

Anders Kristian Strand
(University of Bergen)

“And what if I enwreathed my own?” Literary Tourism as Transplantation in Wordsworth’s Yarrow Poems

Abstract

This article, focusing on William Wordsworth’s poems about the Scottish river Yarrow, investigates the English poet’s creative refashioning of the Scottish broadsheet balladry tradition. It throws light on Wordsworth’s literary tourism and demonstrates how his Yarrow poems display a complex interplay between *seeing* a site, *reading* literary texts about it, and *writing* new significance onto it. The article thus argues that Wordsworth frames his literary tourism as an “enwreathing”, where the wreath is a metaphor of his creative re-organization and re-collection of elements derived from literary tradition and his own experiences as a tourist. Not only elucidating the relatively early poems Wordsworth wrote about this river, I also discuss the late and rarely analyzed poem “Musings near Aquapendente, April 1837”, showing how, by means of his poetics of imagination and memory, motifs from the Scottish ballads are grafted on (or “transplanted” to) a classical landscape, thereby creating “another Yarrow” in Italy.

Keywords

Wordsworth’ Yarrow poems, river poetry, literary tourism, imagination, Romantic temporality

One of the most interesting rivers in Wordsworth’s poetry is the Scottish river Yarrow in the Borders territory. Its name appears in five longer poems written over a span of more than 30 years beginning with “Yarrow Unvisited” from 1804 all the way to the poem opening his collection *Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837* “Musings near Aquapendente, April 1837”. In between these two come “Yarrow Visited. September 1814”, “Yarrow Revisited” from 1831, and “Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg” (1835). Demonstrating a playful relationship with place, notably the locality of the Yarrow, these poems add new layers to – or put into question – what Kate Rigby has called Wordsworth’s “romantic topophilia”¹, his cult-like fascination for specific places which he frames as crucial to his poetic creativity. Without doubt these rather diverse

1 Kate Rigby, “The Rediscovery of (the other) Place in European Romanticism”, *European Romantic Review* vol. 12:2 (2001), 168.

poems all manifest Wordsworth's love of the Borders region, as well as his abiding interest in the tradition of Scottish balladry, but they also display an ironic distance to this tradition, and the Yarrow locality in particular. This irony expresses itself not only in the occasional indifference to the river setting that is voiced in these texts, but also in the scarcity of sustained description typical of the romantic river poem, a feature which one finds in abundance elsewhere in Wordsworth's many poems dealing with rivers (e.g. the Duddon-cycle or various sonnets on sources, streams and waterfalls).² Also notable about these poems is that the Yarrow to Wordsworth is an *iterative* image with an inherent meaningfulness that can be projected on or supplemented to other sites and contexts. I employ the term iterative in the double sense of 1) repetition (from Latin *iterare*: to do again): the image that Wordsworth has of the Yarrow is of something that he can, as he writes, bring with him "where'er I go" ("Yarrow Visited") and project on whatever he wishes; 2) travelling (from Latin: *iter*) since these poems inscribe themselves into a context of voyages and tourism.

Research on these poems is scarce and mostly focuses on their biographical background or the poet's well-known obsession with textual revisions, what Ronald Schleifer calls their "poetics of repetition".³ No attention, however, has been given to Wordsworth's depictions of *literary tourism*, a phenomenon burgeoning at the turn of the century when people increasingly were captivated by the new opportunities for travel afforded by the development of better infrastructure and what eventually became a pan-European leisure network.⁴ Travelling "in the footsteps of" famous authors now became increasingly popular,⁵ a vogue that ultimately became a mainstay of the tourist industry with its associ-

2 See Frederic S. Colwell, *Rivermen. A Romantic Iconography of the River and the Source* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989).

3 Ronald Schleifer, "Wordsworth's Yarrow and the Poetics of Repetition", *Modern Language Quarterly* vol. 38 no 3 (1977). Wordsworth is known for his tendency to revise his earlier poems; see Jonathan Wordsworth, "Revision as Making: *The Prelude* and its Peers" in *Romantic Revisions* ed. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18–43. On the biographical context, see Stephen Gill, "'The Braes of Yarrow': Poetic Context and Personal Memory in Wordsworth's 'Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of James Hogg'", *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol. 16, no.3 (1985): 120–125; Gill: "Wordsworth, Scott, and Musings near Aquapendente", *The Centennial Review* (1992), 221–230; Jill Rubinstein: "Wordsworth and 'Localised Romance': Wordsworth's Scottish Poems", *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* vol. 16, no.4 (1976), 579–590.

4 Cf. Hasso Spode, "Homogenisierung und Differenzierung. Zur Ambivalenz touristischer Chronotopie-Konstruktion", in *Kultur all inclusive* ed. B. Schnepel et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 94–114.

5 See Aaron Santesso, "The Birth of the Birthplace: Bread Street and Literary Tourism before Stratford", *ELH*, vol. 71, no 2 (2004), 377–403; Barbara Schaff, "'In the Footsteps of...' The Semiotics of Literary Tourism", *KulturPoetik*, vol. 11,2 (2011), 166–180, or Nicola Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic and Victorian Britain* (London, Palgrave, 2006)

ation of authors with specific places, be it “Shakespeare country”, “Hardy’s Wessex”, “Brontë country”, “Scott-land” or, in the lifetime of the poet, “Wordsworth’s Lake District”.⁶ The concerns and affective register of Wordsworth’s poetry generally come very close to values and perspectives of modern tourism (be it the cult of heritage, the quest for authenticity, and the celebration of pristine nature). In fact, Wordsworth not only presented himself as a tourist in many of his poems;⁷ he also vastly contributed to the booming Lake District tourism in the Victorian age by writing a travel guide.⁸ However, his Yarrow poems are not simply recording the poet’s experiences during travelling, but instead shows a complex interplay between *seeing* a site, *reading* some earlier literary texts about it, and *writing* new significance onto it. Exploiting the ambivalence of Yarrow as both the name of the locality of the river⁹ and as the name of a flower, Wordsworth, as we will see, frames his poetic tourism as an “enwreathing” (3, 63), where the wreath is a metaphor of his creative reorganization and recollection of elements derived from literary tradition.

