishop herself as well as another important female poet, Marianne Moore. The manifest presence of Elizabeth Bishop in the dream indicates the close connections among the poet's previous conscious thoughts about her, the material in the first two stanzas of the poem, and the wishes for maternal care. She appears in the dream as a day residue connecting to

thoughts about the poem.[9] His associations to that dream leave no doubt that the latent content concerns the wish for maternal care because they refer both to his grandmother and to the previous dreams. Although his associations did not relate directly to his mother, the feelings about his grandmother and his mother were essentially equivalent during this period of time. The dream representation of Marianne Moore married to a much younger man, though a disguise and a displacement, seems to indicate the interchangeability of his mother or grandmother. He (the much younger man) marries and possesses an esteemed and prized older woman, his mother and/or his grandmother.

On the day following this dream, the poet rewrote the poem again from the beginning, and, while working to bring it to completion, another homospatial process brought his mother even closer to awareness. Working on the homophonic relationship of the words "gate" and "gait" he formulated, "Hell's Gate," and although thinking of the Rodin doors in Paris, he surely thought fleetingly of his mother, since he had long been conscious of the connection between the word "hell" and his mother's name.

Another phrase connected to his mother was formulated during this phase of his writing, "Brief, polyphonic lives." Previously I mentioned that the phrase grew out of the poet's association to insect sounds but I did not describe the actual process leading to its production. The appearance of this phrase was facilitated by yet another form of homospatial thinking, one I have not previously mentioned. It is a mirror-image process of dreaming that involves the use of rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and other formal devices based on partial or total repetition of the sounds of words.[10] Similar to the homospatial superimposition of identities referring to disparate and distinct entities as described in the gait/gate example previously, creative rhyming and alliteration are the direct obverse and mirror image of the rhyming and alliteration in dreams.

Although it is somewhat of a digression from this exposition of the psychodynamics of the poem, I shall briefly describe and detail the operation of this other form of homospatial thinking. In dreams, rhyme and alliteration function as pathways for displacement, a displacement always onto the innocuous and irrelevant. Therefore, sound similarities among aspects of the manifest and latent content of a dream facilitate concealment of unconscious wishes, drives, and conflicts. In the creation of poetry and similar types of literary products, however, conceiving effective rhyme, alliteration, and other sound

repetitions functions obversely. As used in secondary process and conscious thought, the formulation of sound repetitions helps to unearth and reveal unconscious preoccupations. Sound repetitions played just such a role in the poet's formulating the particular line, "Brief, polyphonic lives abounded everywhere." A choice of sound repetitions was involved in the sequence of versions leading finally to the line associated with a memory of his mother.

After having written the second stanza in the following form:

> Or outward from the buoyant sorrel mare
>
> Who moved as if not displeased by my weight upon her back.
>
> Her gait swung onto meadows heavy with out-of-sight lilac,

he thought of finding a rhyme for the word "mare" (the rhyme scheme is ABBA). Fond of "near rhymes" or "off rhymes" (words or phrases approximating each other in sound rather than rhyming exactly), he wrote the following words in the margin of his worksheet: "moor, paramour, mere, demure, immure, admire, more, nevermore." After writing this series, he thought of the phrase "Plaisir d'Amour," the name of a song suggesting, or providing an opportunity to introduce, the idea of a frog ("A frog unheeded sang 'Plaisir d'Amour' . . ."). After trying this idea, he substituted the insect "katydid," then tried "tree toads." Finally, he ended up with the construction pertaining to the word "ephemeral"—"Brief, polyphonic lives abounded everywhere"—the idea strongly associated with a pleasant experience with his mother. In the process of thinking of words he might use as rhymes for the word "mare," he had hit upon the word "amour," a word that led closer to his unconscious preoccupation rather than further away. There was a reversal of the displacement mechanism of dreams. Instead of using the sound series for displacing unconscious material onto the innocuous and irrelevant, the searching for rhyme words led to increasingly relevant associations.

