

NOTES

¹See Robert Mayo, "The Contemporaneity of the *Lyrical Ballads*," *PMLA*, 69 (1954), 486–522, esp. p. 424 and n. 12, which lists eleven of the "scores" of contemporary poems to the nightingale. For Coleridge's exuberant, scatological verse-apologia, see *Collected Letters*, I: 406

In stale blank verse a subject stale
I send *per post* my *Nightingale*;
And like an honest bard, dear Wordsworth,
You'll tell me what you think, my Bird's worth.
My opinion's briefly this—
His *bill* he opens not amiss;
And when he has sung a stave or so,
His breast, & some small space below,
So throbs & swells, that you might swear
No vulgar music's working there.
So far, so good; but then, 'od rot him!
There's something falls off at his bottom.
Yet, sure, no wonder it should breed,
That my Bird's Tail's a tail indeed
And makes it's own inglorious harmony
AEolio crepitû, non carmine.

²Gene M. Bernstein, in "The Recreating Secondary Imagination in Coleridge's 'The Nightingale,'" *ELH*, 48 (1981), 339–50, suggests that here we have "the secondary imagination deconstructing with a vengeance which will subsequently enable the poet to recreate objects received from convention and tradition, objects thus 'essentially fixed and dead,' into a vital new relationship" (p. 342). Bernstein discusses the poem's structure in terms of the alternate "deconstruction" (including a deconstruction or exorcism of "To the Nightingale") and "construction" performed by the secondary imagination.

³Warren Stevenson justly remarked that, if it is taken as an absolute, factual proposition about creaturely existence, Coleridge's

categorical statement is categorically wrong: for one thing, animals frequently grieve for their dead. The statement is defensible only as a rhetorical gesture, as a statement about rhetorical categories that connotes something like "In Nature there is nothing (categorically) melancholy"—that is, no *categorically* melancholy being exists. Again we are faced with the discontinuity between being and rhetoric (or language) that lies at the heart of the poem.

⁴*Creative Mind*, p. 90; see also pp. 155–56. What Wheeler says of the footnote to "The Eolian Harp" equally applies here; as a "discursive gesture in the midst of a beautiful poem," it directs "attention to complexities and uncertainties otherwise 'glossed over,'" including "the uncertainty of the role of the framework" (p. 89).

⁵For a detailed discussion of this priest-persona and his functions, see Michael E. Holstein, "Poet into Priest: A Reading of Coleridge's 'Conversation Poems,'" *UTQ*, 48 (1979), 209–25.

⁶Unfortunately, the father's literary instruction would seem to have had unexpected negative consequences: Anya Taylor's discussion of Hartley Coleridge's life makes it only too clear how damaging the textualizing of a child who does indeed grow up to read his father's (and his father's friends') songs can be. With the benefit of her poignant account, the poetical, oddly depersonalized phrase "his childhood" (rather than, say, "my baby") seems both distancing and inadvertently prophetic of the difficulties in maturing encountered by one who in a sense became "his childhood," a literary symbol for natural innocence.

⁷Indeed, the poem succeeded in fathering yet more of "these songs": for "The Nightingale" is indeed a "senior sibling," as Randel puts it, "a prerequisite for other notable romantic texts" including Wordsworth's own countertexts "O Nightingale! thou surely art" and "To a Skylark," as well as Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (p. 50).

The Displacement of Emotions: The Case of "Frost at Midnight"

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Given that the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth shows their continuous interest in the feelings, it is not surprising that the accounts that the poets provide of the origin and purpose of poetry should give feeling a primary role. Feelings are nearer to nature, opposed to culture; they are the ur-text of the mind, from which springs knowledge of the self and the external world. It was in this sense that, in

developing the myth of his origins as a poet, Wordsworth asserted in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) that poetry is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Similarly, in his major statements about the imagination, Coleridge gave a central place to the work of feeling. He argued that poetic diction has its origin in the heightened language induced by passion. In addition, feeling seems to be the key agent in that

aspect of imagination which, in Chapter 4 of the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge termed the “modifying” power. And this power, in turn, accounts for the feelings of the reader: its agency, says Coleridge, enables the poet “so to represent familiar objects as to awaken in the minds of others a kindred feeling concerning them . . .” (*BL*. I.80–81). While feeling has a primary or originating role in these accounts of poetic creativity and a corresponding role in the response of the reader, it is difficult to determine what precisely is the work being ascribed to feeling. Although feeling is prominent as an explanatory construct, it is difficult to explain. In this paper I will outline what I see as some of the reasons for that difficulty.

