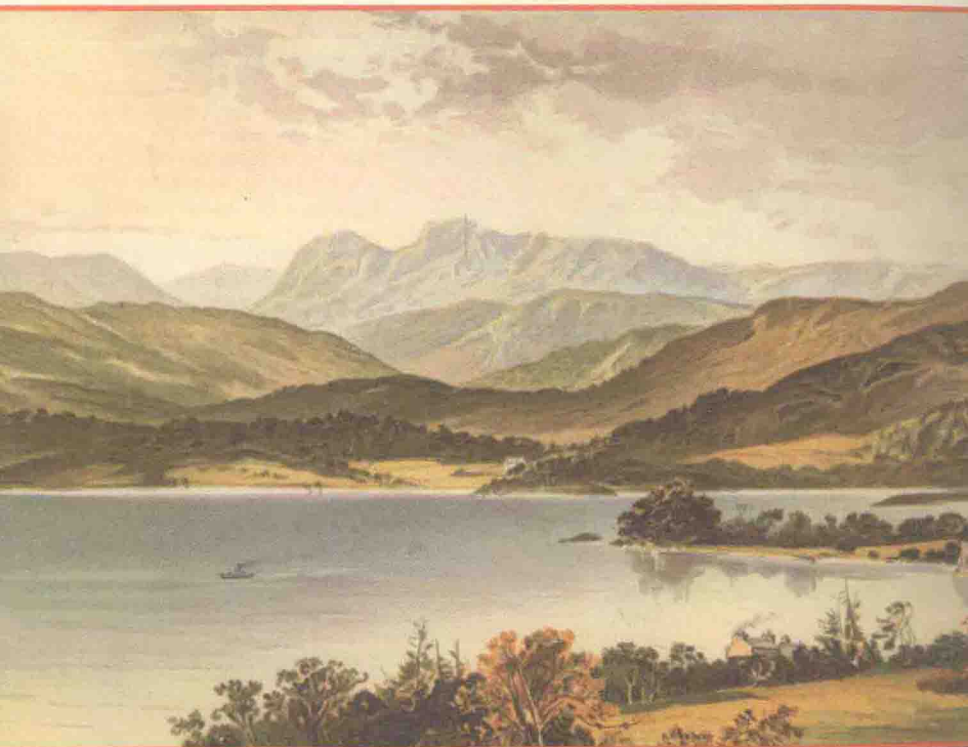


A Longman Cultural Edition

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH



Edited by

Susan M. Levin

A Longman Cultural Edition

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH



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Editor-in-Chief: Joseph P. Terry
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Cover Designer/Manager: John Callahan
Cover Illustration: Waterhead Windermere, anonymous chromolithograph
owned and provided by Susan M. Levin
Title page: Silhouette of Dorothy Wordsworth as a Young Woman
(The Wordsworth Trust United Kingdom)
Manufacturing Manager: Mary Fischer
Printer and Binder: R.R. Donnelley/Harrisonburg
Cover Printer: Phoenix Color Corp.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wordsworth, Dorothy, 1771–1855.

[Selections. 2009]

Dorothy Wordsworth / edited by Susan M. Levin. — A Longman
cultural ed.

p. cm. — (Longman cultural editions)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-27775-6

ISBN-10: 0-321-27775-9

1. Wordsworth, Dorothy, 1771–1855. 2. Authors, English—19th
century—Biography. I. Levin, Susan M., 1950– II. Title.

PR5849.A3 2009

828'.703—dc22

2007052443

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Please visit us at <http://www.ablongman.com>.

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-27775-6

ISBN-10: 0-321-27775-9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10—DOH—11 10 09 08

About Longman Cultural Editions

Reading always vibrates with the transformations of the day—now, yesterday, and centuries ago when presses first put printed language into circulation. So too, literary culture is always open to change, with new pulses of imagination confronting older practices, texts transforming under new ways of reading and new perspectives of understanding, canons shifting and expanding, traditions reviewed and renewed, recast and reformed. Inspired by the innovative *Longman Anthology of British Literature*, Longman Cultural Editions present key texts in contexts that illuminate the lively intersections of literature, tradition, and culture. In each volume, a principal work gains new dimensions from materials that relate it to its past, present, and future: to informing traditions and debates, to the conversations and controversies of its own historical moment, to later eras of reading and reaction.

