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Object Loss, Dreaming, and Creativity—*The Poetry of John Keats*

James W. Hamilton, M.D. 

All poetry is an effort to recreate the language; in other words, to abolish current language, that of every day, and to invent a new, private, and personal speech, in the last analysis secret. But poetic creation, like linguistic creation implies the abolition of time—of the history concentrated in language—and tends toward the recovery of the paradisiac, primordial situations; of the days when one could create spontaneously, when the past did not exist because there was no consciousness of time, no memory of temporal duration. It is said moreover in our own days that for a great poet the past does not exist: the poet discovers the world as though he were present at the cosmogenic moment, contemporaneous with the first day of the Creation. From a certain point of view we may say that every poet is remaking the world for he is trying to see it as if there were no Time and no History.

But if I was to report my own dreams, it inevitably followed that I should have to reveal to the public gaze more of the intimacies of my mental life than I liked, or than is normally necessary for any writer who is a man of science and not a poet.

—FREUD (1900, p. xxiii f.)

This paper will deal with the poetry of John Keats in an attempt to gain some further understanding of the relationship between creative activity and intrapsychic functioning. Particular emphasis will be placed upon dreaming and the mourning process and upon recent clinical and research contributions concerning REM dreaming and children's responses to object loss. Pederson-Krag (1951a) has stressed that in choosing the career of a poet Keats was trying to master primarily oedipal conflicts, and in another paper (1951b) she traced the connection between a manifest dream of Keats and the composition of a particular sonnet. Barron (1963) viewed *Endymion* as a "quest for beauty" and an attempt to establish the beauty of the dream in order to gain relief from depressive symptomatology.

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BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

John Keats was born on October 31, 1795 in London, England, the first child of Thomas and Frances Keats.¹ His father was an innkeeper who had married his employer's daughter. Following John there were four other children, George, Thomas, Edward, and Frances, born in 1797, 1799, 1801, and 1803 respectively. Edward died in infancy, although there are no details as to the cause of his death. Keats's mother was a warm, affectionate person given to impulsive behavior, and John was felt to be her favorite, sharing with her the same temperament and having similar features. Always undersized for his age—his brother George was often taken as being older—he was described as having a vivid imagination and, as a small boy, once stood guard with an old toy sword outside his mother's door when she was ill, enforcing complete quiet and keeping others away. Another version of this story is that he used a real sword to hold his mother prisoner in their house. He showed a considerable talent for mimicry, one which he maintained all his life, and from three on would often respond to questions asked of him by rhyming the other person's last word.

At the age of seven he and his brother George were enrolled in a boarding school, Clarke's Academy, in Enfield, 12 miles from their home. On April 16, 1804, his father, of whom little is known, was killed. While riding at night on wet pavement, he fell from his horse and sustained a depressed skull fracture and massive concussion. His mother remarried two months later, a bank clerk named William Rawlings. However, she left him after a short time, thus forfeiting the inn and legal control of her children, and went to live in a common-law marriage with a man named Abraham in Enfield, where she drank heavily for several years. During her absence Keats and his siblings were cared for by their maternal grandparents, the Jennings. His grandmother was a kindly, considerate woman, and Keats grew to be quite fond of her. At this time, his behavior became markedly aggressive and rebellious; and he began to manifest extreme mood swings. He achieved a reputation as being

¹ All biographical data are taken from Ward (1963) and Gittings (1968).

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the toughest fighter in his school and was described as one who "would fight anyone morning, noon, or night." He was well liked generally, but formed few friendships.

In March, 1805, his grandfather Jennings died; and in 1808 his Uncle Midgley, to whom he was close, succumbed to tuberculosis,

leaving Keats the oldest surviving male member of his family at the age of thirteen. Shortly thereafter his mother returned home extremely ill with tuberculosis, her once remarkable beauty having faded considerably. In the London of the early nineteenth century, tuberculosis was responsible for 25 percent of deaths; the disease itself, considered to be hereditary, was not diagnosed clinically until the final irreversible stages, at which point it was called "consumption." Keats nursed his mother whenever he was home, preparing food, giving medicines, and sitting by her bedside for long hours reading aloud or just watching over her. She died in March, 1810, and Keats was overwhelmed with grief. Upon his return to school after her funeral, his belligerent behavior ceased; he became aloof and withdrawn, and his recurrent depressions became more intense. He began to read copiously, especially in the areas of history, mythology, and astronomy, and was seldom seen without a book. He became preoccupied with his own health to a hypochondriacal degree and began to entertain the choice of medicine as a career. He was much impressed with the *Aeneid*, which he attempted to translate completely in his final year, and established a friendship with Cowden Clarke, the headmaster's son who was eight years older, but who shared enthusiastically his interest in books and music.

In order to qualify as a surgeon Keats began in 1811 an apprenticeship with Thomas Hammond who was practicing in the town of Edmonton, and who had attended both Keats's mother and his grandfather in their terminal illnesses. The field of medicine in England at that time was split among three principal groups—the physicians who were trained in the universities and constituted an elite minority; the surgeons who after serving their apprenticeship spent one year in a London hospital and then wrote a series of exams to qualify for their certificate; and the apothecaries. The latter two would be the equivalent of today's general practitioner. With Hammond, Keats began to study anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology, to assist in the surgery, and to accompany his preceptor on housecalls. He continued to experience severe depressions which he referred to as his "blue devils," and remained very much alone. He made no new friendships and was described by his brother George as "nervous" and "morbid" during this period. He was extremely shy with girls and was involved with them only in overidealized fantasies. He continued to read a great deal, finished his translation of the *Aeneid*; took long walks frequently; and began to develop an inner sense of beauty, spending many hours lying in the fields staring upward at the clouds and the stars.

He became attracted to poetry at the age of eighteen when Cowden Clarke introduced him to Spenser's *Epithalamion* and the *Faerie Queene*, both of which contain elaborate descriptions of beautiful women. He wrote his first poem shortly thereafter and began reading the *Examiner*, a radical publication edited by Leigh Hunt, who was imprisoned in 1813 for two years after having slandered the Prince Regent.

In December, 1814, Keats lost his maternal grandmother and again failed to mourn, although he did compose a sonnet in her memory which implied that she would attain heavenly immortality. With her death, his brothers and sister went to live with Richard Abbey, a London merchant whom Mrs. Jennings had appointed as guardian to her grandchildren shortly after her daughter's death, while Keats remained in Edmonton. The only escape from his depressions which became more marked seemed to be through reading and writing poetry. When Hunt was released from prison in 1815, Keats wrote a sonnet in celebration of the event, and, in October of that year, having completed his apprenticeship, he went to London and the United Hospitals where he began work in the dissection rooms. He soon won a coveted position as dresser to William Lucas, a surgeon at Guy's Hospital, which meant, in addition to his regular studies, long hours in the operating theater with Lucas whose skill as a surgeon both diagnostically and technically left much to be desired. At first, Keats was a keen student, but, in the spring of 1816, he began to miss classes for weeks at a stretch and to concentrate on poetry. It was then that he decided to become a poet, stating to a friend that poetry was "the only thing worthy of superior minds." In his dress he began to emulate Byron, wearing a sailor's

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jacket and trousers and letting his hair grow long. In May, his first published poem "O Solitude" appeared in the *Examiner*.

