

Shared *Recollections*: Dorothy Wordsworth’s Scottish Tour of 1803

Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland, A.D. 1803* captures a six weeks’ tour taken by the author, her brother William and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Recollections* was, from its origins, a shared endeavor, “Addressed,” as Dorothy wrote on the title page of her bound manuscript volume, “to her Friends.”¹ The bibliographical history of *Recollections* is one deeply embedded in experimental and collaborative practices, as reflected in the evolving content of the text over time. Dorothy’s initial composition processes en route and following her return to Grasmere led to intertextual writing between herself and William, with *Recollections* later inspiring several of his Scottish poems and lending itself to his printed works as paratextual headnotes. Through the flexible capacity of its shifting forms, the text integrated the contributions of absent friends into Dorothy’s writing practice, engendering acts of transcription and material embellishment. *Recollections* circulated in manuscript among the family’s sociable readers for several decades. While not primarily envisioned as a published work, Dorothy later saw *Recollections* as a potential source for economic independence, and she investigated a print edition in the 1820s. The possibility of publication was again raised by William in the 1830s before being abandoned due to Dorothy’s declining health. In her final years, extracts of the work were printed in *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (1851) before the eventual posthumous publication of the text in its own right in 1874. Whether in its unsettled manuscript forms or in its multifaceted relationship to print, this essay interprets *Recollections*, and by extension the Romantic woman writer’s book, as an experimental and malleable space

¹ Dove Cottage manuscript (DCMS) 54, “Dorothy Wordsworth's Scotch Tour 1803, MS B, 1803, 1805-1806,” n.d. Henceforth cited parenthetically in the text as DCMS 54.

capable of encompassing both the individual and the collaborative, moving between the private and public not only by necessity but also by choice.

Building on existing examinations of literary sociability within the Wordsworths' circle as well as manuscript circulation more broadly, this essay draws on Dorothy's surviving manuscripts to illustrate the permeable nature of Romantic women's books. I do so within the context of significant new scholarship on the material forms of the Romantic book, which has in recent years reasserted the importance of manuscript culture within the period, particularly in relation to women's writing. While studies on scribal publication practices found initial footing in pioneering work rooted in the early modern period, including Harold Love's *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* and Margaret Ezell's *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*, scholars of Romantic culture have traced these practices within a vital and on-going manuscript culture well into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries despite persistent narratives surrounding the dominant rise of print. This growing area of study has challenged and reshaped notions of media, reading practices and textuality, leading to a destabilization and renegotiation of the form and meaning of the book itself. For readers and writers of the eighteenth century, as Rachael Scarborough King has argued, manuscripts "offered accessibility, flexibility, interactivity, exclusivity, authority, timeliness, personalization, entry into print, and forms of publicity."² Michelle Levy has positioned literary manuscripts as material objects capable of telling "alternative stories" about the Romantic period, in that they reflect "the practices by which hand-written documents were composed, shared, altered, and preserved," and the "social networks" within which they functioned.³ Hilary Havens has described manuscript culture as "[o]ne of the most fruitful directions" for Romantic scholarship through "its intersections with gender, especially in

2 Rachael Scarborough King, "The Multimedia Eighteenth Century" in *After Print: Eighteenth-Century Manuscript Cultures* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 10-25; 10.

3 Michelle Levy, *Literary Manuscript Culture in Romantic Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 1.

investigations of literary networks and coteries.”⁴ New frameworks have been established for interpreting the unique conditions and innovative models surrounding women’s individual, familial and coterie-based scribal publication practices.⁵ Such networked strategies for interpreting the material legacy of women’s manuscripts and scribal publication practices are particularly indispensable in relation to Dorothy’s extensive “body of written work,” which as Rachel Feder has noted, forms a unique “a discursive field in which archival genres, mixed media, and attention to materiality activate poetic experiments.”⁶ By examining the choices and processes that gave rise to the multiple surviving manuscript copies of *Recollections* through the lens of gender, community and personal agency, this essay aims to reveal Dorothy’s dynamic and experimental authorial practices, as well as the afterlife and public reception of her book. Thanks to its capacity to be re-envisioned and reshaped through a myriad of collaborative and material configurations over time, Dorothy’s Scotch tour is a vital example not only of her own authorial prerogative, but also the communal material and literary practices intrinsic to the creation of Romantic women’s books.

