

重庆大学外国语学院 缙湖学术文丛

Mourning for a Home:
A Study of William Wordsworth's
Poems from 1797 to 1807

家园与哀悼： 华兹华斯诗歌的主题研究 (1797 ~ 1807)

李 玲/著




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内 容 简 介

本书以英国浪漫主义诗人威廉·华兹华斯创作巅峰十年期间的诗歌为文本对象,以地方诗学为切入视角和理论指导,旨在探讨华兹华斯诗歌中哀悼和家园的相互影响关系以及这种相互关系的演变过程。从《毁塌的茅舍》到《莱尔斯通的白母鹿》,不同的哀悼方式经由不同的哀悼者,不断发展进化,最终在同一个哀悼者身上集合,并相互吸收融合,哀悼者因此由无法自拔的绝望者进化为智者,既拥有大自然的超然智慧又拥有能透视生死、感悟永恒的心灵禀赋;与此相应,通过哀悼者的哀悼,破灭的家园从新的意义上失而复得,与地方、土地浑然一体的栖居进化为既与地方浑然一体又能游离于其外的栖居。

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前 言

本书以英国浪漫主义诗人威廉·华兹华斯（William Wordsworth, 1770~1850）诗歌创造的巅峰十年期间（The Great Decade, 1797、1798 到 1807、1808 年间，或者说从《毁塌的茅舍》到《莱尔斯通的白母鹿》的创作期间）的诗歌为文本对象，以地方诗学为切入视角和理论指导，旨在探讨华兹华斯的诗歌中哀悼和家园的相互影响关系以及这种关系的演变过程。一方面，哀悼的一个深刻根源是家园的破灭；另一方面，通过哀悼，哀悼者可能重建与地方的关系，获得新的意义上的家园。从《毁塌的茅舍》到《莱尔斯通的白母鹿》，通过探讨玛格丽特的哀悼，著名的漫游者货郎的哀悼，华兹华斯自己的哀悼，英国湖区（The Lake District）居民的哀悼，艾米丽的哀悼等，华兹华斯的相关思想从最初玛格丽特的无望中一步步走出，家园和哀悼的关系，人与地方的关系，以及家的概念和意义在艾米丽至高的思想境界里达到最成熟的状态。

本书共有三章。第一章依次探讨《毁塌的茅舍》中玛格丽特的哀悼，货郎的哀悼，以及作为听者的诗人的哀悼，确立了有关家园和哀悼的相互作用的所有关键因素，包括两种家园概念和三种哀悼方式，并揭示这些因素尚未成熟之处，从而为接下来的两章设下铺垫。两种家园概念为：一种是与地方、土地血脉相连，浑然一体的栖居方式；另一种是既与地方融为一体又游离在地方之外的栖居方式。三种哀悼方式为：一、类似于弗洛伊德的抑郁病患者，哀悼者在哀悼中无法自拔，直至彻底迷失；二、哀悼者在悲伤的极致时刻进入“一脚生者，一脚逝者”的临界状态，并因此豁然意会到生存的真相，感悟到永恒，从而看透无常、走出悲伤；三、哀悼者借助大自然超然的智慧，借助大自然的眼睛

透视死亡，以此超越死亡带来的绝望。在第一章的基础上，第二章继续以地方诗学的视角探讨类似于玛格丽特的悲剧，以及货郎和诗人所代表的哀悼方式的演变。本章的第一节和第二节分析湖区居民的哀悼方式。一方面，类似于货郎对于玛格丽特的哀悼，湖区居民的家园概念使他们的哀悼也体现出哀悼者内化的自然智慧。二者的区别在于前者的智慧属于一种有自我意识的内化，而后者的智慧则是无意识的。另一方面，《兄弟》这首诗进一步发掘了玛格丽特式的哀悼的根源和本质，并在此基础上揭示出湖区居民哀悼方式的脆弱。第三节分析《论墓志铭》第三篇结尾处华兹华斯偶遇一块墓碑并因此感受到精神世界的提升和顿悟的经历。这段经历是《毁塌的茅舍》中诗人所显示的哀悼模式的进一步发展。家园的破灭带给哀悼者的绝望终于在《莱尔斯通的白母鹿》中被彻底克服。本文的第三章分析《莱尔斯通的白母鹿》中艾米丽的哀悼。在某种意义上，艾米丽集玛格丽特，老货郎和诗人于一身；不同的是，她战胜了家园的破灭所导致的悲伤，并且把自然的智慧和临界状态下所顿悟的智慧完美的融合在一起。艾米丽是一位流浪着和漫游着的哀悼者，她从玛格丽特式的在故土的流浪，进化成《兄弟》中伦纳德式的背井离乡的自我放逐，最后升华为栖居在故土的漫游者。与之相应，她的哀悼由无措不安发展成冷酷严肃的忧郁，继而进化成兼具柔和气质和沉思气质的忧郁。