After qualifying for his Apothecary's license in July, 1816, he took a vacation along the Kentish coast with his brother Tom, devoting most of his time to writing poetry and wandering along the seashore. Upon his return to London in the fall he was introduced to Leigh Hunt by Cowden Clarke, and made a very favorable impression which resulted in his becoming a member of a group of young artists—musicians, painters, sculptors, writers, and poets, including Shelley—who met regularly at Hunt's home to discuss the issues of the day. These exchanges were to serve as a considerable inspiration for Keats as he struggled to become a poet in his own right and Hunt himself was to become one of his staunchest supporters. In October, he discovered George Chapman's translation of Homer, again through his friend Clarke, and was so overpowered that he wrote the famous sonnet describing his reactions next day.

In February of the following year, he failed to take his surgical exams in keeping with his growing disillusionment with medicine, and shortly thereafter made a total commitment to poetry. In response to a friendly challenge from Shelley, he started working on *Endymion* in which he was to be absorbed for the next year, and which was to constitute one quarter of his poetic output. Before he had finished this poem, Keats made a pilgrimage to Stratford to visit the birthplace of Shakespeare, who was becoming his ideal as a poet.

No sooner had he completed *Endymion* when he was confronted in December, 1817 with the fact that his brother, Tom, had tuberculosis. Keats initially responded to this news by reconsidering the possibility of practicing medicine. However, when Tom showed some improvement, he quickly dismissed this idea. In June, 1818, his brother George and his bride emigrated to America and Keats left on a walking tour of Northern England, Scotland, and Ireland with his friend Charles Brown, during which he visited the grave of Robert Burns, whose poetry he admired greatly. Upon his return to London in August, he spent much time nursing Tom. He began writing *Hyperion*, his second major work; and met Fanny Brawne for the first time. It is worth noting that three of the most important women in his life, his mother, sister, and Miss Brawne, all had the

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same first name. On December 1, Tom died and Keats, unable to express any grief, became severely depressed. His relationship with Fanny Brawne began to develop along platonic lines, with Keats overidealizing her and finding it difficult to tolerate any lasting, genuine intimacy. During this time he experienced much financial hardship as his brother George underwent some business reverses in America and needed to borrow extra money from him.

In February of the following year, still struggling with his "bule devils," Keats briefly thought again of forsaking poetry and going to Edinburgh to complete his medical training. However, he soon resumed his writing, and the period from January to November, 1819, during which he was gaining critical acceptance as a poet and throughout which he drew heavily upon Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, constitutes one of his most productive phases. In addition to *Hyperion*, it encompasses such works as *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *The Eve of Saint Mark*, and the famous odes "On Indolence," "On Melancholy," "On a Grecian Urn," "To a Nightingale," and "To Psyche." Gittings (1968) refers to this time as "the greatest year of living growth of any English poet." Despite the fact that he had developed "the deep-seated conviction that no woman could ever love him for himself," he became secretly engaged to Fanny Brawne on October 20, 1819. In February, 1820 he developed hemoptysis; and, in September, his health failing rapidly, he set sail for Italy with his friend, the painter Joseph Severn, in order to avoid the rigors of the English winter. He died of tuberculosis in Rome on February 23, 1821, and at autopsy both lungs were found to be completely destroyed by the disease process.

While such a brief biographical sketch hardly does justice to the richness and the intensity of Keats's life, it does indicate that the chronic depression from which he suffered was based upon early, profound, and repeated object losses. Beginning with the death of his brother Edward when Keats was six, there followed the deaths of his father when he was eight, his grandfather Jennings when he was nine, his Uncle Midgley at thirteen, his mother at fourteen, his maternal grandmother at nineteen, and finally his brother Tom, when he was twenty-three. In addition, six months before Tom's death, his brother George was virtually lost when he left for America, as can be seen in the tone of the letters which the

² All letters by Keats are quoted from the collection edited by M. B. Forman (1931).

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brothers exchanged afterward. In a letter to Fanny Brawne, Keats once declared, "I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of some one has always spoil my hours" (L. 134).²

PSYCHODYNAMIC ASPECTS OF CHILDHOOD BEREAVEMENT

There is considerable clinical material available concerning the difficulties which the young child faces in mourning a dead parent. Bowlby (1960), (1961a), (1961b), (1963) emphasized the inability to renounce the loss and the persistent demand on a more or less conscious level for the object's return. Jacobson (1965) described the fantasy of someday finding the lost parent. Robert Furman (1964), however, feels that children can mourn; but in order to do so they must have a concept of death and have achieved the level of object constancy. In a study of forty-two children and adolescents who had lost a parent through death, Wolfenstein (1966) reports:

As our observations accumulated we were increasingly struck by the fact that mourning as described by Freud did not occur. Sad feelings were curtailed; there was little weeping. Immersion in the activities of everyday life continued. There was no withdrawal into preoccupation with thoughts of the lost parent. Gradually the fact emerged that overtly or covertly the child was denying the finality of the loss. The painful process of decathexis of the lost parent was put off, with the more or less conscious expectation of his return. Where depressed moods emerged, especially in adolescence, they were isolated from thoughts of the death of the parent, to which reality testing was not yet applied. Thus we gained the definite impression that the representation of the lost object was not decathected, indeed that it became invested with an intensified cathexis [p. 96f.].

She also stresses the child's idealization of and transitory identifications with the lost parent as a means of coping with ambivalence, and that denial may persist along with an appropriate conscious awareness of what has happened. In considering developmental preconditions which make successful mourning possible she states:

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The hypothesis which I wish to propose is this: not only does adolescence resemble mourning, it constitutes the necessary precondition for being later able to mourn. The painful and gradual decathexis of the beloved parents which the adolescent is forced to perform serves as an initiation into how to mourn. The individual who has passed through this decisive experience has learned how to give up a major love object. In circumstances of later loss he is able to recapitulate the process [p. 112f.].

In Keats's case, the death of his father was compounded by the fact that his mother virtually abandoned him and his siblings almost immediately following the death of her husband to marry William Rawlings. With her subsequent divorce, she gave up legal control of her children and disappeared from their lives for several years to live with another man. Her behavior, particularly her dependence upon alcohol, would indicate that she was having much difficulty working through the loss within a year of both her husband and her father. One would expect that any rage Keats felt toward his father for leaving him would be intensified because of the simultaneous loss of his mother, and that these feelings in turn could be displaced easily onto peers as seen in his truculent behavior at school. Being considered her favorite, it would not have been possible for Keats to account for his mother's action without sacrificing much of his own self-esteem—he

once remarked to a friend that he "had no mother." Keats never talked about his childhood in later life and disliked to have his birthday celebrated. The fact that he was born on Hallowe'en with its symbolic connotation of the return of the souls of the dead would contribute further to this reluctance (Sterba, 1948). When his mother did return home with tuberculosis in 1809, he seemed to be utilizing a good deal of reaction formation in taking care of her, and with her death was unable to get beyond the first stage of mourning, that of introjection (Fenichel, 1945). By becoming a prolific reader—he was hardly ever without a book, literally devouring them—he attempted to sustain an incorporative relationship with his mother (Strachey, 1930), and his interest in astronomy and mythology could be interpreted as a means of trying to recover her directly in a concrete, symbolic fashion.

