

Summer 2000

# Wordsworth, Beaumont, and the Publicity over Captain John Wordsworth's Death at Sea

Richard Matlak

*College of the Holy Cross*, [rmatlak@holycross.edu](mailto:rmatlak@holycross.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://crossworks.holycross.edu/aber\\_doc](http://crossworks.holycross.edu/aber_doc)

 Part of the [European History Commons](#), [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#), and the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Richard Matlak. "Captain John Wordsworth's Death at Sea." *The Wordsworth Circle*. 31, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 119-127.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Berth of the Abergavenny at CrossWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Texts relating to the Earl of Abergavenny (ship) by an authorized administrator of CrossWorks.

Richard Matlak  
English Department  
College of the Holy Cross  
Worcester, MA 01610-2395  
rmatlak@holycross.edu

WORDSWORTH, BEAUMONT, AND THE PUBLICITY OVER  
CAPTAIN JOHN WORDSWORTH'S DEATH AT SEA

Details related to the drowning at sea of William Wordsworth's mariner brother John are treated pretty sketchily in Wordsworth's standard biographies. The event is assumed to be barely incidental to Sir George Beaumont's *Peel Castle in a Storm* (1806)<sup>1</sup> inspiring Wordsworth's famous renunciation of romantic idealism in "Elegiac Stanzas" as "The light that never was, on sea or land / The consecration, and the Poet's dream" (15-16).<sup>2</sup> The biographies that do offer a decent factual accounting of John's fate usually stop at the point where the story begins to matter for understanding the public motivation behind Beaumont's *Peel Castle* and Wordsworth's startling appreciation of his patron's painting, which was, I will argue in this essay, a reaction to the public record of the controversial sinking of John's vessel, the *Earl of Abergavenny*, East Indiaman.

In order to understand the far-ranging implications of John's demise for the lives and works of William Wordsworth and Sir George Beaumont, it is important to observe that Wordsworth's younger brother was more than a generic mariner. He was a weighty

personage as the doughty captain of the *Abergavenny*, one of the largest and newest merchant vessels in the China fleet of the East India Company. After two unsuccessful voyages, the ill-fated voyage of his death held high promise not only to clear John of debt, but to make his brothers and sister rich, for they had invested--it must be said, with more than modest coercion from John<sup>3</sup>--some L3000 pounds of their long-awaited settlement from Lord Lowther in their brother's personal cargo. Hopes were so high for this voyage that the governing body of the EIC had invested over L200,000 in general cargo, and included in the vessel's lading 275,000 ozs of dollars, making the *Abergavenny* one of the richest ships ever to sail under its flag.

But then the tide turned. On the stormy winter night of 5 February 1805, John was in convoy with seven sister ships on their way to India, when the senior commander of the fleet ordered them to safe harbor off the coast of Portland Bill, England, because they had separated from their naval escort. At this time of warfare on the open seas between France and England, it was always necessary to protect merchant shipping with military might. At any rate, on that night, John's vessel was the last to take on a local pilot to lead him safely into Portland Harbor, but instead of leading the vessel to safety, the pilot, together with the vagaries of wind, led the *Abergavenny* into the Shambles, an infamous bank of coarse sand and shingle about 2-3/4

miles in length two miles off the coast of Portland. The hull of the *Abergavenny* was rocked and thrashed for more than two hours on the Shambles to commence the long disaster. Seven hours later, at approximately 11:00 PM, the vessel went down in 65 feet of frigid seas. Being heavily but evenly burdened with cargo and water, the *Abergavenny* sank without rolling, its hull coming to rest stably on the ocean floor with masts erect and partly above sea level. Survivors clung to the masts and rigging, but 266 out of 422 perished, making the sinking of the *Abergavenny* the worst commercial maritime accident in British history.<sup>4</sup>

When the focus of the news reports and the inquiry into liability was placed on John's behavior as captain, indecision and suicidal passivity were openly charged. Inebriation was suggested, but dismissed. One Cornet Burgoyne, the senior officer of His Majesty's Eighth Dragoons, a force of 159 young soldiers en route to India, lamented bitterly that the available ship's boats were not used to save lives. As one of the reports stated the case: "Unfortunately in the general distress and agony of the moment, the ship's boats were not hoisted out, when every soul on board might possibly have been saved."<sup>5</sup> Passengers and crewmen testified that John did not seem desirous of saving his own life as the end neared. His final words were "God's will be done" as he relinquished command of his vessel to chaos and panic.