Examination of Dorothy’s extensive surviving manuscripts raises questions regarding the history of survival for Romantic women’s manuscripts more broadly. Do Dorothy’s practices present an example that is evidenced elsewhere in the archive? Michelle Levy has argued that “The diminished state of the manuscript archive reflects deliberate acts of destruction, often undertaken by the women themselves, or their closest family members,” and such intentional silences in the archival record have been the subject of recent scholarly enquiry

4 Hilary Havens, “Manuscript Studies in the Eighteenth Century,” *Literature Compass* 16, no. 7 (2019): 4.

5 See, for instance: George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker, eds. *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Betty A. Schellenberg. *Literary Coterie and the Making of Modern Print Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

6 Rachel Feder, “The Experimental Dorothy Wordsworth,” *Studies in Romanticism* 53, no. 4 (2014): 543.

in broader nineteenth-century literary studies on gender and women's writing.⁷ Dorothy's surviving body of manuscript writings may, in one sense, be viewed as exceptional, due to the fact that she did not publish her work in her lifetime, as well as the value placed on that work by her family. Dorothy's manuscripts have certainly been better preserved in a complete state thanks to her important creative role in the Wordsworth family. However, there are surviving parallel examples of caches of Romantic women's manuscripts in which women writers chose not to publish, indicating a recurrent practice among women writers and their books, albeit one without consistent reflection in the existing archival record, perhaps due to a lack of enduring literary legacy or reputation.⁸

In what follows, I trace *Recollections* through its many manuscript and, later, print incarnations, advocating for a renewed understanding of the nuanced development of Romantic women's bibliographies. *Recollections* is positioned as a sociable and material object exchanged and developed between members of the Wordsworths' literary circle as well as within the domestic constraints faced by Romantic women authors. I read Dorothy's manuscript as a catalyst for cooperative writing with William, an endeavor which moved between prose and verse as well as manuscript and print, the shifting form of the text mirroring the siblings' changing literary relationship over time. I highlight how the pair developed their own interpretations of the Scotch tour, with each writing from a parallel perspective rather than producing a singular vision, as seen through dual accounts of their experience at Loch Katrine. Further, I explore the changing role of the text in forging Dorothy's identity as a collaborator,

⁷ Michelle Levy, "A New Republic of Women's Letters." *Studies in Romanticism* 59, no. 4 (2020): 523; see also: Alexis Wolf, "Silence in the Archives: Censorship and Suppression in Women's Life Writing in the Long Nineteenth Century" (Special Issue). *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 27 (2018).

⁸ The significant body of manuscripts produced by Irish diarists and travellers Katherine (1773-1824) and Martha (1775-1873) Wilmot provide a parallel example of the manuscript practices flourishing within both provincial and transnational literary communities in the Romantic period. Held by the Royal Irish Academy, the British Library and in private collections, the Wilmots' draft and fair copy manuscripts were circulated widely in their sociable circle and preserved by their family despite the sisters' choice not to seek publication. See: Alexis Wolf, "The 'Original' Journals of Katherine Wilmot: Women's Travel Writing in the Salon of Helen Maria Williams." *European Romantic Review* 30, no. 5-6 (2019): 615-637.

traveler and writer, roles which became more significant in terms of agency, mobility and legacy in later late. In my framing of *Recollections* as a site for collaborative exchange capable of bridging literary and material forms as well as establishing authorial selfhoods and afterlives for both individual women and communities of Romantic writers, I suggest that the text may be used as an example for exploring the complexity and unstable forms of women's books in the Romantic period.