由以上内容简介可见，从《毁塌的茅舍》到《莱尔斯通的白母鹿》，三种不同哀悼方式经由不同的哀悼者，不断发展进化，最终在同一个哀悼者身上集合，并相互吸收融合，哀悼者因此由无法自拔的绝望者进化为智者，既拥有大自然的超然智慧又拥有能透视生死、感悟永恒的心灵禀赋；与此相应，通过哀悼者的哀悼，破灭的家园从新的意义上失而复得，与地方、土地浑然一体的栖居进化为既与地方浑然一体又能游离于其外的栖居。

本书是在许多人的指导和帮助下完成的，笔者想借此机会向他们表

达衷心的感谢。首先，感谢我的博士生导师，北京大学苏薇星教授。此书从最开始的选题，到之后的结构框架，每一个章节的多次修改，都是在苏老师的指导和建议之下完成的。苏老师清新的灵感，扎实宽阔的学术基础和视野，严谨理性的治学思维和态度都让我受益匪浅。其次，北京大学的丁宏为教授也对此书提出了许多宝贵的建议，给予了诸多的关注，在此我也向他表示衷心的感谢。另外，感谢重庆大学外国语学院领导和同事的支持和关怀。此书还得到了重庆大学中央高校基本科研业务费（No. 106112015 CDJSK 04 HQ 04）的资助。最后，特别感谢我的家人，感谢他们长期的关怀和支持。

李 玲

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A Note on Text

All references to *The Prelude* will be to William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 1799, 1805, 1850. Ed. J. Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and S. Gill (New York: Norton, 1979). Quotations will be from the 1850 text, unless designated 1799 or 1805.

Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Wordsworth's poems will be from *The Poems of William Wordsworth: Collected Reading Texts from the Cornell Wordsworth*. Ed. Jared Curtis. Vol. I, II, III. (Perrith: Humanities-Ebooks, LLP, 2011).

Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Hartman's works will be from Geoffrey Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1964).

Abbreviations

Author is William Wordsworth unless otherwise indicated.

- CW *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, Ed. A. J. G. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904.
- EL *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787-1805)*.
- ED Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford UP, 1935.
- FN *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*. Ed. Jared Curtis. London: Bristol Classic Press, 1993.
- LB *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*. Eds. James Butler and Karen Green. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992.
- MY *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years. Vol.I: 1806-1811*. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937.
- PrW *The Prose Work of William Wordsworth*. Eds. W. J. B. Owen and Jane W. Smyser. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- PW *The Poems of William Wordsworth: Collected Reading Texts from the Cornell Wordsworth*. Ed. Jared Curtis. Vol. I, II, III. Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, LLP, 2011.
- WD *The White Doe of Rylstone; or The Fate of the Norton*. Ed. Kristine Dugas. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

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Introduction

I. Home and Mourning in Wordsworth's Poems

Home is a major theme in Wordsworth's poems. *The Prelude* sees young Wordsworth go back home frequently. *Home at Grasmere* is a celebration of dwelling. *The Excursion* dwells frequently on the humble cottages of rural inhabitants. "Hart-leap Well" records a story of returning to one's native place. "Admonition" betrays the poet's strong longing for a lovely cottage. And there are numerous poems in which Wordsworth displays a desire for a homelike place in woods and fields. For example, in "A Whirl-blast from behind the Hill", he writes about a copse with "spacious floor / With wither'd leaves" (9-10), and "A fairer bower was never seen" (8) made of tall hollies; in "Nutting", it is his violation of "the green and mossy bower" (44) made of hazels that gives him "a sense of pain" (50); in the first poem of his "Poems on the Naming of Places", Wordsworth takes a wild nook as "my other home, / My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode" (40-41). Furthermore, there are many poems on birds' nests, which also manifest Wordsworth's fascination with the idea of home, such as the nest of the wild swans envied so much by the passing soldier's widow in "An Evening Walk" (227-257), the sparrow's nest that gives him and Dorothy great delights in "The Sparrow's Nest", and the dwelling defended by the primroses in "A Wren's Nest".