This article aims to elucidate some of the key dimensions of Wordsworth’s creative tourism, with particular emphasis on the first and the last of his Yarrow poems. Writing about the Yarrow, Wordsworth is not only aware of, but exploits the fact that he travels in the shadows of a host of Borders ballads,¹⁰ and not least those published by the “Great Minstrel of the Border” (3, 469) himself, namely Walter Scott, in his anthology of broadside ballads *Minstrelsy of the Scottish*

6 As Ian Ousby notes, by the 1840s, the Lake District tourism was already in full swing, with Wordsworth apparently receiving 500 visitors a year at Rydal Mount (Ousby, *The Englishman’s England*, 180). Even if Wordsworth himself was somewhat skeptical (see for instance his poem “The Brothers” from 1804), his own aesthetics certainly largely contributed to the phenomenon creating what John Urry calls the “Lake-District place-myth”. Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995), 203. On Wordsworth’s conflicted stance on tourism generally, see John Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia”, *October*, vol. 57 (1991) 123–151, particularly pp. 147–150.

7 See *Descriptive Sketches*, the famous 6th book of *The Prelude*, or *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* from 1822, *Poems Composed or Suggested During a Tour, in the Summer of 1833*, or *Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837*.

8 In 1810 Wordsworth published a tourist manual called *Guide to the Lakes* (he republished it later in extended form), a topographical survey over the places in Lake District. On this, see Saeko Yoshikawa, *William Wordsworth and the Invention of Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2014).

9 The connection between rivers and modern tourism might go back to John Denham’s depictions of the Thames in the topographical poem *Cooper’s Hill* (1642), where the Thames is said to “visit the world” and in his “flying towers” (i. e. “tours”) brings several treasures back to England. According to Aaron Santesso, Denham’s poem introduced the concept of “touring” (Santesso, “The Birth of the Birthplace”, 379).

10 See the anonymous “Leader-Haughs and Yarrow”; William Hamilton of Bangour: “The Braes of Yarrow” (1725); John Logan: “The Braes of Yarrow” (1781); Walter Scott’s “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” and his famous *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* whose setting is at Newark Castle lying along the stream.

Border (1802–1803). Himself of Borders descent, Scott claimed these ballads were expressions of undistorted authenticity;¹¹ his Yarrow was a *lieu de mémoire* of untainted proper Scottishness.¹² A crucial assumption underlying the popularity of Scott’s collection, and which coincided with the contemporary romantic interest in popular and oral poetry, went back to Herder’s distinction between learned and bookish art poetry (“Kunstpoesie”) and oral and wild nature poetry (“Naturpoesie”): The ballads were seen as the naïve voice embodied in nature, a “natura loquitur” (nature speaks) authentically expressed through the people (“das Volk”) shaped and nurtured by its local soil. In Wordsworth’s Yarrow poems, the case is different. With a tourist’s non-native view of the river Wordsworth reclaims tourism as not merely passive consumption of the balladic tradition, but its creative estrangement. He presents himself as a “poet-tourist”¹³ who not only takes pleasure in seeing and reading the site, but who appropriates and reshapes it within his own poetic idiom. Approaching the Yarrow through his poetics of imagination and memory, Wordsworth in these poems unties what he calls his inner “vision”¹⁴ of the river from its local reality, thus enabling an operation where the image of the river is transplanted onto new surroundings. This alteration of the Yarrow myth involves the procedure I refer to as taking Yarrow out of Yarrow, e. g., repeatedly creating “where’er I go” (3, 64) “another Yarrow” (1,667): transplanting, reshaping, proliferating, disseminating, and *re-wreathing* the literary tradition. Wordsworth’s touristic poetics rely on an iterative semiotics.

Re-wreathing the Balladic Tradition

In 1814 Wordsworth first visited the river Yarrow in the company of the Scottish writer James Hogg, himself hailing from the nearby Ettrick region. Wordsworth’s experience seems at first to have been a disappointment. In the poem he wrote to

11 About the ballads Scott claimed: “A real old Scottish song is a cairn gorm, . . . a precious relic of old times, that bears the national character stamped on it—like a cameo, that shows what the national visage was in former days, before the breed was crossed” (in letter to Washington Irving, 1817, quoted in “The Ballad and History: The Case for Scott”, *Folklore*, vol. 89, no.2 (1978) 229.)

12 A *lieu de mémoire* is a place or object that “by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (Pierre Nora: “From Lieux de mémoire to Realms of Memory”, Preface to *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, p. xvii.

13 This is my adaptation of Nicola Watson’s term “reader-tourist” (Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, 2006).

14 In the following I use the following edition of Wordsworth’s poems: *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, vol. 1–3, Jared Curtis (The Cornell Wordsworth series), reprinted as HEB: Humanities Ebooks, 2011–2012. I quote from volume I and volume III. Quotes are indicated as volume number and page number. Here: 1, 667.

memorialize the event, “Yarrow Visited, September 1814”, he starts with some lines emphasizing how lacklustre and insignificant he found the riverscape. Here is the first stanza:

And is this – Yarrow? – *This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness.

(“Yarrow Visited”, 3, 62)

Compared to his “waking dream” about and “image” of the riverscape, the actual river appears devoid of meaning: the river flows more beautifully in imagination than in reality. As the twelve stanzas of the poem unfold, the poet, not satisfied with having such a dull sight before his eyes, tries to transform the insignificance of the empirical site back into a balladic context or discourse, as indicated by the reference to the “Minstrel's harp”, a phrase that clearly points to Walter Scott. In fact, this attempt to enhance experience by means of literature is a key tenet of literary tourism. Already Joseph Addison had in his preface to *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* noted: “I must confess it was not one of the least entertainments that I met with in Travelling, to examine these several Descriptions, as it were, upon the Spot, and to compare the Natural Face of the Country with the Landscape that the Poets have given us of it”¹⁵. Addison's wish to see a place through the lens of literature informed later literary tourism. Nicola Watson speaks of the “reader-tourists” of the 18th and 19th century who, eager to visit places they had read about in poetry or fiction, wanted to re-live its excitement.¹⁶ As Watson elucidates, “To go to a place by the light of a book is at once to declare the place inadequately meaningful without the literary signification provided by the book, and to declare the book inadequate without this specific, anxiously located referent or paratext.”¹⁷ Literary tourism operates on the assumption that the book will give value to the landscape, while the landscape provides deeper layers of meaning to the book.

15 Addison, London: Tonson, 1718, unpaginated.

16 The perhaps most famous example being Alfred Lord Tennyson who, when once visiting Lyme Regis, asked his guide about one of the characters in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: “Show me the spot where Louisa Musgrove ‘fell down and was taken up lifeless’”. Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England. Taste, Travel and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 17.

17 Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, 7. See also Barbara Schaff who notes that “tourism is a semiotic system that writes significance onto the landscape”, Schaff, “In the Footsteps”, 179.