Authorship, Collaboration, Community

Tracing Dorothy's progress through the dynamic manuscript versions of *Recollections* gives a view on how the concerns of authorship, collaboration and community influenced the evolution of the text throughout her life. Dorothy wrote that the tour was intended for "a few friends, who, it seemed, ought to have been with" Dorothy and William on their journey, specifically their brother John, the Hutchinson sisters, and Dorothy's friend Catherine Clarkson, as well as Coleridge, who had parted from the siblings in the later stages of the trip. As Lucy Newlyn and others have noted, it "was not [Dorothy's] intention to publish her recollections as a book,"⁹ despite the tour's clear intended use for sociable reading. However, as Ernest de Sélincourt highlighted in his early appraisal of her journals, *Recollections* "has not, like the *Grasmere Journals*, the character of a purely private diary": the evolving narrative, reworked over time, came to be "carefully composed throughout", rather than reading as notes which were "jotted down, like a diary, from day to day."¹⁰

Yet the earliest surviving manuscript records of the Scottish tour take just such a "jotted" form, captured in fragmentary notes on small, loose square sheets of paper (DCMS 43). Dorothy's ability to compose en route was precluded by the clipped pace of the tour as

9 Lucy Newlyn, *William and Dorothy Wordsworth: All in Each Other* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 182.

10 Ernest de Sélincourt, ed. *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, 7 vols. (London: Macmillan & Co, 1941), 1:vii.

well as the rich and all-consuming nature of the experience itself, which also prevented her from taking up other quotidian writing including regular correspondence. As she apologetically wrote to Catherine Clarkson upon returning to Grasmere in October 1803, “Long letters it was out of my power to write unless I had had a thousand times more activity and strength than I am mistress of.”¹¹ Consequently, she kept only sparse notes, scribbling a flow of gathered observations and images: “Boys with honey suckles in their hats – slope upwards – more Boys – green jackets – fishing rods – read Virgil – miner’s son” (DCMS 43). These first textual remnants preserve a rough outline to be used for reconstructing the contours and aesthetic qualities of the landscapes and communities Dorothy encountered in Scotland, details which could later be paired with she and William’s remembrances of the journey.

These early fragmentary notes eventually gave way to at least five subsequent narrative manuscript versions of *Recollections*. Dorothy’s original narrative version, written between 1803-1805, is no longer extant; however, a copy was created from this version by Catherine Clarkson between September and November 1805 (DCMS 50).¹² Dorothy subsequently transcribed a new version for herself from Catherine’s copy between December 1805 and February 1806 (DCMS 54).¹³ Two further copies were transcribed by Sara Hutchinson soon afterwards, the first a gift for Coleridge upon his return from Malta in October 1805 (DCMS 55). Sara’s second transcription was left unfinished (DCMS 55.1). A heavily revised narrative version of the text would be created by Dorothy in 1821, with assistance from another hand, and with a view to potential publication (DCMS 97).

11 Ernest de Sélincourt, ed. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1:402.

12 The original narrative version may have been lost. It is also possible that Dorothy chose to destroy the manuscript, favouring the later revised version.

13 DCMS 54 provides the main source for quotations from *Recollections* in this essay, aside from when referring to another version, as this is the latest version amended by Dorothy during the period under discussion; Michelle Levy has outlined the ‘modest’ changes made by Dorothy to the text of DCMS 54 as she transcribed Catherine’s earlier copy, including descriptions of ‘landscape description’ and ‘local colour’. See: Levy, *Literary Manuscript Culture*, 53.

