

ABSTRACT

CHERNIK, ARIA FORTUNE. "Travelling in the direction of mortality": Wandering the Topography of Wordsworthian Selfhood. (Under the direction of Dr. John Morillo)

One of the primary attributes of a wanderer, as one who is in constant motion, is that he or she is not beholden to traditional spatio-temporal constructs, and, thus, to traditional constructs of life and death. This thesis examines some of Wordsworth's seminal wanderer figures, such as the peripatetic speaker and his uncanny double, the Leech Gatherer, in "Resolution and Independence" and the transcendent Wanderer in the first book of *The Excursion*, "The Wanderer," and investigates the way in which movement functions as an integral component of the phenomenological and ontological construction of Wordsworthian selfhood. In "Resolution," wandering allows the speaker to traverse the natural boundaries of his environment and arrive at a place of liminality where he encounters his spectral other, the Leech Gatherer. Applying Freud's theory of the uncanny, I reveal how the Leech Gatherer ameliorates the severe anxiety within the speaker about dying in "despondency and madness" because of failed artistic accomplishment in a world of materiality, and thus never attaining literary fame, a kind of immortality after death. In contrast, while the Wanderer may certainly be characterized as an immortal figure, he achieves immortality not by negating the existence or permanence of death, but by perfecting a dynamic, relational selfhood that synthesizes the Kierkegaardian dialectic of selfhood. Under Kierkegaard's vision of selfhood, transcendence is achieved by constantly balancing the finite, temporal body and soul and the infinite, atemporal spirit.

Wordsworth's wandering figures are not limited to poetic characters, however. Wandering is also an intrinsic element of some rhetorical tropes. Employing Paul de Man's analysis of the rhetorical figure of prosopopoeia as a figure propelled by "the art of delicate transition," this thesis unearths the way in which Wordsworth, in "Essay upon Epitaphs," portrays epitaph as an archetypical example of prosopopoeic transition. Indeed, in "Essay," Wordsworth writes extensively about the epitaphic function of granting a voice, and thus life, back to the dead and explains how, shrouded within the context of prosopopoeia and epitaph, a sepulchral monument is not a final resting place, but merely a platform from which the dead speak and *through* which they journey back.

“Travelling in the direction of mortality”:
Wandering the Topography of Wordsworthian Selfhood

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[T]he best feelings of our nature [are] feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. — Wordsworth

The self is reflection . . . and imagination is reflection, it is the counterfeit presentment of the self, which is the possibility of the self. — Kierkegaard

[N]othingness is the constitutive structure of the existent. — Sartre

Introduction

As one of the first critics to analyze Wordsworth's poetry through the lens of phenomenological inquiry, Geoffrey Hartman emphasized the role of imagination in Wordsworth's writing as intricately tied to consciousness and the construction of the subject. Hartman also pondered the relationship in Wordsworth's poetry between imagination, reflection, writing, and time, or as Hartman himself describes this inquiry, he examined "the *temporalization* of insight as [Wordsworth] moves from poem to poem or year to year" (xii). Summarizing his critical endeavors in the seminal *Wordsworth's Poetry*, Hartman explains, "What I did, basically, was to describe Wordsworth's 'consciousness of consciousness'" (xii). Noting the significance of Hartman's contribution of placing phenomenology and particularly temporality within the discourse of Wordsworth and romantic studies, in "Rhetoric and the Existential: Romantic Studies

and the Question of the Subject” Thomas Pfau also discusses the limitations of Hartman’s approach:

Hartman sees the poet’s “consciousness” retreat from the “apocalyptic pitch” of imagination precisely because it wishes to preserve a self-identity which it considers to be permanent. Unlike anything in Hegel’s phenomenology, this integrity is not established through a “dialectical movement” in time, but seeks to preserve itself in the face of any imminent discontinuity. Thus, throughout Hartman’s interpretation, death does not constitute a structural part in the progressive unfolding of consciousness but remains instead its fatal other. (497)

Turning to my methodological approach in this thesis, my inquiry begins and ends rooted in phenomenology. Specifically, I trace the construction of Wordsworthian selfhood as it is represented in “Resolution and Independence,” Book I of *The Excursion*, “The Wanderer,” and “Essay upon Epitaphs.” However, my departure point from Hartman is precisely the point raised in the preceding quotation from Pfau. Rather than viewing death as consciousness’s “fatal other,” I will illustrate how in Wordsworthian selfhood, death is not an end that must be negated, but rather a porous and liminal threshold through which a self-actualized, i.e., transcendent, self freely wanders. Further, under my formulation of Wordsworthian selfhood, it is exactly a “dialectical movement” upon which selfhood relies. Rather than turning to Hegel, however, my inquiry applies the concept of self espoused by Søren Kierkegaard, in which constant motion is a critical component of attaining transcendent selfhood. In Kierkegaard’s view, because a self is constructed through a dialectical relationship between body, soul, and spirit, true

selfhood, and, thus, transcendence, is achieved when an individual is able to perfect a synthesis of the relationship between body-soul—represented by the finite, temporal, and necessary—and spirit—represented by the infinite, eternal, and possible. In this way, movement is a necessary element of transcendence beyond death.

Significantly, the notion of movement is even inherent in the denotation of the word “transcend” (“to pass over or go beyond”),¹ and in other words connoting immortality, such as “everlasting” (“infinite in future duration”) and “eternal” (“endless”). Indeed, the word “death” (“cessation of being, end”) itself connotes the idea of an ending and of absolute stasis, while the word “eternity” (“perpetual or indefinite continuance”) connotes perpetual movement. Working past an antithetical reading of words such as “death” and “eternal,” however, reveals that there is a connection between the words—and indeed between the ontological states they denote—in which “qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other” (Wordsworth, “Essay upon Epitaphs” 137-38). This connection is formed through “subtle progress” (Wordsworth, “Essay upon Epitaphs” 136) and “delicate transition” (de Man 76).

Not surprisingly, one of the primary attributes of a wanderer, as one who is in constant motion, is that he or she is not beholden to traditional spatio-temporal constructs, and, thus, to traditional constructs of life and death. For example, the emblematic wandering figure is that of the Wandering Jew, who struck out against Jesus Christ on his way to his crucifixion. The Wandering Jew was condemned to roam the earth without rest until Judgment Day, a condemnation which exceeds the biological lifespan of the wanderer and, thus, transcends linear time. It is this transcendence of time

¹ All denotations are cited from *OED Online*, Ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 1989, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., 09 June 2004 <<http://www.oed.com>>.

that is the source of the spectral quality attendant on wanderers, who appear to be suspended in time, focused intensely on the present while not in the here and now. A significant amount of Wordsworth's poetry and prose reveals a preoccupation with, and anxiety about, the inevitability of death and the notion of eternal life or an immortal soul.

In Chapter One, I analyze how the Leech Gatherer of "Resolution and Independence" acts as a divine spirit who assists the speaker of the poem, who is physically able to traverse the moors but is mentally frozen due to his extreme anxiety, to become *unstuck*. While the speaker's anxiety does stem from an anxiety over death and decay, what plagues the speaker is anxiety about the death and decay of himself as an artist as much as of himself as an individual. In this sense, it is anxiety about not just mortality but failure as a poet that leads to the speaker's existential crisis, and, ultimately, to the resolution of that crisis via his projection of an uncanny double in the form of the Leech Gatherer.

In his essay "The Uncanny," Freud notes that the figure of the uncanny double is commonly used to mollify an individual's anxiety about the inevitability of death, and that an individual's belief that he or she possesses an immortal soul is an archetypal use of a double as a way to deny the destruction of the ego and the power of death. In "Resolution and Independence," the speaker comes across his uncanny double, the nomadic Leech Gatherer, while wandering the moors. Although the Leech Gatherer roams from "pond to pond" and from "moor to moor" collecting leeches, when the speaker first sees the Leech Gatherer he is standing "[m]otionless as a cloud" staring into the water. Indeed, although a significant attribute of both of these characters is their propensity for wandering, the intercourse between the characters involves very little

physical movement. This is because having traveled deep into the moor, the speaker is confronted with his own uncanny double in the form of the Leech Gatherer. Wandering has subverted firm boundaries and has brought the characters into a space of liminality where the speaker's double can fulfill his role of resolving the severe anxiety within the speaker about dying in "despondency and madness" because of failed artistic accomplishment in a world of materiality. For the speaker, the anxiety about death is ultimately ameliorated by a resolution to pursue artistic success in the present life so as to attain literary fame, a kind of immortality after death.