Wordsworth's opening stanza makes a somewhat ironic allusion to this touristic stratagem. The apostrophe of the "Minstrel's harp" signals that from here on the riverscape will be viewed through the lens of the balladic discourse. This is manifested when some stanzas later the speaker detects along the river a "Ruin hoary! // (...) Renowned in Border story" (3, 63), an image unmistakably denoting the setting for Scott's famous *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. In the same vein, the speaker at one point asks about the location of the "the famous Flower / Of Yarrow Vale" (3, 62), an allusion to the rose featuring in Scott's ballad "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow" (published in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*) about an unhappy love triangle which had ended with one of the lovers killed and refigured as a rose growing on the braes of the river¹⁸. In stanza 5 the poem dwells on the effects of this ballad or "Lay", with Wordsworth's enthusiastic embracement of the river as a "witness" to their love:

Delicious is the Lay that sings
 The haunts of happy Lovers,
 The path that leads them to the grove,
 The leafy grove that covers:
 And Pity sanctifies the Verse
 That paints, by strength of sorrow,
 The unconquerable strength of love;
 Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

("Yarrow Visited", 3, 63)

In accordance with the balladic conception of "natura loquitur", the river is here presented as a "witness" keeping intact to posterity the content of the balladic love story. With the repetition of the word "grove" and the allusions inherent in the phrase "all paths lead to",¹⁹ Wordsworth clearly wants us to hear "grave". The verses demonstrate one of the most salient dimensions in Wordsworth's Yarrow poems, the interconnectedness of sadness and happiness, manifested in the repeated rhyming of "Yarrow" with "sorrow". Indeed, the old ballads about Yarrow are rather sad stories – we will soon see more examples of this – but for the speaker the sorrow is made beautiful and soothing through "delicious" verse.²⁰ The sorrow associated with the river is thus not repulsive to him, but rather attractive. As he puts it later in the poem, the thought of Yarrow will "cheer

18 "A fairer rose did never bloom / Than now lies cropped on Yarrow". Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol 3 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1849), 150. The same legend was thematized in the ballads by Logan and Hamilton.

19 For instance, Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25.

20 See Philippe Ariès who speaks of "romantic death", "death which is admirable in its beauty" in *Western Attitudes towards Death from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1974), 58.

my mind in sorrow" (3, 64), whereby he suggests that through the medium of verse something initially sad is changed into something positive.

The balladic arch topic of love is pursued in what is arguably the key stanza of the poem, namely the 9th. This is when Wordsworth surprisingly refers to himself and bringing up his own poetic craftsmanship:

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

("Yarrow Visited", 1, 63f)

According to Peter J. Manning, Wordsworth in his Yarrow poems "takes up Scott's manner and absorbs echoes of the form and diction of the ballad into his own intricate stanza and gravely reflective manner"²¹. Indeed, there is much that appears in these poems that recall or evoke the ballad tradition, be it the vocabulary, the verses and rhyme, or the topics. But in this stanza Wordsworth also throws a sudden and rather surprising view on himself, unexpectedly asking: "And what if I enwreathed my own?" Quite remarkably, the speaker considers that he could make another wreath, now for himself and *not* for this creature that he calls his "True-Love". This is an enigmatic phrase, since the poem elsewhere conspicuously lacks any reference to any companion or mistress whatsoever. Who is this "True-love" for whom he wants to create a "crest of blooming heather"? Is it a reminder of the love triangle of the Yarrow legend, such as it is found in Scott's ballad? Could "True-love" be the name for the balladic tradition itself? What does the poet-speaker mean by "I enwreathed my own"?

For a clarification of what "True-love" is, we must turn to Wordsworth's first poem on the river, namely "Yarrow Unvisited" from 1804. A lively and witty poem, it was written after a tour he and his sister Dorothy had made to Scotland where they had called upon Walter Scott and visited some of the Border region with him. One place, however, they had not seen, namely Yarrow, and the poem, in eight stanzas, stages a wry reflection of that missed occasion. A crucial phrase in it is "winsome marrow", which can refer to both an attractive and cheerful companion and indeed the bone marrow. This phrase, as Wordsworth explains in a note inserted on the top of the poem, is taken from another of the ballads dealing with the Yarrow, William Hamilton of Bangour's rather morbid "The Braes of Yarrow"

21 Peter J. Manning, "Cleansing the Images: Wordsworth, Rome, and the Rise of Historicism", in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 33, no. 2 (1991), 283.

(1725), which treats the same fatal love as Scott’s “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow”. Wordsworth’s paratextual note reads: “See the various Poems the scene of which is led upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular the exquisite ballad of Hamilton beginning ‘Busk ye, [Make yourself ready, my translation], busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride, / busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow!’” (1, 665). With this note, Wordsworth places his poem into the line of the Scottish ballad heritage, asking his reader to keep a keen eye on previous ballads on the Yarrow, whereby he, of course, creates a playful intertextual frame for his own poem. His poem stages a dialogue between two travellers, the main speaker and his “winsome marrow”, where the latter wants to visit the Yarrow: “Then said my ‘winsome marrow’, / Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside, / And see the Braes of Yarrow.” (1, 665) This is rejected by the main speaker who rather prefers travelling “downwards with the Tweed”: “But we will downward with the Tweed, / Nor turn aside to Yarrow.” (1, 666) This conflict between going to see the Yarrow and travelling down the Tweed dominates the whole of the poem and is an allusion to Hamilton’s ballad where the suitor of the “winsome marrow” (and murderer of her lover) had urged her to forget about Yarrow, the site of her earlier amorous encounters, and to stay with him at the Tweed: “Busk ye, and lue [love, my translation] me on the banks of Tweed / And think nae mair [no more, my translation] on the Braes of Yarrow!”²²

In Wordsworth’s poem, this conflict comes to its climax in the fourth stanza when the main speaker exhorts his companion, the “winsome marrow”, to forget about Yarrow:

‘What’s Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.’
– Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

(“Yarrow Unvisited”, 1, 666)

This stanza is separated into two parts: The first dealing with the main speaker’s repudiation of the Yarrow, the second with the sorrowful reaction of his companion. Looking closer, we find a play between “worthy” and “words”, an inscription hinting at the poet’s identity that is sometimes found in Wordsworth’s poetry. Moreover, in the last line the personal pronoun “I” turns up for the first time in the poem. In fact, this claim is promoted by Ronald Schleifer who argues that these verses point to what he calls a moment of “recognition” where the poet