John's biographers, Carl Ketcham and Frank Rand Prentice,

have exonerated John.<sup>6</sup> Kenneth R. Johnston, who also looks into the matter more closely than other biographers of William Wordsworth, concludes that "John's behavior as captain was unimpeachably heroic throughout the seven agonizing hours it took for the ship to sink."<sup>7</sup> Ketcham allows his excellent description of John's life and the sinking of the *Abergavenny* to be summed up in the decision provided by the EIC's Court of Directors: that "the Commanders, Officers & Ship's Company . . . be fully acquitted of all Imputation of neglect or misconduct in respect to the Loss of that Ship."<sup>8</sup> It's interesting that a marine historian might judge from the same evidence that John's "command of the ship was something less than decisive,"<sup>9</sup> but the salient issue for our purposes is the public controversy over John's behavior. Not only did salvaging John's reputation become a temporary obsession with William Wordsworth, as he became defensively absorbed in journalistic detail, but images of the public record led to Beaumont's *Peel Castle*, which reconceived John's tragedy for the poet as a solemn moment in a theodicy untroubled by the awful climate brewed by the press.

Shortly after the *Abergavenny* sank, its story became a prominent part of a long tradition of shipwreck narratives going back to the first collection of *Mr. James Janeway's Legacy to his Friends, containing twenty-seven famous instances of God's Providence in and about Sea-Dangers and Deliverances* (London,

1675). Indeed, the *Abergavenny* story provides a case history of the evolution of these unsinkable narratives. Within a few days of the tragedy, the *Morning Chronicle* of London published an account with several letters from the outspoken Burgoyne and the *Abergavenny's* fourth mate, Thomas Gilpin. On February 13, a 49-page pamphlet was published in London by John Stockdale, who claimed that his chapbook was corrected from "the official returns at the East India House." On February 21, the Minerva Press of London published another pamphlet, *An Authentic Narrative . . . by a Gentleman of the East India House*. The *Gentleman's Magazine* published a version in February 1805. Between 1805-1810 Thomas Tegg, of 111 Cheapside London, produced a series of 28-page pamphlets on shipwrecks, each having a folding aquatint as a frontispiece. One bound and dated 1806 bore the title, *A series of narratives, with folding plates in aquatints*, etc. Included was the narrative, "Loss of the 'Duke of Abergevenny' off Portland Bill, 1805," along with the loss of the *Bounty*, wreck of the 'Phoenix,' et al. Archibald Duncan, retired from the Royal Navy, edited an important and best-selling anthology called *The Mariner's Chronicle*, which reprinted one of the London pamphlets on the sinking of the *Abergavenny*. The *Naval Chronicle* (1799-1818) for 1805 also contains the record of the sinking.<sup>10</sup> In the twentieth century, Keith Huntress's edition of *Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters, 1586-1860* (1974) and

Terence Grocott's more recent *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* (London: Chatham, 1997) reproduce several of the earlier narratives in tact.

From the viewpoint of literary history, the only report that might seem to matter is the relatively favorable pamphlet containing Wordsworth's annotations, which has sat unregarded among the Dove Cottage Papers. However, the more accusatory narratives and illustrations of the shipwreck that Beaumont and other London friends were reading become equally consequential for understanding Wordsworth's defensiveness and for appreciating the public purposefulness of Beaumont's *Peel Castle* (1806). One of the more dramatic pamphlets is *Narrative of the Dreadful Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny, Indiaman, Wrecked February 5, 1805, on the Shingles, off the Bill of Portland, as communicated to the Directors of the India House, by one of the Survivors* (London: 1805) with frontispiece, "The Distress'd State of the Crew of the Abergavenny when she was sinking." *Dreadful Narrative* represents John as a victim of his own premonitions. It reports that John appeared late for his pro forma appearance before the Court of Directors prior to sailing because of a "dreadful presentiment, which often is the forerunner of some great misfortune" (26). While the vessel was beating against the Shambles, we learn that its "bell, by the motion kept tolling, as if ominous of their

approaching fate, 'till the Captain ordered the clapper to be lashed. What a dreadful moment must this have been to the unfortunate sufferers," *Dreadful Narrative* speculates, "to have an awful eternity in view, and the bell, as though by instinct, tolling their departing knell" (9). Just prior to the sinking, we learn that "the First Mate [Samuel Baggot, who drowned] told the Captain she would sink in a moment---The Captain (looking in his face; and with a look, in which was strongly depicted a true sense of their dreadful situation,) replied, "it cannot be prevented--God's will be done." --From that instant the Captain was motionless" (13). Meanwhile, for those clinging to the sails and rigging, the "situation . . . was frightful beyond all possible description; the swell of the sea was dreadful, and every moment they perceived some friend floating around them for a while, then sinking into the abyss to rise no more. 'Down on the vale of death, with dismal cries, / The fated victims shuddering roll their eyes, / In wild despair.'-----" (17).

*Dreadful Narrative* remarks of John that "He was a man of remarkable mild manners; and of so temperate a disposition, that he was known among his ship-mates, by the appellation of the 'Philosopher.'" Believing John to be married, the narrator remarks that it may justly said of him, that: "'Tho' trained in boisterous elements, his mind / Was yet by soft humanity refined. / Each joy of wedded love at home he knew; / Abroad confessed the

father of his crew! / Brave, liberal, just! the calm domestic scene / Had o'er his temper breath'd a gay serene' FINIS" (26).

The frontispiece to this chapbook suggests a less kindly story about this "philosopher" and "father of his crew" and perhaps about his employers as well. (See Illustration One, "The Distress'd State . . . .") The engraver highlights the women passengers frantically racing about the poop deck at the vessel's stern, arms raised in a panic. Darker male figures are hanging from the rigging, or climbing, falling, diving, swimming, and some--crew members, as the narrative makes clear--are waiting in the longboat for the ship to sink, with several below the longboat raising their arms for assistance or attempting to hoist themselves up. The lower focus of the engraving is on a whitened, half-clad figure, arms spread horizontally, as if crucified in air, leaping feet first into the caps of the waves. In the darker region of the poop deck (see Illustration Two), Captain Wordsworth lurks with arms folded, stoically observing the scene, while a woman kneels in supplication, begging that he do something--perhaps release the longboat for the rescue of passengers--while another woman who has fainted is being lifted by a ship's officer. One infers that Captain Wordsworth is being represented as the "philosopher," rather than the man of decisive action required by the situation. The leaping figure with arms

spread may be an image of sacrifice meant as a criticism of the ECI's powerful Christian Claphamites--specifically, Charles Grant, Henry Thornton, and their ally in Parliament, William Wilberforce--who were responsible for favoring John with this select voyage primarily because of his quite irrelevant moral virtues.

The EIC would not suffer such accounts and innuendos to go unanswered. An engraving that counters "Distress'd State" is entitled "The Loss of the *Abergavenny*, East India Man, off the Isle of Portland."<sup>11</sup> (See Illustration three.) Despite its title, the orderly evacuation of survivors rather than the loss of the *Abergavenny* is the subject of the engraving. In direct contrast with the "Distress'd State of the Crew," there is no panic in "The Loss," but rather a stoically heroic image of uniformed survivors standing tall, as if they had used the time prior to their rescue for policing the area and wrapping the sails neatly about the beams upon which they stand--and even about the highest masts where no one stands--patiently awaiting the rescue boat--presently filled with survivors--to return from the attending sloop. In contrast with the sacrificial image of "Distress'd State," the central image here is the rescue boat on its way from the *Abergavenny* to the heaving sloop.

It seems the only narrative Wordsworth read<sup>12</sup> was authored by W.D., one William Dalmeida, an Assistant Clerk to the

Committee of Correspondence in the Home Department of the EIC.<sup>13</sup> Its complete title is *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny, East Indiaman, Captain John Wordsworth, off Portland, on the Night of the 5th of Feb. 1805; drawn from official documents and communications from various respectable survivors*. By a Gentleman in the East-India House (London: Minerva Press, 1805). Although Wordsworth expected his brother's story to be told in a favorable light in a pamphlet authorized by the EIC, he found that John Company chose to distance itself from its captain's decisions and behavior. Two topics will suffice in representing Wordsworth's irritation with the pamphlet: the first is the potential infamy that might become associated with the Wordsworth name, if bad publicity were to become a matter of public memory; the second is the Company's judgment on the behavior of Captain Wordsworth.