In referring to emotions rather than feelings, I want to make a distinction which is, I think, authorized by both Coleridge and Wordsworth, although neither developed a consistent terminology to support it. One purpose of the poet, as Wordsworth conceived it, was to realize the emotion beneath the feeling (what Wordsworth sometimes called “passion”). In the 1802 Preface he refers to the passions of the poets as “far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet . . . [they] do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves.” What I take it to mean is that emotion signifies a process in which the self has its being: emotions represent issues which are fundamental to the existence of the self and to the development of the sense of identity. A feeling, in contrast, is a momentary, phenomenal manifestation of an underlying emotion, coloring and sometimes determining the data of perception and sensation. Both emotion and feeling are self-referential; but, while one looks inward to processes which define the self, the other looks outward to that moment by moment negotiation of the self with the world. The purpose of the modifying power of imagination may be to bring these two realms into productive relationship, to focus on a renewed sense of self: thus the intended trajectory of a poem such as “Frost at Midnight” is from feeling to emotion. There is a close relationship here with the way the trajectory is more often described—from the phenomenal to the noumenal. Using the term emotion rather than the noumenal, however, foregrounds a difficulty in Coleridge’s account. Emotions bring certain problems with them, which Coleridge demonstrates but doesn’t resolve. Traces of the difficulty are projected in various ways on the poetry, although I will refer in particular only to “Frost at Midnight.” The difficulties can partly be elucidated by referring to the empirical workings of emotions and feelings, their role in relation to cognitive functions and the self.

A central difficulty is dramatized by Coleridge himself in a typical, layered quotation that he brings in aid in Chapter 18 of the *Biographia*, where the concept of imagination is deployed in the critique of Wordsworth. Coleridge is objecting to Wordsworth’s poem, “The Sailor’s Mother,” for dressing up with metre and rhyme what should properly have re-

mained as prose. Only the poet’s “visionary state,” the feelings aroused in him by the original incident, allowed Wordsworth to overlook the drop into colloquialism of the last three verses. It is that visionary state, Coleridge adds in parenthesis, “which spreads its influence and coloring over all, that co-exists with the exciting cause, and in which ‘The simplest, and most familiar things / Gain a strange power of spreading awe around them.’” In a footnote Coleridge quotes the original source of these two lines, adapted from his play *Remorse*, in which Isidore describes a nightmare: “every goodly or familiar form / Had a strange power of spreading terror round me” (*BL*.ii.70; *Remorse* IV.i.72–73).¹ The visionary state of imagination, which makes the familiar into something of awe, thus has a direct equivalent in nightmare, where the familiar is transformed into an object of terror. Note that the familiar in Isidore’s account is not merely endowed with terror, as from without, but is itself the source of terror.

Coleridge pursues this conception further: “N.B. Though Shakespeare has for his own *all-justifying* purposes introduced the *Night-Mare* with her own foals, yet Mair means a Sister or perhaps a Hag.” Engell and Bate, in their note to this remark (*BL*.ii.70), accept the correctness of Coleridge’s etymology: *mare* derives from the Old English for a female goblin or monster. This places the mare in a traditional demonology of evil spirits existing externally. Coleridge’s word is “sister,” however, and this continues the more alarming idea, developed in Isidore’s lines, that the terror inheres in what is *familiar*. The “sister” (one recalls the “sister more beloved” of “Frost at Midnight” is a loved, familiar, domestic presence. With this notion, Coleridge verges on Freud’s explanation of the uncanny. The uncanny, Freud was to say, “is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression . . .”; or in words borrowed from Schelling, something “that ought to have remained . . . secret and hidden but has come to light” (Freud, *Standard Edition*, tr. James Strachey [1955–74], XVII, 241, 224). It’s hard to know why, in the midst of the discussion of the modifying power of imagination in Chapter 18, Coleridge chose to draw attention to the parallel power of the nightmare. It suggests, perhaps, a half-repressed ambivalence over the work of the imagination. But this odd conjunction of references does show that emotion functions in both the visionary and the nightmare states in the same way: emotion emanates from a familiar object, and serves to modify the objects around it.

