

Sample Outline

Harry Potter

Ms. Boland

English 2 Honors

14 December 2014

Dorothy Wordsworth: Secret Poet

Thesis: Dorothy Wordsworth's complicated relationship with her brother, William, as well as her realist ideology developed through many childhood events, are shown in her literary works, many of which shaped her brother's poetry as well.

- I. Dorothy's experiences as a child with the hardships of life left her searching for maternal and paternal affection and happiness.
 - A. Dorothy was only six years old when her mother died (Woof).
 - B. After her mother died, Dorothy went to live with her mother's cousin, Elizabeth Threlkeld, in Halifax, Yorkshire (Woof).
 1. Elizabeth Threlkeld, called "Aunt Elizabeth" by Dorothy, encouraged good habits and became a role model for Dorothy (Woof).
 2. Aunt Elizabeth trained Dorothy and focused on character as opposed to accomplishment (Woof).
 - C. "For nine and a half years, She saw neither her brothers nor her father, and was not in Cockermouth for her father's funeral at the start of 1784, when she was twelve" (Woof).

- D. Despite going through several traumatic experiences in her childhood, Dorothy developed a close relationship with a girl at her boarding school (Woof).
1. This led her to have good memories of her childhood (Woof).
 - i. She became so obsessed with these happy memories, that she abandoned any chance of living in the moment (Woof).
 - a. In “Grasmere Journal” on December 24, 1801, the day before her thirtieth birthday, she wrote that she was thinking about last year when she should have been enjoying her current year’s birthday (Woof).
- II. Dorothy’s close relationship with her brother, William, allowed her to become a primary inspiration and influence on William’s works.
- A. When she was twenty-four, Dorothy moved to Racedown with William (Levin).
1. William became a writer (Levin).
 2. Dorothy kept the house clean, while also helping William with his writing (Levin).
 3. This was around the same time that she began to write many letters (Levin).
- B. Two years later, Dorothy and William moved to Alfoxden House (Levin).
1. This was where Dorothy began writing her Alfoxden Journal, in which she recorded her life with William (Levin).

C. Dorothy and William then moved to Dove Cottage, located in the fairly isolated Lake District (“Discover Dove Cottage.”).

1. Here in Dove Cottage, “William Wordsworth wrote some of the greatest poetry in the English language and Dorothy kept her famous 'Grasmere Journal'” (“Discover Dove Cottage.”).

i. In one journal entry, Dorothy discusses how William “soon made his way to the Library piled up in a corner of the window. He brought out a volume of Enfield's *Speaker*, another miscellany, and an odd volume of Congreve's plays” (Scott).

a. This shows the intimacy of Dorothy and William's relationship.

b. William encouraged Dorothy to read and appreciate writing.

D. Dorothy's obsession with William turned into a kind of emotional incest.

1. The two had a deep connection and made a promise they would never leave each other (“Sister Act”).

2. “In some ways, it was a very incestuous relationship because for Dorothy, there was no ever man ever” (“Sister Act”).

i. The night before William's wedding day, Dorothy slept with William's wedding ring on her finger (“Sister Act”).

ii. The next morning, Dorothy gave the ring back to William and blessed him (“Sister Act”).

- iii. William then put the ring back on Dorothy's finger and blessed her as well ("Sister Act").
 - iv. Finally, Dorothy gave him the ring back and William went to get married ("Sister Act").
 3. "As far as William was concerned, Dorothy became his muse" ("Sister Act").
 4. Dorothy was depressed and found the only reason for her to live was William ("Sister Act").
 5. When William did not need her anymore, she became mad and aggressive because she believed she had no reason to live ("Sister Act").
- E. Dorothy willingly provided service for her brother for many years (Woof).
 1. The favor was later returned by her brother when Dorothy's mental state began to deteriorate. As Dorothy had been living in the attic for over 20 years, William would go to the top of the house to nurse her in the years before he died ("Sister Act").
 2. After William's death, Dorothy's mental health vastly improved ("Sister Act").
 - i. She regained some of the personality traits she had lost in her obsession with William ("Sister Act").
- F. "William began consulting his sister's journal to aid his own writing. Dorothy's language intermingles with her brother's" (Levin).