22 William Hamilton of Bangour, *The Poems and Songs* (Edinburgh: Stevenson, 1850), 10.

suddenly becomes aware of himself: “The poet recollects his own words after they have been spoken (...) His own speech becomes the object of his interest, and, precipitated into self-consciousness by the look of his ‘True-love’, he recognizes within his act of speech – he remembers – that he is a poet.”²³

With this in mind, we can better identify the poem's protagonists: The main speaker is Wordsworth, while the “winsome marrow” or “True-love” is a quotation from the balladic tradition. And not only is she a quotation, but she might even be called the Yarrow's *genius loci*, the spirit of the place, which urges the main speaker to come with it. The rhetoric of the “genius loci” according to which a specific landscape is given a voice and a face, is a recurrent element in Wordsworth's nature poetry, where, as Geoffrey Hartman notes, it often coincides with an epitaphic and elegiac function, namely as a voice from the past admonishing the poet to be specifically attentive.²⁴ With the “winsome marrow” in this poem something similar is achieved: As a quotation from it as well as rhyming with it (“marrow”/“Yarrow”), she is herself a part of the body, indeed the marrow of the balladic arch legend, a *pars pro toto* of that local tradition, what Wordsworth calls “localized Romance” (3, 471). By her speech and looks of “sorrow”, Wordsworth is reminded of the melancholy attractiveness of the Yarrow tradition that she embodies and personifies, which he now for the first time really acknowledges or sees. As Schleifer noted, this can be deemed a moment of “recognition” where the poet – Wordsworth, as suggested by the “worth”/“words” signature – suddenly becomes aware of his own discursive *estrangement* of that balladic discourse.

While Wordsworth in his poem uses phrases and images from the balladic tradition, he also shows no interest in tying these words to any experiences with the real site. The speaker's companion, then, “True-love” or “localized Romance”, a personification of Yarrow's balladic lore, finds this “strange”. As an emblem of tourism as romance,²⁵ she has grown accustomed to a different sort of tourists, the ones who comes to the locality to re-experience the balladic narrative *in situ*. In probing into Wordsworth's words and facial expression, she sadly realizes that he has an altogether different relationship with the lore of which she is the guardian spirit (“And looked me in the face, to think / I thus could speak of

23 Schleifer, “Wordsworth Yarrow”, 351.

24 Geoffrey H. Hartman, “Inscriptions and Romantic Nature Poetry”, in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1987, pp. 31–46. These *genii loci* function in much the same way as the “leech-gatherer” in the poem “Resolution and Independence”, a man accidentally meeting the poet-speaker on the moors and whose strange presence and discourse makes him ponder in more seriousness his own life and its relationship to the past.

25 On tourism as a modern form of romance (but with no reference to Wordsworth's Yarrow poems), see Paul Westover: “William Godwin, Literary Tourism, and Necromantism”, *Studies in Romanticism*, vol.48, no.2 (2009), 299–319.

Yarrow”). To her, Wordsworth’s reuse of balladic phrases does not match his reluctance to anchor them in an actual visiting of the place, which to her suggests an irreverence for the authenticity and uniqueness typical of the Scottish ballad tradition.

The question concerning the Yarrow regarding both its touristic and epistemological status is pondered further in the following stanzas. In stanza seven, one of the most crucial in Wordsworth’s Yarrow poems altogether, the poet declares that Yarrow is best appreciated “unseen”:

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own:
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We’ll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we’re there, although ’tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

(“Yarrow Unvisited”, 1, 667)

Again, we see Wordsworth privileging his imagination over reality. In stark opposition to the “winsome marrow”, the personification of “localized Romance”, who in the stanza above had needed to “look him in the face” to check the speaker’s words, Wordsworth holds that seeing the real Yarrow would be not only a disappointment, but even would risk “undoing” the inner “vision” and the “treasured dreams”. These “dreams” and “vision” are derived from the balladic tradition, interiorized narratives and sensations not actually experienced, but drawn from books, and – as Wordsworth insists – to be treasured and kept apart from any actual sighting. By claiming that going to Yarrow would risk “undoing” them, Wordsworth assumes in complete rejection of the common notion of literary tourism that external reality would have a destructive rather than beneficial impact on his estimation of the Yarrow myth.

As we saw, when Wordsworth wrote “Yarrow Visited” after his first visit to the river in 1814, his primary impression was of the sight’s dullness (“O that some Minstrel’s harp were near!”), and it was only after conjuring his own inner images that he was able to overcome his disappointment. His poem thus subscribes to the kind of tourism mentioned by Judith Adler in her history of sightseeing (while referring to William Beckford): “not all late Eighteenth century styles of travel centering on sightseeing involved literal vision of the scenes or objects which lay before the traveller. Early romantics often ‘closed their eyes’ to immediate appearances in order to better see some other reality.”²⁶ This points to a common topic in Wordsworth’s poetics generally. For him, imagination not only takes

26 Judith Adler, “Origins of Sightseeing”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol.16 (1989), 23f.

priority over reality, but is independent of the immediate external world, or as Hillis Miller writes, “rarely has sovereignty of the mind over things been more extravagantly asserted than by Wordsworth”.²⁷ For Wordsworth, exterior reality is often felt as disappointing, and provokes in him the wish, as Hartman notes concerning his autobiography *The Prelude*, to poetically project a “compensatory vision” which confirms the mind’s freedom over reality.²⁸ That freedom is realized by what Wordsworth sees as the two dominant faculties of the poetic mind: Imagination and fancy. In explaining how poems are made, Wordsworth states in the “Preface” to his *Poems* from 1815, that “the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction.”²⁹ This means that the imagination disposes of a host of topics and images that, transformed and regrouped (“modified”), can then be projected (“conferred”) on new contexts and constellations. “Imagination”, according to Wordsworth both “shapes and creates”.³⁰ Wordsworth in the same “Preface” also speaks of fancy, equally “creative”, and which like imagination shows the mind’s ability to “aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine”. Of particular importance is how fancy consists in “calling up, connecting, or associating, at pleasure, internal images so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects”.³¹ According to the poet, fancy is more capricious than imagination, primarily offering emotional colour through effects that are “surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic”.³²

In “Yarrow Visited” both imagination and fancy are at work. As we saw, Wordsworth projects onto the river the visions of his mind, impressing his dreams on reality. This re-making, “conferring, abstracting and modifying”, “creative” operation is what he refers to when he speaks of “enwreathing” (“what if I enwreathed my own?”), an operation implying the interweaving into new poetic constellations of the images that he has garnered from his reading. As we saw, he wanted to make a “crest” to his “True-love”, a kind of votive gift to the actual site. But for Wordsworth this is an operation less significant than that of making a

27 J. Hillis Miller, “Wordsworth” in *The Linguistic Moment, From Wordsworth to Stevens* (Princeton University Press, Princeton 1985), 72.