Although Wordsworth harbors so strong a desire for home and homelike place, in his poems domestic dwelling is often sadly temporary. Time and again, with houses and families falling to ruin together, harmony of a home becomes mourning for a home, and dwelling place becomes epitaphic place. "Hart-leap Well" sees the hart's native place fall into "no common waste, no common gloom" for a long while. In "The Ruined Cottage", Robert's abandonment of the family and later the family's destruction turn the cottage into an epitaphic site. In "Michael", Luke's betrayal of the family gradually reduces the former "Evening Star" (146) of the community to "a straggling Heap of unhewn stones" (17). The ruin of the hope to rebuild a family in "The Brothers" sentences Leonard to self-exile, which is a self-punishment caused by his suffocating mourning for his brother. The destruction of the Nortons in *The White Doe of Rylstone* leaves their place as destitute as a wasteland for a long time, and finally turns the place into an epitaphic site, and Emily into a mourner and bearer of the dead.

However, the relationship between home and mourning in Wordsworth's poems does not end as purely tragic. Morris Dickstein contends: "Wordsworth, finally, was not a tragic poet but one whose consoling ideas could help his readers live with tragedy. He showed them how to expand their range of feeling without falling into gloom or desperation" (343). In "Hart-leap Well", the tragedy of the hart is mourned against the backdrop of Wordsworth's and Dorothy's harsh yet hopeful journey back home. In "The Ruined Cottage", Margaret's home tragedy is framed within the Pedlar's and the Poet's fructifying mourning and their final harmonious relationship with place. Many

“spots of time” (*The Prelude* 12. 208) in *The Prelude*, such as the “Waiting for Palfrey” episode and the “Gibbet” episode, involve a tension between home and mourning, but finally “nourish” and “repair” (215) Wordsworth’s mind.

Why is a journey home, literally or metaphorically, so frequently connected with death and mourning? This is what motivates this book. Wordsworth in his *Essays upon Epitaphs* has some observations directly linking mourning with the idea of home. He shows great respect for the efforts of those inhabitants of Scotland to transfer their dead back to the side of their forefathers:

We learn from the Statistical Account of Scotland that in some districts, a general transfer of inhabitants has taken place; and that a great majority of those who live, and labor, and attend public worship in one part of the country, are buried in another. Strong and unconquerable still continues to be the desire of all, that their bones should rest by their forefathers, and very poor persons provide that their bodies should be conveyed if necessary to a great distance to obtain that last satisfaction. (176)

And he talks about the effect that an epitaph, even if it contains nothing but a name, could have upon local attachment and upon the cohesion of family and community:

As in these registers the name is mostly associated with others of the same family, this is a prolonged companionship, however shadowy: even a tomb like this is a shrine to which

the fancies of a scattered family may return in pilgrimage; the thoughts of the individuals without any communication with each other must oftentimes meet here. Such a frail memorial then is not without its tendency to keep families together. It feeds also local attachment, which is the tap-root of the tree of Patriotism. (190)

In these remarks, mourning is a way leading back to home: it brings the dead back to their ancestors; it unites the dead and the living again in a spiritual sense; it feeds the feeling of home, family, community, and local attachment; and through all these effects, it chastens and exalts the spiritual world of the living. Wordsworth compares the effect a quiet rural churchyard can have upon a mourner's spiritual world to a peaceful concert:

Amid the quiet of a church-yard thus decorated as it seemed by the hand of Memory, and shining, if I may so say, in the light of love, I have been affected by sensations akin to those which have risen in my mind while I have been standing by the side of a smooth sea, on a Summer's day. It is such a happiness to have, in an unkind world, one enclosure where the voice of Detraction is not heard; where the traces of evil inclinations are unknown; where contentment prevails, and there is no jarring tone in the peaceful concert of amity and gratitude. (175)