Effective rhyming, alliteration, and other sound repetition devices function generally in the creation of poetry as mirror image of dreaming processes. This connection to unconscious material contributes to the emotional impact of the rhyme or repetition. As a general principle, the second word or sound conceived in an effectively rhymed or alliterative pair tends to be more closely connected to

unconscious preoccupations because of the progressive process of unearthing. To find out which of the pair are such key words is impossible when looking at a final completed poem. A rhyme word at the end of a stanza in the final version of a poem may be a word the poet thought of early during creation, while a rhyme word at the end of the first line of the poem may actually have been conceived last. Poems are seldom written in the same sequence as we, the audience, read them. As my exposition here has I hope clearly shown, it is essential to have access to the poem in process to know something of the poet's mind.

This point about rhyme and other sound devices in poetic creation opens up a rich and fruitful area of exploration and investigation on its own. It surely requires more substantiation than I have given in these brief comments, but I must postpone further discussion until chapter 10 and return again to the psychodynamics of the writing of this poem.

When the poet finished what was essentially the final version of his work, he did not, in any specific way, think about an unconscious preoccupation underlying his creation. Certainly, he did not conceptualize that he had been conflicted about a wish to be cared for by his mother and a wish to be free and independent, nor would we expect him to do so. His purpose in writing was the creation of an aesthetic object, not, on a conscious level at least, the achievement of psychological insight. That many of the unconscious elements I have discussed here had reached his consciousness or become virtually conscious by the time he stopped is indisputable, in the light of our later discussions. In these discussions, held within a day or two of his writing the virtually final version, it was he who first proposed a connection of his dreams to parents. He suggested that his dreams on the night he started the poem were concerned with a theme of the burdens parents imposed on their children. In the light of all the other data I have discussed here, this first interpretation turns out to have been keenly appropriate.[11] It was he who realized that he had unconsciously used the word "mare" as a reference to his mother and he suggested many other unconscious connections as well. Therefore, he did succeed in unearthing unconscious material in a general way—engaging in the process of arousal I described earlier—in the course of creating the poem.

The psychodynamics of poetic creation in the general case are similar to the specific ones I have described here. The poet becomes intrigued by an initial idea[12] in the form of a thought, experience, word, or image having important unconscious meaning to him. He decides to write a poem because he is

aware of some of the aesthetic potentialities, particularly the tension and conflict embodied in the idea, and also because he is moved to find out more about what the initial idea connotes. Although he does not think it consciously, he is moved to find out some of its unconscious determinants. He starts with a puzzle concomitantly aesthetic and psychological, and he tries to solve it or to disclose its elements. In trying to work out the puzzle, his thought has continuity on both unconscious and conscious levels, specifically, there are continuities and connections between a poet's waking thoughts about a poem and thoughts incorporated in his dreams, as has been amply demonstrated here. Both the dreams during this period of time and the unfolding creative process are concerned with similar underlying unconscious themes. The manner of handling the unconscious material in one of these spheres of psychological activity, dream or creative process, affects the way it is handled in the other. There is, in other words, a progression of psychological activity during the time of writing a poem, a progression leading to alteration in the specific underlying unconscious theme itself. As in the example presented here, the unconscious theme represented in the poet's earlier dreams developed into a later dream representing a disguised wish for marriage with his mother, partly because of the unearthing process concomitantly going on in the creation of the poem. As the unconscious material came closer to the surface in the poem, a (very likely) deeper wish was expressed in the dream. Although there may be a progressive continuity between dreaming and the creative process, and consequently a facilitation and a contribution, the particular functional relationship between the two forms of mental activity is still primarily an obverse one. The dream functions primarily to express unconscious preoccupation in disguised form, while the creative process functions progressively to reveal it. As the poem discussed here progressed, more and more direct connections to the poet's mother appeared while his dreams continued to present obscure or disguised representations. As both forms of mental activity occur in the same person, there is inevitably some mutual interaction. The revelation of unconscious material in the creative process may instigate dreams expressing deeper wishes and, vice versa, dream discharge can often influence the creative process.