Feeling has a central role in producing the effects of poetry through the modifying power of the imagination. This is evident from various remarks in Coleridge’s notes and lectures on Shakespeare. The imagination, he says, is “the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others and by a sort of *fusion force many into one*.” It is “combining many circumstances into one moment of thought” (*Shak*.i.188, 191). In the fourth lecture of 1811–12 Coleridge described imagination as “the capability of reducing a multitude into

unity of effect, or by strong passion to modify series of thoughts into one predominant thought or feeling" (*Shak.*ii.63). In other words, within everyday thought there are objects or ideas for which we normally have our own feelings or to which we are indifferent; through poetry we are led to transfer to these objects or ideas one predominant feeling, which modifies them and brings them into a new configuration. This is possible because feeling has the power to transfer across different conceptual domains. Its prime effect is to alter our response to the familiar, to awaken "that freshness of sensation" which Coleridge described in Chapter 4 of the *Biographia*.

Of course, in Chapter 4 it is assumed that imagination gives us something which is really there, but not noticed before, one of those truths which "lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul." Whether the cross-domain power of feeling guarantees this result is not a question that Coleridge asked directly. It seems doubtful that the feelings of the nightmare terror point to anything like a truth in the sense of Chapter 4; yet Chapter 18 suggests that it is this same cross-domain power of feeling which underlies both vision and nightmare.

Coleridge frequently associates deep feeling with profound thinking: it is the departure point of the passage in Chapter 4, where his claim that Wordsworth united feeling and thinking constitutes a specific instance of a general law that underlies philosophical thought. The claim seems to point to a process in the mind, in which feeling is an authoritative guide to the truths within our being. This is why we should "reserve the deep feelings" for those "obscure ideas" which are the source of our moral perfectibility (*Friend*, i.106). It is as though feelings are the instrument of anamnesis: as Coleridge remarked in 1803 in a letter to Tom Wedgwood, "Feelings die by flowing into the mould of the Intellect, & becoming Ideas" (*CL*.ii.916). This suggests another feature of feeling: it is anticipatory. The feelings foreshadow forms of thought which have yet to be realized in consciousness, hence the importance of feelings. "My philosophical opinions," Coleridge stated in 1796, "are blended with, or deduced from, my feelings: & this, I think, peculiarizes my style of Writing" (*CL*.i.279). Feeling in itself brings a tendency towards completeness: "all Passion unifies as it were by natural Fusion" (*N*.ii.2012). In a note of 1818, Coleridge elaborated this anticipatory aspect of feeling: "Ideas as anticipations are intellectual instincts—the Future is their Object"; their germinal point is that "they must possess unconsciously" what they "consciously miss. . . . The former . . . the materia—the *feeling*—the latter the form, the idea" (*N*.iii.4438).

These remarks point to two powerful components of feeling: it is both cross-domain and anticipatory. It seems that what Coleridge meant by feeling (in these last quotations) is what I would distinguish as emotion, since the feelings he has in mind appear to be determining influences on the forms of thought; they are aligned with the truths of philosophy and

with moral and intellectual being. The cross-domain role of feeling in poetry, which alters the colours of the objects of perception, seems to relate to emotion by a kind of induction. The feelings discover to us the emotion of which they are an outgrowth or agent.