Because of the intensity of Keats's ambivalence toward his

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mother, once the internalization had occurred, much of his aggression was directed inward with the result that he relinquished his role as tough guy among his peers, became hypochondriacal, began to give thought to a career in medicine, and became a mother or caretaker to his siblings (Wolfenstein, 1966). He was attracted to and made his own translation of the wanderings of Aeneas with its theme of the constant search for a paradise on earth. Having begun his medical apprenticeship he remained aloof, depressed, and became more and more involved with nature. Searching the sky constantly, as he did, is a means of trying to retrieve the lost mother as clouds themselves can be a symbolic representation of the breast and one often sees faces outlined in various cloud formations (Almansi, 1961). Furthermore, smaller clouds will dissolve into wisps before fading completely into the blue background, recalling the fusion of infant with mother at the breast, and clouds themselves are mentioned frequently in Keats's works.

It was at this period of his life that Keats became interested in poetry through his friendship with Cowden Clarke and that he started to write his own poems. Later when he began his year at Guy's, it would seem that he was experiencing considerable difficulty coming to terms with the death of his patients, especially those due to tuberculosis, and with his own aggressive impulses, thus straining his use of reaction formation and overidentification with patients. His medical career ended finally after he underwent a brief period of depersonalization while performing surgery, which Ward (1963) describes as follows:

One day at the hospital as he was opening a man's temporal artery, he found himself overwhelmed by the thought of the disaster that would result from a possible slip of his lancet. With a great effort he went on and performed the ligation neatly but all the while he seemed to be standing outside himself and watching his own dexterity with disbelief. The conflict between the cool scientific detachment required of a surgeon and the sensibility and warmth of feeling instinctive to him as a poet had reached its crisis. When he lay down his instruments at the end he realized he could never operate again [p. 102].

Here Keats appears to be struggling with the return of repressed feelings associated with the death of his father from a head injury. In

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giving up medicine, he vowed that he would kill himself if he did not succeed as a poet.

DREAM RESEARCH AND SOME METAPSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF DREAMING

I would like now to deal with the principle thesis of this paper which is: that poetry represented for Keats an attempt to work through the mourning process and that dreaming was integrally related to his creative output. First, some comments related to recent findings in REM dream research. Summarizing the work that has been done in the field, Whitman (1963) states:

A reasonable hypothesis, derived from a number of lines of inquiry, would be that the dream supplies a small amount of visual (oral) gratification derived from the early phenomena of nursing. The major function of the dream—the preserving of sleep—would be accomplished by providing a small quantity of oral satisfaction which enables the person once more to return to deeper sleep, a cycle which goes on four or five times a night. Gifford [1960] has drawn on the original work of Kleitman [1960] to show that at three months, the number of night feedings goes down exactly at the moment that the mean hours of sleep per night goes up. It therefore seems logical to assume that it is at this moment that the dream takes over the function of an unconscious wish-fulfilling hallucinatory experience which enables the infant to continue sleeping. A noteworthy parallel observation is that the number of dreams of a night roughly is equivalent to the usual number of breast feedings of an infant [p. 769f.].

Thus the ever-recurring wish for a primary breast experience becomes the prototype of hallucinatory wish fulfillment in all subsequent dream life. Though the wishes of life become progressively more complex and subtle, this remains as the deepest substrate occasionally to be revealed in regressive experiences during the course of analysis or other intense psychological vicissitudes. The dream may be conceptualized as a minute oral experience which maintains sleep by not only discharging drive cathexis but offering a certain amount of oral gratification. This is completely compatible with Freud's basic postulate that the dream has a sleep-protecting function [p. 771].

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Other clinical studies have shown that individuals deprived of REM dreamtime for two to fifteen days will develop an increased appetite and oral intake (**Whitman et al., 1967**).

Garma (**1966**) emphasized the traumatic, rather than wish-fulfillment, genesis of dreams, a classic example of which occurs when the ego has been threatened by a devastating, traumatic event. The dreaming in this instance is an attempt to gain mastery over the original threat through repetition and, if unsuccessful, results in the development of a definite neurosis, with the depth of regression being conditioned by the magnitude of the threat and the ego's defensive resources at the time. Object loss, especially of the mother or other nurturing persons, may be considered an overwhelming trauma, and I would postulate that the mourner, in so utilizing dreams, is attempting to cope primarily with separation anxiety and the loss of the object by regressing to an early primitive state of incorporative fusion with the mother, represented by the maternal breast, the dream, as mentioned previously, having served the sleeping infant as a hallucinatory substitute for the breast (**Krupp, 1962**).

However, in the case of the preadolescent child, the mourning of a parent or other significant person becomes much more difficult because of the immaturity of the ego and the child's extreme dependence upon the parent, particularly the mother. As Wolfenstein (**1966**) has stated, the end point becomes a hypercathexis of the introjected object and incomplete mourning or melancholia. Another reason for this outcome is the fear which the young child has that if intense grief is expressed, it will become interminable.

THE POETRY OF KEATS—ORALITY AND DEPRESSION

I shall try to demonstrate by direct reference to Keats's poems and letters that the above mechanisms were most important sources of creative inspiration for Keats and that the writing of poetry was an attempt to externalize the dream, to decathect the introject, and thereby to restore the lost object.³

The first poem "Fill For Me" was written early in his career and will be quoted in its entirety:

³ All excerpts are from *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. H. W. Garrod (**1939**).

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Fill for me a brimming bowl
 And let me in it drown my soul:
 But put therein some drug, designed
 To Banish Women from my mind:
 For I want not the stream inspiring
 That fills the mind with fond desiring,
 But I want as deep a draught
 As e'er from Lethe's wave was quaff'd;
 From my despairing heart to charm
 The Image of the fairest form
 That e'er my reveling eyes beheld,
 That e'er my wandering fancy spell'd,
 In vain! away I cannot chace
 The melting softness of that face,
 The beaminess of those bright eyes,
 That breast—earth's only Paradise.
 My sight will never more be blest;
 For all I see has lost its zest:
 Nor with delight can I explore
 The Classic page, or Muse's lore.
 Had she but known how beat my heart,
 And with one smile reliev'd its smart,
 I should have felt a sweet relief,
 I should have felt 'the joy of grief.'

Yet as a Tuscan mid the snow
 Of Lapland thinks on sweet Arno,
 Even so for ever shall she be
 The Halo of my Memory.

From this poem, one gets the definite impression of pronounced loss, and of the equation of breast and face as described by Almansí (1960). The hypercathexis of the lost object is unmistakable and contributes to a failure to work through the loss. The following passage is the last two stanzas of "Woman."

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair;
 Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast,
 Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
 Till the fond, fixed eyes forget they stare.
 From such fine pictures, heavens! I cannot dare
 To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd

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They be of what is worthy,—though not drest
 In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.
 Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark;
 These lures I straight forget—e'en ere I dine,
 Or thrice my palate moisten: but when I mark
 Such charms with mild intelligence shine,
 My ear is open like a greedy shark,
 To catch the tunings of a voice divine.
 Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being?
 Who can forget her half retiring sweets?
 God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
 For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,
 Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,
 Will never give him pinions, who intreats
 Such innocence to ruin—who vilely cheats
 A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing
 One's thoughts from such a beauty; when I hear
 A lay that once I saw her hand awake,
 Her form seems floating palpable, and near;
 Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take
 A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
 And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

Again one senses the loss, the vivid breast imagery, and the hypercathexis, "In truth there is no freeing one's thoughts from such a beauty." The next examples will also describe the effect of object loss.