By the time a poem is completed, or nearly so, poets are dimly aware of some of its personal significance to them. When this poem was nearly finished, the poet was aware of having tried to work out and assert something about his feelings about women in general as well as his feelings about independence, freedom, and going his own way. Later, he made direct connections between the poem

and his mother.

Lest I be misunderstood, I do not mean to say that discovering the personal significance of an idea or an experience is the only function of the creative process or of writing poetry particularly. This poem makes a powerful statement about modem man's alienation from himself, conveys the emotional impact of the experience of significant encounter, and has philosophical and theological overtones. For example, there are implications of man's fall from grace or the expulsion from the Garden of Eden[13] and there are allusions to the relationship between soul and body in the structure and content of the poem. There are references to war and to Troy and a commentary in the poem on the devastation and terror of war from the time of antiquity. Making such statements and producing such effects are clearly among the functions of creating a poem. I am not deemphasizing the importance of this, the more conscious aspect of the creative process; nor do I presume, in these woefully brief comments about the aesthetic aspects of the poem, to do justice to its richness and, for me, its haunting evocation. These aspects of the poem are clearly very important to the poet as he writes and to ourselves as audience. But the less conscious functions of writing poetry, what I have earlier described as the psychological and biological functions of the creative process, are also clearly crucial and proceed in the manner I have described. These less conscious functions do not contradict the conscious aesthetic fabric of the poem. They are, in a large degree, responsible for it and enhance it.

## Summation

I shall try to demonstrate the critical point I have just made within the complete context of the poem. First, I shall summarize and fill out what we now know about the psychodynamics and background of the specific parts of the poem, taking each stanza in order:

> One spring twilight, during a lull in the war,
>
> At Shoup's farm south of Troy, I last rode horseback.
>
> Stillnesses were swarming inward from the evening star
>
> Or outward from the buoyant sorrel mare

This stanza and the one following were written after the basic structure and content of the last three stanzas had been developed. The creation of these two stanzas was guided by the homospatial conception of the riderless horse and the horse and rider together, a conception generated by the poet's wish to be cared for by his mother. The first line of the stanza was derived from a formulation initially referring to times spent in the company of his mother, grandmother, and grandmother's sister. The allusion to war, originally constructed as a personal reference to a period prior to entry into the army, suggested Troy and the idea of the Trojan war and horse in the next line. There was also a real farm in Troy, New York, where the poet had ridden horseback. The last two lines of the stanza were based on the conception of simultaneous opposition between the words "inward" and "outward," a janusian process leading to the formulation of the horse as a "mare," the homophone for the French word for mother.

Who moved as if not displeased by the weight upon her.

Meadows received us, heady with unseen lilac.

Brief, polyphonic lives abounded everywhere.

With one accord we circled the small lake.

The first and second lines of this stanza were derived from the homospatial conception of the homophonic words "gate" and "gait," a conception involving the bringing together of the horse's stride (first line) and the idea of a door opening (second line). Both the original idea from which the phrase "heady with unseen lilac" was derived and the first line as finally formulated here have sexual overtones. This construction suggests the feelings of a woman during sexual intercourse, "not displeased by the weight upon her, "and the original idea, "bordered by thick hedges of invisible lilac," a vaginal orifice. The phrase, "brief, polyphonic lives" connects to the poet's memory of a pleasant and important interaction with his mother. The last line is an expression of the fusion in the horse/horse-rider homospatial conception.

Yet here I sit among the crazy shapes things take.

Wasp-waisted to a fault by long abrasion,

The 'Three Sisters' howl, 'Hell's Gate' yawns wide.