The series is designed for several kinds of readers and several situations of reading: the cultural editions offer appealing complements to the *Anthology*, as well as attractive resources for a variety of coursework, or for independent encounters. First-time readers will find productive paths to investigate, while more-seasoned readers will enjoy the fresh perspectives and provocative juxtapositions. The contexts for adventure vary from volume to volume, but the constants (in addition to handsome production and affordable pricing) are an important literary work, expertly edited and helpfully annotated; an inviting introduction; a table of dates to track its composition, publication, and reception in relation to biographical, cultural, and historical events; and a guide for further study. To these common measures and uncommon enhancements, we invite your attention and curiosity.

Susan J. Wolfson, General Editor
Professor of English, Princeton University

About This Edition

In assembling selections from her work across a history of its production for the first time, this Longman edition provides an account both of Dorothy Wordsworth's writings and of how readers at different times have experienced them. As the sister of William Wordsworth and a member of his household, Dorothy Wordsworth was, until the 1980s, regarded more as an adjunct to the literary energies of Romanticism than as an independent authorial presence. Yet her writing so fascinated so many people that it was circulated both in manuscript and in publications. The texts presented here, many of which have not been readily available to the reading public, offer a record of a woman organizing her world and of how that record achieves public awareness.

Dorothy Wordsworth copied and recopied her journals and poems and sent them to family and friends all over England. To the Clarksons, for instance, she sent a version of the Green Narrative that is printed here for the first time. She wrote poetry, some of which William Wordsworth included in his collections of 1815, 1836, and 1842. Many poems, however, remained in manuscript until the 1980s when I collected them in *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism*, texts reprinted here.

Her preferred mode of expression was the journal. In her hands this form becomes a powerful narrative of emotional, domestic, and artistic life sustained among a group of extraordinary people. In 1851, her nephew Christopher Wordsworth published excerpts from her work in his *Memoirs of William Wordsworth, poet laureate*, some of which are included here. Not until 1875 did a journal receive conventional publication, when Principal Shairp put out *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland a.d. 1803*, my basis for selections from the Scottish tour. So successful was Shairp's endeavor (he received many fan letters) that scholars such as William Knight and Ernest de Selincourt turned to the manuscripts preserved at

Dove Cottage in Grasmere to create fuller editions of her other journals. Knight's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions are my basis for selections from both her journals and letters.

Both personal and cultural, her perennially resonant concerns gain focus through the contextual material presented here. A table of dates provides orientation to literary, political, and cultural events of her time. As descriptions by her contemporaries Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey, and Maria Jane Jewsbury demonstrate, she was a woman who impressed and puzzled those around her. William Hazlitt, Samuel Rogers, and Thomas De Quincey portray her daily life in the Wordsworth circle—the walking, the talking, the writing, the family dynamic. Considered strange, perhaps incestuous, the Wordsworths' life generated an investigation by the Home Secretary, described in letters presented here for the first time since the 1930s.

With other women of the household, Dorothy was responsible for daily cuisine and home management. Cookbooks provide important insights into cultural norms—one thinks of *The Settlement Cookbook* or *The Way to a Man's Heart* that from 1901 helped integrate so many Jewish immigrants into the American way, or of how Julia Child's work developed American tastes. Hannah Glasse's *Art of Cookery* served a similar function in Dorothy's day, and so a brief excerpt is included. A chart explaining monetary values and units of measure helps clarify her daily concerns.

A selection of William's poems and De Quincey's narrative of the Green tragedy illuminate Dorothy Wordsworth's place in a community of writers. As she and her circle registered their local world and traveled abroad, they produced accounts influenced by theories of the picturesque as well as by the culture of travel writing. Selections from William Gilpin, Mary Russell Mitford, Ann Radcliffe, Henry Crabb Robinson, and Mary Wordsworth that parallel her work establish a context for Dorothy's views of her world.

Illustrations also illuminate. Three portraits of Dorothy Wordsworth reveal her changing appearance. The silhouette suggests the slim young woman who wrote to her friend Jane in a letter of May 6, 1792, of gaining two pounds. "I now reach *eight stone*." A stone is 14 pounds. At 112 pounds, Dorothy stayed trim by walking miles every day. An effect of her illness was loss of mobility and weight gain, reflected in Crosthwaite's formal portrait of her at 62. Nine years later, John Harden sketched her in a kind of wheelchair.

And finally, the importance of social and political activities in Dorothy Wordsworth's life cannot be overstated. The school she

helped create, part of a movement to allow women some education, drew on the work of educator Sarah Trimmer, from whose *Economy of Charity* I provide a short excerpt. Dorothy's writing gives an account of a changing world as people are thrown off their land, partly owing to enclosure, the redistribution and fencing off of private and public property to create large, private holdings. Her concerns are those of a country farmer whose 1786 pamphlet *Cursory Remarks on Inclosures* illuminates issues of the Grasmere journals and the Green narrative. Often cited by economists and cultural historians, this pamphlet has been out of print since the early nineteenth century, but is presented here.