These last accounts of emotion, as I call it, also draw attention to that other significant feature, which I mentioned earlier: emotion is, in some way, defining of the self, or at least self-referential. For example, in a note of 1801 on the lines from "Tintern Abbey"—through "the deep power of Joy / We see into the life of things," in which Wordsworth speaks of a transformation in understanding nature—Coleridge typically shifts the emphasis of the reference to his understanding of the self (capitalizing and underlining *Life* in quoting Wordsworth): "i.e.—By deep feeling we make our *Ideas dim*—& this is what we mean by our *Life—ourselves*." This feeling, he says, "is deep & steady—and this I call *I*—identifying the Percipient & the Perceived—"(*N*.i.921). In other words, Wordsworth describes a feeling rather than a seeing, in which some essential part of the self is actualized. Similarly, in seeing a hawk's droppings falling through the air as a "chrysal" in the sunlight, Coleridge remarks "how altogether lovely this to the Eye, and to the Mind too while it remained its own self, all & only its very Self" (*N*.iii.3401).

Thus there are three important aspects of the work of emotion which enable it to act as the modifying power in imagination: feelings modify many thoughts and images and make them one thing (the cross-domain role); emotions are anticipations of ideas in the process of formation; and emotions refer to the self, the inner or true self. In addition, I have suggested a clarification of terms (a desynonymization) in which feelings are directed outward, as relatively short term controls over acts of perception, while emotions represent the long term concerns of the self.

Although a poem such as "Frost at Midnight" was written before Coleridge's ideas on imagination were well developed, it is quite feasible to read the poem for the evidence it offers for these different aspects of emotion, which contribute to the modifying power of imagination. There is the feeling of disquiet, which perhaps begins with the owl's cry, and transfers to the silence, to the unseen village, sea, hill, and wood, to the fluttering film, and then to the scene at school where it takes more definite form in the young Coleridge's awe at "the stern preceptor's face." There is a poetic deployment of anticipation, in the "ministry" of the first line which foreshadows the "eternal language" of God to be heard by the growing Hartley. The feeling of disquiet in the opening is self-referential in a way which only becomes apparent later, as Coleridge's sense of exclusion is traced to its source in his childhood exile to London. Out of the several feelings of the poem Coleridge generates that more profound and permanent-seeming emotion, the noumenal sense of God's work through nature. In these various ways the poem's discourse tends to support what Coleridge was to say about imagination,

and this is often how the poem has been read. In the last few lines the poet is able to reinterpret his surroundings: his "convalescence" has clearly begun. As Richard Haven says in *Patterns of Consciousness: An Essay on Coleridge* (1969), the "discursive order" of the opening has been displaced by a "symbolic order," in which frost, snow, and icicles prefigure the unity of self with God.

In this sense, imagination can be described as the "displacement" of emotions, recalling the derivation of the word emotion, which is to move, or displace. The emotion of the "symbolic order" is the sense of a shift from ordinary perception to a recognition of truths hidden within the familiar, or a move from the shadow towards the substance self (cf. *N.ii.3026*). While this offers one way of understanding the intention of a poem such as "Frost at Midnight," in which the familiar is made a source of awe, it is not clear whether the emotion of the nightmare, which exercises the same power on the familiar, is amenable to the same explanation. In what respect, if any, could we say that the nightmare emotion implicates the substance self?

To correlate the modifying power of imagination with the transfixing dread of the nightmare in Chapter 18 is obviously equivocal. But other remarks of Coleridge suggest that the power of emotion that provide for the imagination can also work to create grief, despair, or terror. The features of emotion that serve a process leading to glimpses of the ideal are the same features that produce and reinforce states within which the self is immobilized or suspended.

For example, Coleridge noted the cross-domain power of grief. It "blows the Horn, to a scattered mob of obscure feelings," so that a single feeling of sorrow can serve to "bring together all the little relics of pain & discomfort, bodily & mental, that we have endured even from Infancy" (*N.i.1599*). He also saw the feelings associated with guilt or despair as anticipatory in some obscure sense, as the approach of something frightening: "even in dreams of Sleep the Soul never *is*, because it either cannot or dare not be, any *<ONE> THING*; but lives in *approaches*—touched by the outgoing pre-existent Ghosts of many feelings—It feels for ever as a blind man with his protended Staff dimly thro' the medium of the instrument by which it pushes off, & in the act of repulsion" (*N.ii.3215*).