I'm eating something in the cool Hertz car

The idea of a rock formation called "Three Sisters" pertains to the summer experience with the three important and related women. This idea, one of the earliest ones in the poem, was an initially disguised representation of the poet's underlying preoccupation, a disguise later penetrated in part by the formulation and insertion in the same line of the phrase "Hell's Gate," a reference pertaining to the poet's mother.

When the shadow falls. There has come to my door

As to death's this creature stunted, cinder-eyed,

Tottering still half in trust, half in fear of man—

Dear god, a horse. I offer my apple-core

The idea of the horse appearing at the door and the reference to death in the first two lines were connected to the poet's thoughts about the looming up of the figure of Madeline Usher. It also involved a reference to his grandmother whom he had imagined as alive while dead, a person rising from death. The phrase "half in trust, half in fear of man" was derived from the janusian conception of horse as simultaneously not-beast and not-human as was the line referring to an ancient bond between the human and the horse in the last stanza.

But she is past hunger, she lets it roll in the sand,

And I, I raise the window and drive on.

About the ancient bond between her kind and mine.

Little more to speak of can be done.

These lines represent the conscious feelings—discouragement, non-communication, the sense of an inability or unwillingness to return to the past—that stimulated the writing of the poem. They also

represent the poet's conscious wish to be free and independent. The writing of the poem involved the poet's search both for an abstract meaning of these ideas and feelings and for their unconscious roots.

In the earliest version of the poem, the poet wrote lines presenting a fairly straightforward description of the circumstances of his experience at Monument Valley. He included the extreme sense of tension and discomfort he had felt at the scene and a fairly prosaic statement of the abstract and universal implications of the encounter with the horse: "A tradition in China as in modern verse/Gives to each age its emblematic beast." The janusian conception of the horse first formulated at this stage had not yet indicated an unearthing of unconscious material. These early lines stated the poet's personal anxiety and possessed some aesthetic tension but they did not yet possess the overall quality of dynamic movement and progression of the final poem.

How did it get better? How, to sharpen the question, did the poet mold these earlier lines into an excellent poem? A key factor was a change in structure. After his dreams concerning Miriam, his mother, and his grandmother, and after he arrived at the homospatial conception, he began thinking about a happy, wish-fulfilling connection. He thought of a personal memory and decided to develop it as the beginning of the poem, constructing stanzas to go *before* the original lines. Structurally, he was giving the Monument Valley experience a historical background and providing a temporal sequence in the poem. Psychodynamically, he was placing remembered emotions of gratification and wish fulfillment prior to tension and anxiety. Rather than resolving tension through gratification and fulfillment, he reversed the sequence,- tension and anxiety follow wish fulfillment.

Such an emotional sequence is intrinsic to the structure of good art. Art that is primarily escapist and unimportant generally moves psychologically from expression and generation of tension to resolution in wish fulfillment. Happy or wish-fulfilling endings in literary works are mildly satisfying but are also quite dull and flat. Good art invariably leaves us stimulated and aroused. Always, there is some degree of psychological resolution along with tension at the end, as there is in this poem, but this resolution is not produced by wish fulfillment.[14] In this poem, some of the final resolution comes from the poet's act of moving on; he drives away and something decisive has occurred. There is a clear break of relationship, or a breakdown of communication, between himself and the horse species and what it represents. It is a sad and tense finale; something is resolved, but there is no sense of fulfillment.

The emotional power of the poem derives, I think—having invaded the realm of literary criticism against my vows, I now beg indulgence —from the sense of movement and development in this breaking of a relationship. Whatever the horse species represents, and it is clear that it poetically represents many things, the energy and dynamism comes from the sense of breaking a relationship with something in the past or with the past itself. Regardless of whether the horse is a metaphor for man's alienation, for death, for war, for sexuality, for womankind (including Miriam and the poet's mother)—and she is all of these —she is a thing of the past. At one time, the relationship with her was intensely gratifying, but a good deal changed; at the time of the encounter nothing more could be done with her or for her. Even an apple that was reminiscent of happier days of an Edenesque experience was only a core to be offered. Eden was lost. All that remained was to raise the window of the car and drive on, to renounce the relationship and move on to other things. Consequently, while there is a profound sense of loss in this poem, there is also a sense of progress. Both the poet and the horse have changed; the relationship is lost, but the poet at least can still move on.

The sense of progress and development results directly from placing the wish-fulfilling, gratifying stanzas at the beginning of the poem. The emotional sequence thereby moves away from wishful fantasy toward reality and captures the mixed feelings of loss and progress we all experience as we mature and grow up. And the decision to create the earlier stanzas was derived from homospatial and janusian thinking and the unearthing of unconscious material in mirror-image processes of creativity. The structuring of the poem was influenced by the poet's growing awareness as he proceeded.

The process of unearthing unconscious material during the writing of the poem functioned to unify disparate elements of the overt structure of the poem as well as its more covert emotional content. For one thing, the homospatial conception pertaining to the horse and rider served to give a formal and dynamic balance to the poem. It specifically generated the formal decision to have two lead-up stanzas before the description of the scene at Monument Valley, a decision which embued the poem with the quality of building up to a specific point and then receding. This formal buildup and recession complements the emotional theme of gratification and fulfillment followed by loss.

A second and important aspect of the homospatial conception was that it brought to the fore the poet's close relationship with his mother. The intense sense of closeness with the horse and the quality of

happiness of the first two stanzas were dictated by the poet's almost- conscious touching on feelings related to his mother. The sense of closeness in these lines is coordinated with the sense of loss in the last lines because the feelings pertain to the same relationship. The basic loss felt is the loss that, at some point, leads to progress. Without his mother's care, the poet can achieve full freedom and independence. My point here is that the lines describing the loss would not, even if elaborated, have made a poem; it was necessary for the poet to unearth the source of his feeling of loss, to some degree, in order to be able to tell the story.

A third aspect of the emotional and formal unification produced by the operation of the homospatial and janusian processes pertains to specific words and ideas. The references to Troy and a war in the first stanza arouse ideas of the ancient world consonant with the reference to an "ancient bond" between the man and the horse at the end of the poem. Such linkages formally integrate the beginning and the end of the poem and suggest further levels of interpretation. The idea of an ancient bond between man and horse at the end of the poem was present in an early phase. Thoughts stimulated by or accompanying the homospatial conception—about the period of his life before the war and the ride on Shoup's farm near Troy—helped both to provide formal links and to suggest a concomitant personal and universal meaning to the idea of an ancient bond and of the past. Another example pertains to the homospatial process leading to the formulation of the line, "Meadows received us, heady with unseen lilac," and the phrase, "Hell's Gate." Both were derived from the homophonic gate/gait conception. The repetition of the idea of doors, gates, or meadows opening in these early lines and the reference to the horse at the poet's car door later also served as a structural-emotional integration of the beginning and end of the poem. Such repetition early and late in the poem also produces some stasis; it makes the poem somewhat atemporal and contrasts with a concomitant sense of progression. Doors appear both early and late, they are fixed aspects of life. Although there is the suggestion of an earlier opening onto heavenly meadows and a later shift to hell's gate, both are related to the final door of death. In an overall similar fashion, the poet's unconscious conflict both progressed and stood still during the writing of the poem. It was more conscious, but not changed too much.

Many emotional and structural congruencies can be developed from the specifics of the creation of this poem. But I think it is no longer necessary for me to stay in this realm of literary analysis to make my major point. My point is that the homospatial and janusian processes, processes which on the surface

could seem to be merely aesthetic devices for connecting and integrating various aspects of the poem, have deep emotional roots and functions as well. The unearthing of unconscious material functions to make poetic form and content congruent with each other on an emotional level; surface and deep material are blended and unified.