28 Geoffrey Hartman, “A Poet’s Progress: Wordsworth and the *Via Naturaliter Negativa*”, in *The Prelude* ed. Gill Abrams and J. Wordsworth (Norton and Company: London, 1979), 605.

29 Wordsworth, *The Poems*, vol. 2, ed John Hayden (London: Penguin, 1977), 915.

30 Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 915.

31 Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 920, 912, 918. Wordsworth’s use and distinction of the terms fancy and imagination is notoriously obscure. He was influenced by both W. Taylor and Coleridge. For the philosophical background, see McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 90–94. On the distinction in Coleridge, see Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford: OUP, 1971) 169f. In general, modern research on Wordsworth puts little emphasis on this distinction, primarily focusing on imagination.

32 Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 919.

wreath of and for “my own” (“enwreathing my own”). This wreath is made up of images that are not simply independent of reality, as were his “vision” and “treasured dreams” in “Yarrow Unvisited”. On the contrary, in “Yarrow Visited” his inner visions are stamped on the riverscape:

I see – but not by sight alone,
Lov’d Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of Fancy still survives –
Her sunshine plays upon thee!

(“Yarrow Visited”, 3, 64)

The stanza highlights both perception and creation: the poet sees the river, but also shapes it by means of his imagination and fancy, here metaphorized as a conferring of a “sunshine” onto the riverscape, that is the light emanating from his “treasured dreams” and “vision”. In this way Wordsworth forms an image of the river that connects inner vision with exterior sight. Rather than merely “treasuring” his dreams in a kind of archive, Wordsworth now actively exploits and connects them with the present. In the poem’s last verses, this operation of enhancing the river of the river is called a “genuine image”:

But that I know, where’er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me – to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

(“Yarrow Visited”, 3, 64)

The images are “genuine” because they are the products of his interweaving of inner and outer reality. Making a “wreath” out of Yarrow and taking it with him, Wordsworth thus both appropriates and refashions the inherited Yarrow. Unlike the “localized Romance”, epitomizing the site in its static quality, for Wordsworth Yarrow is an iterative phenomenon, something to be brought “where’er he goes”. He even claims that the image of Yarrow will sooth his “sorrow”, thus suggesting that it forms a charm or fetish. With “sorrow” the poet points to what Aleida Assmann calls Wordsworth’s acute awareness of the “wound of time”: time as the producer of loss and ruin.³³ Remembering Yarrow, or more precisely, the Yarrow which he had not only seen, but formed through his fancy and imagination, is to Wordsworth a means with which he hopes to withstand any feeling of despondency of time’s ravaging in the future. That the image will “dwell with me”, means that it becomes part of his memory: After having stamped his “vision” and “dreams” on the riverscape, a new entity, a “genuine image”, is produced and

33 Aleida Assmann, “Die Wunde der Zeit. Wordsworth und die romantische Erinnerung”, in *Memoria. Vergessen und Erinnern*, ed. Haverkamp und Lachmann (München: Fink, 1993), 259–382.

internalized. This process is in accordance with the poet's famous definition of poetry as "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings [...] recollected in tranquility".³⁴ This memorialization of the image of Yarrow is crucial to the later Yarrow poems, as we will see in the next subchapter.

As both "Yarrow Unvisited" and "Yarrow Visited" demonstrate, Wordsworth as a literary tourist relates to the Yarrow myth and its "localized Romance" in a rather independent manner. He does not let himself be dictated by his "True-love", even if, of course, he feels her attraction. In his ingenuous poetic reshaping of balladic tradition of the site, he in fact achieves something that Scott himself had called into question, its *preservation*. In the introduction to his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Scott had declared these old ballads to be illustrative of an authentic national character since lost, and had added that due to their precarious state "the causes of the preservation of these songs have entirely ceased or are gradually decaying".³⁵ What Scott had in mind was what he saw as the failure of modern-day inhabitants of the Scottish Borders to uphold the oral minstrelsy of their ancestors. However, in his Yarrow poems, Wordsworth seeks a different preservation of these ballads from the one intended by Scott. Rather than celebrating the local site, his poems shape it into an iterative "genuine image" to be brought with him "where'er I go". Yarrow is no longer tied merely to a Scottish habitat, but by route of Wordsworth's poetic tourism turned mobile and flexible. That what he calls the river's "genuine image" "dwells with me" might be taken to mean that the real authority over the river and how it is represented now resides in Wordsworth. This operation could be called Wordsworth's *re-wreathing* of the tradition.

Transplanting Yarrow in Italy: Wordsworth's re-wreathing of Scott

Wordsworth wrote three more poems dealing with the Yarrow: in 1831 "Yarrow Revisited", a poem memorializing his meeting with Scott in 1831 on his second and last trip to Yarrow. A vast bulk of the poem consists in praise of Scott, the "Great Minstrel of the Border" (3, 469).³⁶ Then, in 1835 Wordsworth wrote "Ex-tempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg" on hearing the news of the death of Hogg, a native of the Borders region and known as the "Ettrick Shep-

34 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in Mason, *Lyrical Ballads* (Edinburgh: Pearson 2007), 82.

35 Quoted in Charles G. Zug III, "The Ballad Editor as Antiquary: Scott and the Minstrelsy", *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, vol 13, No.1 (1976), 599.

36 Wordsworth added a note preceding the poem claiming that it is "a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott, and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance (...)" (3, 469).

herd". Finally, he returned, albeit briefly, to Yarrow in his long "Musings near Aquapendente", the first poem in his collection *Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837*.