In all the texts of this edition, annotations are mine, unless otherwise noted. Dealing with many Wordsworths can be confusing, so for clarity I identify them by first name. I also use the following abbreviations: DW—Dorothy Wordsworth; WmW—William Wordsworth; STC—Samuel Taylor Coleridge; MW—Mary Wordsworth.

Because Dorothy Wordsworth's writing appears in many different forms in many different places, collecting it presents particular challenges. In the 1940s and 1950s, Helen Darbishire and Mary Moorman produced further editions of the journals and arranged for copies of all the Dove Cottage material to be brought to North America. One tradition maintains that during the Cold War, Darbishire became convinced that the Russians would head to the Lake District to bomb Dove Cottage and the national treasures it held. The manuscripts would have to be photocopied for safekeeping. But then what? George Healey, the director of libraries at Cornell University, convinced her to give Cornell the reproductions. But worried that Ithaca, in a location sometimes called "The American Lake District," might also be vulnerable to attack, she took out a map of Canada, closed her eyes, and put her finger down on a random spot, which turned out to be Winnipeg. A second set of copies was sent to a bank vault there.

Working with such a variety of material has indebted me to many people and institutions. The Cornell Wordsworth collection has been invaluable, as have library resources at Drew University, Columbia University, and Stevens Institute of Technology. As holder of copyright to the works of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, the Wordsworth Trust has kindly supported this project. Dorothy's *Narrative of George and Sarah Green* and material from her late journals are published here with permission of The Wordsworth Trust, Cumbria, United Kingdom. My transcription of the Green

narrative is from a manuscript preserved in the British Library and printed here with its permission: © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. Permission to print material from the late journals has also been given by Marilyn Gaull, founding editor of *The Wordsworth Circle*, in which Carl Ketcham's texts used here first appeared. My transcriptions from manuscripts of the poems and of *Mary Jones and her Pet-lamb* in the archive at Dove Cottage Library, Grasmere, first published in *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism*, appear here again with the kind permission of The Wordsworth Trust, Cumbria, United Kingdom. Specific manuscript information about each poem appears in the footnotes. The selection from the *Harvard Library Bulletin* containing Richard Woodhouse's *Cause Book* appears by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University. For some texts no copyright holder could be found, despite an extensive search; we apologize for any omission. We mean to credit all those, from Dorothy Wordsworth's day to our own, who have sustained a community of interest in her writing.

Three great Wordsworthians who have been my teachers have enabled my investigations of Dorothy Wordsworth's life and work: Steven Parrish, Carl Woodring, and M. H. Abrams. Rachel Brownstein, Margaret Homans, and Susan Wolfson, my partner in this Longman project, have been crucial to my involvement with Dorothy. Without the technical assistance of Eric Rosenberg and his staff at Stevens, the proofreading skills of Eleanor Wedge, and the help in every way of my husband, Robert Ready, this edition would not exist.

Susan M. Levin
Stevens Institute of Technology, 2008

Introduction

The name “Dorothy” means “gift of god,” and Dorothy Wordsworth (1771–1855) was born on Christmas day in Cockermouth, Cumberland, the third child and only daughter of John Wordsworth, an attorney, and Anne Wordsworth. Dorothy Wordsworth’s work and life would be bound to the writing community of the Lake District, one that included Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey, and her brother William. Her authorship and sistership converged to create writing—journals, poems, stories, travel narratives, and letters—that have come to be valued as the work of a distinct, intimate sensibility.

John Wordsworth earned his living as scribe and agent to one of the principal landlords of the region, Sir James Lowther. The Wordsworth children occupied a comfortable place in Cockermouth society, but then, in 1778, Anne Wordsworth died. The family disintegrated; the boys were sent away to school, and six-year-old Dorothy was sent to live with Elizabeth Threlkeld Rawson of Halifax, an arrangement Anne had made before her death. With the blessing of her husband, “Aunt” Rawson started Dorothy on a fine education, giving her the classics of England, Greece, and Rome to read and encouraging her to write stories and compositions. Though Dorothy missed her brothers terribly, she seems to have found consolation in literature and in a friendship with Jane Pollard that endured for a lifetime.