I must finally mention something about the nature of the process of literary revision, a process I have been implicitly discussing throughout these chapters without explicitly analyzing. In a previous study of revisions[15] in the creation of a play by Eugene O'Neill, I demonstrated that the revision process functions to reveal unconscious material, but it is also used to remove psychological elements and content that are closest to the author's *immediate* conscious and preconscious concerns. In exception to the revelation in creativity I have so far strongly emphasized, there is some degree of suppression and deletion of elements pertaining to preoccupations close to the creator's consciousness. It is a form of psychological economizing and balancing. The creator deletes inadvertently overt and direct references to personal feelings and concerns, which he himself consciously recognizes as he proceeds. He removes superficial personal references, as it were, while he unearths deeper unconscious issues and meanings. Hence, he avoids and defends himself against minor anxieties attendant on immediate unacceptable ideas and feelings so that he becomes better able to tolerate the potentially major anxieties attendant on deeper unconscious concerns. He does not knowingly or purposely engage in such psychological balancing and trading, but follows the well-established aesthetic principles of using implication rather than direct reference and of orienting to universals rather than to particulars. Such principles or devices, as I have emphasized throughout, always serve important psychodynamic as well as aesthetic ends for the creator and also for the audience. In the case of deleting revelation of immediate personal concerns, the audience is spared the burden of an author's personal confession and of unnecessary involvement in the author's real life.

In the creation of "In Monument Valley," the poet deleted all references to immediate feelings and to the actual incidents he was thinking about by the time he arrived at the final version of the poem.

For example, he removed his earliest reference to being there with J.T. by changing all "we" references to "I" and he deleted references to the personal discomfort experienced during the picnic. After initially thinking about the time in his life when he spent his summers with his mother,

grandmother, and grandmother's sister, he altered the time reference to have a more symbolic connection, "during a lull in the war," for the final version.[16] As O'Neill did in the creation of his play, the author of this poem deleted references to his more conscious and preconscious concerns and he also, like O'Neill, embodied his deeper, more unconscious preoccupations in the final product. The result is that the final product is far better than the initial formulation; it is an achievement of something new—not only a description of the author's actual experience[17]—and valuable. The process of revision shows us how this achievement came about.

I have now completed the analysis of a specific case. In spite of much detail and documentation, I have left much undone and unexplained about the creation of the poem. Such is, and may always be, the case with the splendor of creativity. But I cannot dwell on the specific case any longer because I must now proceed to more general considerations, applications, and evidence.

Notes

1 I shall give as much information in this account as seems necessary to clarify material pertaining to the poem. Details about specific relationships and circumstances will, however, be omitted.

2 The possibility arises, of course, that the stipulated process of unearthing the unconscious seen in the creation of this poem was stimulated entirely by the poet's relationship to me. However, I have previously reported another empirical study of the creative process, carried out totally in my absence and the absence of any psychiatrist, where the characteristic of unearthing unconscious processes was clearly present; see Rothenberg, "The Iceman Changeth." I should also point out that, whatever my role in the process, it is the concomitance of unearthing the unconscious and the successful creation of a poem that must be explained.

3 I have discussed the relationship between insight and inspiration in some detail elsewhere,- see my "Poetic Process and Psychotherapy." The data presented here provide a more elaborate documentation and confirmation of the previous suggestions and propositions.

4 Monument Valley, Arizona, does have a rock formation named the Two Sisters.

5 After reading the foregoing material as documented here, the poet agreed that it was all quite plausible and probable. As the nature of our relationship was not a psychotherapeutic one, there was no need or possibility to pin down these connections further.

6 In a strict use of the term, a symbol is a substitute for something else which it may or may not superficially resemble. I have here used the expression "figurative representation" in lieu of "metaphor" in order to avoid confusion when I later refer to artistic metaphors specifically. In a broad sense, however, figurative representations can be considered equivalent to metaphors. Metaphors, or the here-designated "figurative representations," both represent other entities and integrate elements of these entities into their content. There is today much interest and discussion about such definitions and distinctions; see esp. L. C. Knights, and B. Cottle, eds., *Metaphor and Symbol* (London: Butterworth, 1960).