... there too should be
 The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,
 That with a score of light green brethren shoots
 From the quaint mossiness of aged roots:
 Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters
 Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters

The spreading blue-bells: it may haply mourn
 That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
 From their fresh beds, and scattered thoughtlessly
 By infant hands, left on the path to die.

This is an excerpt from "I Stood Tip-Toe ..." and presents an idyllic natural setting which is suddenly shattered when the small flowers are carelessly picked and "left on the path to die." The same

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feelings are expressed in these lines from "To Charles Cowden Clarke":

... small good it were
 To take him to a desert rude, and bare,
 Who had on Baiae's shore reclin'd at ease,
 While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze
 That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,
 Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers:
 Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream
 Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream;

The following is taken from "To J. H. Reynolds, Esq.," written at the time his brother Tom was dying.

O that our dreamings all of sleep or wake
 Would all their colours from the Sunset take:
 From something of material sublime,
 Rather than shadow our own Soul's daytime
 In the dark void of Night. For in the world
 We justle—but my flag is not unfur'd
 On the Admiral staff—and to philosophize
 I dare not yet!—Oh never will the prize,
 High reason, and the love of good and ill
 By my award. Things cannot to the will
 Be settled, but they tease us out of thought.
 Or is it that Imagination brought
 Beyond its proper bound, yet still confined,—
 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,
 Cannot refer to any standard law
 Of either earth or heaven?—It is a flaw
 In happiness to see beyond our bourn—
 It forces us in Summer skies to mourn:
 It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.
 Dear Reynolds, I have a mysterious tale
 And cannot speak it. The first page I read
 Upon a Lampit Rock of green sea weed
 Among the breakers—'Twas a quiet Eve;
 The rocks were silent—the wide sea did weave
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
 Along the flat brown sand. I was at home,
 And should have been most happy—but I saw

Too far into the sea; where every maw

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The greater on the less feeds evermore:—

But I saw too distinct into the core

Of an eternal fierce destruction,

And so from Happiness I far was gone.

Still am I sick of it: and though today

I've gathered young spring-leaves, and flowers gay

Of Periwinkle and wild strawberry,

Still do I that most fierce destruction see,

The Shark at savage prey—the hawk at pounce,

The gentle Robin, like a pard or ounce,

Ravening a worm—Away ye horrid moods,

Moods of one's mind! You know I hate them well,

You know I'd sooner be a clapping bell

To some Katschatkan missionary church,

Than with these horrid moods be left in lurch—

[lines 67-109].

Here one feels the imminent loss, the helplessness of Keats—it will be recalled that he thought briefly of resuming his medical career at that time—the rage in response to the frustration, along with a good deal of primitive, oral aggressive imagery. Certainly, Tom's pending death, resulting from tuberculosis, had reawakened feelings associated with the loss of his mother and uncle from the same illness.

"To Sleep"

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,

Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,

Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,

Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;

O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,

In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,

Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws

Around my bed its lulling charities;

Then save me, or the passed day will shine

Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;

Save me from curious conscience, that still lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;

Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards.

And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

This sonnet well describes Keats's ambivalence and guilt in relation to the multiple losses he experienced. Next is another sonnet, one

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of Keats's last works, written to Fanny Brawne and reflecting intense oral dependent strivings in the form of a relentless demand for total, unwavering love and care.

I cry your mercy—pity—love!—aye, love!

Merciful love that tantalises not,

One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
 Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot!
 O! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine!
 That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
 Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes divine,
 That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasur'd breast,—
 Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all,
 Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
 Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
 Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
 Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind
 Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!

The very last poem Keats ever wrote conveys a sense of frustration, rage toward the frustrating object, in this instance, Miss Brawne, and attempts to awaken in her the same guilt for not saving his life which Keats himself lived with in regard to his various losses and which was previously dealt with in "To Sleep."

This living hand, now warm and capable
 Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
 And in the icy silence of the tomb,
 So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
 That thou wouldst wish thine own heart dry of blood
 So in my veins red life might stream again,
 And thou be conscience-calm'd—see here it is—
 I hold it towards you.

To summarize, the previous examples reflect the problems of object loss, unresolved dependent strivings and chronic depression, and their dynamic interrelatedness.

The following excerpts will deal with the phenomena of internalization, sleep, and dreaming. Internalization as used here was defined by Schafer (1968) as "all those processes by which the subject transforms real or imagined regulatory interactions with his

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environment, and real or imagined characteristics of his environment, into inner regulations and characteristics" (p. 9).

"Ode to Psyche"

Yes, I will be they priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight

That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in!

The second is an exchange between Apollo and the goddess Mnemosyne taken from *Hyperion* (Book III, lines 59-91):

'Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
 'And their eternal calm, and all that face,
 'Or I have dream'd.'—'Yes,' said the supreme shape,
 'Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
 'Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 'Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
 'Unwearied ear of the whole universe
 'Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 'Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
 'That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
 'What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
 'When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
 'To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 'The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
 'From the young day when first thy infant hand
 'Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
 'Could bend that bow heroic to all times.

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'Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
 'Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
 'For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
 'Of loveliness new born.'—Apollo then,
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
 Throbb'd with the syllables.—'Mnemosyne!
 'Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
 'Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
 'Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
 'Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
 'And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
 'I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
 'Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
 'And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
 'Like one who once had wings.'

The third is taken from *Sleep and Poetry*:

What, but thee, Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!
 Low murmurer of tender lullabies!
 Light hoverer around our happy pillows!
 Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!

Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!

The fourth: "Bright Star":

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—

Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night

And watching, with eternal lids apart,

Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,

The moving waters at their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—

No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,

Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,

And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

In the above lines, Keats describes his search for the lost mother whom he has incorporated, "Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a

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fane in some untrodden region of my mind," and with whom he attempts to reunite in his dreams. Sleep is referred to as the "Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses," and is related to nursing at the breast: "Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast." In a letter to Benjamin Bailey in 1818, Keats wrote: "When I was a Schoolboy I thought a fair Woman a pure Goddess, my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not—I have no right to expect more than their reality" (L. 79). In *Endymion*, the Goddess of the Moon, Cynthia, with whom Endymion has fallen in love, appears three times to him in his dreams—from the sky, from a well, and in a cave. At one point in the poem, after Endymion renounces temporarily his love for Cynthia, there occurs the following passage: "I have clung to nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen or felt but a great dream! O, I have been presumptuous against love ..." (Book IV, lines 636-639).

The Eve of St. Agnes, which was based on the superstition that a maiden would see her future husband in a dream if she fasted on St. Agnes Eve, supports the theoretical assumption that oral deprivation can lead to hallucinated wish fulfillment:

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,

Young virgins might have visions of delight,

And soft adorings from their loves receive

Upon the honey'd middle of the night,

If ceremonies due they did aright;

As, supperless to bed they must retire,

And couch supine their beauties, lilly white;

Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require

Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

The same causal relationship is seen in the sonnet "The Day is Gone":

The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!

Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,

Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,

Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!

Faded the flower and all its budded charms,

Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,

Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,

Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—

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Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,
 When the dusk holiday—or holineight
 Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave
 The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;
 But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
 He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

Owing to the crucial, adaptive significance that dreaming had for Keats, his sense of reality and his reality testing were at times rather tenuous. The following passages reflect his uncertainty as to what was dream and what reality:

From "Ode to a Nightingale"

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! Adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?"

From "Ode to Psyche"

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear:
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?

From *Lamia*

It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream
 [Part I, lines 126-129].

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"On Death"

Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,
 And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?
 The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
 And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.
 How strange it is that man on earth should roam,
 And lead a life of woe, but not forsake
 His rugged path; nor dare he view alone

His future doom which is but to awake.

Waking, of course, implies separation from the figures in his dream.

THE DREAM AND THE POEM

I would now like to explore the specific relationship between dreaming and poetic creativity. Regarding poetry, Kris (1953) wrote:

The multiple meaning constitutes richness; the dichotomy between appropriate ambiguity and hidden precision, the latter more stringent as the lines flow into the stanza, becomes an important criterion in the study of poetic language. There are poets who are masters of multidimensional vagueness, without leading finally into the growing precision; there are others, whose lines differ from ordinary verbal communication only by meter, rhythm and setting, by the "music of poetry"—but do hardly use the very complexity of meaning. All this seems to have become more understandable to us through our experience with contemporary poetry: here complexity of words tends to be maximized, multiple meanings abound, and uncertainty of interpretation tends to prevail. There can be little doubt that in this the modern poet is more than accidentally akin to the dreamer; also the phenomenon is not limited to any one artistic medium [p. 343].

About his own creative processes, Stephen Spender, the poet (1962), writes:

Sometimes, when I lie in a state of half-waking, half-sleeping, I am conscious of a stream of words which seem to pass through my mind, without their having a meaning, but they have a sound, a sound of passion, or a sound recalling poetry that I know. Again sometimes when I am writing, the music of the

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words I am trying to shape takes me far beyond the words, I am aware of a rhythm, a dance, a fury, which is at yet empty of words.'

In the opening lines of *The Fall of Hyperion* which is subtitled "A Dream," Keats wrote:

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave

A paradise for a sect; the savage too

From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep

Guesses at Heaven: pity these have not

Trac'd upon vellum or wild indian leaf

The shadows of melodious utterance.

But bare of laurel they live, dream and die;

For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,

With the fine spell of words alone can save

Imagination from the sable charm

And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,

'Thou art no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams'?

Since every man whose soul is not a clod

Hath visions, and would speak, if he had Lov'd

And been well nurtured in his mother tongue

Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse

Be Poet's or Fanatic's will be known

When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave.

The following lines are from "I Stood Tip-Toe ..."

Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,

Lover of loneliness, and wandering,

Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!

Thee must I praise above all other glories

That smile us on to tell delightful stories.

For what has made the sage or poet write

But the fair paradise of Nature's light?

Keats wrote *Sleep and Poetry* after he had spent an evening visiting with Leigh Hunt who invited him to stay overnight. He was given a bed in Hunt's study, but was unable to sleep at all as his mind was flooded with vivid imagery beginning with scenes from a painting of Poussin's "Empire of Flora," which portays a mythological scene of nymphs and lovers in a garden with Apollo flying overhead in his golden chariot. Keats was in an almost hypomanic

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state and Ward (1963) describes him thus: "As he lay on his narrow bed between sleep and waking, line followed on line with the miraculous ease of dream and when the light began to glimmer at the window he could not believe morning had come so soon. He rose up full of the energy of a man with a task which he is eager to start." Two quotations from that poem are pertinent; the first is:

... and the shade

Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid;

And many a verse from so strange influence

That we must ever wonder how, and whence

It came [lines 67-71].

and

... yet I must not forget

Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet:

For what there may be worthy in these rhymes

I partly owe to him—[lines 347-350].

"On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer," was composed under much the same circumstances as *Sleep and Poetry*. Keats and Cowden Clarke had remained up all night reading Chapman's translation of Homer, a most exciting discovery for Keats. He was ecstatic throughout and keenly aware "of a sonnet beating in his head" (Ward, 1963) which he wrote out completely while walking home at dawn.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,

And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;

Round many western islands have I been

Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told

That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken;

Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes

He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men

Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

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As an aside, one must wonder why Keats made the slip of attributing the discovery of the Pacific Ocean to Cortés rather than Balboa. The sea occupies a central position in many of his poems as a symbolic representation of his mother, while the line "Silent, upon a peak in Darien" recalls an image of the breast. When Keats himself first saw Lake Windander he was so affected that he wrote to his brother Tom, "the two views we have had of it are of the most noble tenderness—they can never fade away—they make one forget the divisions of life; age, youth, poverty, and riches; and refine one's sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and steadfast over the wonders of the great Power" (L. 71). It is therefore understandable that Keats would feel considerable ambivalence toward a man who had actually discovered one of the largest bodies of water in the world.

Before composing the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Keats wrote a letter to his brother George and his sister-in-law Georgiana:

This morning I am in a sort of temper indolent and supremely careless: I long after a stanza or two of Thompson's *Castle of Indolence*. My passions are all asleep from my having slumbered till nearly eleven and weakened the animal fibre all over

me to a delightful sensation about three degrees on this side of faintness—if I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lillies I should call it langour—but as I am [n.:]—Especially as I have a black eye.—I must call it Laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable frown. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me: they seem rather like three figures on a Greek vase—a Man and two women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguise. This is the only happiness; and is a rare instance of advantage in the body overpowering the Mind. I have this moment received a note from Haslam in which he expects the death of his Father—who has been for some time in a state of insensibility—his mother bears up he says very well—I shall go to town⁴ tomorrow to see him. This is the world—thus we cannot expect to give way many hours to pleasure—Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting—While we are

⁴ While most of Keats's spelling errors have been reproduced from the originals, those requiring lengthy explanations have been corrected.

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laughing the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events—while we are laughing it sprouts it grows and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck—Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words. Very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of Mind: very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others—in the greater part of the Benefactors to Humanity some meretricious motive has sullied their greatness—some melodramatic scenery has fa(s)cinated them—From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness—Yet this feeling ought to be carried to its highest pitch as there is no fear of its ever injuring Society—which it would do I fear pushed to an extremity—For in wild nature the Hawk would loose his Breakfast of Robins and the Robin his of Worms—the Lion must starve as well as the swallow. The greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk. The Hawk wants a Mate, so does the Man—look at them both they set about it and procure on(e) in the same manner. They want both a nest and they both set about one in the same manner—they get their food in the same manner—The noble animal Man for his amusement smokes his pipe—the Hawk balances about the Clouds—that is the only difference of their leisures. This it is that makes the Amusement of Life—to a speculative Mind. I go among the Fields and catch a glimpse of a Stoat or a fieldmouse peeping out of the withered grass—the creature hath a purpose and its eyes are bright with it. I go amongst the buildings of a city and I see a Man hurrying along—to what? the Creature has a purpose and his eyes are bright with it. But then, as Wordsworth says, "We have all one human heart"—there is an ellectric fire in human nature tending to purify—so that among these human creature(s) there is continu(a)lly some birth of new heroism. The pity is that we must wonder at it: as we should at finding a pearl in rubbish. I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard of have had hearts comp(1)etely disinterested: I can remember but two—Socrates and Jesus—their Histories evince it. What I heard a little time ago, Taylor observe with respect to Socrates may be said of Jesus—That he was so great a man that though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his Mind and his sayings and his greatness handed to us by others. It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by Men interested in the pious frauds of

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Religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour. Even here though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of—I am however young writing at random—straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness—without knowing the bearing of any one assertion of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin? May there not be superior beings amused with any graceful, though instinctive attitude my mind m(a)y fall into, as I am entertained with the alertness of a Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest Man shows a grace in his quarrel—By a superior being our reasoning(s) may take the same tone—though erroneous they may be fine—This is the very thing in which consists poetry; and if so it is not so fine a thing as philosophy—For the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth—Give me this credit—Do you not think I strive—to know myself? Give me this credit—and you will not think that on my own accou(n)t I repeat Milton's lines

"How charming is divine Philosophy
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose
But musical as is Apollo's lute"—

No—no(t) for myself—feeling grateful as I do to have got into a state of mind to relish them properly—Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced—Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it. I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet—but look over the two last pages and ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will well bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show you that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of any thing but Knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were throug(h) my human passions—they went away, and I wrote with my Mind—and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart—

Why did I laugh tonight? No voice will tell:
 No God no Demon of severe response
 Deigns to reply from heaven or from Hell.—
 Then to my human heart I turn at once—
 Heart! thou and I are here sad and alone;
 Say, wherefore did I laugh? O mortal pain!

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O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain!
 Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads:
 Yet could I on this very midnight cease
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds.
 Verse, fame and Beauty are intense indeed
 But Death intenser—Death is Life's high mead."

I went to bed, and enjoyed an uninterrupted Sleep—Sane I went to bed and sane I arose (L. 123).

As Keats describes his thoughts in this letter one must be curious as to whether the vase could represent the dream screen which Lewin (1946) feels is derived from the breast. Pursuing his free associations Keats goes on to talk of the death of a friend's father; about clouds "continually gathering and bursting"; about the difficulty of facing one's own misfortunes: "our own touch us too nearly for words"; and about oral dependent and cannibalistic imagery expressed in terms of animal behavior. He quotes Wordsworth and then states "that among these human creatures there is continually some birth of new heroism," and wonders about the purity of his own writings and whether they will be not only immortal but undistorted through the years. He seems to be concerned here about the amount of aggressive as compared with libidinal energy that is utilized in the writing of his poetry, "I am however young writing at random—straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness—without knowing the bearing of any one assertion of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin?" and later "I am ever affraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet." Then comes the sonnet and the concluding statement about sleep.

The poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge shows a close relationship between dreaming and creative activity, with unresolved oral strivings being very much a part of Coleridge's characterological structure. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," after the mariner repents the killing of the albatross, he falls asleep and dreams of

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being fed at the breast. In his later life, Coleridge became addicted to opium, and claimed that "Kubla Khan" had been dreamed in its entirety during an opium sleep (Beres, 1961); (Marcovitz, 1964).

The following clinical material is pertinent. A young, depressed, alcoholic man, who was being treated in intensive psychotherapy, brought a poem to one of his hours which he had dreamed the previous night. His mother had been extremely overprotective and seductive in her relationship with him and one of his earliest memories consisted of lying in bed with her at the age of four or five and masturbating her to climax. In the above hour after presenting the poem to his therapist he went on to talk about the frustrations of his marriage, of his wife's infidelity, of his promiscuous search for a better woman, and how independent he was of his mother. However, in the poem, he stated:

My thoughts change to all the things that once I have had
 Now is when I really become sad.
 And in the last lines he declared:
 O, how I wish I could grab all the bright things
 And push out all the sad.⁵

Prince (1914) has described in detail the creative responses of a subject who had written a poem "automatically" which was derived from a dream or series of dreams.

THE POEM AND THE LOST OBJECT

Segal (1952) feels "that all creation is really a re-creation of a once loved and once whole, but now lost and ruined object, a ruined internal world and self." The next selections attempt to establish that for Keats the poem represented an attempt at restoration or restitution of the lost object. The first is from "I Stood Tip-Toe ..."

The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
 And crept through half closed lattices to cure
 The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,

⁵ I am indebted to Dr. Salvatore Tuzzo for the above material.

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And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
 Soon they awoke clear eyed: nor burnt with thirsting,
 Not with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting:
 And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
 Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;
 Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss and stare,
 And on their placid foreheads part the hair.
 Young men, and maidens at each other gaz'd
 With hands held back, and motionless, amaz'd
 To see the brightness in each other's eyes;
 And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
 Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy.
 Therefore no lover did of anguish die:
 But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
 Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
 Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses,
 That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses:
 Was there a Poet born?—but now no more,
 My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.—[lines221-242].
 The following passages are from *Sleep and Poetry* (lines 96-212, 267-268, 288-293).
 O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
 Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed
 That my own soul has to itself decreed.
 Then will I pass the countries that I see
 In long perspective, and continually
 Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass
 Of Flora, and old Pan: sleep in the grass,
 Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
 And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees;
 Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,
 To woo sweet kisses from averted faces,—
 Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white
 Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
 As hard as lips can make it: till agreed,
 A lovely tale of human life we'll read.

And one will teach a tame dove how it best
 May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest;
 Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
 Will set a green robe floating round her head,
 And still will dance with ever varied ease,
 Smiling upon the flowers and the trees:

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Another will entice me on, and on
 Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon;
 Till in the bosom of a leafy world
 We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd
 In the recesses of a pearly shell.
 And they shall be accounted poet kings
 Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.
 ... though no great minist'ring reason sorts
 Out the dark mysteries of human souls
 To clear conceiving: yet there ever rolls
 A vast idea before me, and I glean
 Therefrom my liberty; thence too I've seen
 The end and aim of Poesy.
 From *The Fall of Hyperion*
 ... Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?
 The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
 Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
 The one pours out a balm upon the world,
 The other vexes it [Canto I, lines 198-202].

In the Preface to *Endymion*, Keats declared:

Knowing within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent

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to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try

once more, before I bid it farewell.

In various letters Keats has dealt with the same theme:

What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a Word, you may know my favorite Speculation by my first Book and the little song I sent in my last—which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these Matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how any thing can be known for truth by consequitive reasoning—and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections. However it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is "a Vision in the form of Youth' a Shadow of reality to come—and this consideration has further convinced me for it has come as auxiliary to another favorite Speculation of mine, that we shall enjoy ourselves here after by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone and so repeated. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation rather than hunger as you do after Truth. Adam's dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its Spiritual repetition. But as I was saying—the simple imaginative Mind may have its rewards in the repeti(ti)on of its own silent Working coming continually on the Spirit with a fine Suddenness—to compare great things with small—have you never by being Surprised with an old Melody—in a delicious place—by a delicious voice, fe(1)t over again your very Speculations and Surmises at the time it first operated on your Soul—do you not remember forming to yourself the singer's face more

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beautiful than it was possible and yet with the elevation of the Moment you did not think so—even then you were mounted on the Wings of Imagination so high—that the Prototype must be here after—that delicious face you will see [L. 31].

I never was in love—yet the voice and the shape of a Woman has haunted me these two days—at such a time when the relief, the feverous relief of Poetry seems a much less crime—This morning Poetry has conquered—I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life—I feel escaped from a new strange and threatening sorrow.—and I am thankful for it.—There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality

I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human friend Philosopher) a fine writer is the most genuine Being in the World. Shakespeare the paradise Lost every day become greater wonders to me. I look upon fine Phrases like a Lover [L. 142].