Though the first version of the narrative, begun in 1803 and completed in 1805, does not survive, marginalia documenting the composition process transcribed into subsequent manuscript copies, combined with Dorothy's correspondence from the period, reveals how domestic constraints, social relationships and family events became interwoven factors in the production of Romantic women's books. While at first making progress on the narrative following her return to Grasmere, Dorothy's writing would be disrupted by caring responsibilities for her infant nephew and niece as well as for Coleridge during a bout of illness. The project was further side-lined by Dorothy's labor as William's amanuensis alongside Mary, transcribing several copies of *The Prelude*. Writing to Catherine Clarkson in March 1804, she noted that "A great addition to the poem on my Brother's life" had been made. Based on the 1500 new lines, Dorothy suggested her friend could "Judge then how fully we have been employed, what with nursing, and the ordinary business of the house."¹⁴ In June 1804, Dorothy noted in the margin of her narrative that she had resumed the tour "after a long pause" by "endeavour[ing] to recollect the latter part of our journey," and she struggled to recall "the character of different places" in Edinburgh, the Tweed and around the River Esk (DCMS 50, II, 98). The shock of her brother John's death at sea in February 1805 posed perhaps the largest impediment to the work's completion. "I do not know that I shall be able to go on with it at all," she wrote in the liminal space of the manuscript upon resuming her writing in April 1805. "I shall now only attempt to give . . . an idea of those scenes which pleased us most, dropping the incidents of the ordinary days, of which many have slipped from my memory" (DCMS 54, 173). She persevered, and in May 1805 completed the first version of the narrative manuscript while sat in the Moss hut overlooking the orchard at Dove Cottage.

Dorothy's composition of the *Recollections* between 1803-05 began a collaborative project that would incorporate visual, poetic and material contributions from members of her

14 de Sélincourt, *Letters*, 1:459.

intimate circle. Perhaps the most notable manifestation of the book's transformation via collaborative manuscript publication is the ornate copy, bound in green emerald leather with golden engraving and adorned with calligraphed title pages, created by Catherine Clarkson (DCMS 50; **Insert Fig. 1**). Catherine (1772-1856), a marginal member of the Wordsworths' circle and the wife of anti-slavery campaigner Thomas Clarkson, was Dorothy's frequent correspondent. In 1803, the Clarksons had relocated from Cumbria to Suffolk, leaving their home on Ullswater due to Catherine's ill health. Dorothy's letters imply that her composition of *Recollections* was motivated at least in part by a desire to raise Catherine's low spirits. Catherine was the first person to receive the manuscript in circulation, transcribing her own copy between September-November 1805, which she began during a return visit to Cumbria (DCMS 50, n.d.). Catherine materially engaged with Dorothy's original experience of literary travel, allowing her to connect with each sequence of the journey as she transcribed, despite her own ill health.

Catherine's copy is valuable as the earliest surviving textual iteration of the narrative version, given that Catherine used Dorothy's now-lost original manuscript to create her transcription. It is also unique in its inclusion of several of Dorothy's poems. Catherine later transcribed "To my niece Dorothy, a sleepless baby" and "The Mother's Return" within the manuscript, among other poems which were as yet unpublished. These poetic addendums are bound within the volume, underscoring both Dorothy's authorial identity among her friends as a writer across genres, as well as Catherine's editorial prerogative. Catherine's manuscript transcription of *Recollections* is a masterpiece in itself: a testament to literary friendship contained within a handmade book. Her personal marginalia speaks to the personal importance of the project: the text was copied "in bed, and the whole by myself." "When I began the work," she noted, "I scarcely indulged the hope of finishing it myself, my health being so indifferent that every little exertion of mind or body fatigued me exceedingly," yet "instead of a difficult

task,” the transcription proved to be the “easiest and pleasantest employment that ever I engaged in.” Through this difficult labor, she gained “a treasure”: a “copy of my beloved friend’s Journal” – a record connecting her own literary efforts with Dorothy’s.

Even as Catherine’s copy was being adorned with a sense of finality by its transcriber (DCMS 50), *Recollections* was continuing to evolve through the creation of Dorothy’s own second copy in late 1805 through early 1806 (DCMS 54), the text expanding from within to encompass Dorothy and William’s shared remembrance of their journey. Dorothy’s narrative served as a locus for co-operative writing between the siblings by augmenting their existing literary partnership, a long-established pattern of mutual inspiration that found footing in prose-poetic collaborations arising from Dorothy’s earlier Grasmere journals, written between 1800-02. While the siblings’ dual writing practice has at times been read in terms of a binary separation, with Dorothy’s feminine prose tidily divided from William’s masculine poetry, Nigel Leask has argued that this “gendered division of labour . . . underestimates Dorothy’s own distinctive and experimental practice as a prose writer.”¹⁵ This is particularly true given Dorothy’s poetic compositions evidenced in Catherine’s version of the narrative. Indeed, the text of *Recollections* itself subverts the idea of such a division. Unlike the earlier Grasmere journals, which were drawn on by William for use in verse beyond the pages of Dorothy’s notebooks, *Recollections* enabled a process of mutual composition between the two writers that is captured by and reflected within the layout of the manuscript itself, which displays elements of both of their representations of experiences.