In Chapter Two, I employ Kierkegaard's concept of self to investigate Wordsworthian selfhood as embodied by the dominant figure of Book I of *The Excursion*, "The Wanderer." In this poem, the wanderer figure, explicitly called the Wanderer, is contrasted against the speaker of "Resolution and Independence" in that while the speaker is stuck, although eventually navigates his way out of this bind through the help of his projected double, the Wanderer is both physically and mentally fluid for the entirety of the poem. Indeed, it is the Wanderer's ability to synthesize, through the mental process of imagination, the Kierkegaardian elements of body, soul, and spirit and ultimately achieve a selfhood that transcends traditional time and finds a way into eternity. Selfhood involves, to employ Wordsworth's phrase, "subtle progress." Adding to the relationship between movement and transcendence, Kierkegaardian selfhood also involves a dynamic process founded upon an individual's ability to imagine, in which "imagination is the medium of the process of infinitizing" (Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death* 163, quoted in Cole 18). Wordsworth's phenomenological understanding of the making of a self is also akin to Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of consciousness. As Sartre

explains in “Consciousness and Imagination,” imagination “is the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom” (66), i.e., as it realizes its unbounded movement.

Others have commented on the importance of process generally and walking specifically to the Wanderer and his ability to transcend time, and, thus, death. In *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit*, Frances Ferguson notes that the Wanderer embodies a distinct “insistence upon process, in which even the finality of an individual death is seen synecdochically, as an infinitely repeated even in the continuing timespan of both man and nature” (213). And in *Romantic Vagrancy*, Celeste Langan makes the succinct observation that the Wanderer “seem[s] to effect a walking cure not only of melancholy but also of death itself” (261). In my analysis, however, rather than focusing primarily on the physical act of wandering, I focus on the way in which the movement of a wandering mind is fundamental to an individual’s moving through the traditionally posited binaries of life or death.

Finally, in Chapter Three I address how Wordsworth’s “Essay upon Epitaphs,” a prose piece that was originally appended to *The Excursion*, approaches the subject of death and immortality not from the represented traditional figure of a wanderer, but rather from the rhetorical figure of prosopopeia; this figure, however, contains the essential element of movement, albeit expressed in unconventional ways. In “Autobiography as De-Facement,” Paul de Man comments that prosopopeia is “the art of delicate transition” that involves “gliding displacements” (76). Indeed, in “Essay upon Epitaphs” the figure of prosopopeia very much involves a geographically specific place—the gravesite—and the ability of the dead to reemerge from the gravesite via epitaph and ultimately to transcend place and time. Wordsworth describes this movement of the

immortal soul as “the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears” (138-147). For the immortal soul, just as for uncanny doubles, traditional wanderers, and the figure of prosopopoeia, movement is vital, but direction is not.

**Chapter 1: “I was a Traveller then upon the moor”:
The Uncanny Wanderer(s) of “Resolution and Independence”**

The figure of the double may be cast as a traveler accompanying an earthbound, mortal self out from and back into eternity, or as a necessary fiction used to quell the insufferable existential crisis attendant to traditional spatio-temporal constructs of life and death. In *Beyond Psychology*, Otto Rank identifies the immortal soul as a classic example of the figure of the double. He explains that the double was “[o]riginally conceived of as a guardian angel, assuring immortal survival to the self” (76). The problem with this conception, however, is that inherent in the double is an uncanny quality of resemblance, so that while at one time in the individual’s life the double is representative of the immortal soul, “the double eventually appears as precisely the opposite, a reminder of the individual’s mortality, indeed, the announcer of death itself” (76). Rank explains that “the double whom we meet after the completion of this developmental cycle appears as a ‘bad,’ threatening self and no longer as a consoling one” (76).

For Freud, investment in an immortal soul, in an everlasting double, is one way in which an individual attempts to ameliorate anxiety about dissipation of the self at the time of death. In “The Uncanny,” Freud continues Rank’s exploration of the double’s development by emphasizing the aspect of the uncanny intrinsic to the double. Freud notes that “the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (220). Freud comments that while “*unheimlich*” (“uncanny”) is the opposite of “*heimlich*” (“homely”), “*unheimlich*” is not merely synonymous with

“unfamiliar.” Stressing that the etymology of “uncanny” is complex and lengthy,² Freud notes with great interest that “among its different shades of meaning the word ‘*heimlich*’ exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, ‘*unheimlich*’” (224). Thus, what is “*heimlich*,” or what is homely, can come to be “*unheimlich*,” or what is frightening *because of its homeliness*.

Despite the Rankian and Freudian analyses of the uncanny double, which stress the double’s cyclical development from pacifying guardian angel to anxiety-producing harbinger of death, the uncanny may also be experienced as eerily familiar yet ultimately encouraging and hopeful. Commenting on the prominence of the double figure in literature, Rank himself notes that one of the social functions of an artist is to “humanize[] traditional folk-beliefs by animating them with his own spiritual struggle for immortality.” Rank gives the example of Goethe’s *Faust*, in which “[t]he artist took the traditional folk-tale and lifted it from its superstitious entanglements into a human struggle for self-immortalization through work, that is, self-realization” (76).

In “Resolution and Independence,” the nomadic Leech Gatherer is a remarkable embodiment of the uncanny, representing that which is both eerily familiar and eerily ghostly.³ While the poem is told from the perspective of the speaker, a wandering poet, it is the Leech Gatherer around whom the poem turns. Far from being an entity distinct from the speaker, the Leech Gatherer is the speaker’s uncanny double, whose task is to quell the speaker’s anxiety about his financial and artistic future, and, ultimately, his

² To uncover an accurate articulation for what constitutes the uncanny, Freud looks to other languages and then to the German language, quoting at length from Daniel Sanders’s *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (1860).

³ I am indebted to Sharon M. Setzer for her work applying Freud’s theory of the uncanny to *The Excursion* and to “Essay upon Epitaphs.” See Sharon M. Setzer, “Wordsworth’s Wanderer, the Epitaph, and the Uncanny,” *Genre* 24 (1991): 361-379.

death. Despite the uncanny nature of the Leech Gatherer, this double does not ultimately follow the model of the traditional Rankian and Freudian double, as the Leech Gatherer does not pass finally from guardian angel to harbinger of death, but rather perfects his task of dispelling the speaker's anxiety and allowing the speaker to progress past his halting fears. Notwithstanding this difference, the Leech Gatherer significantly exemplifies Freud's view of the uncanny. Indeed, the narrative of "Resolution and Independence" mirrors the way in which the uncanny itself is experienced: as the narrative opens, the speaker is wandering through the *heimlich* moor, the natural setting which he knows so intimately and in which he feels securely at home, until eventually the speaker is confronted with the *unheimlich* Leech Gatherer, a figure who is *unheimlich* because of the very nature of his being *heimlich* to the speaker.

In "The Uncanny," Freud explains that "the word '*heimlich*' is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and 'kept out of sight'" (224-25). That which is kept out of sight is an aspect of the uncanny that is infused into the opening of "Resolution and Independence." That the speaker's narrative privileges sound over sight until the speaker comes upon the Leech Gatherer helps to set the mood for the introduction of the uncanny figure. The poem's first line, "There was a roaring in the wind all night" (1), emphasizes the auditory over the visual. For example, the speaker continues the stanza by describing the sounds of the birds that he hears but does not see, and then finally describes the air that is filled "with pleasant noise of waters" (7). Indeed, even in the second stanza when the speaker introduces a concrete visual image ("The hare [who] is running races in her mirth" (11)),

he immediately diminishes the corporeal by describing the ephemeral, doubling mist along side the animal, a mist that “Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run” (14).

The speaker notes that he was a “Traveller” who wandered the moor where, through his wandering the pastoral domain of “blissful creatures,” he walked “Far from the world . . . and from all care” (33). Expressing his view that through the action of wandering he can actually escape the hardships of the world, this view is soon challenged when the speaker comes to realize that as a poet, his financial security will likely be in peril. The optimism and imagination that propel a poet to be independent of the regimented commerce of the “world,” the “pleasant thought” that equates “life’s business [with] a summer mood” (37), may later cause that poet pecuniary loss and mental anguish. Recalling the fates of Chatterton and Burns, the speaker states: “We poets in our youth begin in gladness; / But thereof come in the end despondency and madness” (48-49).

Just when the speaker seems to lose all resolve, he receives a “leading⁴ from above” (51) in the desolate and “lonely” land through which he was wandering. Emphasizing the secret yet now visual nature of the image before him, the speaker describes how, “Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven / I saw a Man before me unawares: / The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs” (54-56). This image is purely visual. Notably, however, the proximity of the words “bare,” “eye,” and “heaven” effects a curious reading whereby the man, who comes to be known to the speaker as the Leech Gatherer, is both unobstructed and out in the open, yet also uncovered by the

speaker. Indeed, this is reminiscent of Schelling's observation that "'*Unheimlich* is the name for everything that ought to have remained . . . secret and hidden but has come to light'" (Sanders, quoted in Freud 224). That the Leech Gatherer is gazing into a reflective pool highlights both the visual and uncanny aspects of the image, for the speaker's double is once again multiplied through his own vision.

In addition to the initial impression the speaker gives that the Leech Gatherer is imbued with a spectral quality and has far outlived his possible earthly years, the uncanny nature of the Leech Gatherer is achieved through doubling, an aspect of the uncanny that ultimately blurs the boundary between the speaker and the Leech Gatherer. Freud notes that "the phenomenon of the 'double'" may be "marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" (234). Freud explains that the double has connections with "reflections in mirrors, with shadows, [and] with guardian spirits . . ." (235). Notably, the Leech Gatherer is standing absolutely still looking down for leeches into a pool of water, which reflects an image like a mirror; further, as will be discussed, the Leech Gatherer is a guardian spirit for the speaker.

The uncanniness of the Leech Gatherer is also effected by the speaker's comparing the Leech Gatherer to a stone, sea creature, cloud, stream, and dream. After the speaker notes the exceptionally advanced age of the Leech Gatherer, he describes him.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie

⁴ The use of the word "leading" is interesting, as "leading" connotes movement generally and walking specifically, a connotation made strange by the image of one moving vertically from the earth's surface

Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
 Wonder to all who do the same espy,
 By what means it could thither come, and whence;
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
 Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself[.] (57-63)

The uncanny nature of the Leech Gatherer is expressed in his fluctuating between inanimate object (stone) and animate being (sea-beast). Similarly, the speaker notes that the Leech Gatherer was standing in the “margin” (74) of the pool “motionless as a cloud” (75). This representation of the Leech Gatherer as existing in the margin and simulating a cloud, which looks solid but is only illusory, creates an image of a quasi-corporeal being, just as the Leech Gatherer is described as only quasi-human due to his likeness to a sea-beast and his seemingly infinite age. Indeed, the speaker exclaims that the Leech Gatherer’s “extreme old age” renders him “not all alive nor dead, / Nor all asleep” (64-65). Freud explains that a prime example of the uncanny, as articulated by Jentsch, is when one “doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate . . .” (226).

While the doubling of the Leech Gatherer in the reflective pool contributed to his uncanniness in a more subtle way, the speaker describes the Leech Gatherer explicitly as doubled when he states, “His body was bent double, feet and head / Coming together in life’s pilgrimage” (66-67). These two lines suggest that “life’s pilgrimage” is to effect, through walking, the attainment of a transition from the purely physical, represented by

rather than horizontally along it.

the Leech Gatherer's feet, to the metaphysical, represented by the Leech Gatherer's head, which can only be realized through one's uncanny, spectral double.

As a corporeal and spiritual embodiment of "life's pilgrimage," the uncanny nature of the Leech Gatherer is extended through his being represented as a divine figure. Indeed, in describing the Leech Gatherer, the speaker alludes to Christ, stating that the old man's body is doubled over "As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage / Of sickness felt by him in times long past, / A more than human weight upon his frame had cast" (68-70). Carrying the weight of humanity's sin upon his frame, Christ exists in a liminal space where he is both alive and everywhere, yet already crucified and in no single, identifiable place. Similarly, the speaker continues to use diction associated with religion generally and God and Christ specifically as he relates his interaction with the Leech Gatherer. The speaker's first utterance to the Leech Gatherer is "This morning gives us promise of a glorious day" (84). The speaker explains that the Leech Gatherer's words

[C]ame feebly, from a feeble chest,
 But each in solemn order followed each,
 With something of a lofty utterance drest –
 Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
 Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
 Such as grave Livers⁵ do in Scotland use,
 Religious men, who give to God and man their dues. (92-98)

⁵ The book of life, also called the book of livers or the book of the living, is "in biblical language the record of the names of those who shall inherit eternal life." *OED Online*, Ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 1989, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., 09 June 2004 <<http://www.oed.com>>. The idea of the grave as representing not only death but, alternatively, eternal life is discussed in Chapter Three.

The Leech Gatherer tells how he roams from moor to moor earning an honest income with “God’s good help” (104). Immediately after the religious diction and references to God, however, the uncanny—rather than divine—nature of the Leech Gatherer comes to the fore of the verse.

The speaker notes that the Leech Gatherer’s words have changed from following a solemn order of stately speech to becoming indivisible, to a voice “like a stream / Scarce heard” (107-08),⁶ and that “the whole body of the Man did seem / Like one whom I had met with in a dream” (109-110). As Freud explains in “The Uncanny,” dreaming is a counterpart to the invention of doubling: just as a subject’s double acts to deny the human condition of being born into one’s own death by acting as an immortal soul to the subject’s mortal body, it is within the “language of dreams”⁷ that a subject may process the anxiety that is repressed during waking life. According to Freud, the belief that a double can transcend death is bred “from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and of primitive man” (235). Freud argues that the processes of doubling and dreaming are necessary for the healthy development of the ego to move from the stage of primary narcissism. He states that doubling allows for self-observation, for the formation of a “special agency” that “is able to stand over against the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticizing the self and of exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our ‘conscience’” (235). This development away from the stage of primary

⁶ This simile is reminiscent of the speaker’s description at the beginning of the poem where, touching upon the uncanny nature of the scene, he states that “all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters” (7). Interestingly, it is not only the uncanny aspects of the Leech Gatherer that are emerging at this middle-point of the poem, but the uncanny aspects of the narrative are reemerging and repeating.

⁷ Freud explains in “The Uncanny” that doubling is expressed through the dreaming process by a doubling or multiplying of the genital symbol, which represents a defense against finality, just as the idea of a soul acts as a double for the corporeal body.

narcissism, however, may produce more anxiety because at this point “the ‘double’ reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death” (235). It is at this point that the double becomes “a thing of terror . . .” (236).

Unlike Freud’s subject, the speaker in “Resolution and Independence” does not move past the stage of primary narcissism.⁸ Rather than becoming a “thing of terror,” the speaker’s double remains a divine, pacifying, guardian spirit. When he comes upon the Leech Gatherer, the speaker has been reflecting upon the “despondency and madness” that befalls most poets, and lamenting the financial hardship that he, as a poet, will likely face. Thus, when he spots the Leech Gatherer so removed in nature from the commerce of daily life, so alone upon the moor, the speaker questions the Leech Gatherer as to what occupation the latter pursues. The Leech Gatherer explains that he roams from moor to moor searching for leeches to sell, and that while he is poor and his financial situation is precarious, he manages to secure an “honest maintenance.” As the speaker’s anxiety returns about whether as a poet he will be able to secure such a maintenance, or whether even as a “mighty” poet he will die in misery, cold, and pain, the speaker, “longing to be comforted” (117), once again implores the Leech Gatherer, “How is it that you live, and what is it that you do?” (119)

⁸ Indeed, this moment in which the speaker’s double is doubled has been described by one critic as a “doubly specular moment” that “is surely an oneiric product of Wordsworth’s own mind.” Eugene L. Stelzig, “Memory, Imagination, and Self-Healing in the Romantic Crisis Lyric: “Trilogie der Leidenschaft” and “Resolution and Independence,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 90 (1991): 536. Notably, in this oneiric moment the uncanny Leech Gatherer is reminiscent of Narcissus. This comparison is particularly striking because, as Freud explains, the invention of doubling as a way to quell one’s anxiety about death “has its counterpart in the language of dreams, which is fond of representing castration by a doubling or multiplication of a genital symbol.” Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. 17 (London: Hogarth P, 1955) 235. Freud continues that the idea that one can preserve oneself against death (or indeed castration) is “sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love” and from “primary narcissism.” Freud 235.

As the Leech Gatherer is repeating his answer, explaining again that he collects leeches in the pools of water upon the moors, the speaker notes that the natural surroundings, as well as the Leech Gatherer's bodily form and words, begin to cause him anxiety.

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
 The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me:
 In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
 About the weary moors continually,
 Wandering about alone and silently. (127-131)

Although the Leech Gatherer displays a calm mental state and attitude of perseverance, the speaker begins to project onto this spectral figure the anxieties that plague his own mind. Enmeshing the Leech Gatherer not just into his own self but into the natural surroundings as well—the moors are “weary” even though it is the Leech Gatherer who is continually pacing—the speaker doubles in his “mind's eye” the already doubled Leech Gatherer.

Despite this moment of transferred anxiety, the speaker reverts to casting his double in the role of guardian spirit rather than harbinger of death, until the double is no longer needed and disappears as quickly as he had appeared. The speaker notes that the Leech Gatherer became cheerful and kind, and spoke of other, less weighty matters. Indeed, as the Leech Gatherer's body is now described in only one, wholly concrete term—“decrepit”—it is the Leech Gatherer's “firm” mind that is the focus of the last lines of the poem, a mind that has been interpolated by the mind of the speaker.