This second note raises a central difficulty in Coleridge's account of feeling. While the feelings involved in the imagination can readily be identified with the self, Coleridge prevaricates when considering the feelings involved in states of despair, evil, or nightmare. In a note of 1805, he remarks on his inability to free himself from weakness: the Soul repeats vices, he says, "which it knows to be degrading & destructive, and really detests, in consequence of clinging to some *Passion*, which Reason—nay, of which it dreads to question its reason" (*N.ii.2458*). As Pascal put it, "The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of." Coleridge seems to recognize in

these notes a logic in feeling, which in other places he rejected. The "streamy" nature of association seen in states of reverie, which Coleridge examined as a possible cause of "moral evil," has passion or bodily feeling as its motor, in opposition to thinking and reason (*N.i.1770*; *N.ii.2543*). At the centre of the opposition is the difference between the active and passive selves: feeling tends to evil because the mind is passive and reason out of action.

Coleridge's judgment on his reveries has largely been accepted by commentators. For example, in *Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry* (1974), Paul Magnuson explained that for Coleridge "there is an essential evil in daydreams and imaginings and that subjective random trains of association cannot be innocent because the passive mind dissolves into a chaotic phantasmagoria of images and feelings" (p. 68). But this seems incorrect: there cannot be random associations. As studies of daydreams such as J. Varendonck's *The Psychology of Day-Dreams* (1921) have shown, they are often motivated by concerns of the self that have been overlooked or partly repressed. It seems probable that dreams and nightmares arise from the same general cause. Thus the reason behind the passion—it is, notably, at this point that Coleridge's syntax breaks down in the note I quoted a moment ago—comes back to the self once again. The emotions that fuel the reverie or the nightmare are self-referential, but the Soul "dare not" be itself, but must live "in *approaches*," touched by feelings that emanate from something it is actually repulsed by, as in the analogy of the blind man with his stick. The self both is, and is not, what it feels. The other properties of emotion, its cross-domain and anticipatory power, conspire to fix the self in that state. At its worst, as Coleridge's notes on his own dreams record, the power of that transfixing emotion transforms everything it touches into a source of terror.

Because the self feels, yet resists its knowledge, the complicity of the self in causing the nightmare terror produces confusion. Coleridge's poem, "The Pains of Sleep," is his classic expression of this sense of complicity:

Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know
Whether I suffered, or I did:
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe.

The confusion extends, of course, to Coleridge's discussion of the will. If the will is synonymous with the self, as Coleridge was inclined to believe (e.g., *N.i.1717*), then it is hard to see how the nightmare terror could be a product of the self. The guilt and terror is both willed and not willed, a paradox which "Pains of Sleep" in part expresses. The most notable expression of this state, of course, is the motiveless guilt of the Ancient Mariner (see my "Guilt and Death: The Predicament of the Ancient Mariner," *SEL* 24 [1984], 633–53). But are there in "Frost at Midnight" feelings which point to a state rather than a process? And if so, how might they influence the treatment of the perceptions, memories, and ideas deployed

in the poem? "Frost at Midnight" underwent several revisions. The passage which gave Coleridge the most trouble was that beginning at line 20 where he attempted several times to explain the sense of sympathy with the inanimate film fluttering on the bars of the fire. His second version describes the playful spirit which "loves not to behold a lifeless thing," and reads life into the film. At the same time, he

Smiles, as self-scornful, to disarm the scorn
For these wild reliques of our childish Thought,
That flit about, oft go, an oft return
Not uninvited.