The pairs’ dual accounts of their visit to Loch Katrine, positioned intertextually in Dorothy’s second version of the manuscript, provides a vivid example of how each offered a unique yet parallel authorial perspective (DCMS 54, 197-98) [**Insert Fig. 2**]. This section of

15 Nigel Leask, *Stepping Westward: Writing the Highland Tour c. 1720-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 198.

the manuscript displays in illustrative detail the ways in which Dorothy's narrative gave rise to and interacted with William's "Stepping Westward." Here, William's three-verse poem is intertwined within Dorothy's account, transcribed between a break in her prose. Dorothy's narrative first frames the scene, describing a stroll after sunset, as she and William pass "two neatly-dressed women, without hats" (DCMS 54, 197). One of the women remarks to the pair, "What, you are stepping westward?" Recapturing the powerful emotional impact of this brief but intimate interaction, Dorothy writes, "I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front, *yet* glowing with the departed sun." Dorothy's evocative textual reminiscence of the shared experience was read by William, who, as Dorothy notes, wrote "the following poem long after, in remembrance of his feelings and mine." Dorothy's language, highlighting the fact that William's "Stepping Westward" was written "long after," subtly makes clear that while their memories of the experience, and its creative power, are shared and generative, this moment of literary inspiration originates in her own text, as well as in her recreation of the scene at some remove from the original experience. Dorothy's hand-drawn map of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond adds a further visual embodiment to their dual representations of the incident, inserted immediately following their intertextual writings. Six such penciled maps are included within the pages of DCMS 54. As Zoë Kinsley has noted, Dorothy's maps "emphasize the deeply subjective nature of her depiction of place," thereby accentuating the ways in which the manuscript book, and the tour itself, has been constructed through her own authorial viewpoint.¹⁶

Dorothy's correspondence throughout 1805-06 sheds light on the importance that *Recollections* held as an inspiration for William's Scottish poems including and beyond "Stepping Westward," as well as her vision for the eventual layout of the manuscript copies

16 Zoë Kinsley, *Women Writing the Home Tour, 1682-1812* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 23.

undergoing simultaneous transcription. Dorothy wrote to Catherine in mid-December 1805 following William's composition of "The Solitary Reaper" giving instructions for how the poem should be incorporated into further copies before thinking better of the plan: "you can leave a small Blank ... no you cannot – for I cannot point out the passage."¹⁷ Shortly after, the manuscript of the third section, which was being sent back in order to create a further revised copy, was feared lost in transit.¹⁸ As Dorothy wrote on Christmas Day 1805, "It is indeed very vexatious about the loss of the Journal . . . William values it so highly that I can scarcely say what I would not have given rather than lose it entirely."¹⁹ Though the manuscript was recovered not long after, having been dropped in the corner of a field, its misplacement stoked a sense of crisis, with Dorothy anxiously entreating Catherine to commission a new transcription of the volume from her completed copy for William's use. Such measures signal the importance affixed to Dorothy's book as a facilitator for William's own writing practice. After recovering the missing volume, Dorothy undertook "recopying my journal in a fair hand."²⁰

Material and Print Afterlife

Dorothy has historically been interpreted as a writer reticent to assume a public readership, an understanding often supported by her own declaration to Catherine Clarkson that she "should detest the idea of setting [her]self up as an Author."²¹ However, this statement must be understood within its original context: as a desire for Dorothy to maintain not only her own

17 *Letters*, "DW to CC December 14th 1805," 1:653; 654.

18 The manuscript in question was Dorothy's original version, now no longer extant. See note 10.

19 *Letters*, "DW to CC 25 December 1805," 1:659.