All three poems represent a development of the Yarrow topic: It has now become a river that is first and foremost perceived, by the poet, through memory, or what in "Yarrow Revisited" he calls "memory's shadowy moonshine" (3, 472). A melancholy feeling of the passing of time becomes more prevalent, the poems more rooted in Wordsworth's own sense of ageing. Revisiting the river, Wordsworth is moreover propelled to not only pursue, but also challenge his earlier images of it. This is particularly evident in "Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg". In this poem Wordsworth mourns the death of several writers and friends in the years before: mentioned are Coleridge, Lamb, Crabbe, Felicia Hemans, but particularly central to him are the two writers who had accompanied him on his two visits to Yarrow: In 1814 with Hogg (†1835), and in 1831 together with Walter Scott (†1832).³⁷ Accordingly, the Yarrow is portrayed as an epitaphic river, a river giving testimony of his two dead friends, while also questioning his old notions of Yarrow as "localized Romance": "No more of old romantic sorrows, / For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid! / With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten, / And Ettrick mourns with her their poet dead." (3, 724). With his two Scottish friends dead, the era of the "romantic" and popular Yarrow-cult to which both Scott and Hogg had contributed, is decidedly over. The attractive and soothing "sorrow" associated with the Yarrow myth that he had cultivated in the earlier poems, is now replaced by "sharper grief".

An important tenet of "Extempore Effusion" is memory: the poet's recollections of shared experiences with his friends which prefigure their later death. An example is Wordsworth's memories of Hampstead in the company of the poet George Crabbe who had died in 1832:

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

("Extempore Effusion", 3, 724)

Within the epitaphic context of the poem, Wordsworth's memory of his stay in Hampstead with Crabbe provides significance to the present: the London they gazed on *then* has *now* through the workings of memory become a sign, a "black wreath", which tells of Crabbe's, Scott's, Hogg's, and the others' death. Wordsworth's memory not only relies on retrospection or the attempt to understand the past in a new way, but involves a prospective activity, a "forth-looking":

37 On context, see Stephen Gill: "'The Braes of Yarrow'. Poetic Context and personal Memory in Wordsworth's 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg'", *The Wordsworth Circle*, vol. 16, nr 3 (1985), 120–125.

He turns to the past to make that past say something about the miserable present. Memory itself is an “enwreathing” of images of the past which become reflective of the present. This might tell us something about Wordsworth's poetics of memory. As Aleida Assmann has noted, this poetics, essential to his autobiographical work *The Prelude*, relies on the poet's stinging awareness of loss and consciousness that his own past cannot be reproduced in its original vitality and freshness. For the romantic poet, the passing of time opens as “wound”, as Assmann notes. The memory is both the condition for acknowledging this wound and its compensation; i. e. a “supplement” which does not copy or reproduce the longed-for original experience, nor heals the wound of time, but might relieve it of some of its sting.³⁸ As a supplement (rather than a mechanical reproduction) of the original experience, the memory is to some extent independent of it, and can be freely deployed in new contexts. According to Assmann, this points to the cooperation between memory and the enwreathing operations of imagination: “Deshalb ist die romantische Erinnerung nicht Wiederherstellung, sondern ihr Ersatz. Sie ist suggestives Rankenwerk über einer manifest gewordenen Lücke, ein Supplement der poetischen Imagination” [Therefore, romantic memory is not restoration, but its replacement. It is a suggestive vine over a gap that has become manifest, a supplement to the poetic imagination.].³⁹

After “Extempore Effusion”, Wordsworth returned to Yarrow and its tradition one more time, in “Musings Near Aquapendente, April 1837”, a poem which more than any other shows the close connection of memory and imagination. This introductory poem is also longest and arguably the most important poem in *Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837*, a collection recording Wordsworth's experiences as a tourist in Italy in the early Summer of 1837. A long meandering meditation on Antiquity, Christianity, secularization, and the poet's own nearing death – and very rarely analyzed⁴⁰ – it brings us, as Martha Hale Shackford noted long ago, “the distinctive note of the philosophy of a man of sixty-seven”,⁴¹ who reflects on aging, the passing of time, and memory. The poem must also be seen in terms of literary tourism. At the time, travels to Italy had a long cultural history and could be antiquarian or “interrogative”,⁴² or, alternatively, hailed as a means

38 Assmann, “Die Wunde der Zeit”, 378.

39 Assmann, “Die Wunde der Zeit”, 374. For a more comprehensive study on Wordsworth's poetics of memory, as well as a comparison with Coleridge and de Quincey, see Lis Møller: *Erindringens Poetik. William Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge, Thomas de Quincey* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011). At the end of this book there is a succinct English summary.

40 The poem has been seen as one of the older Wordsworth's more unsatisfying poems, with Stephen Gill laconically remarking, “the poem has few admirers” (Gill, “The Braes”, 1992), 221.

41 Shackford, “Wordsworth's Italy”, in PMLA, vol. 38, no.2, (1923), 252.

42 For Santesso, this means where the tourist “was required to interrogate or engage with

for northerners to discover what was routinely described as the sensuality and vitalism of the south.⁴³ Both dimensions are certainly relevant to Wordsworth's poem, but its most important trait lies in another strand of 19th century tourism, the sentimental cult of the dead. This topic has recently been elucidated by Paul Westover who reveals how tourists at the time literally, in his words, "travelled to meet the dead", an enterprise anchored in a "distinctly romantic 'death of the author'".⁴⁴ This is indeed a characteristic of Wordsworth's poem. Speaking about his travels in Italy, he mentions the landscapes associated with Cicero (Tusculum), with the 17th century lyric poet and writer of epitaphs Chiabrera (Savona)⁴⁵, not to forget Tasso's burial place in Rome or Virgil's tomb in Naples, and as for Horace he hopes to travel to the Sabines to "meet the shade of Horace by the side / Of his Bandusian fount" (3, 531).⁴⁶ Nicola Watson speaks of the era's "reader-tourists" who, when visiting places associated with revered authors, hankered after the extra thrill of feeling the spirit, the "presence of an absence", hanging over it.⁴⁷ Inasmuch as "tourism represents a quest for an authentic domain of being",⁴⁸ these meetings with dead authors were assumed at the time to offer the very height of authenticity.

The most important dead author in "Musings Near Aquapendente" is Walter Scott. To Wordsworth, Scott was "the Great Minstrel of the Border", "the mighty Minstrel" (3, 723) and "the Wizard of the North" (3, 526), indeed the very embodiment of the literary Yarrow tradition. However, Wordsworth's portrayal of him is rather elegiac. He was aware that his friend, whom he had known since 1804, in the last years of his life had been dogged by ill health, economic ruin, and a certain decline of his creative powers, and when the two of them had met for the last time in 1831 at Yarrow, Wordsworth had been shocked by the physical deterioration of his friend.⁴⁹ During this meeting Scott had told him that his doc-

imaginary surroundings: one gazed upon the ruins of Rome so that one might imaginatively reconstruct it" (Santesso, "The Birth of the Birthplace," 2004), 380.