Although the Leech Gatherer is subsumed back into the speaker rather than into the water, like Narcissus the Leech Gatherer rests finally with his own self, with his own image.

I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
 In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.

“God,” said I, “be my help and stay secure;

I’ll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!” (137-140)

That the last image of the Leech Gatherer, and indeed of the poem, is one of isolation adds to the illusory nature of the figure, particularly when the way in which the Leech Gatherer will again be conjured up fills the mind of the speaker. This spectral quality is also heightened by the speaker’s invocation of God, the archetype of non-corporeal existence. Notably, while the speaker states that he will need the help of God to remain resolute in his work as a poet, he also adds that he will think of the Leech Gatherer—and not God—for inspiration. Thus, it is the uncanny double of the speaker, a double who is shrouded with divine qualities, rather than an orthodox God-head who will serve as a guiding light for the speaker.

Similarly, the final image erected by the speaker of the Leech Gatherer as a traveler upon the moor mirrors the speaker’s characterization of himself as the subject of the narrative: “I was a Traveller then upon the moor” (15). Indeed, as a double for the speaker, the spectral quality of the Leech Gatherer is realized in part due to his being both constantly in motion yet eerily still. The very livelihood of the Leech Gatherer is defined by his ability to move in search of leeches, to roam from “pond to pond” and “moor to moor” (103), to travel “far and wide” (121), to pace “[a]bout the weary moors continually, / Wandering about alone and silently” (130-31). As Freud explains, “the factor of the repetition of the same thing . . . does undoubtedly, subject to certain conditions and combined with certain circumstances, arouse an uncanny feeling, which,

furthermore, recalls the sense of helplessness experienced in some dreamstates” (236-37). Freud offers a number of examples to highlight his observation, many of which involve the act of walking, or, more specifically, wandering: wandering through unknown streets in a foreign land and arriving repeatedly at the same place; losing one’s way in a forest mist and, attempting to find one’s way back to a place, continually coming upon the same, unintended spot; or wandering about in a darkened and unfamiliar room and colliding time and again with the same piece of furniture.

It is this sense of wandering without actually gaining ground that is uncanny. Notably, while the speaker describes the Leech Gatherer as a traveler among the moors, the speaker also describes him as remarkably still. Indeed, in his most immediate state, the Leech Gatherer is located in the mind’s eye of the speaker, exceptionally contained yet roaming the moors. When the Leech Gatherer is projected outside of the mind’s eye of the speaker, as the speaker’s spectral double, he is portrayed as a wanderer, yet also is portrayed as “Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood, / That heareth not the loud winds when they call; / And moveth all together, if it move at all” (75-76). Just like the cloud, the fluid Leech Gatherer moves seamlessly from moor to moor, or moves not at all as he settles himself at a pond to gather leeches, a pond that is disturbed only by the motion of the Leech Gatherer’s staff. It is only in the speaker’s mind’s eye and in the dreamlike realm of the speaker’s objectified subjectivity that the Leech Gatherer wanders at all.

Wordsworth’s construction of the speaker’s visionary mind represents what Barbara Ann Schapiro calls the “relational model” of mind. While Schapiro investigates Wordsworth’s relational model as it pertains to the interdependency of imagination (the subjective mind) and nature (the objective world), application of the model as it pertains

to the correlation between the speaker's subjective mind and the speaker's objectified subjectivity, as represented by his uncanny double, is illuminating. Indeed, just as the speaker / Leech Gatherer occupies a liminal space within much of the poem, Schapiro notes that "[t]he space between the subjective inner world and the external object world" is a space of potentiality and transition in which "absolute categories are suspended" and "connection coexists with division" (33). Further, unlike the traditional psychoanalytic model which frequently casts Wordsworth's visionary passages "as defensive and sublimatory, as forms of regressive illusions" (36), such passages, including Wordsworth's spots of time, as Schapiro explains, actually embrace not just anxiety but also consolation (40). As such, illusion in Wordsworth is not expressed within a solely Freudian framework as a merely "defensive delusion" (41). Thus, for Wordsworth's speaker of "Resolution and Independence," the Leech Gatherer is not merely a necessary fiction, but rather a necessary fellow traveler who leads the speaker on his essential journey of navigating the relational dynamics of self and selves. This essential journey through selfhood remains with Wordsworth for the next decade, reappearing in the familiar form of a new wanderer character in *The Excursion*.

**Chapter 2: “The life which cannot die”:
Kierkegaardian Selfhood and “The Wanderer”**

While the Leech Gatherer of “Resolution and Independence” represents a double of the wandering poet, he is depicted as an entity separate from, though projected by, the poet. Through navigating the moors of his familiar landscape, the poet is able to navigate the uncanny topography of his othered self—the Leech Gatherer who is identifiable if not altogether separate. Like the Leech Gatherer, the character of the Wanderer from the first book of *The Excursion* is a character in motion; however, although the Wanderer travels extensively peddling his wares, his essential dynamic movement takes place within his own being. Representing the archetypal Kierkegaardian self as a selfhood necessarily in motion, the Wanderer achieves his most progressive self-actualizing feats through the act of imagining his transcendent self. This self neither negates the existence of death nor becomes frozen at the thought of arriving at its doorstep; rather, the Wanderer is a self who, as Hartman states, is able “to look *through* death” (306).

In *The Problematic Self in Kierkegaard and Freud*, J. Preston Cole offers a thorough treatment of the Kierkegaardian concept of self. Self is constructed not through immediately discernable, discrete components, but rather through a dialectical relationship between body, soul, and spirit. Specifically, it is spirit that functions as the agent of discourse between body and soul, as the relational aspect of self. Further, the Kierkegaardian “man” exists as a synthesis between the finite and infinite, the temporal and eternal, and necessity and freedom. Within the dialectical relationship, body-soul is represented by the finite, temporal, and necessary. Spirit—also termed the “power of being”—is represented by the infinite, eternal, and possible. Thus, the central dialectic of

selfhood is between the finite, temporal, and necessary and the infinite, eternal, and possible.

Not surprisingly, Kierkegaard views selfhood as a dynamic process in which “imagination is the medium of the process of infinitizing” (*Sickness unto Death* 163, quoted in Cole 18). Cole explains the critical role that imagination plays in the establishment of self, and Kierkegaard’s view that “[t]he self is reflection” (*Sickness unto Death* 163, quoted in Cole 18):

[T]he imagination is the capacity of the self to mirror an image of itself, to project a picture of the possible self. It is this ability which creates the other pole of the dialectic of selfhood, the transcendent, infinite self, as against the immediate, finite self. Note, however, that this image is not a mirror-image of the self. It is a “counterfeit presentment of the self.” And yet it is the possibility of the self—the self one is not yet, the transcendent self. It is an imaged possibility in dialectical relation with which the individual exists. (18)

Thus, Kierkegaardian selfhood is a dialectical relation between the essential, existential, and eternal selves, and it is imagination that propels this relation. An individual who lacks imagination lacks the ability to self-reflect, and, therefore, lacks the ability to attain selfhood.

Just as imagination is the unifying and constitutive force of a Kierkegaardian self, it is also an intermediary force, a place of liminality between consciousness and imagined image. At a state of pure consciousness, an image has not yet been born. It is through imagination that an image is shuttled into existence. The act of imagining propels an

image from consciousness, so that the image is simultaneously free from and bound to consciousness, has a life of its own yet is wholly dependent on consciousness for that life. As a relation between consciousness and image, imagination is a dynamic feature that cannot be static for selfhood to be realized.

It is the quality of movement within a sphere of liminality attendant to imagination that aptly characterizes Wordsworth's wanderer figure from Book I of *The Excursion*, entitled "The Wanderer." The Wanderer character is not only an embodiment of a figure in motion in the literal sense of physical movement, but in the sense of being a liminal figure who resides somewhere between life and death and whose ability to imagine seems critical to his very existence, to his very selfhood. The Wanderer is both local and alien, topologically contained and peripatetic, ontologically substantiated and spectral. Rather than rendering the Wanderer a binary figure, these qualities interrelate in a dynamic and ever-changing way so that the Wanderer is ultimately realized as a self not because of his arrival, but because of his endless journey.

Wordsworth comments on the essential characteristics of imagination and consciousness—and the attendant phenomenological implications—and of movement and death even prior to the opening of "The Wanderer." In the poem contained in the preface to the 1814 edition of *The Excursion*, the speaker states:

On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
 Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
 Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
 Accompanied by feelings of delight
 Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;

And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
 And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
 Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
 The good and evil of our mortal state.
 —To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
 Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
 Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
 I would give utterance in numerous verse. (15-27)

Noting the importance of solitude to the process of imagination and reflection, the speaker explains how he sees “fair trains of imagery before me rise,” a comment that may lead one to conclude that the speaker views himself a passive observer rather than an active creator of those images. However, this conclusion is counteracted by the very image of the imagery itself; the image created by the speaker is imbued with the spectral quality of the seemingly unsubstantial “fair trains of imagery” that are rising cloud-like through the air. More than merely a projection of the speaker’s imagination, the imagery is presented as a very part of the speaker himself, a part that is made more human by the fact that it is “[a]ccompanied by feelings of delight.”