Such peaceful concerts can indeed be heard in Wordsworth's poems on the theme of mourning and home, among which Emily's final

mild and delicious melancholy in *The White Doe of Rylstone* and the Pastor's mourning in the rural churchyard in *The Excursion* are two most typical examples. Less peaceful yet still capable of offering some tranquility are the Pedlar's and the Poet's mourning in "The Ruined Cottage". Yet, there are also some jarring tones in the music of mourning and home. One hears the silently depressing drips of Margaret's tears that seem to flow forever day and night, the dull and suffocating sound of the drying-up of Michael's life volition while his mourning for Luke gradually consumes his life, the wail and heartbreak which Leonard represses within his lonely heart when and after he again leaves his home place, etc. However, these jarring tones do not contradict Wordsworth's metaphor, because finally all the varieties of tones flow into one last stream, which makes a peaceful, yet deep, monitory, and restorative concert. The peaceful concert is not thin, simple, easy and light music, but grows out of the recognition of the truth of mortal life and of the spirit of humanity. Then, facing tragedies of home and place, why can some mourners achieve restoration while others cannot? How does the idea of home and place affect the course and effect of mourning? How can a depressing or even devastating mourning finally be transformed into a restorative one? These questions are what this book explores. The word "for" in the book's title "Mourning for a Home" carries two suggestions: one is that a home is lost, which causes the mourning; the other is that within the mourning there hides a hope to regain a home, and on some occasions a new home and a new relationship with place is indeed regained through mourning.

II. The Concepts of Mourning, Home, and Place

As far as mourning is concerned, people usually refer to Freud's explanation. In his "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud discerns a dichotomy between mourning and melancholia:

Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, and ideal, and so on. In some people the same influences produces melancholia instead of mourning and we consequently suspect them of a pathological disposition. It is also worth notice that, although mourning involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life, it never occurs to us to regard it as a pathological condition and to refer it to medical treatment. We rely on its being overcome after a certain lapse of time and we look upon any interference with it as useless or even harmful. (39)

On some occasions, Freud's definition is too clinical for literature criticism. With its therapeutic purpose, it defines mourning as a healthy and necessary anguish in the immediate wake of bereavement, and if the anguish is much prolonged, mourning acquires a menacing trait of melancholia, which is unhealthy and needs interference. The healthy mourner pours out his grief over the time, lets go the lost, finds a new object to replace the lost, reinvests his emotions into the new object, and finally manages to move on. Contrary to the healthy mourner, the

melancholic refuses to let go the lost, and is locked in the past, because of which he lives past as present and regards representations of past as reality.^①

The application of Freud's theory of mourning and melancholia to Wordsworth's poems is certainly helpful, since some mourners in Wordsworth's poems do manifest some characteristics of the Freudian mourner and the Freudian melancholic. But on many other occasions, the mourners in Wordsworth's poems move beyond Freud's theory: some mourners manifest both characteristics of the Freudian mourner and melancholic; and for other mourners, melancholia is not purely menacing, but is necessary and helpful to the final beatification of mind. Furthermore, due to its therapeutic purpose, Freud's theory shows much more concern for the mourner than for the mourned, and it regards mourning more as an isolated instance occurring to an individual mourner than as what occurs to a community.

The conceptual premise of this book is broader than Freud's definition: it regards mourning as a tension between the mourner and the mourned, with the emphasis not only on the mourner but also on the persistence of the mourned in the world of the living; it extends mourning from individual grief to the influence of death and loss upon community; it explores mourning not only through the psychological lens, but also through the social and cultural lens, especially the lens of home, place, and community; finally and inevitably, mourning lasts much longer than the immediate wake of bereavement. William Watkin's observation on mourning suits better the purpose of this

① For further explanation of the Freudian melancholy, see Chapter Three, 238-239.

book: "To mourn means to come back to the dead, to consider the strategies we have used to come to terms with death, to go over remains, to look at what we as a culture have been able to do with them." (47) So, mourning in this book includes both the Freudian mourning and the Freudian melancholia, and any other behavior of going back to the dead, such as remembering the dead or visiting the graves of the dead long after the great grief has been overcome, or even an unexpected encounter with a grave on the part of a bereaved individual or community or only of a passing traveler.

Home refers to the feeling of belonging or rootedness, usually in terms of place. Yi-fu Tuan defines home as "an intimate place" (144). Freya Stark makes a similar remark: "This surely is the meaning of home—a place where every day is multiplied by all days before it" (55). But very often too, home goes beyond the concept of place, especially particular place. In Wordsworth's poems, a home can be a very particular place, it also can be the whole nature, and sometimes there are heavenly dwellings or even yearnings for a dwelling in poetry and imagination. So, the relationship between home and place could be that home is in place, or beyond place, or it could also be that home is both in and beyond place.

This book involves two very unique ideas of home in Wordsworth's poems. One refers to the state of being completely "in" place, especially a deep union with the land inherited from generation to generation for the rural inhabitants in the Lake District. Wordsworth has a very moving comment on this idea of home in one of his 1801 letters to Charles James Fox: