

## 批判閱讀 例一

批判閱讀與思考(一)：

紅色字體：作者 Baron 的想法、判斷與解讀。

藍色字體：作者用來強調個人想法的特殊用字遣詞。

黑色字體：引用其他作者的第一手，第二手文章。

Baron, Michael. *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth's Writing*. Longman: London, 1995.

### Aesthetic and economic values: 'Michael'

Wordsworth commended 'Michael' to the attention of his friend Thomas Poole as 'a picture of a man . . . agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart; the parental affection, and the love of property, landed property, including the feelings of inheritance, home and personal and family independence'. **Emphasis on inheritance is rare in Wordsworth's writing, but the concept of 'landed property', linking landscape and economic effort, can easily be seen as a development of the idea of aesthetic ownership implicit in the 'Poems of the Naming of Places'. Wordsworth's comment points to the social and political forces of the poem.**

**Yet the most famous act of praise of 'Michael', Matthew Arnold's in his 1879 introduction to a section of Wordsworth's poems, used it to formulate an aesthetic criterion of naturalness in poetry, a naturalness which was at the same time the 'expressive[ness]' of Wordsworth's poetry at its most characteristic.** The line 'And never lifted up a single stone' exhibited, according to Arnold, a kind of non-style (or perhaps meta-style) in which '[i]t might seem the Nature not only gave him the matter for his poem, but wrote his poem for him'. **Such poetry owed nothing to language and everything to nature.**

**On the face of it there is no necessary conflict between these views, because one is broadly about subject matter and the other about style. But recent readings have shown how the poem joins the two in dialogue or conflict between aesthetic and social matters. Marjorie Levinson's widely influential discussion in *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* is professedly materialist, asking questions about the precise economic circumstances of Michael's ownership of his 'landed property' (if Michael paid off his mortgage on the land by producing a surplus income, why can't he pay off his new debt in the same way after Luke leaves?) and arguing that Michael falls into the trap of sacrificing his son by putting a price on his life – doing what Abraham in the biblical narrative was prevented from doing. **These problems are left unresolved in the poem because Wordsworth is more interested in poetry than in work: the poem has a frame narrative of how the speaker himself learned the story of Michael and why he is passing it on to others.****

**註解 [a1]: 挑選權威引文**：華茲華斯對自己作品《麥克爾》的看法。

**註解 [a2]: 用引文導入作者論點**：Baron 引用華茲華斯自己的推薦詞，來說明此詩中所注意到的地產之愛很不尋常，它串連起地景與經濟，也展現了此詩的社會政治力道。

**註解 [a3]: 文獻回顧**：Baron 先回顧前人 Matthew Arnold 所推崇此詩之中的『自然性』具有高度美學的表達性。

**註解 [a4]: 文獻回顧**：Baron 深化 Arnold 觀點對於自然的強調。

**註解 [a5]: 深入發現議題**：但是 Baron 指出新近的解讀傾向於認為此詩結合了美學和社會觀點的衝突。

**註解 [a6]: 提出其他學者的看法**：Baron 提出 Levinson 的物質主義觀點，後者指出麥克爾雖有地產卻仍然經濟困窘的難題。

**註解 [a7]: 作者繼續轉述 Levinson 的觀點**：詩中雖然提問，卻並無解決，乃是因為華茲華斯重視的是詩的架構和詩的傳承。

for the sake  
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills  
Will be my second self when I am gone.

**註解 [a8]: 佐證:** 引用華茲華斯《麥克爾》之中的詩句來證明上段中的判斷有所根據。

As Michael hopes (but fails) to pass on his land to his son Luke, Wordsworth hopes (and succeeds) in passing his narrative on to readers, potential poets. These are two parallel stories of inheritance, and, in Levinson's view, the poems value aesthetic inheritance more highly than legal inheritance of landed property.

**註解 [H9]: 作者解讀 Levinson 的真正洞見:** Baron 指出 Levinson 在分析中建立起一組平行的類比: 麥克爾希望留給兒子地產, 正如華茲華絲希望把詩留給潛在的後代詩人。也就是說, 此詩較重視的是詩所留下美學遺產

This parallel is important in providing a way of linking economics and aesthetics, but there is a broader and, I think, more precise context available if we look at different kinds of aestheticisation in the poem. In the first place the action has an inevitability which gives it a kind of tragic form, and we can link this with Wordsworth's comment about the poem to Charles James Fox. Writing of 'small independence proprietors of land', he argues that ownership of inherited land immeasurably deepens the 'domestic affections' in a way 'inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, or the manufacturing Poor':

**註解 [a10]: 作者推出自己的看法:** Baron 認為 Levinson 串連美學和經濟是對的, 但是還需要從更大的脈絡來讀, 特別是詩中的悲劇形式。

Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic affections. . . . It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social men.