As can be seen, Keats went to great lengths to develop a concept of beauty which, among other things, would allow him to deal with the abstraction rather than the person in an attempt to cope with the threat of loss, thus rendering immortality more certain. This struggle is best expressed in the opening lines of *Endymion*:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:

Its loveliness increases; it will never

Pass into nothingness; but still will keep

A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

And in the closing lines of "Ode on a Grecian Urn," he wrote:

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty',—That is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Through sleep and dreaming Keats was able to regress and to fuse with the lost object, the introject, which upon awakening he must abandon (**Krupp, 1962**). An attempt to compensate for this separation is made by externalizing the dream in the writing of poetry (**Barron, 1963**). However, Keats was seldom satisfied with his poems and indeed wrote a savage criticism of *Endymion*, as his brother, Tom, was dying. At this time, he declared, "I am sometimes

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so very sceptical as to think Poetry itself a mere Jack-a-Lantern to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance" (L. 53). Here the problem becomes one of failure to re-create in actuality, to make total restitution of the lost object and to submit to a temporary loss or partial decathexis of the introject after completing a given work, which places him in a position of having to reincorporate and continually to try and gain further mastery, to work through the problem via his writing. This in turn accounts for such a prolific output in such a short time span. In a letter to John Reynolds he once stated:

The difference of high Sensations with and without knowledge appears to me this—in the latter case we are falling continually ten thousand fathoms deep and being blown up again without wings and with all (the) horror of a bare shouldered creature—in the former case, our shoulders are fledge, and we go thro' the same air and space without fear. This is running one's rigs on the score of abstracted benefit—when we come to human Life and the affections it is impossible (to

know) how a parallel of breast and head can be drawn—(you will forgive me for thus privately treading out (of) my depth, and take it for treading as schoolboys tread the water)—It is impossible to know how far Knowledge will console us for the death of a friend and the ill "that flesh is heir to" [L. 64].

And in the poem "On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again" he wrote:

O golden tongued Romance, with serene lute!
 Fair plumed Syren, Queen of far-away!
 Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
 Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute:
 Adieu! for, once again, the fierce dispute
 Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay
 Must I burn through: once more humbly assay
 The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit:
 Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,
 Begetters of our deep eternal theme!
 When through the old oak Forest I am gone,
 Let me not wander in a barren dream,
 But, when I am consumed in the fire
 Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.

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THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

To put it another way, the conflict over fusion and separation-individuation was a crucial one for Keats, with its implications of ill-defined ego boundaries, and difficulties in distinguishing dream from reality. He used the term "identity" a great deal, at times almost in Erikson's (1956) sense of the word. In a letter to John Reynolds, Keats wrote:

I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think—We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of this thinking principle within us—we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression—whereby this Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the balance of good and evil. We are in a Mist. We are now in that state—We feel the "burden of the Mystery" [L. 64].

Here he describes the passive, dependent position of intrauterine and early infant development and the uncertainty related to separation from the mother, "We are in a Mist."

Similar feelings are expressed in still other letters:

As to the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and

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shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion Poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. A Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body—The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute—the poet has none; no identity—he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's Creatures. If then he has no self, and if I am a Poet, where is the Wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the Characters of Saturn and Ops? It is a wretched thing to confess; but is a very fact that not one

word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature—how can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every one in the room begins so to press upon me that I am in a very little time an(ni)hilated—not only among Men; it would be the same in a Nursery of children: I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day.

In the second place I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good: if I should be spared that may be the work of maturer years—in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in Poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of Poems to come brings the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is that I may not lose all interest in human affairs—that the solitary indifference I feel for applause even from the finest Spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may have. I do not think it will—I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the Beautiful even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself: but from some character in whose soul I now live. I am sure however, that this next sentence is from myself. I feel your anxiety, good opinion and friendliness in the highest degree [L. 93].

Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles

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is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways. Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience, it is the teat from which the Mind or intelligence sucks its identity" [L. 123].

In *Hyperion* Keats writes:

'... I am gone

'Away from my own bosom: I have left

'My strong identity, my real self [Book I, lines 122-124].

As Keats's literary career developed, particularly as he became critically accepted and began to make ego-syntonic identifications with Byron, Milton, Shakespeare, and Burns, his own sense of self-identity became more firmly consolidated and he was able partially to work through the mourning process. However, this task was tragically interrupted in February, 1820 when he became aware that he had tuberculosis and that his own death was imminent.

There is a strong suggestion of regressive fusion in his Epitaph "Here lies one whose name was writ in water," plus the fact that he requested that his name not be inscribed on his tombstone. At the time when Keats read Chapman's Homer with Cowden Clarke, he shouted with delight when he came upon the last line in the passage describing the shipwrecked Ulysses struggling to get ashore,

... both knees falt'ring, both

His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth

His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath

Spent to all use, and down he sank to death

The sea had soak'd his heart through.

As mentioned previously, the sea as a maternal symbol appeared frequently in Keats's poems (Ward, 1963). Clinical experience has shown that depression does render one more vulnerable to such illnesses as tuberculosis—George Keats himself died in 1841 of tuberculosis which manifested itself only after he had become depressed following a business failure which threatened him with bankruptcy. It is interesting to note the interrelationship of early object loss, depression, a love of the sea and travel, respiratory infections,

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and creative writing in the lives of Conrad, Maugham, O'Neill, and Thomas Wolfe (Meyer, 1964); (Pfeiffer, 1952); (Weissman, 1957); (Nowell, 1960).

While he displayed a strong wish for intimacy with a woman throughout his life, Keats was at the same time fearful of the implications of such a relationship, and found it very difficult to develop a basic trust in such situations. In a letter to Benjamin Bailey he wrote: "When among men I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen—I feel free to speak or to be silent—I can listen and from every one I can learn—My hands are in my pockets I am free from all suspicion and comfortable. When I am among Women I have evil thoughts, malice spleen—I cannot speak or be silent—I am full of Suspicions and therefore listen to nothing—I am in a hurry to be gone—You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since Boyhood" (L. 79). Barron (1963) has postulated that female inconstancy "may well be a spur of central significance to artistic creativity."

DREAMING AND CREATIVITY

The role of dreams in certain areas of creativity other than literature has been an integral and well-established one. Kekulé conceived of the Benzene ring after having had a dream wherein atoms turned to snakes which formed a ring by swallowing each other's tails (**De Becker, 1968**). Einstein formulated the theory of relativity after he visualized $E = MC^2$ in a dream (**Lindon, 1966**). Descartes felt dream material was crucial to his scientific thinking, although there is some question as to whether his dreams preceded or followed his discoveries (**Schönberger, 1939**); (**Lewin, 1958**). Otto Loewi (**1960**) came upon the proof of the role of acetylcholine in the chemical mediation of nerve impulses in a dream, which he forgot upon awakening in the morning, but fortunately repeated the next night with total recall. In attempting to discover the theory of Fuchsian groups and functions, the French mathematician Poincaré (**1913**) had pored over the problem for fifteen days trying to prove that no such functions existed. He then experienced a sleepless night during which "ideas rose in crowds; I felt them collide until pairs interlocked, so to speak, making a stable construction." The next day

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as he boarded a bus, the solution came to him when he put his foot on the first step. Giovacchini (**1966**) has reported a case where dreams taken in the context of transference played an important part in scientific creativity. Paul Marco, a contemporary sculptor, claims that "most of the ideas for statues to make come to me in the middle of the night. That is when fantasies are running best" (**Folsom, 1966**). Within the field of literature, Robert Louis Stevenson attributed his inspiration to the "Little People or Brownies" who appeared in his dreams and presented complete tales to him (**Kanzer, 1951**). Eugene O'Neill, who experienced considerable early maternal deprivation, would dream entire scenes of his plays (**Weissman, 1957**). Many of the poems of Conrad Aiken and several of his short stories, most notably, "Bring! Bring!" and "Mr. Arcularis," were derived from dreams (personal communication) and Aiken, like Keats, lost both parents during childhood (**Aiken, 1952**).