Similarly, the speaker exclaims that he is
 conscious of affecting thoughts
 And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
 Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
 The good and evil of our mortal state. (20-23)

Like the “fair trains of imagery” rising before the speaker, the “thoughts” and “remembrances” of the above lines combine the seemingly paradoxical elements of purely conscious meditation (“thoughts” and “remembrances”) and purely unconscious emotion (“affecting” and “dear”) to create a hybridized ontological state. In this state, thoughts and remembrances, which are traditionally conceived of as necessarily tied to the subjective mind of a self, have become objectified and are themselves acting upon the self. Rather than creating a dehumanizing effect, the speaker’s hybridized ontological state evinces a self that is able to transcend the traditionally segregated elements of purely conscious thought and purely unconscious emotion and tap into a place of “affecting thoughts.”

As “The Wanderer” opens, the Author recounts how he comes upon the Wanderer in a reclined position, at rest under the shade of trees. The Author describes the Wanderer as

a Man of reverend age,
 But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
 There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
 Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
 An iron-pointed staff lay at his side. (33-37)

Note the similarity between the Wanderer and the Leech Gatherer of “Resolution and Independence.” Both are solitary men of old age who travel extensively—travels that are emphasized by the essential staff that both men have—but are stationary at the reader’s first introduction. The similarity is not mere coincidence; indeed, just like the Leech Gatherer, the Wanderer is portrayed as an uncanny, spectral figure. The essential

difference between the two figures, however, is that whereas the Leech Gatherer is charged with the responsibility of resolving for the speaker the speaker's perturbation about leading an artistic life, the Wanderer is not easily attached to one character, or even one voice, from the poem. Rather, he represents the more general process of actualization of selfhood, a necessary component of which is the realization that the dynamic spirit functions as the agent of discourse between body and soul, as the relational aspect of self. Thus, the Wanderer serves as an uncanny, quasi-human entity parabolic of the process of becoming.

As a young boy, the Wanderer possessed within him a significant breach between thought and feeling. The Author explains that the Wanderer's spirit was nourished by communing with nature, silent and alone, and that he felt fulfilled and gratified by sensory pleasure alone:

[H]is spirit drank
 The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him; they swallowed up
 His animal being; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live; they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,

His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love!
 A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 Oh then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
 The written promise! Early had he learned
 To reverence the volume that displays
 The mystery, the life which cannot die;
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
 All things, responsive to the writing, there
 Breathed immortality, revolving life,
 And greatness still revolving; infinite:
 There littleness was not; the least of things
 Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*. (206-32)

Overtaken by “sensation, soul, and form,” the Wanderer’s very “animal being,” his very life, was subsumed into sensory experience. The Wanderer’s existence was essentially tied to image—to form—but in an infantile way. Although his mind was open to receive the sustenance of “visitation from the living God” as images, this open mind was passively bound to the forms before him. He lacked the ability of phenomenological, objectified reflection of the self as processor of sensory experience. Indeed, the very process of “[t]hought was not.” Rather, enjoyment of forms and the sensory, soulful

reaction to these forms was the primary destination of the Wanderer's mind, a destination that was always already arrived at, as "in enjoyment [thought] expired." In this state of elevated feeling, the very existence of the Wanderer was "oftentimes *possessed*."

Wordsworth's use of italics for the word "possessed" emphasizes the import of the word to the passage. In addition to meaning that the Wanderer's existence was taken over by feeling, the word also suggests that this seizure was other-worldly, and that the Wanderer's existence is sometimes altered into a non-human state.

As the passage continues, the dichotomy between thought and feeling develops. The Author explains that while the Wanderer learned early to revere the portrayal through the written word of "the life which cannot die," it was when he was communing with nature, when he was "in the mountains did he *feel* his faith." Once again, Wordsworth uses italics to privilege feeling over thought: for the Wanderer, the written word created an intellectual appreciation for eternal life, but it was when he stepped away from the intellectual, when "[t]hought was not," that he believed through feeling what he had learned. And when the Wanderer *felt* his faith, he believed that he was able to tap into the revolving, infinite, and eternal. And once again, the belief in the eternal is internalized more intensely; more than just believing, the Wanderer was able to, as Wordsworth elsewhere expresses, see into the life of things: "He *saw*."

Despite the young Wanderer's belief that he bore witness to a place of transcendence where life is eternal, he was still, in a Kierkegaardian sense, at a primal state of being where "body and soul are related in immediate unity" (Cole 16). In this state one's existence is determined largely by one's psychological needs and desires, by the emphasis on feeling over thought; spirit, or "the possibility of self-determination," is

present but latent (Cole 16). Kierkegaardian selfhood is actualized only through a relation between body-soul—represented by the finite—and spirit—represented by the infinite. Thus, when the Wanderer’s existence is chiefly dominated by body-soul, he remains grounded in the finite. This is true despite the Wanderer’s own assumption that he is feeling, and seeing, “the life which cannot die.”

The boyhood Wanderer’s sensory-driven belief that eternal life is achievable is illusory, as actualization of eternity belongs to a selfhood that perfects the relation between body-soul and spirit, a relation that is constantly in flux. Just as the relational elements of the speaker’s visionary mind in “Resolution and Independence” allow the speaker to transcend his stable borders and evolve as a productive self after his encounter with his uncanny double in the image of the Leech Gatherer, the aging Wanderer’s ability to synthesize the relational aspects of body, soul, and spirit allows him to evolve into an ideal self. Because the Wanderer comes to synthesize the dialectical components of selfhood, he is able to detach from extreme states of being, such as extreme sadness, and does not become stranded in the body-soul dialectic, which is the Kierkegaardian representation of immediacy or mortality. As one critic notes, the “individual stature” of the Wanderer is “self-sustaining” (Dabundo 9). In stark contrast to the Wanderer, the character of Margaret is a “victim of excessive feeling, of emotional imbalance” (Dabundo 9). As is discussed later, Margaret exemplifies a self mired in the immediate.

The Wanderer’s ability to realize ideal, or eternal, selfhood is essentially tied to his ability to imagine. Kierkegaard explains that imagination is an indispensable element of attaining ideal selfhood because to reach that ontological state, a self must be able to transcend the immediate self and posit, via imagination, a self different from the

immediate self. For example, the Wanderer's boyhood belief that there is a life which cannot die was false because that belief was arrived at through the immediacy of body-soul perception and without an appreciation for the relational aspect of selfhood.

Because the young Wanderer's belief was based on a nonexistent reality (i.e., it cannot be otherwise that there is a life which cannot die) rather than on a negated reality (i.e., there is a life which can die but that consciousness can be negated) eventually leads to the young Wanderer's anxiety and despair.

Being able to conceptualize consciousness not as nonexistent but as negated deepens a self's very being and ameliorates despair. In "Consciousness and Imagination," Sartre explains that the essential requisite for a consciousness to be able to imagine is that the imagination "must have the possibility of positing an hypothesis of unreality" (61). Sartre makes the critical distinction between a consciousness ceasing to be conscious and a consciousness being conscious that "nothingness is the constitutive structure of the existent" (63):

It is of the very nature of consciousness to be intentional and a consciousness that would cease to be consciousness of something would for that very reason cease to exist. But consciousness should be able to form and posit objects possessing a certain trait of nothingness in relation to the whole of reality. In fact, we recall that the imaginary object can be posited as nonexistent or as absent or as existing elsewhere or not posited as existing. We note that the common property of these four theses is that they include the entire category of negation (nihilation), though at

different degrees. Thus the negative (nihilating) act is constitutive of the image. (61)

The Wanderer's fixation on eternal life—particularly when the Wanderer understands eternal life through an immediacy of seeing natural images and forms—without being conscious of the act of nihilation is an impediment to his ability to realize genuine selfhood, and, thus, causes despair. It is the Wanderer's movement, both in the literal sense of wandering and in the metaphorical sense of progressing toward a relational selfhood, that lessens his despair and allows him to realize an atemporal existence.