43 In the late 18th century, the voyage to Italy was often used if one needed to overcome life crises. See the "Nachwort" by Albert Meier und Heide Hollmer in: Johann Gottfried Herder, *Italienische Reise* (München: dtv, 1988), 625.

44 Paul Westover, *Necromanticism. Travelling to Meet the Dead 1750–1860* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

45 Wordsworth had some decades earlier translated some of Chiabrera's epitaphs in connection with his work on the epitaphic genre, his "Essay on Epitaphs", 1810.

46 Wordsworth's reference to Horace must be deemed extremely conventional in 19th century literary tourism. Antony Lentin writes that "So many Victorians made the pilgrimage to the site of the Sabine farm that neighbouring peasants supposed that Horace was an Englishman". See Lentin, *The Odes in English Verse* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1997). Wordsworth had himself translated the Bandusia ode in the 1790s.

47 Watson *The Literary Tourist*, 7.

48 Frow, "Tourism", 129.

49 In a letter he noted: "How sadly changed did I find him from the man I had seen so healthy,

tors had ordered him to go to Italy to regain his health, but as recorded by Wordsworth, Scott had shown little aptitude for this voyage, quoting “with sadness” two lines from Wordsworth’s own “Yarrow Unvisited”, “‘When I am there, although ’tis fair, / ’Twill be another Yarrow.’” In “Musings Near Aquapendente” Wordsworth returns to this meeting and Scott’s quotation, and he also adds a few but poignant lines about the misery experienced by Scott on his Italian tour. Scott had died on his trip back from Naples in 1832, and Wordsworth had been informed by one of his companions that it had not given the Border Minstrel any pleasure:

[...] Hope was for him no friend,
Knowledge no help; Imagination shaped
No promise.
[...]
He said, ‘When I am there, although ’tis fair,
’Twill be another Yarrow.’ Prophecy
More than fulfilled, as gay Campania’s shores
Soon witnessed [...]

(“Musings near Aquapendente”, 3, 526f)

To understand these verses, with their portrayal of the sad last days of Scott unable to find any stimulus in Italy, I think it is useful to point to the concept of nostalgia. The nostalgic, according to Susan Steward, seeks for a past characterized by immediacy and presence, but the problem is that “the past [he] seeks has never existed except as a narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack”⁵⁰ Scott’s “sadness” when quoting from Wordsworth’s poem falls into this category: Italy as “another Yarrow” cannot, to him, compete in beauty with his longing for the real Yarrow back home. For Scott, Italy as “another Yarrow” can therefore be nothing else than a disappointment, a distorting and false image or copy of something that in his sentiment is authentic. However, to Wordsworth this problem of nostalgia does not pose itself, because from the start he had not primarily conceived of Yarrow as an authentic presence but, as we saw in “Yarrow Unvisited”, as a *literary construction* made up of balladic stories or narratives. As we saw in the previous subchapter, the quoted lines had pointed to the young Wordsworth’s disillusion with reality and his privileging of the imagination over actual experience, his belief in the inner “vision” and “treasured dreams” of Yarrow rather than its empirical immediacy. Wordsworth now takes up this topic in his description of Scott’s Italian

gay, and hopeful, a few years before, when he said (...) ‘I mean to live till I am *eighty*, and shall write as long as I live’” (quoted in Rubinstein, “Wordsworth”, 580).

50 Susan Stewart, *On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 23.

sojourn. As he presents it, Scott had not been able to confer on the Italian scenery the inner “vision” of Yarrow in the way Wordsworth had done it in “Yarrow Visited”, where he had impressed on the river a “wreath” of his inner dreams. In Scott’s case, Wordsworth underscores, his nostalgia was caused by his lack of something that he deems crucial: imagination (“Imagination shaped no promise”). Thus, Scott’s attempt to engage with the Italian “bright land” had failed and instead he had merely seen its “splendours” as second-rate and insignificant in comparison to his own “native” Yarrow, a Yarrow to him inextricably tied to the Scottish balladic tradition and its native soil.

In “Musings near Aquapendente” Wordsworth contrasts Scott’s miserable voyage to his own joy in Italy. Contrary to Scott’s nostalgia, Wordsworth approaches Italy and Aquapendente, the name of a village and a waterfall in the Lazio region, through the means of his imagination and the supplementary activity of his memory. In this way, his relation to the Yarrow accords with his statement in “Yarrow Visited” of Yarrow as an iterative image and that “where’er I go, / Thy genuine image, Yarrow! / Will dwell with me”. For far from relating to Yarrow in a passive, literal, reverential, nostalgic manner, Wordsworth now *transplants* it, thereby creating Italy as “another Yarrow”, retaining the image of the old one as a “genuine image” as he confers it on another. This is not a Yarrow exclusively tied to the Scottish geographic space but a Yarrow that can be created potentially wherever he travels. Unlike Scott, the merely local and “romantic” poet, Wordsworth retains a more cosmopolitan⁵¹, universal, and synthetic gaze, because as an outsider he is not bound by the limited, embodied view of the provincial. This gain provided by a cosmopolitan perspective Wordsworth had already raised in “Yarrow Revisited”, where he had urged Scott to go to the “classical” soil of Italy to find renewed strength: “May classic Fancy, linking / With native Fancy her fresh aid, / Preserve thy heart from sinking!” (3, 470) However, as it turned out, for Scott this optimistic hope was not to come true, unlike for the tourist-poet Wordsworth. As is manifest in “Musings near Aquapendente”, he, not Scott, is able to “link”, as he writes, the native with the classical, Yarrow with Aquapendente.

In some metapoetic lines near the end of the poem, Wordsworth somewhat enigmatically draws a conclusion:

[...] not in vain, under these chestnut boughs
Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
To transports from the secondary founts

51 Already Coleridge had claimed in *The Friend* that cosmopolitanism is not averse to patriotism, but “at once the Nursling and the Nurse of patriotic affection”. Quoted in Esther Wohlgemut, *Romantic Cosmopolitanism* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 2f. A view with which Wordsworth here seems to contend.

Flowing of time and place, and paid to both
Due homage.