In attempting to link object loss, dreaming, and creativity, no personal example is more significant than that of Freud. In the preface to the second edition (1908) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (**1900**) he wrote: "For this book has a further subjective significance for me personally—a significance which I only grasped after I had completed it. It was, I found, a portion of my own self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death—that is to say, to the most important event, the most poignant loss, of a man's life. Having discovered that this was so, I felt unable to obliterate the traces of the experience." Both Freud and Keats were prolific letter writers and Freud's correspondence with Fliess (**1950**) was a crucial part of his self-analysis.

Dreams do not lend themselves readily to secondary process forms of expression or elaboration and are easily repressed or forgotten. Schachtel (**1959**) feels that the forgetting of dreams is a result of the incompatibility of primary and secondary processes. Both the dream and the poem have a manifest and latent content, and the ambiguity and multiple imagery of the former may be more readily conveyed by the latter than by other forms of creative expression. I have described the case of an adolescent girl who used poetry in an attempt to resolve a conflict in sexual identity (**1968**). The patient had written a particular poem which on the manifest level compared the automobile unfavorably with the horse. However, the latent content revealed that she was contrasting the horse, which

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represented unattainable phallic strivings, with her debased, feminine self representation, "auto" being used as a switchboard to denote both "car" and "self." Muratori (**1774**), an eighteenth-century scholar, once composed a Latin poem, a pentameter, in a dream and felt afterward that it could not have been written during waking hours other than by using extremely complicated metric technique.

In a recent attempt to correlate visual imagery with cognitive organization, Horowitz (**1967**) offers some interesting hypotheses:

Freud and Rapaport have described a hypothetical state of infantile hallucination as one of the earliest forms of mentation. In this inferred state the infant experiences increasing hunger tension, and recalls the mnemonic impression associated with previous satiation of such needs with hallucinatory vividness. Such hallucinations are not yet subject to reality testing and provide sufficient partial gratification to temporarily reduce the pressures of internal need stimuli and enhance the ability to tolerate delay.

Following this, as the infant gains in sensory discrimination and motility, hallucinations are thought to be inhibited as the infant learns to differentiate what is real from what is only internal mental activity. During this preverbal stage of development, cognition proceeds in terms of memories of sensory impressions. Even later, when word representations have been achieved, gaps in conceptual ability are probably expressed cognitively in the form of imagery.

Thinking in imagery and particularly thinking pictorially would, therefore, be regarded as an earlier cognitive system than thinking in word representations. In later life it would reemerge under certain circumstances, e.g., dreams and fantasy thinking, be preserved as a cognitive style in certain persons, but generally be suppressed in favor of thinking in word representations.

The very fact of its reemergence and the occasional simultaneous occurrence of thought moving temporally in both word and picture "tracks" suggests, however, that it is retained as a definable system. That is, instead of viewing thought as a unitary process using different kinds of "bits" or monads we would regard it as a process that can activate or suppress multiple cognitive systems, each with its own characteristics and utility.

Each system, also, would have its own circuitry or physiologic substrate and various neurophysiologic states might alter the propensities of usage of the various systems. This would be similar operationally to motor reflexes: primitive muscle reflexes reappear after cerebral trauma alters inhibition and affects operation

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of later and more elaborate systems. Just as differing persons vary in their style of perception, individuals also vary in their "style of consciousness"—and this would have to do with variations in the patterns of usage of various cognitive systems [p. 945].

FURTHER METAPSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Before closing, I would like to add some comments about Keats's small stature, which may have been a determinant of his creativity. Throughout his life, Keats was acutely aware of and sensitive about his lack of height; Niederland (1967) has shown clinically that physical malformations, among which he includes shortness, lead to specific ego defects, the narcissistic repair of which may be attempted in the creative act.

Greenacre's contributions (1963) about the childhood of the artist and the collective alternates are extremely relevant. She states:

The readiness for contact with, and the capacity for using, the collective alternates tend then to permit a less decisive closing of the successive libidinal phases of early childhood than might otherwise be true. One result of this intrinsic state of affairs may be a diminished firmness of the barrier between primary-process and secondary-process thinking and imagery, a condition which seems characteristic of gifted individuals.

It is a psychoanalytic truism that poets and other artists know well and travel readily the high road to the Unconscious. They seem naturally to know and to use the language of dreams. What the analyst must work patiently to decipher with his patient, the artist knows and expresses. Yet paradoxically he is often unaware that he knows, at least in personal ways, what he may have expressed with beautiful conciseness in universal or collective terms. If we think of the creative product being achieved in part through "a regression in the service of the ego"—to use the concept of Ernst Kris—we may well ask whether the tenuous character of the barrier between primary- and secondary-process thinking does not make regression extraordinarily easy in the creatively gifted person, and whether, indeed, he does not have so ready an access to primary-process thought, imagery, and relationships that his use of them is not truly a regression in the sense in which we ordinarily think of it. It seems rather that

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primary-process thought remains vitally present in the creative person, and is carried throughout life as part of the collective object relationships which do not have always to be sweepingly sacrificed to the personal. This continued access to states of early childhood may be the basis of the innocence of the artist, and his ability frequently to utilize the direct vision of the child [p. 15ff.].

In attempting to define the essential attributes of the creative person, Keats observed that "several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (L. 32).

Expanding upon Greenacre's formulations, Weissman (1968) writes:

Put figuratively but schematically, the artist-to-be infant equipped with more than usual sensorial sensitivity had more intensely cathected an imagined (hallucinated) breast than he had ever cathected the real breast. To the advent of an increasing sense of reality he brings his established state of intense attachment to hallucinated objects and their representations. In adult life, he retains his relative indifference to real objects. It is this more unusual capacity to hypercathect imaginary objects which early in life characterizes the future creative person... A stronger influence for the increased cathexis of hallucinated objects is derived from the given individual's greater than usual sensorial sensitivity to stimuli from objects." In his opinion, creative elaboration is predominantly in the service of the ego ideal and he concludes that "the creative state may be viewed as a transient hallucinatory or delusional psychosis without ego regression but reinforced and maintained by the coordinated activities of the dissociative and integrative functions of the ego."

SUMMARY

The poetry of John Keats has been examined to determine if there is a meaningful connection between the early and repeated losses of essential people in his life, his failure to mourn adequately, and his creative output. It is a basic postulate of this paper that

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object loss leads to a regressive fusion with the lost object and that the dream becomes an integral part of this process having originally been utilized by the infant to cope with the loss of direct oral gratification from the mother during sleep. Recent developments in

ego psychology have demonstrated that the working through of adolescent conflicts is essential before one can come to terms with the death of significant persons, especially parents. When his choice of medicine as a career became too conflictual, Keats resorted to poetry in an attempt to complete the mourning process and to make restitution for the lost object, most importantly his mother, by externalizing his dreams in the form of poems. Because of the intense ambivalence and hypercathexis of the introject, this method was only partially successful and, having to be repeated over and over again, led to one of the richest, most profuse creative efforts in all of literature.

In closing, the following remarks by Mircea Eliade (1967) seem appropriate:

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