20 Ernest de Sélincourt and Mary Moorman, eds. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years; Pt. 1: 1806-1811* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), "DW to CC March 2 1806," 10; Dorothy also references DCMS 55 C i, transcribed by Sara Hutchinson. A further transcription created by Sara Hutchinson, MS C ii, was left incomplete.

21 *Letters: the Middle Years*, "DW to CC December 9 1810," 2:454; Dorothy's "recopying" resulted in DCMS 54.

anonymity, but also that of her disenfranchised beneficiaries in writing the charitable *George and Sarah Green: A Narrative* on behalf of the orphaned Green children.²² As Michelle Levy has asserted, “[i]t should not be forgotten that Dorothy *was* a published author,”²³ including through early printed extracts of *Recollections*.

Poems, in Two Volumes, published in 1807, marked the first instance of *Recollections*’ use as a framing device for William’s poems in print. In *Poems*, the headnote to “Stepping Westward” reconfigures the perspective of Dorothy’s prose remembrance, centering William’s narrative voice: “While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine.”²⁴ Occluding Dorothy’s identity and gender, the passage nonetheless creates a link between William’s printed poems and her hand-made book. What’s more, this introductory framing of “Stepping Westward” for a public readership replicates the experience of the Wordsworths’ intimate literary community, as the first readers to encounter many of his Scottish poems between 1805-07 would have done so through the lens of Dorothy’s *Recollections*. These fragmentary borrowings of Dorothy’s writing laid the groundwork for later inclusion of fuller works, such as three of her poems, which appeared in *Poems of William Wordsworth* (1815). Such contributions remained largely anonymous, or were attributed to a “Female Friend.” Yet the Wordsworths’ correspondence makes clear that publication of *Recollections* under Dorothy’s name was seriously considered at several points in time, the earliest at a critical moment in her life when seeing the book in print would be newly beneficial to her individual and authorial desires.

The late 1810s and early 1820s marked a period of extensive travel and prolific writing for Dorothy. Her account of climbing Scafell Pike in 1818, which was later extracted as printed

22 Dorothy Wordsworth, *George and Sarah Green: A Narrative*, ed. by Ernest de Sélincourt (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936).

23 Michelle Levy, “The Wordsworths, the Greens, and the Limits of Sympathy,” *Studies in Romanticism*, 42, no. 4 (2003), 541-563, p. 548.

24 William Wordsworth, *Poems: In Two Volumes* (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster-Row, 1807), 1:14.

content within William's *A description of the scenery of the lakes* (1822), underscores how the excursion filled her with "a sense of thankfulness for the continuation of that vigour of body, which enabled [her] to climb the highest Mountain."²⁵ The Wordsworth family's extensive European tour resulted in the creation of a highly polished and extra-illustrated manuscript tour, *Journal of a Tour on the Continent* (1820), a project shared by Dorothy, Mary and William. William's poems were interspersed within the manuscript volume in a style echoing *Recollections*.²⁶ In 1822, Dorothy made a second tour in Scotland, a journey which she worked up into a new, but less eloquent manuscript narrative (DCMS 99). In 1822, aged fifty-one, Dorothy was free of the domestic and caring responsibilities that had occupied earlier years, and she had been largely replaced as William's amanuensis by her niece and namesake, Dora. Looking to new opportunities, Dorothy returned to *Recollections*.

Letters exchanged during this period between the Wordsworths and poet Samuel Rogers indicate that a revised version of the text was submitted for publication (DCMS 97). In 1822, William appealed to Rogers' earlier "wish that my Sister would publish her *Recollections* of her Scotch Tour," requesting he follow through with his "offer to assist in disposing of it to a Publisher for her advantage."²⁷ The siblings hoped "an adequate sum could be procured through the means of this MS" to enable Dorothy to revisit Switzerland as well as "extend[ing] her ramble to some part of Italy" (88-9). Rogers offered to lay the work before John Murray, proposing that either he or Longman would "advance enough for the present purpose" of the book, namely Dorothy's "thoughts" of Europe.²⁸ Dorothy wrote to Rogers in early 1823, detailing a lingering hesitation to publish under her own name, which could only be absolved

25 DCMS 51.11, A.D. 1818 – "From a letter to Mr Johnson."

26 DCMS 90; Michelle Levy describes the family's collaborative and multimedia work on *Journal of a Tour on the Continent*, noting "Just as Dorothy should be considered exclusively as a manuscript author, it would also be a mistake to assume that Wordsworth operated solely within print culture." See: Levy, *Family Authorship*, 126.