W.D.'s narrative emphasizes at the outset that the general public has a justifiable interest in the sinking of the *Abergavenny*, for "when numbers are involved in one"

common fate, and that fate is attended with circumstances of unusual horror, the blow is felt by the whole community, the republic itself is convulsed by the shock, and grief, pity, and regret expand among all orders and

conditions of men (2).

W.D. refers to a previous tragedy at sea, the sinking of *The Halsewell*, East Indiaman, which aroused public sympathy a decade earlier, because the captain of the vessel drowned along with his two accomplished and beautiful daughters.<sup>14</sup> But then sympathy gave way to commercial insensitivity:

We too often, by a strange perversion of taste,  
and lapse of humanity, see the distresses of  
the ill-fated Captain and his passengers  
portrayed on the TEA-TRAY, and emblazoning the  
screen . . . . (Wordsworth's underlining,  
without comment, 2)

In other words, the Wordsworth family might anticipate a commercialization of their tragedy in the hawking of domestic memorabilia. But just how might the tragedy be portrayed?

It was a blessing that W.D.'s focus on a gallant midshipman of the *Abergavenny* (rather than John's behavior) captured the imagination of the public:

When Caesar met his fate in the Capitol, he  
folded his robe about him, that he might fall

with decency---when the sailors pressed  
ardently for a supply of liquor on the officer  
who guarded the spirit-room---'Give us some  
grog!' exclaimed the honest Tars; 'it will be  
all as one an hour hence!'---the reply of the  
officer would have done honour to the brevity  
of Roman fortitude---'I know we must die,' cooly  
replied the gallant Midshipman, 'but let us

die like men!'---He kept his post, armed with  
a brace of pistols, and there staid, even whilst  
the ship was sinking. (16)

Wordsworth was correct to anticipate the attraction of such  
anecdotes, but it is deliciously ironic that Lord Byron would  
immortalize the midshipman's words in the shipwreck scene of *Don  
Juan* Canto II:

Canto 36

"Give us more grog," they cried, "for it will be  
All one an hour hence." Juan answer'd, "No!  
'Tis true that death awaits both you and me,  
But let us die like men, not sink below  
Like brutes;"--and thus his dangerous post kept he,  
And none like to anticipate the blow; . . .<sup>15</sup>

Undeniably a noble moment for Juan, but one can imagine Wordsworth grimacing at Byron's affrontery in associating his lascivious hero with his wholesome brother's fate. Indeed, locating him imaginatively on his brother's vessel as a midshipman of his crew! Understandably, Wordsworth's chief fear of Canto One, which was published with Canto Two in 1819, was "that Don Juan will do more harm to the English character, than anything of our time; not so much as *Book*;--But thousands . . . will batten upon choice bits of it, in the shape of Extracts."<sup>16</sup>

Wordsworth makes another comment and pencil correction where W.D. allows for a harsh inference about the inexplicable inaction of Captain Wordsworth:

It has been said, that had the proper precautions been taken, not a life would have been lost; perhaps Captain Wordsworth was not, till too late, sufficiently aware of the incurable state [underlined by WW] of the ship: but it is hardly probable, whatever might have been the resolution of the passengers, that *all* the crew would have deserted her---it is a well-known fact, that some sailors will not quit a sinking ship: we may instance the *London East*

Indiaman, which was run down by the *Russel* man of war--the crew to a man might have been saved, but they energetically exclaimed---'No, we cannot leave our beautiful ship---we will share her fate!' and they were seen in the ACT of CHEERING as she went down. (17)

Although such behavior seems the result of not guarding the spirit room, the EIC positing a voluntary martyrdom on the *Abergavenny* against the evidence at hand is a brazen and preposterous but purposeful attempt to defuse with chauvinism Company liability for the failure of its captain. Ironically, His Majesty's soldiers especially became a sacrifice of the tragedy for being required to pump water out of the vessel until they were wearily trapped and drowned in the bilge. The senior commander of John's convoy, Captain W.S. Clarke of the *Wexford*, surely implies a negative judgment of his subordinate and his crew when he declares in his letter to the Court of Directors of the EIC that the great loss of life was "in great measure attributed to so many . . . being below at the pumps."<sup>17</sup>