7 During that day, he had formulated the lines (as still part of the last three stanzas):

A gentle broken horse

For all he knew it could have been I who first

Broke him, rode him, abandoned him.

When I went off to study or to war.

8 The reference to that time period continued with various alterations, through successive versions. Different aspects swing back and forth, as follows (numbering of versions is mine):

1. One summer dusk a year or two after the war

2. One spring dusk before I went to war

3. One spring dusk during a lull in the endless war

4. One spring twilight during a lull in the war

See also previous note.

9 Despite the lag of several days, the appearance of Bishop in the dream is appropriately considered day residue; in fact, it could also be considered residue connected to the poet's having temporarily, and probably uncomfortably, abandoned the poem for a few days.

10 It is not yet clear exactly how this particular process operates in other creative endeavors besides poetry and imaginative literature. Sound similarities and identities play an important role in musical creation; see chap. 10 below for a discussion of how homospatial thinking functions in pattern superimposition in music. Pattern superimposition would involve sound similarities and identities in a manner analogous to creative rhyming and alliteration in poetry.

11 Many other psychological themes, e.g., yearning and loss, are suggested in the data presented but they are not pertinent to the discussion of the creative process here. The dream analyses also do not include all the connections and elaborations of a complete presentation of data and an exploration, but such a presentation would be digressive.

12 Beardsley uses the word "incept" for this initial idea, a good term, I think; see M. Beardsley, "On the Creation of Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 23 (1965) :291-304. Also, see chap. 5 below.

13 Note that the Garden of Eden idea, as represented in a reference to giving the horse an apple core, is antithetical to the idea of being at death's door; pleasure and gratification are opposed to death and punishment. The qualities of the setting in the poem are therefore simultaneously antithetical, another janusian formulation introduced at a very early stage of the writing of the poem.

14 Freud's essay, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," has been rightly criticized for focusing only on escapist and hack writing in discussing the role of fantasy in literary creativity. It is partly because of this error that psychoanalysis has come to be identified with a view of art as a manifestation of regressive primary process thinking and wish fulfillment. Although Freud was certainly right to emphasize personal roots in creativity and the importance of fantasy and wish fulfillment at some level, he neglected the qualitatively different psychodynamics of good art I am discussing here ("Creative Writers and Daydreaming," pp. 141-54).

15 See Rothenberg, "The Iceman Changeth," a study in which the process of revision is seen as a feature providing both an understanding of the creator's unconscious processes and the means whereby a literary work is improved and given aesthetic value.

16 The reference to Shoup and his farm, a real person and a real place, escaped deletion because it was not connected to any immediate personal or psychological concern and because it had a specific aesthetic purpose. This purpose was not changed or contradicted by the overall aesthetic and psychological thrust of the final poem. Shoup's farm was included initially because it gave particularity and contemporaneity to the mythic allusion to Troy. The personalized reference to a particular farm and person known to the poet was an intentional aesthetic device designed to contrast with, to establish continuity with, and to heighten the immediacy of the ancient Trojan war. The real Shoup's farm was located near Troy, N.Y., a factor introducing the connection into the poet's mind. The inclusion of such incidental personalized references in order to enhance the overall aesthetic effect does not at all contradict the general point made here about the concealing aspect of literary revision.

17 Here, the philosophical question arises of whether this shift from description and documentation represents actual discontinuity with the past and radical newness (see n. 1, chap. 2 above, and chap. 12 below). The author's constant act of separating himself and his immediate preoccupations and concerns from the object he is creating is, I think, an intensive and profound one and thereby warrants consideration as a core feature of the production of radical newness. As I discuss below in chap. 13, such separating concomitantly involves a bringing together; the author also continually connects the material to real experience and to the natural world during this phase of the process.