**註解 [a11]: 佐證:** Baron 認為這個悲劇在於華茲華斯認為地產的擁有深化了家人情感, 這是別的階級沒有的。Baron 引用華茲華斯自己的說法作為佐證。

Wordsworth goes on to say that this 'class of men is rapidly disappearing'. Two things need attention here, first, that he is writing at a moment of perceived social decline, so that Michael's failure to hold on to both land and family symbolises a general problem that needs a political solution: arresting the drift towards towns and factories and controlling the depression of wages and rise in prices. All these factors are mentioned in the letter to Fox. Wordsworth makes tragedy out of a specific historical moment. This raises the question of how effective a political generalisation can be made out of a very particularised section of society: Michael's way of life is important partly because it is uncommon. The second point is that there is a blurring of aesthetic and emotional experience in the quoted passage that complicated any simple opposition between the aesthetic and the economic. The same thing happens much more extensively in the poem itself.

**註解 [a12]: 佐證:** Baron 引用華茲華斯的語句來證明他對華氏的觀點是有根據的。

This crucial passage is that in which Michael's feelings for the land and for his son become mutually supportive:

He with his Father daily went, and they  
Were as companions, why should I relate  
That objects which the Shepherd loved before  
Were dearer now? That from the Boy there came

**註解 [apple13]: 作者提出自己的觀察:** Baron 從當時的歷史背景, 以及華茲華斯自己在信中的想法, 整理出二件值得注意的事: (一) 華茲華斯對當時社會衰退的現象不是沒有感, 而且曾提出政治方案來解決人口流失; (二) 詩中有明顯的美學與情感經驗的模糊, 因此無法認定其間有簡單的對立關係。

Feelings and emanations, things that were  
 Light to the sun and music to the wind;  
 And that the Old man's heart seemed born again. (207-13)

**註解 [apple14]:** **佐證:** Baron 引述詩中的句子來說明上述第二點。

'Light to the sun': the phrase reminds us of one of Wordsworth's formulations of imaginative awakening in *The Prelude*: 'an auxiliary light / Came from my mind'. Michael invests Luke with the power to waken his (Michael's) imagination, and so Luke becomes the aesthetic property or agent of his father. In this way Michael's experience and values are so inward-looking that he is left vulnerable to any 'outside' influence, which must inevitably disturb what he has emotionally achieved. He has himself created a hard line between inner and outer in the act of internalising Luke's (imagined) experience. It is this inevitability, I think, that makes the poem tragic as well as elegiac: Michael's emotional strengths are also his limitations. It is much more concentrated and self-contained than the 'Poems on Naming of Places' and its companion-piece 'The Brothers', which I shall consider below, nor does it have a dynamic debate about the barrier that divides within and without, as some of Wordsworth's ballads do. Significantly his house is a symbol of work for the surrounding community but not a scene of communal economic relations. Harmonious spousal relations within the cottage are symbolised by the two spinning wheels, but to others 'The Evening Star' as the cottage is named is 'a Public symbol of the life, / The thrifty Pair had lived': a thing apart from their neighbours, a landmark seen from afar, not a centre of communal life.

**註解 [apple15]:** **解說上面的**  
**引句:** Baron 引用 *The Prelude* 中的詩句觀念來讀 *Michael*，以說明在有產傳子的脈絡中，父對子的情感投注也使得父很容易也必然受到外在(社會經濟)力道的衝擊。這個悲劇性正在於情感是 *Michael* 的強處也是他的弱點。

The other kind of aestheticisation (which Levinson and others draw attention to) is Wordsworth's self-reference as a poet who, as it were, grew into the role of the poet by hearing such stories as the one he relates: 'Michael' is a poem to make poets out of economics.

**註解 [apple16]:** **加強觀察的**  
**深度:** Baron 進而談到實體的財產，也就是麥克爾居住的小屋。Baron 從中讀出房屋雖是生產工作的象徵，卻是和周遭社區經濟體系和社區生活隔絕的——因而可以被美學化

It was the first,  
 The earliest of those tales that spake to me  
 Of Shepherds, dwellers in the vallies, men  
 Whom I already loved, not, verily  
 For their sakes, but for the field and hills  
 Where was their occupation and abode.  
 And hence this Tale, while yet I was a boy  
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power  
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency  
 Of Natural objects led me on to feel  
 For passions that were not my own, and think

**註解 [apple17]:** **加強觀察的**  
**深度:** Baron 揭露詩中的另一種美學化：華茲華斯在聽故事、說故事的動態過程中長成詩人。因此，詩人透過詩的美學而被「生產」出來的過程也可以視為詩的一種經濟思考。

At random and imperfectly indeed  
 On man; the heart of man and human life.  
 (21-33)

In these lines Wordsworth's speaker uses Michael for his own aesthetic purposes just as Michael uses Luke for his emotional purpose, 'Not verily / For their own sakes'. This supports the view that the poem is about transforming economic actuality into aesthetic values, but we must also give due weight to the sense of inner and outer as it applies in both these fields.

**註解 [apple18]: 前文的佐證**  
 : 引用華茲華斯《麥克爾》中詩句,以證明其詩不僅僅是個故事,華氏自己受到該故事的影響而產生了某些他所期望的目的性。

**註解 [apple19]: 再加強說明自己的觀點**  
 : Baron 認為此詩的過程主要就是把 (Michael) 經濟的現實轉換成 (華茲華斯) 美學的價值。換句話說,詩的美學觀(內心的)裡包含著經濟生產(外在的)。Baron 也認為也不應該對於外在(物質)與內在(心靈與美學)二個領域思考中過於偏廢。