(“Musings near Aquapendente”, 3, 534)

I suggest that what he means by “secondary founts” is both the Italian setting of the poem, Aquapendente, and his memory of Yarrow, both of which he has “paid homage” to. This dual perspective is indeed characteristic of the poem, with Wordsworth frequently moving between images of Italy and Britain. For instance, the “broom in flower”, growing at the site from which Wordsworth contemplates the waterfall named Aquapendente, is a parallel to the homely Yarrow: “She [the broom] bids me to fly to greet / Her sisters, soon like her to be attired / With golden blossoms opening at the feet / Of my own Fairfield”. Having in his mind returned home and there being strengthened by a renewed vision of his homely soil – “The glad greeting given, / Given with a voice and by a look returned / Of old comradeship” (3, 525) – he can once more return to Italy and stamp his inner vision on the landscape of the Apennine. The poet “roves” (3, 527) in his imagination between the native and the Italian. These “transports” are founded on his creative memory: The term “secondary founts” might be a nod to John Locke, a philosopher clearly important to Wordsworth, who had spoken of recollections as “secondary perceptions”.⁵² With an intriguing change, Wordsworth calls his memories “founts”, thus emphasizing that the memory of Yarrow is a source that keeps on giving, indeed enabling him through the creative and imaginative activity to see the waterfall Aquapendente as “another Yarrow”.

A similar iterative conception can be detected in another metapoetical passage in the poem:

Chiefly let me cull with care
Those images of genial beauty, oft
Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
But by reflexion made so, which do best
And fittest serve to crown with fragrant wreaths
Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine.

(“Musings near Aquapendente”, 3, 530)

Wordsworth speaks of images that are made “pensive” by route of reflection, and I suggest that “pensiveness” – a term that also appears in crucial verses in the earlier Yarrow poems⁵³ – is exactly the word Wordsworth chooses as fitting his experiences as a literary tourist. The images are “pensive” not because the sites

52 Locke notes: “The mind has a power to revive perceptions, which it once had, with this additional perception annexed to them, that it has had them before”. See Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1975), 150ff.

53 In “Yarrow Visited” the speaker, looking at the river, is “not unwilling here to admit / A pensive recollection”.

offered to the Wordsworthian tourist are particularly semantically potent in themselves, but because they are, in his mind, linked to images produced by the reading of literary texts about those places, images that have become “treasured dreams” (“Yarrow Unvisited”). Summoned by his imagination – what he here calls “reflexion” – these images are ready to be reused, translated, and made into, as Wordsworth importantly notes, “fragrant wreaths”. This parallels my earlier claim about Wordsworth’s suggestion that his poetry consists of “wreaths” made of elements from the balladic tradition. Here the site is no longer Yarrow in Scotland but “another Yarrow” in Italy, namely Aquapendente, the name for both a village and a waterfall, and which not only points to “falling water”, but also to pensiveness as such, “pendente” being of the same root.

As we have seen, to Wordsworth’s variant of the literary tourist, travelling implies culling images and enwreathing. This means, firstly, that touristic travel involves the collecting of images and signs⁵⁴, and these are, by the poet-tourist, made into a wreath. Secondly, in the Yarrow-poems this wreathing takes on a further meaning in that the Yarrow is also a flower growing at the riverbank, which clearly is alluded to by the frequent references to plants and planting in these poems. Taking the Yarrow out of the Yarrow, then, implies not only imposing a book-derived river-image on other rivers and landscapes, it also is an action that extends to the flower yarrow. As I have argued, the conferring of the imagination of the image on another image corresponds to the activity of “enwreathing”. Thirdly, by the frequent use of this metaphor Wordsworth inscribes his Yarrow-poems into the popular notion of a poetry collection as a garland, which like the anthology or florilegium, both meaning flower-gathering, posits a metaphorical link between flowers and poems. Finally, this poetic “wreath” that “crowns” what Wordsworth calls “Life’s cup” also points to *fame*: the wreath given to great authors. In the same poem he speaks of Virgil’s “laurel-shaded tomb” (3, 532), evoking the plant that such wreaths are emblematically made up of. This, together with his description of his poem as a “shrine” (3, 534), underscores the meaning of the term “Life’s cup” as *urn*. The wreath thus becomes a figure of his posthumous fame. This, too, plays into the contemporary notions of tourism with (as Westover claims) its “distinctly Romantic ‘death of the author’” where “literary artists had to die in order to achieve ‘classic’ status”⁵⁵, as well as the general so-called “culture of posterity” favoured by the Romantics, i. e. their wish to survive their own death.⁵⁶ In fact, this was a crucial dimension for Wordsworth who, as

54 As John Urry noted, “The touristic gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs”. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage 2002), 2.

55 Westover “*Necromanticism*”, 92.

56 Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999). See also Hazlitt’s statement: “Fame is the recompense not of the living, but of the dead. The temple of fame stands upon the grave: the flame that burns upon its altars is kindled from the

Paul de Man noted, “is one of the few poets who can write proleptically about their own death and speak, as it were, from beyond their own graves”.⁵⁷ In the poem, one of the last he ever wrote, Wordsworth thus suggests that Aquapendente will be a site to be visited by future “reader-tourists” eager to meet with his own “shade”, like Horace’s in the Sabines. Wordsworth envisages himself as a future “genius loci” of Aquapendente.

Conclusion: “Another Yarrow”

In a letter to Allan Cunningham from 1825, Wordsworth speaks about his “indebtedness” to “the North” and the vast array of Borders literature. He mentions several important poets, including Walter Scott, and admits how much they have influenced him, but then he also adds: “Do not say that I ought to have been a Scotchman. Tear me not from the Country of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton”. The paragraph concludes with the following statement: “It is enough for me to be ranked in this catalogue (of writers of the Borders), and to know that I have touched the hearts of many by subjects suggested to me on Scottish ground.”⁵⁸

To “touch hearts”, but not necessarily to be himself native of the “ground”: for Wordsworth, as we have seen, literary tourism is a kind of both imaginative conferring of inner “visions” on new sites, and the transportation and transplantation of Yarrow out of its original habitat, thereby connecting the local with the universal. As I have tried to demonstrate, literary tourism is for Wordsworth a springboard for creativity, in which there arises a complex interplay between visiting sites, reading about them, and writing – or *rewreathing* them – anew. In Wordsworth’s Yarrow poems we see an English poet-tourist who with a perspective combining distance and identification, empathy and alienation, both engages with and subverts, both visits, revisits, rewrites, and rewreathes the balladic tradition.

ashes of great men”. Hazlitt, “On the living poets”, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt vol. 5*, ed. Hove (London: Dent, 1930–1934), 143–144.

57 Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality”, in *Blindness and Insight* (London: Routledge, 1983), 225.

58 Wordsworth, “*Letters of William Wordsworth*”, 230f.