At age nine, Dorothy went to boarding school in nearby Hipperholme. Her father’s sudden death in 1783 left the Wordsworth children in a difficult financial position. Dorothy had to continue her education at Miss Mellin’s Day School, near the Rawson home, and then leave school altogether to go live with the

Cooksons—her maternal grandparents and an uncle—at Penrith. These grim relatives, her legal guardians, discouraged her literary inclinations and were especially upset when William arrived to take his sister on long country walks. Luckily, another uncle, the Reverend Dr. William Cookson, captivated by her intelligence and industry, arranged for Dorothy to live with him and his wife at Fornsett. He taught his niece French, Latin, Italian, math, and geography; Dorothy helped with the housework and with five children. With the Cooksons, she established a Sunday School and then planned for a School of Industry for girls.

Always sustaining her was the plan she and William had of living and writing together. A bequest from William's college friend Raisley Calvert and income from tutoring a friend's son finally made this project possible. Over the protests of their relatives, who considered it "a very bad wild scheme,"¹ William and Dorothy moved to Racedown in 1795 and then, to be near Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to Alfoxden House in 1797.

Viewed as morally and politically dangerous because of their unconventional life, they were asked to leave Alfoxden House. They decided to go to Germany, and having written *Lyrical Ballads* to help finance the trip, Coleridge and the Wordsworths embarked in 1798. The mud and rain of a German winter made the Wordsworths happy to return home in April 1799.

In December, William and Dorothy took up residence at Dove Cottage in Grasmere. William's wife, Mary, joined their household in 1802, and as the family grew they moved to more commodious houses: Allan Bank in 1808 and Rydal Mount in 1813. They lived in the Lake District for the rest of their lives.

Several events were particularly disturbing to Dorothy Wordsworth's precarious balance of art and domesticity: the death at sea in 1805 of her brother Captain John Wordsworth; the falling out with Coleridge in 1810; and, in 1829, her own illness, perhaps a stroke, perhaps arteriosclerosis. Even so, that same year, when nephew Jonny faced a professional and emotional crisis, Aunt Dorothy, almost fifty-eight, was dispatched to see him through. Traveling to his dreary parsonage in Whitwick, she described in a journal entry, departing day: "On new Terrace—Sun bursts out/before setting—unearthly and/brilliant—calls to mind the change to another world—Every/leaf a golden lamp—every twig/bedropped with a diamond. The/splendour

¹ De Selincourt, *Biography*, 59.

departs us rapidly—.” At Whitwick, the light left her. For the next 30 years, she moved in and out of sanity, at times refusing to recognize her world, at times a fervent participant in life around her.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH'S WRITING

If she did not write for publication, Dorothy Wordsworth did write to be read, circulating manuscripts to friends and family. Her journals were kept partly to be consulted by William and other writers. William published some of her poetry with his own; a number of people urged her to publish various writings, and she entered into publication projects.

Her work raises many issues of writing and reading. What does it take for a woman to become a writer? What were the cultural pressures and prejudices that nineteenth-century women faced as they wrote? How does Romanticism define Dorothy Wordsworth's work, and how does Dorothy Wordsworth help define Romanticism? What kind of writer is Dorothy Wordsworth?

The process of defining herself, her community, and her perspective on her world emerges in the Alfoxden notebook (1798), an account of her life in the country with her brother and Coleridge. Both used her ways of seeing and her words in their poems. Her Grasmere journals (1800–1803) relate William's courtship of and marriage to Mary Hutchinson, a narrative reflecting repeated anxiety about being replaced as her brother's companion. Rather than marry, Dorothy remained in the household of her brother, to write, to help him write, and to contribute to the domestic labors. Aunt Dolly did laundry, baked gingerbread, wrote poems for William's five children, and copied and edited her brother's work. Her Grasmere journals, written to organize her own emotions and “to give William pleasure,” provide material for some of his best-known poems. These notebooks also detail the life of the village and the movements of beggars, vagrants, and gypsies, of people displaced in the changing economy of the early nineteenth century. Recording and reflecting on the stories of the men and women who pass her door, Dorothy registers her own center in Grasmere.

Nineteenth-century economics, especially the handling of support for the poor, figure in *A Narrative Concerning George & Sarah Green of the Parish of Grasmere* (1808). Telling of the Greens's death in a snowstorm and of the way the parish organized to support their orphaned children, Dorothy Wordsworth explains a system of

charity under attack by advocates of the workhouse system. The Poor Law Amendment Bill of 1834 helped replace the individual parish care Dorothy extols with, in the words of Dr. John Kay, one of its enforcers, “workhouse humiliations.”

