

Analyse the
relationship between
dorothy's diary



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' It is often suggested that the source for many of William Wordsworth's poems lies in the pages of Dorothy Wordsworth's journal. Quite frequently, Dorothy describes an incident in her journal, and William writes a poem about the same incident, often around two years later. ' It is a common observation that whilst Dorothy is a recorder - ' her face was excessively brown' - William is a transformer - ' Her skin was of Egyptian brown' . The intertextuality between The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals and ' I wandered lonely as a Cloud' allows both Dorothy and William to write about the same event, being equally as descriptive, but in very differing ways. Dorothy writes in a realist ' log-book' like style, whereas William writes in a romantic ballad style. This can be very misleading, as it gives William's work more emotional attachment even though his work is drawn upon Dorothy's diary, which in its turn is very detached, including little personal revelation. When read in conjunction with William's poetry, Dorothy's journal seems to be a set of notes written especially for him by her. In fact, from the very beginning of the journals Dorothy has made it quite clear that she was writing them for William's ' pleasure' . This ties in with many of the diary entries in which she has described taking care of William in a physical sense. In a way this depicts the manner in which William uses his sister's journal to acquire the subject of his poetry, which makes it seem as though Dorothy is his inspiration.

Unlike her brother, Dorothy seems to be less solitary in her experiences, her accounts of what happened and who was with her are less personal than William's. Dorothy tends to include everyone who surrounded her at that point and time - ' We [Dorothy and her brother William] were in the woods

beyond Gowbarrow park' - whereas William makes it a companionless experience, he forgets everyone that may have been sharing the moment with him - ' I wandered lonely as a Cloud' . This, in conjunction with the use of imagery, similes and personification, not only makes William's poems more accessible to a wide range of readers but it also adds character and personality, whereas Dorothy's journal tends to be more reserved and closed to interpretation. Although both use semantic field of nature, William's use is more affective as it conveys emotion, passion and attachment to his work.

The use of first person narrative in both texts is effective in differing ways. In Dorothy's journal, the use of first person narrative helps the reader gain an in-depth insight into her mind, whereas the first person narrative in William's poem helps the reader become engrossed and connect with his emotions.

The A-B-A-B-C-C rhyme scheme adapted by William not only gives the poem rhythm, but combined with the iambic pentameter makes it take on a very inviting and bouncy flow, almost emulating the ' dancing Daffodils' . On the other hand, Dorothy's full on descriptive journal, shows the reader exactly how the daffodils ' tossed & reeled & danced' - thus impeding them from developing a personal picture. This really emphasises the personality of the diary form, as it shows she is writing to record those moments, which end up being so pivotal for William's inspiration. William's use of alliteration and onomatopoeia also increases the natural rhythm of words and at certain points accentuates the natural sounds of nature.

William tends to use imagery in order to depict the beauty of nature, whereas Dorothy uses nature itself to depict the beauty of the moment. This correlates with the style of the time, as female writers honed in on more

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detailed images of nature, whereas male writers would be more likely to use verse (ballad) forms, with romanticised imagery of nature. This is partly the reason why William's use of the first person personal pronoun is very effective in the poem and Dorothy's use first person plural pronoun is extremely suited to the journal form of her prose. The syntax of both pieces also mirrors this.

William's word order is melodious and adapts a very rhythmic tone - ' Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the milky way, They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay: Ten thousand saw I at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance. ' Whereas, Dorothy uses longer and more complex phrases - ' I never saw daffodils so beautiful they grew among the mossy stones about & about them, some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness & the rest tossed & reeled & danced & seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the lake, they looked so gay ever glancing ever changing. Both pieces are very representative of the writer's character and state of mind. The intertextuality between both texts is one that reflects the relationship of the two individuals.