27 Ernest de Sélincourt, ed. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years [1821-30]*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1939), "WW to Samuel Rogers, September 16 1822," 88.

28 Dove Cottage, WLMS A / Rogers, Samuel / 2, September [?] 1822, 1-2.

by being granted the financial independence she required. The worst outcome, in her view, would be to fail in “obtaining my object” “after having encountered the unpleasantness of coming before the public” – she would not “sacrifice [her] privacy for a certainty *less* than two hundred pounds” [emphasis original].²⁹ Funds aside, she worried that “a work of such slight pretensions” as *Recollections* “will be wholly overlooked in this writing and publishing (especially *tour*-writing and *tour*-publishing) age” (103).

Dorothy’s anxieties about the book’s reception may have led her to make textual revisions that took away from its original charm. From 1821, she began creating a heavily revised copy of *Recollections* intended for publication (DCMS 97). The four-volume manuscript was written out by Dorothy, William’s clerk John Carter, as well as another transcriber whose identity was not recorded, a much-expanded version from earlier three-volume iterations.³⁰ Dorothy amended countless passages, apparently aiming to elevate the text’s literary status. “[S]uch a cruel woman” is revised as “a woman who appeared to be destitute of common humanity,” while “we were unwilling to leave the sweet spot” is transformed to “we reluctantly wheeled away from the scene.” Through these alterations, as de Sélincourt noted, Dorothy inadvertently “removed from it many of those intimate person touches to which it owes so much of its value.”³¹ There is no proof that Dorothy’s 1821-22 editorial interventions posed an obstacle to the book’s publication, and Rogers’ letters indicate that he placed a copy before Murray for consideration.³² By 1823, however, Dorothy had changed her mind, and the possibility of publishing *Recollections* was put aside.

Dorothy’s book nevertheless continued to further her identity as both a writer and traveler within and beyond the Wordsworths’ immediate circle, identities which took on

29 *Letters: the Later Years*, “DW to Samuel Rogers Jan 3 1823,” 102.

30 Michelle Levy offers an extended discussion of Dorothy’s revisions to the narrative in creating DCMS 97, including a table highlighting substantial stylistic changes from earlier versions DCMS 50 & 54. See: Levy, *Literary Manuscript Culture*, 53-4.

31 Ernest de Sélincourt, *Journals*, I, xii.

32 Charlotte May, 21 February 2020, private correspondence based on forthcoming article.

increasingly retrospective meaning due to age and illness. Dorothy's first serious bout of ill health began in the spring of 1829 with a debilitating attack of "internal inflammation."³³ The painful condition returned frequently throughout the early 1830s, leaving Dorothy intermittently bedridden, though her physical condition gradually improved. The death of her beloved friend in Sara Hutchinson in 1835 coincided with a notable change in Dorothy's mental state, leaving her in "a state of childishness."³⁴

It was perhaps due to the gradual loss of lucidity in his long-time collaborator and confidant that William turned to reflect on their shared past, often doing so by featuring excerpts from Dorothy's Scottish book within his own, as he had done previously in 1807. Short passages drawn from her narrative intermingle with poems in his 4-volume *Poetical Work* (1832), accompanied by the heading "Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller" within a section entitled "Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803." A repurposed extract becomes a headnote for "To the Sons of Burns," recalling that "The Poet's grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses: 'Is there a man whose judgement clear,' &c."³⁵ Lengthier prose glosses taken from Dorothy's book were also included in *Yarrow Revisited* (1835). As paratext to his poem "Highland Hut," William inserts three full pages from Dorothy's text, extracts he introduces as "from the journal of a Lady, my fellow-traveller in Scotland, in the autumn of 1803," which "accurately describe" "the beautiful appearance of the *interior* of one of these rude habitations."³⁶

33 Ernest de Sélincourt and Alan G. Hill, eds. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Second Enlarged Edition, V. The Later Years, Part 2 1829-1834* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979), "WW to Robert Jones August 4th 1829," 102.