The Author explains that the Wanderer was unable to find fulfillment and purpose by taking employment that restricted his movement to one geographical location, even when that employment was teaching at a village school where he would be surrounded by the books that he loved so dearly, such as the “divine Milton.” Rather, the Wanderer feels compelled toward movement and becomes a “vagrant Merchant.” Significantly, that compulsion toward movement is driven by

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who constrains
 The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
 The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
 (Spirit attached to regions mountainous
 Like their own steadfast clouds) did now impel
 His restless mind to look abroad with hope. (316-21)

The Wanderer becomes guided by “[t]hat stern yet kindly Spirit,” the Kierkegaardian representation of the infinite, eternal, and possible. Cole explains Kierkegaard's view that “The dialectic of Spirit . . . is the process whereby the infinite possibilities of

selfhood are disclosed to the finite, immediate self. In this process the immediate self is made aware of ever new horizons of selfhood” (17).

For years the Wanderer follows an “active course” of constant traveling as a peddler, a course that is punishing to the Wanderer’s physical frame. However, the Wanderer’s “steady course” of traveling is nourishing to his soul and allows his mind to be “serene” and “unclouded by the cares / Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped / By partial bondage” (356-58). That the Wanderer’s mind becomes unbounded is critical because this state of freedom will eventually allow his imagination to fulfill its necessary role of serving as “the medium of the process of infinitizing” (Cole 18), and, thus, of positing for the existing self the transcendent self. At this point in the Wanderer’s developing selfhood, the relational aspect of spirit is beginning to emerge as a synthesizing force in conjunction with the dialectical elements of selfhood. The Wanderer begins to take on superlative, though still human, qualities for his compassion and wisdom, and when he has the choice to end his constant traveling because “provision for his wants / Had been obtained” (382-82), he decides rather to continue his life in constant motion—that of wandering.

After the Wanderer ends traveling for a monetary purpose and begins wandering, there is a notable shift in his evolving self. Using language that in many ways mirrors the language used to characterize the quasi-human, uncanny Leech Gatherer of “Resolution and Independence,” the Author characterizes the Wanderer in super-human terms.

[H]e was a man

Whom no one could have passed without remark.

Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs

And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
 Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
 Into a narrower circle of deep red
 But had not tamed his eye; that, under brows
 Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
 From years of youth; which, like a Being made
 Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
 To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
 Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.
 So was He framed; and such his course of life
 Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
 The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
 Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
 Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
 His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
 The shadows of the breezy elms above
 Dappling his face. (422-441)

Demonstrating the depth of transformation of the Wanderer from inquisitive child to scholar to peddler to wanderer to, ultimately, transcendent self, the Wanderer's "whole figure breathed intelligence" after years of wandering. While time had compressed the Wanderer's physical body, his eyes—traditionally conceived of as the doorway to one's soul—remained vibrant and untamed. That the Wanderer's decaying exterior, physical body is used as a foil to emphasize his vital internal, soulful existence is reminiscent of

the Leech Gatherer, who suffers from such extreme old age that his body is bent double so that his feet and head come together as one, but who has “yet-vivid eyes.” Just as this juxtaposition of feeble body with vibrant mind, this privileging of the mind over the body, created a character not beholden to traditional notions of time in the Leech Gatherer, so too does the Wanderer come to be seen as transcending conventional spatio-temporal boundaries. Indeed, the Wanderer is described as “a Being made / Of many beings,” a description that reaches to the heart of what distinguishes the Wanderer from the humans around him: the Wanderer has come to exist not as a singular body-soul entity, but as a relational aspect of selfhood represented by spirit and propelled by movement.

The preceding passage sets forth two other stark similarities between the quasi-human, spectral Leech Gatherer and the super-human, spirit-driven Wanderer. One similarity is the import of a walking staff to each character’s existence, and the second similarity is the way in which each character is identified as being a wanderer, yet at rest and motionless when first introduced. In “Resolution and Independence,” the Leech Gatherer’s staff served as the main support for his “limbs, body, and pale face” (71), suggesting that the Leech Gatherer’s aged body remained mobile only due to his walking staff. Likewise, the Wanderer’s only appendage was his staff, “[t]he prized memorial of relinquished toils.” Although the staff is the definitive, physical object representing wandering, or at the very least walking, both the Leech Gatherer and the Wanderer are met by the speaker of “Resolution and Independence” and the Author of “The Wanderer” in a state of rest. The speaker notes that the Leech Gatherer is “motionless as a cloud” when the speaker finds him on the moor, and the Author explains that the Wanderer is

supine when the Author comes upon him at the ruined cottage, and that the Wanderer's eyes are half-shut as if in drowsiness. Rather than detracting from the wandering nature of each character, the fact that these characters are at rest at critical times in the narratives only furthers the notion that the characters have found a curative, internal tranquility that remains with them at all times. Indeed, ostensibly speaking about the heat of the day but metaphorically referring to the peace of soul that the Wanderer has attained, the Author says to the Wanderer: "'Tis . . . a burning day: / My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems / Have somewhere found relief" (448-450).

Although both the Leech Gatherer and the Wanderer possess uncanny qualities in terms of their questionable ontological status as entirely alive or entirely dead, there is a stark difference between these two figures pertaining to the uncanny double. While the Leech Gatherer is portrayed as a wholly double figure, a projected construct of the speaker's own mind, the Wanderer, while certainly liminal, is not merely a double; rather, the Wanderer is an intact, integrated self who represents not splintered selfhood but synthesized transcendence. This is not to say that the Wanderer does not, as an orator of Margaret's epitaphs,⁹ symbolize how a community of the living is necessarily a community existing in liminality between the living and the dead; indeed, by memorializing Margaret, the Wanderer is an active member of what one critic calls Wordsworth's "social vision of transmortal community" (Fosso 7). However, while the Wanderer symbolizes larger implications about society, as an individual character he is not another's transferred projection in the way in which the Leech Gatherer is a double for the speaker. The Wanderer is a singular figure who has found the "relief" that flows

⁹ See Laura Dabundo, "The Extrospective Vision: *The Excursion* as Transitional in Wordsworth's Poetry and Age," *The Wordsworth Circle* 19 (1988): 8-14.

from the dynamic movement of his relational self and that allows him to attain eternal selfhood. The Wanderer's unbounded imagination posits the possibility of this eternal, or transcendent, selfhood, and his dynamic spirit continually fluctuates to maintain the dialectical relationship necessary to become this actualized self. Further, the Wanderer does not merely negate the existence of an immediate, or finite, self; rather, he retains a cognizance about the possibility of nihilation of that actualized self. Like the Kierkegaardian self, the Wanderer has no final destination, no mandated end-point: his wandering represents the constant, relational movement of his spirit rather than a mode of escape. That the latter form of wandering does not lead to a transcendent self is epitomized by the tragic Margaret of "The Wanderer."

Margaret, the young woman who in an effort to lose herself and her sorrows by wandering off from the cottage to which she is intrinsically tied, is a foil to the aged Wanderer who wanders not to lose himself but to actualize his self. Unlike the Wanderer, who is metaphorically described in terms of his mind and being, the deceased Margaret, as depicted by the Wanderer, is cast in the language of physicality.

She is dead,
 The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
 The hut itself abandoned to decay,
 And she forgotten in the quiet grave. (507-510)

Margaret is portrayed as a corporeal representation of the cottage to which she was tied, the inanimate, physical structure in which she once placed all hope for eternal happiness and transcendence from sorrow. Margaret's grave is quiet and lacks any sense of the immortality of spirit. This portrayal is contrasted with that of the Wanderer, whose aged

body may continue to decay, but who nonetheless transcends the finite and temporal by achieving selfhood.

Margaret tells the Wanderer that, in an effort to get away from her sorrows, she has “wandered much of late” (754). She explains, “I have been travelling far; and many days / About the fields I wander, knowing this / Only, that what I seek I cannot find” (764-66). Margaret cannot find peace through wandering because she is wandering in an attempt to get away from something, in contrast to the Wanderer who wanders to get closer to his own self. Wandering is portrayed within the poem as a life of misery when such a life is embarked upon for reasons not related to self-actualization. Indeed, the very reason for Margaret’s despair is that her husband “joined a troop / Of soldiers, going to a distant land” (676-77) and left her without saying goodbye or affording her the opportunity to go with him “and sink / Beneath the misery of that wandering life” (680-81).

The difference between the result of the Wanderer’s and Margaret’s wandering is reestablished at the close of the poem, where the Wanderer tells the Author how Margaret was not able to move beyond the confines of her mind and feelings of sorrow. In contrast, the Wanderer has found a way to transcend the most desperate of human emotions through his enlightened spirit. The Wanderer recounts how he walked by the barren wall of the deceased Margaret’s ruined cottage and thought upon the lively flowers and vegetation that once adorned the wall:

[I]nto my heart conveyed
 So still an image of tranquility,
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful

Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,
And walked along my road in happiness. (945-955)

This passage accurately explains how the Wanderer has been able to take the leap of faith necessary to allow spirit to guide him, to keep him moving along his road in happiness. This is not a saccharine happiness that comes from being easily satiated by living in a state of immediacy without reflection on the eternal. Rather, it is a happiness derived from acknowledging that the nihilation of that very happiness is not an end-point, but a starting point from which spirit presents a possibility of a transcendent self, and, ultimately, the road upon which that self must wander to be finally actualized.

Chapter 3: “Travelling in the direction of mortality”: “Essay upon Epitaphs” and Troping the Journey Back

Although the rhetorical tropes of prosopopoeia and apostrophe may both be used to treat an absent person as present, the tropes share a significant difference pertaining to movement. While apostrophe involves a speaker’s discourse that is marked by an abrupt stop and then a diversion to address an absent person, prosopopoeia involves a discourse of transference in which voice moves from the absent to the present. As Paul de Man deftly notes in “Autobiography As De-Facement,” prosopopoeia involves “the art of delicate transition” (76). An archetypal example of a mode of prosopopoeic transition is an epitaph. In *Essays upon Epitaphs*, Wordsworth writes extensively about the epitaphic function of granting a voice, and thus life, back to the dead and explains how, shrouded within the context of prosopopoeia and epitaph, a sepulchral monument is not a final resting place, but merely a platform from which the dead speak and *through* which they journey back. The deconstruction of traditional spatio-temporal boundaries via epitaph mirrors the way in which Wordsworth’s wanderer figures traverse, simultaneously, the topography of life and death, past and present, and being and non-being. Notably, the first of the *Essays*, entitled “Essay upon Epitaphs” and the subject of this Chapter, was appended to an early version of *The Excursion*. An examination of the relationship between epitaph and Wordsworth’s wanderers demonstrates how movement—specifically, relational movement—is an essential element to attaining transcendence of death and amelioration of anxiety.

Wordsworth’s view of death as it is expressed in “Essay upon Epitaphs” is that death is not an end-point to ontological existence, but merely a transitory interruption in a journey in which epitaph functions as a bridge between the living and the dead. This

transitory interruption is similar to the situation in “The Wanderer” when the Author comes across the Wanderer supine and in the shadows of the breezy elms above: although the Wanderer’s physical body is at rest, he remains cognitively engaged in the process of synthesizing dialectical elements of his self (i.e., body, soul, and spirit). De Man’s assertion that the dialectical aspect of prosopopoeia involves “the art of delicate transition” unearths the similarity between the way in which prosopopoeia functions as a trope and the way in which the Wanderer transcends traditional spatio-temporal boundaries: both prosopopoeia and the Wanderer are fundamentally tied to the movement of delicate transition; however, the former is tied to the gentle displacement of voice, and the latter is tied to the gentle displacement of states of selfhood.

As Sharon Setzer observes in “Wordsworth’s Wanderer, the Epitaph, and the Uncanny,” in “Essay upon Epitaphs” Wordsworth invokes an image similar to the supine Wanderer resting in the shade. Wordsworth describes a “traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, ‘Pause, Traveller!’ so often found upon the monuments” (173-76). Just as the resting Wanderer continues to roam via his continual, dynamic cognitive function, so too is the resting traveler animated. The latter’s animation, however, is derived not from the relational movement of synthesizing the elements of his *own* selfhood (i.e., body, soul, and spirit), but from the relationship *between* the traveler and the inhabitant of the tomb upon which he leans, a relationship made possible through epitaph. Indeed, rather than detracting from the emphasis on movement, the halted traveler represents the importance of movement to the granting of

continual life and continued vivaciousness, as the traveler “figuratively and literally giv[es] voice to the funeral text [and] animates the deceased” (Clymer 352).

While the Wanderer’s transcendence of spatio-temporal boundaries and actualization of “the life which cannot die” are derived from his ability to communicate between different aspects of his self, and the life-granting aspect of epitaph is derived through the prosopopoeic communication between the living and the dead, both models rely on the ability to synthesize seemingly irreconcilable states of being. Indeed, it is, as de Man notes, “the art of delicate transition” that propels prosopopoeia. Using some of Wordsworth’s own language in “Essay upon Epitaphs” to support this statement, de Man avers that:

The gradual transformations occur in such a way that “feelings [that] seem opposite to each other have another and finer connection than that of contrast.” The stylistics of epitaph are very remote from the “unmeaning antithesis” of satire; they proceed instead by gliding displacements, by, says Wordsworth, “smooth gradation or gentle transition, to some other kindred quality,” “kept within the circle of qualities which range themselves quietly by each other’s sides.” (76)

Prosopopoeic communication between the living and the dead and a realization of absolute mortality is an essential element not just to the dead but to the *living* as well. Wordsworth exclaims it would be a joyless existence if he were confronted with an existence in which life ends at the doorstep of the grave:

I confess, with me the conviction is absolute that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced [by a belief in eternal life],

such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow. (93-102)

For Wordsworth, were there no way to synthesize the states of life and death, were there to be no innate belief in continuance beyond death, even living humans would navigate their way through their lives like shadows, like mere shells as if their most vital component—their spirit—went missing. Paradoxically, rather than propelling an individual to experience the utmost sense of vitality while alive, the notion that humans are destined only for the end-point of a gravesite would cause an individual to lose all sensation of being alive. For Wordsworth it is the gravesite, then, that becomes a place where life's journey is merely interrupted but not ended by death (de Man 74). And it is the epitaph on the gravesite that gives life back to the deceased, that allows the voice of the grave's inhabitant to reemerge in the figure of prosopopoeia. The emphasis on the movement of gradual displacement until seeming opposites come to be understood not as antithetical but as complementary and necessarily intertwined is the movement that is critical to the Wanderer's transition from immediate, primal self to eternal, transcendent self. Rather than perceiving the conditions of the finite and infinite and the temporal and eternal as adversarial forces, the Wanderer understands that negation of the finite and

temporal is not the pathway to the infinite and eternal. It is not static negation, but dynamic synthesis of the dialectics of selfhood that paves the way for an endless journey.

In analyzing the trope of prosopopoeia from a rhetorical perspective, de Man takes issue with what he characterizes as Wordsworth's own text's counseling paradoxically against the use of prosopopoeia, the main figure of the text. De Man investigates why Wordsworth reproduced in the first "Essay upon Epitaphs" Milton's epitaphic poem to Shakespeare, yet omitted six lines from the poem. De Man concludes that the omission is an effort to conceal the existence of a latent threat inherent in the trope of prosopopoeia. In particular, de Man notes that the omitted lines, "Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving / Dost make us marble with too much conceiving" exemplify this threat. De Man explains that the phrase, "Dost make us marble," "cannot fail to evoke the latent threat that inhabits prosopopoeia, namely that by making the death speak, the symmetrical structure of the trope implies, by the same token, that the living are struck dumb, frozen in their own death" (78). In other words, according to de Man the trope requires a process of reciprocity in which the absent and lifeless are animated by receiving the voice (and corresponding face) of the living, and the present and living are in turn rendered inanimate, voiceless, and faceless.

While this conclusion as derived from a strictly interpreted rhetorical perspective may be sound, it is noteworthy that de Man's own conclusion falls into the very trap that prosopopoeia warns against, i.e., analyzing language through the lens of the antithetical and irreconcilable dialectical discourse. An alternate reading, then, is that by making the death speak, the living become *unfrozen* in the face of their death: an intimation of immortality is the "genial warmth" that prevents a frost from "chill[ing] the spirit.

Without the voice of the dead from beyond the grave, the living would be the voiceless ghosts “mov[ing] about like [] shadow[s].” Thus, it is not the voice of the dead but the fear of final death that strikes dumb the living. In “Engraved in Tropes: The Figural Logic of Epitaphs and Elegies in Blair, Gray, Cowper, and Wordsworth,” Lorna Clymer offers a similar critique of the way in which de Man’s analysis of the trope of prosopopoeia is flawed.

It is true that the halted traveler is momentarily arrested by the prosopopoeia of the epitaph that strikes the reader motionless in his journey, but de Man’s celebrated deconstructive rigor here wrongly injects a *rigor mortis* into the living. Far from being struck dumbly inert after being halted by an epitaphic address, the traveler’s arrest is followed by vocalization; in voicing the text, the reader activates the prosopopoeia that confers a mask or persona upon the dead. The epitaph necessitates a dramatic encounter between the reader and the text, between the living and the dead, a more essential exchange than the one presumed in de Man’s mere “possibility” of reply. (353)

Just as prosopopoeia relies upon the “the art of delicate transition,” Wordsworth’s contention that humans have an “immortal Soul” is a belief founded on the movement of synthesis, on the “connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other” (135-38). To demonstrate how the immortal soul travels from the grave via the voice of the dead, and how this reemergence absolutely relies upon a dialectical process, Wordsworth writes:

As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears. (138-147)

The use of the phrase “the quarter” to describe the region in which the sun sets and the region in which the sun rises leaves open an undissected region of existence. Working through gentle displacement, however, Wordsworth immediately fills this region with those very quarters and erases any demarcation between setting and rising sun, between dying and being born. The immortal, “contemplative Soul” is not daunted when “travelling in the direction of mortality” because, as the Wanderer knows, direction is only meaningful, and furthermore knowable, if there is an end-point. Thus, the contemplative Soul simply “advances to the country of everlasting life,” and returns to walk among the living, “the land of transitory things.” Ultimately, just like the figure of *prosopopoeia*, the Wanderer exists in a liminal state between life and death.

In “*Essay upon Epitaphs*,” Wordsworth asserts that *prosopopoeic* discourse between the living and the dead engenders a “transmortal community” (Fosso 7) in which an uncanny voice from beyond the grave breathes life back into the dead. Although it is

the living who—by remembering the dead through epitaph—reanimate the dead, the living have an “indebtedness to those dead” (Fosso 6), for it is the presence of that very voice that quells for the living their anxiety about physical mortality. As discussed above, Wordsworth explains that “if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced [by a belief in eternal life], such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy” (94-98). Thus, for Wordsworth it is critical that humans are able to believe the “intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable” (40-41).

Wordsworth supports his notion that there exists within humans an innate awareness of immortality by giving an example of a child standing by the side of a running stream and posing the question: “Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?” (71-72) Wordsworth answers this rhetorical question by stating: “And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity” (72-77). This is analogous to the way in which humans, according to Wordsworth, experience an innate awareness of immortality: the grave may be the letter of the answer to the question where do the deceased reside, but the spirit of the answer is that the deceased reside in perpetuity. Further, in a literal sense, an epitaph in letter is merely letters engraved in a monument, but for Wordsworth an epitaph in spirit is the voice of the dead. Extending the notion of the spirit of the Wordsworthian epitaph, one

scholar has noted that the Wordsworthian epitaph is “the word made flesh, the word brought to life” (Dabundo 12).

Just as the act of remembrance plays a critical role in sustaining a transmortal community, the act of remembrance as it pertains to an artist’s ability to be immortalized by his or her community is at the heart of “Resolution and Independence.” In “Resolution,” the speaker implies that the failure of a poet to achieve widespread readership as well as high critical acclaim is not simply a disappointment that can be compartmentalized within the realm of professional endeavors; rather, such a failure is an exceedingly destructive force that denigrates the integrity of the poet’s relationships, personal heart and mind, and financial well-being, that leads to, “Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty” (35). Indeed, the speaker projects an uncanny double to fulfill the very task of serving as a substitute divine entity who has the power to ameliorate the poet’s deep concern that, “We poets in our youth begin in gladness; / But thereof come in the end despondency and madness” (48-49). While Wordsworth may be working through, via the characters of the speaker and the Leech Gatherer in “Resolution and Independence,” his own concern about how, and indeed if, he will be remembered through his writing, in “Essay upon Epitaphs” Wordsworth explicitly expresses this concern.

“Essay upon Epitaphs,” as de Man comments, “turns compulsively from an essay *upon* epitaphs to being itself an epitaph, and, more specifically, the author’s own monumental inscription or autobiography” (72). The turn comes most noticeably when Wordsworth sets forth the requirements for writing epitaphs and begins by describing death as a leveling factor: “To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel

themselves to be in absolute coincidence” (308-10). Wordsworth appears to almost idealize writers of epitaphs (an idealization that is more significant given de Man’s comment), cataloging the many criteria of inscription that epitaph writers must fulfill to actually allow for the voice of the deceased to be heard. He notes that an epitaph need not, and indeed should not, deconstruct the deceased and address his or her discrete characteristics; rather, the deceased should be immortalized by an epitaph that speaks to the deceased as a whole person and that does not depict imperfections that may have plagued the living person. Wordsworth characterizes this depiction not as deceitful, but as embodying “truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections of the living!” (346-347) One begins to question if Wordsworth is indeed leaving instructions for his own epitaph, asking his loved ones and readers to look at his character as a whole and to not focus on his specific failings. An epitaph may, however, focus on the fragilities common to the nature of being human, so that “[t]he composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in heaven” (362-66).

Wordsworth’s comment that “[t]o be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence” (308-10) may be read as a salutary comment that ameliorates the feelings of exile and isolation often associated with an existential crisis about impending death. However, if all humans must face death, Wordsworth, too, must face his own anxiety about this fact. Thus, it becomes critical for Wordsworth to combat this anxiety by assurances that he will benefit from the figure of

prosopopoeia. It is the still-living that keeps the dead alive through memory, but this immortality is realized only if the epitaph is crafted correctly so as to fulfill its function of providing a voice for the dead. If this re-animation is not achieved, “the memorial is unaffecting and profitless” (379-80), and the grave is indeed the end-point.

After much discussion about the notion of a “perfect epitaph,” Wordsworth concludes the first “Essay upon Epitaphs” with a startling observation. Wordsworth admits that he has omitted one critical exception to the general rule about epitaphs: “[I]f it be the *actions* of a man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act” (472-76). Wordsworth offers that prominent writers are an example of such an exception, explaining that such individuals need no biographic sketch or delineations of their character to individualize these dead in the minds of the living because “[t]his is already done by their Works, in the memories of men” (482). The connection between artistic works and the immortality of the creator of those works is problematic for Wordsworth, of course, for if his work does not continue to be read, he will perish in the grave. Wordsworth’s use of Milton’s epitaphic poem about Shakespeare as the last words of his essay is a reflection of his deepest anxiety about not succeeding as a poet worthy of such immortality, and, thus, ultimately reliant upon epitaph as a way in which to reemerge as a voice from beyond the grave via the trope of prosopopoeia.

In “Rhetoric and the Existential: Romantic Studies and the Question of the Subject,” Thomas Pfau asserts, “The most significant transformation of the paradigm of subjectivity within the study of romanticism involves essentially the substitution of

structures of consciousness by structures of language” (498). While my thesis employs methodologies from both the psychologically-influenced phenomenology of Hartman and the deconstructionist-influenced phenomenology of Pfau and de Man, Pfau’s comment about the way in which language informs subjectivity is vital to my thesis’s argument about the way in which movement informs Wordsworthian selfhood. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the movement attendant to the process of transference, and ultimately resolution of anxiety, is an integral part of the talking cure, just as in “Resolution and Independence” the movement attendant to the process of the speaker transferring his anxiety onto the figure of the Leech Gatherer so as to be pacified is an integral part of the process of doubling. Indeed, even within the psychoanalytic relationship transference itself is a form of doubling, for in successful transference the analyst becomes a double for the mother and/or father. Significantly, the psychoanalytic talking cure is premised upon a wandering discourse that the patient engages in not with the analyst, but with himself or herself.

From a deconstructive, or rhetorical, perspective, circuitous movement is an essential element of tropes, notably of the trope of metaphor. Indeed, there are many similarities between the way in which metaphor functions as a structure and the way in which the Wanderer realizes transcendent selfhood. In “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy,” Jacques Derrida unearths a relationship between movement and the production of knowledge. Derrida opens his essay:

From philosophy, rhetoric. That is, here, to make from a volume, approximately, more or less, a flower, to extract a flower, to mount it, or rather to have it mount itself, bring itself to light—and turning away, as if

from itself, come round again, such a flower engraves—learning to cultivate, by means of a lapidary’s reckoning, patience . . . (209)

Note how Derrida’s own metaphor emphasizes the notion of metaphor bringing itself to light, to presence, via movement, in this case via turns, what Derrida later describes as “the ideal of every language, and in particular of metaphor, being to bring to knowledge the thing itself, the turn of speech will be better if it brings us closer to the thing’s essential or proper truth” (247). By giving something a name that belongs to something else, metaphor also involves a kind of transference (231) and “a certainly inevitable detour” (270) that “opens the wandering of the semantic” and gives affect to the act of displacement (241). The process of metaphor mirrors that of the Wanderer’s self-actualization, as both processes rely on turns and re-turns, displacement and synthesis, to propel the emergence of truth, of knowledge. Thus, while the Wanderer may not be a double in the sense of the uncanny, perhaps he is, after all, a double for metaphor.

There is, however, a point—a turn—of stark difference between the structure of metaphor and the Wanderer. Derrida explains that as metaphor completes its process of delivering the proper, the intended, truth, it “always carries death within itself” (271). While the Wanderer, who does not negate death’s existence, certainly carries the knowledge of death within himself, he transcends this ontological state, and by walking through death, becomes neither the metaphor nor the Derridean metaphorical “dried flower in a book” (271). Thus, it may be the living flower that engraves, but it is the liminal wanderers who travel the journey back.

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