W.D. skirts the issue of John's reported suicidal behavior with ambiguity. The Fourth Mate had reported that John clung to the ropes, but did not seem interested in living:

Captain Wordsworth, at the moment the *Earl of Abergavenny* was going down, was seen clinging to the ropes. Mr Gilpin used every persuasion to induce him to endeavour to save his life; \*he did not seem desirous to survive the loss of his ship. (24)

[WW's asterisk and underlining]

John's desire to die not being a matter of Company culpability, the EIC does not bother to contradict the other accounts on this point, but Wordsworth finds it intolerable. He adds an asterisk to this comment and reinterprets what W.D. has just said about Gilpin's report:

\*Contradicted by Wm Gilpin, who spoke to Capt Wordsworth---and saw him using [*making* crossed out and *using* written above] every exertion to save his life--- (24)

In short, John's employers acquiesced to the common perception in the news: John did not do everything he could for others; for whatever reason, neither did he strive to save his own life.

Sir George Beaumont's *Peel Castle in a Storm* (1806), prepared for the Royal Academy Exhibit of 1806, responds to the public record by rising above it. (See Illustration Four.) In

comparison with depictions of other disasters at sea, which are packed with detail from their narratives, it is noteworthy that Beaumont's oil lacks visual referents to the publicized particularities: the possible foibles of the pilot, Captain John Wordsworth's disabling dismay, the panic of hundreds of innocent victims in the final moments, any suggestion of the controversy over the presence of ship's boats or who finally used them, the flawed journalism of articles and pamphlets, the self-serving witness of the EIC, material considerations related to the value of cargo, and most significantly, visible presence of human life.<sup>18</sup> The particularity of the frontispieces is erased and forgotten in lieu of the larger religious perspective suggested by John Wordsworth's final words, "God's will be done." A nondescript bark sinking towards a common sunset effaces the tragic demise of hundreds who perhaps did not know that, as Beaumont was fond of remarking, "Whatever is, Is Right."

Beaumont's storm-tossed boat<sup>19</sup> thereby transforms accident and human frailty into an image of destiny. No pilot misdirected Beaumont's vessel onto the shoals. No one on-board failed to discharge his duty. Rather, the vessel surges in the throes of an awesome sea-force towards the light of the setting sun--sinking westward, as it were--with the outer bastion of a castle standing front and center as a bulwark of weather-tested fortitude. A bolt of forked lightning to the right of the vessel may seem to

problematize the purpose of divine intervention in the fate of the *Abergavenny*, but reading it so would be to miss the point of Beaumont's generalized iconography. The sign of Zeus represents divine awareness, and, yes, the inscrutable "will of God."

Wordsworth responded to the painting with epiphanic intensity, retaining it in memory, "as if it were before [his] eyes,"<sup>20</sup> he said, as he went about the business of reconsidering, not the tragedy, but the impotence of his earlier art in the wake of it.

## NOTES

- 
1. The correct spelling of the island and its castle's proper name is *Piel*. Beaumont spelled it *Peel* when naming his oil and Wordsworth spells it *Peele* in the title of his poem.
  2. Text references to "Elegiac Stanzas" are taken from Poems in Two volumes, and *Other Poems, 1800 - 1807, by William Wordsworth*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1983): 266-68.
  3. John demanded that the first payment of the Lonsdale settlement, some L3000, go exclusively to him, rather than being shared by his siblings, so that he might invest in private cargo on his second voyage. John wrote to William: "Now for myself I must say that it is absolutely necessary that I should have the whole of the three thousand pounds or I had better resign the command of the ship for if I have not money it is not possible that I make money . . ." Carl Ketchum, ed., *The Letters of John Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1969): 139.
  4. The passenger list included 160 crew members, 80 of whom survived; 159 soldiers, 50 of whom survived; 51 passengers, 11 of whom survived; and 52 Chinese laborers, 15 of whom survived, for a total of 422 passengers, 156 of whom survived.
  5. *Narrative of the Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny, East Indiaman*, (London 1805). Reprinted in *The Mariner's Chronicle, Being a Collection of the Most Interesting Narratives of Shipwrecks, Fires, Famines, and Other Calamities Incident to A Life of Maritime Enterprise*, ed. Archibald Duncan in 4 vols (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1806): vol. 2, 87-88.
  6. Moorman finds him "blameless" (II.37); Gill makes no judgment of his own, allowing a summary of William Wordsworth's comments to stand that John "had died at his post, blameless of the wreck, dying as he had lived, 'steady to his duty in all situations'" (Gill 240);
  7. Kenneth R. Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet Lover Rebel Spy* (New York: Norton, 1997): 815.
  8. *The Letters of John Wordsworth* : 51.
  9. Keith Huntress, ed. *Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters, 1586 - 1860* (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1974): 131.

