

On the sonnet john
keats and william
wordsworth essay
sample



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John Keats and William Wordsworth ironically wrote two sonnets about the sonnet with contrasting attitudes. Both authors have different ideas and feelings about the constraints imposed on the poet by the sonnet form. Keats, although he feels negatively about the constraints imposed by the sonnet format, he writes the sonnet in his own creative unidentifiable form. Wordsworth however, tells the reader that he uses the format of the sonnet as a refuge and solace from "too much liberty." Both authors sonnets contrast in their attitude and form but also are similar in some of the techniques used.

One of the largest notable difference in the two sonnets is the form used; Keats used an unidentifiable form rather than the standard Shakespearean or Petrarchan form. Wordsworth uses an Italian rhyme scheme in his sonnet to convey his attitude that he does like the "Sonnet's scanty plot of ground." Keats use of an unidentifiable form further extends his attitude that even while being limited the poet can still let the "Muse be free." Other contrasts between the poets and their poems is the use of allusions; Keats alludes to Andromeda, a Greek myth, and Wordsworth does not use allusions, however he does give examples that the reader can relate to.

Both Keats and Wordsworth use elaborate diction to convey the constraint and weight of the sonnets form. The diction in Keats sonnet especially gives the reader a feeling of the chains a poet is bound with in writing a sonnet. Wordsworth uses diction that helps to reader to understand the weight that is lifted from having too much liberty. Both poets create vivid images of the constraintment. Wordsworth uses the examples of the nuns and hermits to

give an image of the boundaries that are set by the poem. Keats uses Greek imagery to convey his feeling of restriction.

“ In truth the prison, unto which we doom / Ourselves, no prison is.” Both Keats and Wordsworth, one feeling constrained and one feeling solace, show that the sonnet form is not a prison. Keats feels that even while being constrained, the poet must still be creative and not be bound by the format, but by “ garlands of [one’s] own.” Wordsworth’s attitude is one of solace and contentment, that although will still being bound, one must understand that the format lifts the weight imposed by “ too much liberty.”