Complementing her commitment to her domestic life in the Lake District are travel narratives in which Dorothy Wordsworth represents herself as the woman who goes out to seek experience in the company of family and friends. Her *Journal of Visit to Hamburgh and of Journey from Hamburgh to Goslar* (1798) provides the group account of her first trip abroad and begins the blending of tourism, landscape description, comparative sociology, and chronicles of memory and change that would animate all her travel writing. Her *Journal of a Tour on the Continent*, 1820, visits the scenes of William’s youth to create her own myth of the mind, nature, and memory. In the Alps, as at home, the stakes are high, as the power of her writing reveals. Many people wrote travel journals; many people wrote diaries—but both Dorothy and her readers recognize the distinguishing force of her vision, of her ability to see and place the details of her world in a unique narrative.

Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland A.D. 1803 has little to do with conventional descriptions. Poet Samuel Rogers was so impressed with Dorothy’s manuscript that he offered to find a publisher. The circumstances surrounding this possible publication demonstrate much about Dorothy’s life as a writer. In 1822, nearly twenty years after the tour, publication was still being discussed. William, referring to Rogers’s “skill and experience in these matters,” writes to him in a letter of September 16 about finally bringing the book to press. Dorothy would like, William adds, to publish a series of her travel writings. Glad to be of service, Rogers advises Dorothy not to sell the copyright, but to “enter the Lottery oneself and not sell the ticket for little or nothing to the bookseller.” He continues: “The bookseller I should go to myself in such a case would be Murray. He will consult Gifford, who will certainly be charmed with a talent such as hers. . . .”² Replying to Rogers on January 3, 1823, Dorothy says she prefers a “middle course,” and suggests that a bookseller might be convinced to pay for the right to

² Hill, *Letters*, 3, 1, p. 155n. John Murray was the publisher of choice for many writers, including Byron, to whom in 1816 he paid £2000 for canto III of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*. Jane Austen sold the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* for £110. William Gifford was a founding editor of the *Quarterly Review*, also published by Murray.

publish a certain number of copies. She would, however, need to receive at least £200 to make relinquishing her privacy worthwhile. By 1837, when her health and mind had disintegrated, William put an end to the possibility of her publishing and wrote of the Scottish tour project: "I *had* hoped that my carrying my Sister's journal thro' the press might prove a salutary interest to her—but as I no longer can cherish that hope, I must defer the publication—we find that the work perhaps would not interest her at all, or if it did, like every thing that excites her, it would do her harm."³

The Green narrative also generates one of many discussions Dorothy had about publication and about the profession of authorship. The Clarksons urge that this extraordinary work be given larger circulation through publication. Dorothy writes to Catherine Clarkson: "My dear Friend, I cannot express what pain I feel in refusing to grant any request of yours, and above all one in which dear Mr. Clarkson joins so earnestly, but indeed I cannot have that narrative published." She then makes a statement which is often taken to mean that she did not see herself as a publishing writer: ". . . I should detest the idea of setting myself up as an author." If we look at the full context of the statement, however, its meaning is not so clear-cut. She writes: "I cannot have that narrative published. My reasons are entirely disconnected with myself, much as I should detest the idea of setting myself up as an Author. I should not object on that score as if it had been an invention of my own. It might have been published without a name, and nobody would have thought of me. But on account of the family of the Greens I cannot consent." She then goes on to write of her fears that publication might "bring the children forward to notice as Individuals, and we know not what injurious effect this might have upon them."⁴

Dorothy focuses on avoiding notoriety, both for herself and others. Hers is an anxiety many women feel about the prospect of becoming public figures, an anxiety enhanced by the ambivalence she must have felt about treading on her brother's turf. Her objections to publication also raise a general question about works drawn "from real life": what effect will the text have on the subject? For a Romantic writer, who often takes herself and those nearest to her as the best subject available, the concern is typical.

³ Hill, *Letters*, 6, pp. 505–506.

⁴ Knight, *Letters*, I, p.351.

But as she aged, Dorothy's own writing, especially her poetry, became her focus. Her poetry underscores her relationship to the writers around her even as it emphasizes her need to distinguish herself from them. Analyzing her life as a Lake District woman, the poems set past fantasies against present realities. Speaking to some of William's most famous poetry, they show the "violet betrayed," and "consciousness no longer hidden." She continually recited her verse, and when a gift was required, Dorothy often sent some of her poems.

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This chromolithograph of Windermere is one of a set of four Lake District scenes, which I purchased at the auction held during the Wordsworth Summer Conference in Grasmere. The late Jonathan Wordsworth, a descendant of Dorothy's brother Christopher, served as auctioneer. It was one of his favorite conference events, and he performed with the grace and exhilaration that made him such an important presence for students of the Wordsworth circle. In the 1830s, chromolithography, a process dependent on the precise laying of differently colored lithographic stones or plates, began to supersede hand application of color and became extremely popular by the end of the century.

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