34 *Letters: the Later Years*, "Mary W to HCR 20 Nov 1835," 117.

35 William Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 4 vols. (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, Paternoster-Row, 1832), 2:202.

36 William Wordsworth, *Yarrow Revisited. and Other Poems*. (London: Printed for Longman, Orme, Brown Green & Longman; and Edward Moxon, 1835), 38-40.

The intermingling of Dorothy's prose and William's poems in these printed works recreated the siblings' former parallel manuscript writing process, stirring associations which may have moved William to revisit publication of *Recollections*. William wrote to his publisher Edward Moxon regarding the possibility in 1835. Moxon replied with both cost and profit estimates for a print run of 1,000 copies, noting that "Miss Wordsworth's Journal" would fill approximately "340 pages."³⁷ William found fresh inspiration in preparing Dorothy's book for Moxon, "enlarg[ing] two little Poems upon the subject of Burns which would have seen the light for the first time" as intertextual insertions.³⁸ He eventually decided not to proceed with the book's publication due to Dorothy's delicate mental state, realizing that rather than serving as a "salutary interest to her," the project "would not interest her at all, or if it did, like every thing [*sic*] that excites her, it would do her harm."³⁹ Beyond this, William and Mary both agreed "there would be some indelicacy in drawing public attention to her in her present melancholy state."⁴⁰

Following William's death in 1850, a substantial forty-five-page excerpt from Dorothy's *Recollections* was printed in *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (1851), edited by his nephew Christopher Wordsworth. *Memoirs* clearly identified Dorothy's authorship and collaborative role to a public readership for the first time. The editor asserts that her journal is the same one often "referred to by Mr. Wordsworth," which "will be interesting to the reader, as proceeding from the pen of his companion, and as supplying fresh illustration to the poems."⁴¹ Christopher Wordsworth's arrangement maintains the same layout of intertextual illumination between narrative and poems used in Dorothy's earliest manuscript copies. The

37 DC WLMS 6/1/3 Moxon; Edward Moxon to WW, "Feb 24th 1836"; Moxon estimated that 1,000 copies would cost £113, including printing, paper, advertising and "extras"; the sale of 900 copies at 6/1 would bring in £273.15.0, raising a profit of £160.15; the author would receive 2/3 of the profit, the publisher 1/3.

38 *Letters: The Later Years*, "WW to HCR 15 December 1837," 496.

39 *Letters: The Later Years*, "WW to Edward Moxon 23 December 1837," 505-6.

40 *Letters: The Later Years*, "WW to HCR 15 December 1837," 496

41 Christopher Wordsworth, ed. *Memoirs of William Wordsworth Poet-Laureate*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1851), 2:209.

lengthy inclusion laid the groundwork for public interest in the text, which would be published in full to popular success in 1874, edited by John Campbell Shairp. Mary Ellen Bellanca has questioned the ethics of publication of Dorothy's work in *Memoirs*, noting that “[g]iven the 80-year-old diarist's ill health in 1851, one must wonder whether she consented to, or was even aware of, the printing of scores of pages of her writing for strangers to read.”⁴² Dorothy's mental and physical health certainly vacillated between 1848–51, and there is no record of her giving consent to the extracted publication of her book. Yet given *Recollections'* long progression as an adaptable and sociable book of the Romantic period, as well as evolving desires and attempts to publish it, there is also a poignancy to the text's appearance as coda to her closest collaborator's life even on the precipice of the end of her own, its publication and attribution building an afterlife for the book, its writer and her Romantic literary community.

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⁴² Mary Ellen Bellanca, “After-Life-Writing: Dorothy Wordsworth's Journals in the Memoirs of William Wordsworth.” *European Romantic Review* 25, no. 2 (2014): 201-218, 214.

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