- 
10. Most of this brief publishing history is from Keith Huntress, ed. *Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters*: x, 232.
11. This painting was obtained from the National Maritime Library, Prints and Drawings, reference #PAI 5923. There is, what appears to be, a frontispiece of the same in the Dove Cottage Papers, provided by James Butler.
12. My assertion that Wordsworth read the pamphlet here to be described and discussed is based upon his annotations in pen and pencil. Carl Ketchum refers to Wordsworth's annotating the pamphlet in *Letters of John Wordsworth*: 178. Duncan Wu says in *Wordsworth's Reading, 1800 - 1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995): 3, entry 8, that it is unclear "whether the Wordsworths ever saw the pamphlet," but this seems to be an oversight.
13. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, I, The Early Years, 1787-1805*, ed. Ernest De Selincourt, 2nd ed. rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967): 560, n. 2.
14. See, for example, National Maritime Prints and Drawings, #PAH 0502, "The Loss of the *Halsewell*, East Indiaman, Capt Richard Pierce. This rich laden ship (outward bound) was wreck'd off Seacombe in the isle of Purbeck in Dorsetshire, on the 6th Jan 1786" and PAH 7421, "To the Directors of the Hon'ble East India Company this Print representing the Loss of their Ship *Halsewell* in the Night between the 5th & 6th of January 1786 with precarious situation of the Survivors in a cavern of the rock."
15. *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, Volume V, *Don Juan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986): 99-100. The only specific evidence on Byron's borrowings from accounts of shipwrecks, including this pamphlet by W.D. on the sinking of the *Abergavenny*, is provided in Willis W. Pratt, *Byron's Don Juan, Volume IV, Notes on the Variorum Edition* (1957; 2nd ed. Austin: U of Texas P, 1971): 62-63. McGann and other editors do not mention the pamphlet by W.D.
16. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 2nd ed. III. The Middle Years, Part II, 1812-1820*, edited by Ernest De Selincourt. Revised by Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970): 579.
17. Clarke's letter is included as Appendix 4097, p. 3510, to the Committee on Shipping Meeting of 19 February 1805 in the Oriental

---

and India Office Collection of the British Library, "Committee of Shipping: Minutes of the Committee and Court, 1803-09, Document #534, Shelfmark L/Mar/C.

18. Beaumont had pencilled in sepia several sketches with titles such as "View of Peel Castle with a Shipwreck" c. 1799 (see figure 1), which bear little relationship to either of the final oils. The significant distinctions between the ur- and final projects are the substitution of a vessel in distress for the shipwreck of the pencil sketches and the absence of people in the oils. Front lower left of the pencil sketch contains survivors who seem to have reached the shore at Rampside in a small boat. A second ship's boat is sailing towards them, midway between what must be the wreck at the foot of the mountain and the survivors on the shore. The prominent outer-most bastion of the castle dominates the sketch and, though diminished in size, retains its prominence as the focal center of the oils.

19. Lorenz Eitner recognizes two related themes of the "Storm-Tossed Boat" in nineteenth-century painting: it is "used to dramatize man's struggle against fate or against nature, or to point up the need for salvation" (287) and to represent "distressed humanity isolated in a meaningless or malignant universe" (288). See "The Open Window and the Storm-Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism." *Art Bulletin*. 37 (1955): 281-90.

20. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, Part I, 1806-1811*, ed. Ernest De Selincourt, 2nd ed rev. by Mary Moorman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969): 63.