The lines record an ambivalence of feeling towards these childish thoughts, both amusement and scorn: neither feeling connotes a respect for such "wild reliques," in contrast to the prophetic role that Wordsworth had attributed to childhood thought in his major poems. Particularly, it suggests a type of simultaneous (yet defensive) interest and repulsion towards this tendency of thought, some unassimilated emotion which is perhaps at the source of Coleridge's problem with the passage. In his essay, Freud noted that one important source for the uncanny was the feature of childhood that he called "omnipotence of thoughts," the endowing of the world with animate spirits and the belief in one's power to control the world by thought or be controlled. None of us has passed through this stage, Freud claimed, "without preserving certain residues and traces of it which are still capable of manifesting themselves" (Freud, p. 240).

These lines in the poem, later eliminated, effectively describe that residual tendency of childhood thought to endow the inanimate with life. They also make a revealing prelude to the account of school which follows: Coleridge's wish, which he originally called a "most believing superstitious wish," was really expected to bring about the arrival of townspeople or "sister more beloved." In improving the poem, Coleridge removed the explicit connections of adult with childhood modes of thought. But the idea remains, forming a kind of palimpsest which can still be glimpsed through the final version, which refers only to his "dim sympathies" with the film making "a toy of Thought."

What is being referred to, then, are the feelings of an earlier state of the self, dominated by the "omnipotence of thoughts." The specific memory of his time at school involves feelings of loneliness and fear of the teacher, but more central is the feeling of the connection with home, now lost, but which the mere intensity of wishing should restore. Here the importance of the anticipatory dimension of emotion is apparent, since Coleridge explicitly contrasts his earlier childhood—where the music of the church bells filled him with "a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear / Most like articulate sounds of things to come!"—with the superstitious anticipation now that wishing will bring about the thing wished for. The adult Coleridge writing the poem is still in some obscure way a victim of that self-confuting wish. He is fixed within the state

that it caused, instead of being caught up in the process of reciprocal and developing oneness with nature that he then invokes for Hartley.

In this respect the poem can be seen as a rehearsal of the contrast between the two types of emotion: the imprisoning feelings of the state, compared with the proper condition of the self free to "wander like a breeze." Even in the latter case, however, I sense that Coleridge is in difficulty projecting the feelings of process onto the scenes he envisages. Having told us how he himself missed those whom he loved at school, the "Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved," it is odd that Hartley is envisaged wandering through nature alone. There is also a sense in which the images of nature we are offered, the lakes, mountains, and clouds, are oddly static, although the reflections of the mountains in the clouds is perhaps intended to symbolize the reciprocity of God's mind with that of the boy. The sense of process unlocking the state, as it were, begins to make itself felt in the last few lines of the poem, where what is frozen begins to smoke in the sun, and single drops fall from the icicles. As has often been noticed, in the conversation poems Coleridge makes acts of bestowal on others,³ while his own condition, as in "Frost at Midnight," remains relatively unchanged. Another way of saying this is that the predominant emotion remains that of stasis.³

But if the self lives and knows itself primarily in its emotions, in what sense can the self be said to be limited (as this poem seems to suggest) to a state? If emotion is not only self-referential, but also anticipatory, to refer to the self as a state is a contradiction in terms: it is to ascribe a stasis to something that is necessarily dynamic, in process. Here the complicity of the self is apparent once more. Although what is anticipated in the "wild reliques of . . . childish Thought" is rejected in the poem, by amusement and scorn, yet the familiar surroundings of the cottage and its environs have become a source of anxiety, a lower-key version of the nightmare terror. The situation can perhaps be dramatized in this way: what is being both recognized yet rejected is that condition of the self contingent on his childish omnipotence of thoughts having really brought about what it wished for. What the poem half conceals is that, perhaps, the "wild reliques" have already changed the self. If so, the child was in some way responsible for accomplishing his own exile to school, implicated in causing his own suffering. There was an early wish to be independent, to reject the parents (even to cause the death of his father): that wish has resulted in this classroom with its teacher that terrifies him, and where he now unwishes what he had wished. Confined to this stasis, confuted by his own wishes, the emotion of the state connotes a wrongdoing. Since his condition is a punishment, his wishes must have been evil. The powers of thought which he raised up threaten some limitless and nameless retribution.⁴

Informed in particular by his dreams, it seems that Coleridge obscurely knew this. The powers themselves are a childish fantasy, a relique; it is what the emotion conveys

about the fate of the self that perplexed and eventually horrified Coleridge (cf. *N.i.2078*). The emotion hints at a process located within the self, anchored in the past, a type of hidden allegory of his being which constantly threatens to overcome that symbolic reading of emotion which is figured in the image of Hartley's interaction with nature. But the emotion remains at a remove, sensed through a type of repulsion, a fear without a name. In this light, the frequent dreams and nightmares recorded in the notebooks, with their repeated references to childhood, can be seen as attempts on the part of his system to work out the origins and implications of this nameless fear and guilt, a fruitless attempt to gain control over it.

In "Frost at Midnight," then, we glimpse another aspect of the emotion that underlies the poem. While the anticipatory power of the fear remains, its implications for the self are, literally, unthinkable. Thus it makes sense to speak of the displacement of emotion also in this sense, as the inability to accept what its anticipatory power represents. The whole of "Frost at Midnight" is an act of displacement, a turning away from the emotion of the self which is the central and motivating cause of the poem. In summary, there are two major emotions in the poem: the emotion that displaces the self towards the ideal, and the emotion that, being a source of anxiety, is itself displaced, because it threatens to turn (because it has already once turned) that oneness of thought and world into something uncanny and destructive.

Preceding the passage on imagination in Chapter 4, Coleridge offered a footnote on "bulls," a topic that much interested him. A bull is a statement containing a particular kind of contradiction. As Coleridge explained, we bring together "two incompatible thoughts, with the *sensation* but without the *sense*, of their connection" (*BL.i.72*). In other words, we have the feeling of connection without the thought.

This phenomenon describes in summary the aspect of "Frost at Midnight" that I have tried to explain, where Coleridge gives a feeling for, but cannot explain, his past. The bull which Coleridge then supplies in the footnote is apposite: it shows how his predicament must have felt to him: "I was a fine child, but they changed me."

NOTES

¹Paul Magnuson notes that Coleridge used the same lines from *Remorse* to describe his opium addiction, another form of stasis, in a letter of 1814 (*CL*, III, 496). *Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry* (1974), p. 89.

²Jean Pierre Mileur argues that the acts of bestowal of the conversation poems are primarily a defence of the self; the "other," in each of the poems, is silent or absent. *Vision and Revision: Coleridge's Art of Immanence* (1982), p. 45.

³Magnuson points to the calm with which the conversation poems open: "But it is not a calm of plenitude, a quiet repose when the heart listens. The calm is more often a threatening stasis, something to be overcome by an act of faith and imagination" (*Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry*, p. 37). Magnuson also points out the revealing phrase, "dead calm," originally in "Frost at Midnight" at line 45.

⁴The stasis of such emotion is something that itself endures, according to Magnuson: "By forgetting, sorrow may be repressed, but fear and guilt cannot be forgotten and cannot be transformed into other emotions. They exist merely to return unmodified. . . ." *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue* (1988), pp. 43-44. But I am arguing that they anticipate a worse emotion, some ultimate terror or despair (and perhaps an eternity of suffering: cf. *N.i.1421*, *N.ii.3078*).

The *Lyrical Ballads* Ode: "Dialogized Heteroglossia"

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"We deem that the volumes offered to you are to a certain degree *one work*, in kind *tho' not in degree*, as an Ode is one work." So wrote Coleridge to Joseph Cottle in May, 1798, concerning the plans for *Lyrical Ballads*, adding that the intention of both Coleridge and Wordsworth was "that our different poems are as stanzas, good relatively rather than absolutely" (*CL* 1: 412). This a curious claim, certainly, to be made for a collection of poems by two such different poets—that their individual poems could neither be appreciated nor

understood fully by themselves but only in their relationship within the whole collection.

The claim has certainly not carried much weight in the years since 1798. Neither professors nor students nor book publishers have treated "The Ancient Mariner" or "We Are Seven" as if they were pieces of a larger whole and with qualities and meanings only to be discerned in that larger context. And with good reason, too, for whatever claims Cole-