' I wandered lonely as a Cloud' is not William's only poem based on her journal and conversations between the two. In Dorothy's entry for Sunday, March 14th 1802, she clearly states that ' he [William] wrote the Poem to a Butterfly' after she had ' told him that [she] used to chase them a little but that [she] was afraid of brushing the dust off their wings, & did not catch them. This not only shows that Dorothy played an important role in William's inspiration, but it also shows that she herself wanted to and was glad to have <https://assignbuster.com/analyse-the-relationship-between-dorothys-diary/>

such an influence on William's work. In 'Poem to a Butterfly' William quotes Dorothy's fear of brushing 'The dust from off its wings', however, unlike Dorothy who just writes 'they used to kill the white ones', William actually mentions their other sister 'Emmeline'. Both seem to find a pleasurable solace in reminiscing on their infancy through naturalist memories, although William seems to evolve his perception of the everyday world.

He forms his ideas in a structure which mirrors the reality and essential beauty of the everyday world. Dorothy on the other hand is very direct and forms a sharp image of the everyday world surrounding her. This acute honesty sweetens William's poem. Whilst Dorothy states that 'they [William and, perhaps, their sister - Emmeline] used to kill all the white ones', William softens the harshness of it writing that - 'Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days, The time, when in our childish plays My sister Emmeline and I Together chased the butterfly! A very hunter did I rush Upon the prey; which leaps and springs I followed on from brake to bush'. Once again this mirrors William's ability to use a regular rhyme scheme and a 'fluttering' rhythm in order to romanticise and soften his poetry. This is also mirrored in his choice of words.

In his poem 'Beggars' he uses very exotic and adventurous language - 'She towered, fit person for a Queen To lead those ancient Amazonian files; Or ruling Bandit's wife among Grecian isles. Whereas Dorothy uses very plain descriptive language in her journal to describe the same event - 'a very tall woman, tall much beyond the measure of tall women'. This may be because, unlike the other two poems, he actually was not present on this occasion. William stated that the aim of the poem was to 'exhibit the power

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of physical beauty and health and vigour in childhood even in a state of moral depravity' after not being able to write the poem whilst listening to Dorothy read out her diary entry. Like in 'To a Butterfly' he directly quotes Dorothy - 'wreathed round with yellow flowers' and 'a rimless crown' - although due to the structure and the flow of the poem his take on her journal entry is actually more exciting than her own personal account.

By directly quoting Dorothy and adding 'the gayest in the land', he adds more significance to the wreath - this really emphasises his aim, as it brings out 'the power of physical beauty' intertwined with grandeur and abundance within the language he uses. Dorothy on the other hand focuses more on recording the event accurately, this really emphasises the belief that she wrote the journals purposely descriptively so that William could experience the moments as though he were there personally or even so that they could both relive them - like in the poem 'To a Butterfly' and according to her account of that day. When using Dorothy's journal to help him compose, William tends to make some sort of reference to her journal. Although there aren't always direct quotes, there tends to be a subtle detail which mirrors a phrase from the entry which inspired him. In 'I wandered lonely as a Cloud' he often refers to the 'dancing Daffodils' just like Dorothy describes the daffodils as having 'tossed & reeled & danced'. In "To a Butterfly' he directly quotes her - 'The dust from its wings' - this may be because the phrase itself holds strong naturalist imagery, and therefore becomes a vital image in the poem, just like it is in her journal entry.

In 'Beggars' the direct quotes he picked are further emphasized when he adds his own interpretation to them - 'Wreathed round with yellow flowers

the gayest of the land. ' This is perhaps because both had different aims and readers in mind. From the poems I've read in conjunction with ' The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals' it has become clear that whilst Dorothy wrote for her brother's ' pleasure' and aid - William wrote introspectively, hypothetically, and apprehensive that along with the altering landscape his memory would be forgotten or malformed. There is a considerable physical contrast between the images in Dorothy's and William's work, although both often write about the same events.

This is generally because both seem to follow the attitudes that typify female and male writers of the romantic era. Dorothy's journal is distant and universal in the themes it addresses, while at the same time focussing on small details which could easily be unnoticed, although carrying significant underlying messages. I found this the case when it came to her use of nature - as I read further and further into the journals it became apparent to me that she took refuge in the ever-changing yet constant wonders of nature. William on the other hand, as a male writer took liberty to reflect on his individual significance to others, and focuses on larger objects in his descriptions. Their descriptions of their memories contain remnants of beauty and quiet that stayed with them throughout their lives and still echo through their work, together with pangs of pain which are so cunningly referred to in their work.

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