Possession and Dispossession in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*

Mikyung Park*

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【Abstract】

This essay aims to elucidate the intersection of poetry and passion in terms of material poverty and emotional excess, which are constitutive of Wordsworth's creative origins in two poems of *Lyrical Ballads*: "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Last of the Flock." In these poems, Wordsworth attacks the social injustice that ruins the rustic poor and their intense feelings in the wake of industrialization

* Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Kyonggi University.

and urbanization. In view of Susan Eilenberg's formulation of literary possession, possession refers to both material property and emotional engrossing. That is, passions are contingent on possession and dispossession of both material and immaterial property. The correlation between material possession and mental obsession is made possible through Wordsworth's endeavor to find poetic value in the suffering of others. Extreme deprivation forces Goody Blake to steal twigs from Harry Gill; due to the lack of warm heart the latter inflicts violence on the former and consequently invites perpetual chill. The ostensibly supernatural effect of Harry's teeth chattering is indeed derived from the powers of the imagination, namely, his conscience, as his ears have been haunted by Goody's prayer. In "The Last of the Flock," Wordsworth represents the predicament inherent in the shepherd's affections divided for children and the sheep. On the verge of selling the last of the flock, the shepherd loses his sound mind; he no longer cares about his own life and that of his children. Neither Goody's nor the shepherd's industry prevents them from destitution. In poetizing the poor rustics, particularly, those who are forced to lose their minimal property, Wordsworth makes persistent efforts to capture their individual psychology and register the movement of excessive emotions as a result of dispossession. In so doing, the poet urges readers to call into question the dominant way of perceiving the underprivileged and marginal figures, whose suffering is justified not merely in the poverty discourse but in the literary space.

Key Words: passions, possession, dispossession, poverty, *Lyrical Ballads,* William Wordsworth

1. Passion, Poetry, Possession

Wordsworth makes clear that poetry and passion are mutually defined and fundamentally constitutive of each other. He demonstrates the idea of poetry primarily in the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* and the Note to "The Thorn." The two prose works were added to the 1800 volumes and evinced the consistency of Wordsworth's poetic theory. In the "Preface," Wordsworth defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" and its origin is taken from "emotion recollected in tranquility" (72, 85). In the Note to "The Thorn," moreover, poetry equals passions in that the mind receives and processes words as representation and the represented:

> poetry is passion; it is the history or science of feelings: now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language ..... repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. ..... the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. (Owen 97 emphasis in original)

In this supplementary essay, the poet clarifies the identification of poetry with passion. Furthermore, Wordsworth underscores passion not merely as a signified but as a marker of things signified. He proves this theory through a retired mariner, who is the balladeer in "The Thorn." Repetition is characteristic of the superstitious speaker as a means of complementing the insufficiency of words. While developing his logic to verify Martha Ray's abnormal life of alienation in the wilderness,

the mariner escalates his own (and the reader's) bewilderment by revealing dubious details of the woman made abject by suffering. The sailor-narrator sticks to ocular proof of Martha's allegedly scandalous demeanor. Repeated words reflect the lack of accurate information about Martha's alleged pregnancy, infanticide, and insanity. Then, passions become equivalent to poetry in an effort to "trace the motion of the human mind"; Wordsworth's account of poetry as the history or science of feelings informs "emotive aesthetics" (Ferguson 13). Hence, the above citation applies to Wordsworth's other poems that articulate impassioned state of the mind.

As part of investigating the intersection of poetry and passions, this essay calls attention to the way in which poetry entails possession. Possession refers to both material property and emotional engrossing. At the center of Coleridge and Wordsworth's collaborative production of *Lyrical Ballads*, as Susan Eilenberg argues, are "the processes of possession and dispossession" that the two poets textualize in handling the subject matter as well as the ownership of their writings (5). As Eilenberg observes, both the 1798 and 1800 volumes of *Lyrical Ballads* contain numerous poems about "economics" (61). Specifically concerning the intertextuality of literary possession in Coleridge's "Christabel" and Wordsworth's "Michael," Eilenberg points out that "a complex of ideas about property, propriety, and possession informs the images of literary authority, textual identity, and poetic figuration to be found in much of the two writers' major works" (ix).[1] Inspired by Eilenberg's account

1) Eilenberg contends that for the authors of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, "questions of literary property were still intricately bound up with questions of propriety and matters of style bound up with matters of ownership" (15). The critic discusses the significance of property as representations of "poetic utterance"

of property as "a potential figure of poetry" (5) in *Lyrical Ballads*, this essay seeks to explicate the ways in which passions involve possession and dispossession of both material and immaterial property in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.[2] In other words, borrowing Eilenberg's formulation of literary possession, this essay will combine poverty and passions as an integral part of Wordsworth's creative origins.

In addition to the aspect of being possessed, according to Eilenberg, poetry and property are interchangeable in terms of their dependence on agents of "handing down or tradition" (92). This assumption of the generational connection enables Eilenberg to construct an analogy of Michael's land to Wordsworth's poetry; the land gains significance only as inheritable property to descendants just as story is "valued not as it is hoarded but as it is shared" (Ibid.). The critic continues to elaborate on the value of a story that "In order to mean anything, to be worth anything, a story must be told, listened to, and—the teller hopes—told again" (Ibid.). Poetry and property equally need to be

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in "Poems on the Naming of Places" and "Michael" (60-86), and Coleridge's "demonic possession" and Wordsworth's "financial and familial dispossession" through the intertextuality between "Christabel" and "Michael" (87-107). In terms of etymology, both property and propriety are derived from an adjective "proper." Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com. Propriety is a problematic term in light of Adam Smith's theory of sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

2) Wordsworth's perception of poetry as property is inseparable from his idea of copyrights. Eilenberg notably probes into Wordsworth's persistent efforts to reform copyrights throughout his poetic career (192-212). Lee Erickson also underscores Wordsworth's conception of "poetry as property" about which he was "the most concerned" of the Romantic poets (49). Depicting Wordsworth as "the most tenacious in retaining his copyrights, and perhaps, the most disappointed in his expectations for the sales of his work," Erickson maintains that Wordsworth's dependence on the literary marketplace is manifested in his acute attention to the copyright (ibid.).

disseminated to the other who is not the original owner. Eilenberg stresses the singularity of Michael's mentality in valuing land "not for its price in the marketplace and not for the minimal wealth it enables him to accumulate but for its power to symbolize and strengthen family bonds" (92). This perspective suggests the possibility of linking poetry to property on multiple levels. Nonetheless, the distinction between exclusive possession of land and expansive possession of poetry by readers should not be disregarded.

The experiences of possession and dispossession are contingent on material poverty and emotional excess in "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Last of the Flock." The ostensibly contrary concepts of possession and dispossession are not inevitably a binary opposition here. Rather, possession presupposes and conditions dispossession insofar as emotional excess often derives from the privation of property. Moreover, possession will not be confined to the realms of financial and literary ownership, but extended to diverse connotations ranging from material goods to psychological paranoia and to poetry as property and vice versa. On the other hand, dispossession implicates loss of property and the subsequent visitation of hardship, thus resulting in possession by uncontrollable feelings. In this regard, possession and dispossession are not divided into positive and negative experiences, respectively.

The correlation between material possession and mental obsession is made possible through Wordsworth's self-conscious endeavor to find poetic value in the suffering of others. This process of creating poetry is analogous to a process of imitating the original feelings of the sufferer on the basis of common reaction to pain irrespective of difference in degree. Andrew Bennet explains Wordsworth's seemingly contradictory production of poetry "in terms of the author's experience or emotion

and as a supplement to or copy of that experience or emotion" (109). For Wordsworth, encounter with the other inspires him to deliver the other's story, in particular, his response to it; he actually meets or hears about the other. Yet the other's story does not simply offer the subject matter, but gives rise to bewilderment, thus conducting the speaker to question the reason for the emotional contagion. More importantly, in many poems of *Lyrical Ballads*, awareness of the other's pain causes the speaker to reveal intense emotions; a singular experience of the other brings the flow of passions to light. While acknowledging the cognitive aspect of passions and their transpersonal movement, Thomas Pfau remarks in reference to Jean-Luc Nancy and Georges Bataille: "The presence of the other does not constitute a boundary that would limit the unleashing of 'my' passions; on the contrary, only exposition to the other unleashes my passions" (3).[3] For instance, "Simon Lee" conveys a speaker's mourning over the old man's gratitude for breaking "A stump of rotten wood" (84).

A balladeer who bears witness to the other's story conditions the genesis of the two poems of *Lyrical Ballads*. The balladeers of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Last of the Flock" play a crucial role of sympathizing with and yet mediating the direct expression of emotional turbulence that involves the characters. The speaker of each poem explicitly mediates instantaneous passions represented in the suffering other. While relating the other's stories of suffering, the balladeer is

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3) Pfau's thesis is to rearticulate emotion not as passion but "via the concept of 'mood'" unlike the tradition of rhetorical and utilitarian approaches to contain explosive and unverifiable feelings in the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith and David Hume (6-7). Instead of "the topical or lexical taxonomies," emotion is argued to hold "a holistic and historically distinctive component in the unfolding story of modernity" (7).

possessed by similarly painful feelings and yet keeps his distance from the direct victims. Nevertheless, the balladeer stays emotionally invested in the characters of the poems.

In “Goody Blake and Harry Gill” and “The Last of the Flock,” poverty serves to intensify passions; penury triggers the concerned parties to build the virtual community of emotion, which includes the balladeer, characters, poet and presumed readers. As in “Michael” and other poems of Wordsworth’s, the passions enacted within “Goody Blake and Harry Gill” and “The Last of the Flock” are transmitted among people. The passions in these two poems are evoked by their adherence to property and the ensuing feelings. That is, Harry Gill’s and the shepherd’s agonizing, resulted less from physical pain than from psychological anxiety, is highly contagious; their suffering affects the speakers, who urge his audience to participate in the passions dramatized within the poems. The reader is not supposed to consume self-indulgent emotions; instead, he or she is compelled to be aware of being present in the scenes of writing and reading of the poem when addressed as “you” both in “Goody Blake and Harry Gill” and “The Last of the Flock.” Not only mediated by the balladeer but addressed as “you,” readers are compelled to feel intrigued by the causality of the pain of the characters.[4] Accordingly, audiences find themselves eventually

4) In fact, readers remain ignorant of the identity of the balladeer and his or her financial stability in each poem. Yet readers are convinced that the speaker of each poem is sympathetic with the misery that Goody Blake, Harry Gill, and the shepherd all undergo in a different fashion. As Wordsworth proposes the poet’s position as that of the “translator” (79), the balladeer is likewise situated between characters and the poet. The passions enacted within the poems are the very results of the balladeer’s sympathetic approach to the sufferers. He almost takes for granted that the reader cares about the people in affliction as much as he does.

possessed, not directly though, by the distress that Goody Blake, Harry Gill and the shepherd have exhibited within the texts. In consequence, as Adela Pinch aptly notes, affective exchanges prove extremely "personal" and at the same time "impersonal" feelings, leading to "the transpersonal nature of feelings" in the late eighteenth-century literary culture of circulating and reproducing conventional feelings and literary tropes (7-9).[5] Influenced by the characters of the poems, the poet's passions are decisive in engendering imaginative works and claiming the property of poetry as valuable assets. Poetry, thus, unfolds as a literary phenomenon of passions that the poet owns and yet disowns so that they claim transient autonomy and thus remind us of the borders of psychosomatic landscape inhabited by the poet, characters, and the implied readers.

When feelings hinge upon the pain of the other, Wordsworth's emphasis on emotions leads some critics to accuse him of appropriating femininity that has been circulated as a token of weakness and vulgarity in his contemporary literary culture. Especially in the poems that deal with the suffering and abandoned women, Anne Mellor maintains that Wordsworth "embraced the patriarchal construction of the female as nature—and its attendant association of femininity with passivity, emotionality, irrationality and corporeality" (145). Indeed, most women in his poetry passively endure pain caused by the external forces that lie out of their control. Both Pinch and Susan Wolfson claim for

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5) Pinch's approach to the cognitive power of emotions is indebted to David Hume's notion of experience as the reception of external impressions. Hume's perception of emotions points to "contagious" feelings and "correspondent movements in every human nature" (576). Pfau also acknowledges the strength of Pinch's claim and develops his thesis on the close relationship between passions and history in many of English and German writers of the Romantic period.

Wordsworth's appropriation of femininity as an essential factor in establishing his poetic identity in the late eighteenth-century discourse of sensibility. Bringing the "relationship between affect and language" into focus, Pinch contends that Wordsworth utilizes "other people's pain" as "the theoretical origin of representation" (9). Since the pain is usually ascribed to women in Wordsworth's poems, Pinch highlights the role of "gender" in producing "emotion" in the context of the contemporary discourse of feelings (74). Focusing on the gender of feelings in Wordsworth's poetics, Wolfson maintains that in several poems of *Lyrical Ballads*, "a possession by feeling may effeminize men, eroding the social figure of manliness that depends on clear gender difference" (31). Like Pinch who motivates Wolfson to explore the gender of feelings, Wolfson underscores how closely passions and poetic creativity are related. For Wolfson, "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Thorn" showcase the femininity of "men of feeling" and prove that femininity is not simply biologically female (31). Wolfson foregrounds the binary opposition of womanly feeling to masculine rationality while stressing the "blurring of gender distinction" when she asserts that "the overflow of men's feelings is infused with strains of psychological aberrance and extravagance that threaten to subvert the rational capacities and self-possession with which Enlightenment discourse equates with manly character" in some poems of *Lyrical Ballads* (34, 31). Based on this clear division of feeling and rationality, and that of male and female, Wolfson claims for the disruption of male creativity by "the transgressive power of female passion and its influence to the possession, over its male audience" (34). Indeed, Wordsworth counts on the sexual difference in achieving the imaginative coloring of an ordinary experience, that is, defamiliarization, as part of finding similitude in dissimilitude or dissimilitude in similitude (Owen

85). However, Wordsworth's poetics of feelings is not entirely contingent on gender. Faced with the extreme conditions of being, however, male characters are not exempt from enormous feelings, either. In this precise regard, as Karen Swann puts it, gender is still "a secondary construction" in comparison with the fundamental condition of being (89). Instead of gender, narrative devices gain much import.

Wordsworth criticizes the "emotional extravagance" (Pinch 2) as a debased kind of pleasure propagated by sentimentalist literature through the poetic devices of containing uncontrollable emotion: multiple layers of narrative and meter. First, multiple layered narrative requires a speaker and his audience addressed within the text. Bearing in mind Wordsworth's urgent allegation that "exorbitancy always threatens literature" as in sensational literature, Swann makes this point as well: "although the pleasure of poetry originates in and feeds on passion, passion always threatens to exceed the bounds of what can impart pleasure to others or even to the passionate individual" (87). This is echoed in Wordsworth's denunciation of extravagant emotion and his deployment of "the technical apparatus," that is, *The Ruined Cottage*'s "multiplication of human filters between the reader and narrated events" for "poetic control" to check "our morbid or wanton dalliance with suffering by drawing our critical attention to acts of reading and telling" (Swann 87). For Swann, the multiple layers of narrative are integral to keeping proper distance from the suffering other, which constitutes Wordsworth's attack upon the contemporary sensationalist literature. In telling about the other's suffering, each balladeer shows his or her limits, thus urging readers to reflect on their own practice of sympathizing with suffering victims encountered in literary space at a distance.

Second, meter holds novelty in recuperating degenerate emotions from

irrationality and abuse. Admitting the predicament of representing the painful feelings, Gerald Izenberg suggests that Wordsworth provides "remedy in song, that is, in the work of the poet" as the register of "the deepest feelings, namely, the inevitably deepest responses to the irremediable" (129). Izenberg asserts that Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* is exemplary as "a manifesto that, *at the boundary*, poetry does indeed succeed politics in dealing with the human condition," in particular, "figures of suffering" (127). Wordsworth attempts to cope with the challenging question of suffering by neither objectifying nor identifying with the victims. Most of all, Izenberg forcefully maintains that Wordsworth as the poet "accomplishes the apparently impossible" by means of the operation of "meter." Drawing our attention to "the peculiar power of song for Wordsworth" (125), Izenberg agrees with Wordsworth's emphasis on metrical language in its capacity to provide the mind with "the perception of similitude in dissimilitude" (Owen 85). With emphasis on the power of meter, Wordsworth accounts for his poetic theory in the Preface: "The music of harmonious metrical language" and the accumulated experience of pleasure from similar metrical composition all "make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feelings which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions" (86). Meter delivers double significance: first by "tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feelings" and second by "derealizing tragedy," which means "throwing an 'unsubstantial existence,' a fiction or fantasy of regularity, over it" (Izenberg 130). According to Izenberg, in representing Margaret's suffering aggravated mostly by her "response of complete passivity" to external forces, Wordsworth affirmed that "the politicized understanding of poverty had never been adequate to the dilemma the

vagrant symbolized for him all along" (123). Instead, Izenberg observes that Margaret's character allows the poet to elucidate the "irremediable human lack of self-sufficiency and ultimate aloneness" from the laws of nature, according to which "human suffering is also part of its eternity and tranquil beauty" (123- 24). As Izenberg continues to note, Wordsworth's correlation of passions to poetry is illustrated in the passions of "extreme situations and final things, where human frailty and helplessness are made manifest: madness, aloneness, and death, the reality of utter annihilation" (126). The extreme situations by no means impede the poet from understanding the crucial universality of passions in his poetry, as the poet "thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men" and accordingly shares "the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men" (Owen 80).

2. Material Poverty and Emotional Excess

Recently, both Paul Fry and Mary Jacobus shed new light on the entire Wordsworth criticism by shifting their focus from human concerns to things and objects that preoccupy most of his poems. Fry insists that the more radical question for Wordsworth is not so much politics and history as "ontological" or rather "ontic" motive (2-3) in light of his constant "attention to objects" (201). Notwithstanding the emphasis being placed on fundamental equality among beings, human and inhuman alike, Fry's view is less enlightening for analyzing the contours of emotion intrinsic to the experience of poverty and possession. In this essay, the questions of poverty and passions necessitate exploring Wordsworth's warning against the limitations of politics and institutions.[6)]

6) Wordsworth's recognition of poverty as the main reason of inequality of

Likewise, because “the virtual nonhumanity of Wordsworth’s characters,” who are located “at the outermost edges of the human community, defines that community by delimiting it” (Fry 6), the social implications of an individual’s adversity are still timeless and yet demand a historical perspective. As Quentin Bailey has pointed out, Wordsworth’s concerns with the desperate, the poor, and the displaced indicate his acute awareness of the destructiveness of the government policies over the poor through the systematic attempts to institutionalize and control the poor (50).[7)]

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human beings in a society is closely related to one of the philosophical influences on the French Revolution, that is, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The citizen of Geneva asserts that property causes unequal subordination of the poor to the rich, who come up with the social contract as part of protecting their property (Eunki Eun 169). Chan Kil Park observes that “a hunger-bitten girl” (*The Prelude* IX. 513) in France made him an ardent patriot, namely republican, who supported the French Revolution in the first place (28-35).

7) These government policies include Pitt’s 1796 Poor Bill for “the relief and maintenance of the poor, the encouragement of industry, and the diminution of the poor-rates,” Jeremy Bentham’s 1797-98 articles on “Pauper Management” in the pages of the *Annals of Agriculture*, and Thomas Malthus’s 1798 book, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (Bailey 50). Malthus’s attack upon the Poor Laws accounts for his contempt for the poor for being lazy and dependent on the parish relief and charity; in short, he blames the poor themselves for the deteriorating conditions of poverty as opposed to the expected lessening of poverty as a result of administration. The controversy over reforming poor relief culminated in the New Poor Law of 1834. Bailey’s argument revolves around Wordsworth’s critique of the limitations of the systematizing efforts to regulate the poor along with the weakness of mere benevolence that precludes any institutions. In a similar vein, Gary Harrison forcefully argues that Wordsworth “at least does not fault the victims of social and economic injustice for bringing adversity upon themselves” (111). Most of all, Wordsworth demands to modify a perspective on the poor that assumes that “idleness and profligacy were the causes of poverty.” Instead, he resists reproducing such an attitude to the poor and suggests “revers[ing] the stereotype by showing that disabling idleness may proceed from poverty, which itself

The historical background of widespread poverty in the mid 1790s is intimately tied to Wordsworth's creative writing. Earlier, Jacobus drew attention to Wordsworth's turn to "narrative poetry to express his indignation at the plight of the poor, the dispossessed, and the casualties of war" during the crisis years of the 1790s in the wake of the Anglo-French Wars begun in 1793 (142). Harrison refers to these crisis years presented as "an evil time" ("The Female Vagrant," 90; "The Last of the Flock," 85) as those of 1794 to 1797,

> a time of grain shortages and the consequent inflation of prices due to poor harvests in 1794 and 1795; an increasingly costly war against France in the West Indies and on the continent; an escalation of alarm over the possibility of popular revolt or revolution in England and Ireland; and restrictions on commerce as a result of that war (94).

Through "The Female Vagrant," according to Harrison, Wordsworth exemplifies "the poverty and destitution of the female vagrant to criticize Pitt's war against France and the Pitt administration's failure to provide for the destitute, the numbers of whom were visibly growing in the mid-1790s" (93). As James Butler remarks, on a closer look, "the joy of Alfoxden spring" in 1798 reflected the mixture of Wordsworth's creativity and "the poverty and anguish of neighboring common men and women" (39-40). Specifically, in Alfoxden area of the mid-1790s, "shortage of bread" "in the background of several of Wordsworth's poems" was so prevailing that poverty precipitated "a tripling" in the area's rate for "poor relief between 1792 and 1802"

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may proceed from social, economic and even natural causes beyond the immediate control of the victims of these powerful, predatory forces" (ibid.).

(ibid. 40). For some years before *Lyrical Ballads*, hardship pertained to common conditions for people in the lower order of society. Therefore, the contemporary readers of *Lyrical Ballads* had "a shared sense" of "five long winters" ("Tintern Abbey," 2) because of "war, widespread famine, and a sequence of winters that has been likened to a mini ice age" (Bailey 143). The 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* is the continuation of Wordsworth's representation of the neighboring reality populated with vagrants, beggars, criminals, the mad, the sad, and idiots, all of whom are not strangers in the poetic landscape of *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Borderers* Wordsworth composed the previous year.

The entire circumstances that the rustic poor face are not much different; such an underprivileged individual's feelings tend to receive little attention. In his letter to Charles James Fox in 1801, however, Wordsworth asks politicians to preserve the property of the poor precisely because small possession for the poor rustics is the foundation of domestic affections. Wordsworth laments "a rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders of society" (Owen 100). Domestic affections are proportional to the independent spirit that holds a certain amount of possession. Yet, as Wordsworth points out, industrialization and urbanization significantly contributes to "the encreasing disproportion between the price of labour and that of the necessaries of life" and the destruction of "the bonds of domestic feeling among the poor," who are entirely exposed to the influence of those sweeping changes (ibid.). This letter elucidates the reason behind his new pastoral poems such as "The Brothers" and "Michael," both of which were included in the second volume of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*. Here, Wordsworth demonstrates strong disapproval of the poor management of the Poor

Law[8] in that industrialization and enclosure conspire to exacerbate domestic ties and poverty without offering any substantial alternatives to the irrevocable deprivation.

The poor in Wordsworth's poetry are a reminder of vulnerable state from which both the poet and the reader are not immune. In his twenties, Wordsworth was acquainted with the insecure status of subjectivity exposed to the figures of utter poverty that populated his surroundings, at home and abroad. Harrison points out the distinction between Wordsworth's poetry and "eighteenth-century loco-descriptive or pastoral poetry" in dealing with "rustic paupers and sufferers" (Izenberg 126). Wordsworth does not consider the poor rustics as "distanced aesthetic objects," but obliges his readers to acknowledge the poor "as mirrors of his or her own precarious subjectivity and as reminders of the fragility of the reader's social status" (Harrison 18). In other words,

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8) The Poor Law was seriously discussed in the 1790s in Great Britain not only because of its benefits but also its concomitant problems of the political economy. The Poor Law began in the Renaissance and divided the responsibility for the poor into the local parish and the government. Gary Lee Harrison deals with the complicated relationship between poetry, poverty and power in his book, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1994). For further historical and political understanding of the Poor Law, see Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990); George R. Boyer, *An Economic History of the English Poor Law, 1750 -1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990); and David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010). The year of 1798 saw two works that designated a turning point in English society: Wordsworth's experimental poetry in *Lyrical Ballads* and Thomas Malthus's radical ideas of reformative study on population and food in An Essay on the Principle of Population. Hye Young Park has provided an in-depth examination on Wordsworth's concerns about poverty and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 in conjunction with the development of political economy, in particular, utilitarianism and laissez-faire economics (73-75).

the poet almost identifies his condition with that of the poor. According to Harrison, Wordsworth's social status as the middle class has long been unstable due to "the precarious and arbitrary nature of the self in a society that exposes individuals to political, economic and social flux" (58). Indeed, belonging to the middle class does not exempt individuals from poverty in these hard times. Robert Mayo pointed out that "The Last of the Flock," "Simon Lee," and "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" presented momentous novelties in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* (505). According to Mayo, Wordsworth appropriated familiar subjects and literary forms that had been circulated in the magazines in the 1790s in terms of "their sympathetic fidelity to everyday rural life" (505). Despite the differences, these three poems faithfully depict everyday life in the rural area, especially, the correlation of poverty to passions; passions are contingent upon the event of possession, material and emotional.

By reading "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Last of the Flock" together, this essay discusses their similarities and differences in conjunction with the common denominator of poverty and excessive passions. Both poems open with the anonymous balladeers' curiosity about the singular suffering that Harry Gill and the shepherd exhibit. In the first poem, Harry Gill is mysteriously ill and involuntarily chattering from indomitable chill (1-4). In the second poem, the narrator asks the reason why a grown-up man weeps on the public road (16). From the opening lines of each poem, the reader anticipates satisfying his or her curiosity. On the one hand, the reader's expectations are somewhat fulfilled as Harry Gill's chill and the shepherd's tears result from Goody Blake's curse and the shepherd's loss of the flock, respectively. On the other hand, these narrative poems somehow elude

the reader's inquisitiveness. Harry Gill's suffering is mystifying and perpetual, whereas Goody Blake's suffering suddenly disappears from the narrator's consideration apart from the obvious lack of her well-being. Rather, Goody's chill seems to transfer to Harry's body at the moment of her praying when caught in the middle of theft. "The Last of the Flock" leaves the reader ignorant of and thus speculative about the consequences of the shepherd's selling the last lamb. The narrator of the first poem warns farmers to keep in mind the case of Goody Blake and Harry Gill when it comes to the individual practices of philanthropy. The narrator of the second poem plays the role of disclosing his encounter with the destitute shepherd without didactic intervention in the reception of the poem. In these poems, the characters turn out to yield to the dispossession of property and to the possession of deep emotions. As Goody Blake and the shepherd are driven to endure poverty, their emotions grow intense to the extent that they end up standing on the verge of ruining themselves: the former infringes upon the other's property and thus her own propriety, while the latter entertains "wicked deeds" and "wicked fancies" (71-72). The former furtively steals sticks from the hedge that belongs to her rich neighbor, Harry Gill, while the latter increases guilt as he feels less affection for the children in inverse proportion to the number of sheep.

3. The Powers of the Imagination and the Haunted Ear in "Goody Blake and Harry Gill"

Mayo remarked that "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" was certainly "the most popular" of all the poems in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* (520).

By analyzing the record of contemporary magazines, Mayo confirmed that the poem was most widely read and pirated. Emphasizing the superstitious and gothic elements of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," Alan Bewell observes that "Possession in its most extreme forms was manifested in the dispossessed, in the power that recoils on those who look on others with fearenchanted eye" (175). The poem is an example of Wordsworth's subtle use of superstition and the Gothic fad that he borrowed from Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-6). As specified in the "Advertisement" of 1798, the tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill originates in "a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire" (66), although the poet locates Goody Blake's cottage in Dorsetshire (29).[9] While taking the "true" story from Darwin's work, Wordsworth transforms Goody into a poor old lady unlike "a witch in a play" portrayed by Darwin (Wordsworth 1991, 282). The source directs his readers' attention to the supernatural and Gothic aspects surrounding the old woman. On the contrary, Wordsworth's innovation refutes the supernatural tendency dominant in the popular poetry of his day. Through this poem Wordsworth shows that the "power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous" (Owen

9) Mark Schoenfield points out that Wordsworth foregrounds the historical and material conditions that determine the fate of the poor in that his "shift from the location in his source—Warwickshire, a rapidly industrializing area in the 1790s—to the still rural Dorsetshire offered to reviewers a political context of industrialization, which [Charles] Burney refuses" in his review of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" in the Monthly Review (102-3). Schoenfield argues that the hedge reminds us of "the ongoing disputes about enclosures" which led to radical division of the rich and the poor (106). According to Michael Turner in *Enclosures in Britain, 1750-1830,* Dorsetshire was "the location of the first Enclosure Act in 1604" (ibid.).

86). As Jacobus rightly regards Southey's complaint about "the popular superstition of witchcraft" as a wrong accusation, "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" genuinely illustrates hardship that exceeds the destitute old lady's way of survival. The speaker of the poem is reluctant to embellish her impoverishment for creating artificial stimulus as in the sensationalist literature, which "excited strong emotions with melodramatic and supernatural events for the sake of cheap entertainment and the writer's self-aggrandizement" (Izenberg 126). Instead, Wordsworth brings to the fore human frailty in confrontation with such brutal condition as chill. For Wordsworth, it is imperative to recognize the human mind's capacity to "evoke powerful emotions through homely situations plainly described without recourse to the artificial, the grotesque, the supernatural" (Izenberg 120). Wordsworth is concerned primarily with conducting readers' awareness to elementary feelings in a particular situation, as he differentiates his poetry from contemporary poetry in that "the feeling therein [these Poems included in *Lyrical Ballads*] developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling" (73). That is, passions are more important than mere events.

The structure of the poem is constructed with the speaker's curiosity about Harry's illness, tracing back to the origin of his miserable coldness. The present tense in the opening two lines and the past tense in the third stanza comprise the cause and effect; the present state traces back to the past event. The causality impresses readers with some enigmatic power. Before the main story begins, the narrative strategy calls attention to Harry's illness repeatedly expressed in his constant chattering that seems to evade volition. Readers are intrigued to find out the reason for his chilliness in the opening two

lines: “Oh! What’s the matter, What’s the matter? / What is’t that ails young Harry Gill?” (1-2). Arousing such curiosity in readers is presumably familiar in “the popular poetry of the day.” His past youth and health formed a striking contrast with Goody’s poverty and old age; his past strength is far from his present weakness. The narrative of the poem reveals that Harry’s suffering is in fact caused by Goody’s prayer in her desperation. On the one hand, the poet needs to stress the effect of damnation on Harry. On the other hand, he destabilizes readers’ moral schemata that tend to make Goody’s curse unnatural.

When extreme cold prevents Goody from falling asleep, the narrator makes the reader (“you”) experience her cold. The narrator implies that whoever observes Goody’s life feels a certain degree of suffering. The narrator seems to address the reader, “if you encounter Goody Blake, you would feel the same way as she did” in Snow’s words. The poor woman might be an object of pity, which indeed tests the reader’s ability to sympathize with her. Whereas Harry had a big voice of three and plenty of property, Goody was always old and lacked firewood and clothes to protect her from freezing winter weather. Thus, it is evident that the two characters do not belong to equal social stratifications. Goody’s poverty is related less to her laziness than to socio-economic situation:

> All day she spun in her poor dwelling,
> And then her three hours’ work at night!
> Alas! ’twas hardly worth the telling,
> It would not pay for candle-light.
> --This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,
> Her hut was on a cold hill-side,
> And in that country coals are dear,

For they come far by wind and tide. (17-24)

The narrator explains how Goody's labor does not in the least keep her from indigence. The price of coals is too high for her labor to meet the expense. Even with steady toil, Goody's hardship exceeds her capacity to cope with it. Overworking never lessens her poverty, leaving her pain unrelieved. In addition to material deficiency, Goody is mentally unfortunate since she has no companion to cheer herself with.

Wordsworth's poem testifies to the sad truth that material possession undoes human relationship. If Goody's suffering is soothed by several twigs from Harry's hedge, her advancing to the latter's fence could be the only means for her to resort to. However, it is no wonder that Harry takes Goody's action as a "trespass" (66) and swears to take "vengeance" (68) upon her. Violent attack that Harry inflicts on Goody ironically backfires on him. Goody's silent prayer to "God that is the judge of all" (96) is fulfilled in Harry's lasting coldness. Harry's ears have been haunted by Goody's voice; his hearing sense determines his own fate afterwards, namely, his lifelong chill. Layers of garments and blankets are not sufficient to guarantee Harry warmth that he has desperately wanted since he heard Goody cursing his perpetual lack of warmth. Warmth connotes double meaning: his lack of warm heart toward his poor neighbor is transformed to want of physical warmth. Harry's chill has more to do with the psychological reason than with the external world. Jacobus is indeed right in arguing that "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" "does more than draw attention to the power of the mind over the body"; the imagination that transforms mental anxiety to bodily reaction works as "an agent of moral justice" (235). Harry's repeated chattering works as a reminder of the moral judgment

that he is unable to avoid.

The ballad rhyme and meter reinforce the impact of the poem on the mind of a reader, especially a relatively affluent one. It is remarkable that Pinch relates Harry's chattering to the power of meter: "the effects of meter upon the reader's attention are not unlike the effects of the imagination on the body of Harry Gill" (89). Regarding Harry's chattering, Wolfson observes that this poem suggests the possibility of "radical consequences for the self-possession of male identity" since "Goody's revenge takes possession not just of Harry's body but his very voice" (38, 40). Furthermore, Goody's voice "ultimately claims the poem's body and voice" (Wolfson 40). The poem produces an odd effect on the reader due to the disparity between the literary form and the miserable contents. Goody's seasonal chill and Harry's perpetual chill are connected by meter and onomatopoeia of chattering of Harry's teeth. The clattering sound somehow recurs to the mind of readers long after finishing the poem.

Although theft is definitely wrong from both moral and legal perspectives, Goody's predicament is hard to judge because of the tremendous paucity in which she is placed. As a result of revenging Goody Blake for theft, Harry in turn ends up with inhumanity because of his inability to articulate words; consequently his communication with other human beings is broken, except for chattering and muttering to himself. Punishing Harry for his cold heart, Wordsworth questions the liberal argument that poverty gives rise to crime, thus suggesting an equivocal attitude towards the automatic correlation of Goody's poverty to her petty offense. Wordsworth's poetry dismantles the ideas of criticizing and marginalizing the poor unlike the sensationalist poetry. A worthy purpose of each poem clarified in the Preface pertains to

the poem's "humanitarian lesson" (Jacobus 237), the necessity of philanthropy on the part of rich "farmers" (127) like Harry. The contemporary readers of *Lyrical Ballads* include affluent farmers. Left without the knowledge of Goody Blake's warmth and felicity, the reader is not privileged to possess warmth unless he or she feels sympathetic to neighbors like Goody outside the text.

4. Predicament of Reproduction and Possessive Affections in "The Last of the Flock"

Wordsworth illustrates his concern with poverty in another poem of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, "The Last of the Flock." Snow contends that the poem "demonstrates his desire to expand the definition of poverty" well beyond the categories that are either destitution or the necessity of labor to make a living. "The Last of the Flock" is close to "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" in that poverty gives rise to an enormous amount of emotions that are apparently unrestrained.[10] In these poems, material goods are not external but integral to both Goody and the shepherd. The shepherd holding a "lusty lamb" (17), which indeed testifies to the past thriving and prosperity of both his flock and family, comes to despair to the extent that he would not

10) With respect to excessive emotions in Wordsworth's poetry, Jae Oh Kim offers a meaningful interpretation of the dynamics of pain and pleasure in creating sympathy as a desirable effect of reading Wordsworth's poetry (19). He poses the question of pleasure in sympathizing with the impoverished shepherd in "The Last of the Flock"; yet he fails to relate the issue of poverty in the poem to the historical context of the Poor Law (30).

care about the fate of his own children as well as his own life. The case of this shepherd is part of Wordsworth's attack on "injustice in the administration of the poor law" (Mayo 505). As Mayo observes, "the weeping shepherd of *The Last of the Flock* is not yet a beggar or a thief, although desperate poverty is suggested at the next stage of his decline" (504). This shepherd reminds his contemporary readers of "unhappy or destitute rustics, who are not infrequently encountered in magazine poetry. ..... many of the mendicants of the magazines were men who had earlier known rural felicity and lost it" (Mayo 504). Wretched peasants reduced to poverty have populated magazine verse as common subjects in the late eighteenth century. "The Female Vagrant" placed before "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* is also an example of the financial and familial stability that the protagonist and her father enjoyed in the past. While the popular poetry depicting poverty and poor rustics tended to immerse the readers in the miserable condition of the suffering victims, Wordsworth's poems attempt to retrieve the lost voices of the suffering other and illuminate the reasons of prevalent poverty and decrepitude.

One of the most striking distinctions between "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Last of the Flock" lies in what property means for Harry Gill and the shepherd. Harry's hedge allures his poor neighbor Goody for providing twigs; but the shepherd's sheep are the source of supporting his children. The hedge is not decisive in offering food and the necessities for Harry, while the sheep are not merely the solitary recourse for the shepherd's family but the foundation of his affections for the children. To be precise, the hedge remains a border to divide the neighbors' property and yet does not determine Harry's life, however often Goody returns to the hedge. But for the shepherd

and his family, the loss of the sheep demarcates life from death.

"The Last of the Flock" probes into a unique mentality of the shepherd stuck in the absurd reality where poor relief ironically deteriorates poverty. The poem begins with quite an impressive depiction of a stout man found weeping silently with a lamb in his arms by the speaker. Obviously the speaker is intrigued (and intriguing his reader) to figure out the shepherd's unhappy situation. Unlike Goody and Harry, the shepherd is unnamed; his nameless identity explicitly shows a commonplace phenomenon that produces and intensifies poverty with which the owners of small property are faced. It is the socio-economic structure that drives the shepherd to an abject position, in which he becomes incapable of surviving with his integrity and dignity intact. Admitting the oddity of his mindset, he is more concerned about the flock than his own children as a source of happiness. The shepherd's psychology is difficult to understand in a society that values humans over animals. Once the shepherd was unable to supply food for his children even with his utmost exertion, he felt his "pride was tamed" (43) and thus could not help seeking assistance from the local parish. His property, which is a flock of sheep, disqualifies his demand for relief from the parish.[11] However, the product and profit from the flock are not ample to support his family. The shepherd's plight is

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11) The shepherd and his decreasing sheep refer to the debate on poverty and the Poor Law. The sheep are significant as an allusion to the historical context of the Poor Law established since the Elizabethan period. In *Utopia* (1516), Sir Thomas More criticized the British government policies regarding poverty and the concentration of wealth on "the nobility and gentry" as well as on "holy men," arguing that "peculiar to English people alone," their "sheep" "that used to be meek and eat so little. Now they are becoming so greedy and wild that they devour men themselves" (12).

attributed to the abused institution of the Poor Law, which helps the poor after forcing them into destitution. The shepherd relates his story of being thrown into poverty:

> I sold a sheep as they had said,
> And bought my little children bread,
> And they were healthy with their food;
> For me it never did me good.
> A woeful time it was for me,
> To see the end of all my gains,
> The pretty flock which I had reared
> With all my care and pains,
> To see it melt like snow away!
> For me it was a woeful day. (51-60)

The shepherd's pain is excruciating as he bears witness to his sheep dwindling one by one; the sheep began with a ewe, grew to a score to fifty, and ended up today's last one. His attachment to the sheep does not merely remain possessive; rather, the decrease of the sheep changes the mountains which have been covered with the white animals like snow. What's worse, the sheep is equivalent to blood that is essential for the life of the shepherd. The shepherd explicitly conveys his desperate mind by relying on the metaphor of "a vein that never stopp'd, / Like blood-drops from [his] heart they dropp'd" (63-64), while he hopelessly watches his flock of sheep decreasing one by one until the last of his "precious flock" (81). Anticipating the end of his career as a shepherd, he is well aware that living at subsistence level never soothes his grief because he loses "all [his] gains" to feed his ten children. It is incongruous that for the shepherd "gains" is rhymed with "pains" since the loss of gains inevitably brings

pains. Since the parish does not provide any help, it is disturbing that the shepherd's "grief" is rhymed with "relief" (43-44). To put differently, the rhyming scheme underscores the cruelty of poverty. The flock has been the very foundation of his life and affection for his children. Selling the sheep to provide food makes him miserable not because he cares for material wealth but because the animals constitute his self-esteem as a human being, as a father, as a husband, and as an independent rustic. For the shepherd, the sheep are more than material possession but equal to a "spiritual need" (Hartman 1964, 144). "No polemical context," as Hartman convincingly observes, "can explain the intensity of the shepherd's love for the flock" (143). A vicious circle of poverty drives people to lose their entire property in the face of a sharp decline in the market for wool and mutton, whereas the price of the necessities is rapidly increasing. Reduction of fifty sheep into a single one, therefore, indicates a vicious circle that makes social, economical and political institutions aggravate the human condition as such. The poor are forced to dispose their property due to a makeshift, not fundamental, solution to impoverishment. In the closing stanza where the shepherd laments his dejection, the reader imagines what will happen afterwards; he will sell the last of his flock and disappear from the pastoral landscape.

The shepherd's affection for the sheep reminds us of a pastoral, "Michael," which concludes the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*. Just as Michael cherishes the land as much as his son, so does the shepherd of "The Last of the Flock" treasure his sheep. The only purpose of Michael's sending his only son, Luke, to the city is to keep the land, on which are founded domestic affections that are not possible without the independent spirit of possessing small property. For both shepherds, it

is impossible to separate their property from their children. Besides, their property is more important than their offspring because their property makes it possible to cultivate their paternal love, which Wordsworth calls “domestic affections” in a letter to Charles James Fox written on 14 January 1801. After receiving a complimentary copy of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, Fox wrote a letter complaining about poetic touch on the humble subject of common people and rustic life. In response to Fox’s letter, Wordsworth makes his point that common and ordinary people “who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply” (102). In the same letter, the poet claims that “the most sacred of all property is the property of the Poor” and the destruction of their property and consequently their disappearance is indicative of the disintegration of “the lower orders of society” (101, 100). For “statesmen,” that is, “proprietors of small estates,” their little tract of land inherited from the ancestors serves to hold dear their “independent domestic life” and reveals “the best qualities” they preserve while living in nature however different from “us” (101-102). The best qualities shared by “statesmen” stem from the mind that is least artificial and distorted by social institutions because of their constant association with nature. What his contemporary figures like Fox, Francis Jeffrey and Hazlitt read, however, is incompatible with Wordsworth’s intention to disregard and even “level” social class, which is certainly disturbing their sense of social hierarchy and its accompanying stability, however facile. In the world where natural sensibilities are hardly viable, Wordsworth proposes good poetry as the “original image of man and nature” (79). In another letter that Wordsworth wrote to Thomas Poole on 9 April 1801, he makes explicit that “Michael” represents the poet’s understanding of the close “relationship between property and passion”

(Eilenberg 91). Wordsworth's letter to Poole displays his fundamental belief in the spirit of independence as a founding element of the lower orders of society. In this letter, Wordsworth speaks of "Michael" as

> a picture of man, of strong mind and lively sensibility, 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. (Eilenberg 91)

This passage resonates Wordsworth's letter to Fox regarding the divided affections for property and children. When Eilenberg relates the economics of "Michael" as an analogy between literal and figurative property, she emphasizes "a potential figure of poetry itself" (61) that property has revealed within and outside of the poem. Yet, focusing on the possession and property in "Michael" and "Christabel," Eilenberg does not take into account the generic differences between pastoral and gothic (87). Nonetheless, Eilenberg's attention to the theme of possession, whether material or psychological, is insightful in that Wordsworth transforms the mind's complexity about property to poems. Michael and the shepherd of "The Last of the Flock" contribute to evoking "profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts" and enlarging "our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature" (Owen 102).

The two poems discussed so far, "Goody Blake and Harry Gill: A True Story" and "The Last of the Flock," present the poetic productivity of destitution and passions. The characters deprived of their property have no other choice but to confront an incomprehensible and yet singular state of the mind. As Snow observes, poverty seems to operate as an "irresistible force" and destroys "love" as well as "property." It

is apt to attend to Snow's account of the Wordsworths' perception of poverty in accordance to their own circumstances of financial desperation before June 18, 1802, the day when they heard "news about Lord Lowther's intention to pay all debts." Snow succinctly explains how Wordsworth's reality and poetry are reciprocally defined: "Both Dorothy's journal accounts of the poor and William's intense psychological proximity to his poor shepherd in 'The Last of the Flock' indicate that identification with the poor brought two of them to see the indigent they encountered in powerfully personal ways." In representing the poor rustics, especially, those who are forced to lose their minimal property, Wordsworth makes persistent efforts to capture their individual mind and psychological process, thus producing the creative works that register the movement of excessive emotions in the wake of experiencing dispossession. In so doing, the poet urges readers to call into question the dominant way of perceiving the underprivileged and marginal figures, whose suffering is justified not merely in the poverty discourse but also in the literary space.

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워즈워스의 『서정담시집』에 나타난 소유와 박탈

박미경

본고는 워즈워스의 『서정담시집』에 나타난 감정과 시의 상관관계에 주목하여 소유와 박탈이 감정의 생성에 미치는 방식을 시의 창작 및 수용과 연결하고자 한다. 워즈워스는 1800년 「서문」에서 강렬한 느낌이 자발적으로 흘러넘치는 것을 시라고 정의하고 시의 기원은 고요함속에 회상된 감정에 있다고 선언하였다. 특히, 격렬한 감정은 물질적 소유의 박탈로 인해 통제할 수 없게 되고, 텍스트 안에 위치한 화자는 인물의 격정에 자연스레 사로잡혀서 이를 독자에게도 전달한다. 가령, 「구디 블레이크와 해리 길」과 「마지막 양 한 마리」에서 시인은 경제적 빈곤이 감정의 잉여를 생산하는 방식을 시로 재현하고 있다. 이 두 시에서 빈곤으로 인해 주인공들의 고통이 심화되는데 이는 사회 전반에 만연한 불평등한 제도와 열악한 행정에 기인하기 때문에 당대의 정치제도에 대한 비판과 박탈당한 계층의 사람들에 대한 지속적인 관심을 반영한다. 시인은 가난한 노파 구디 블레이크를 통해 근면한 노동이 최소한의 생계를 보장해 주지 못할 뿐만 아니라 빈부격차로 인해 이웃 간의 사이가 폭력적인 처벌과 저주로 변하는 상황을 고발하고 있다. 구디의 기도를 듣는 순간부터 젊은 부자 해리는 엄습해 오는 오한으로부터 자유롭지 못하고 영원히 이를 부딪치며 떨게 되는데, 워즈워스는 이를 초자연적 현상이 아니라 극빈자 이웃에게 조금의 자선도 베풀지 않고 오히려 폭력으로 복수한 냉혈한의 양심의 가책으로 부각시킨다. 한편, 워즈워스는 오십 마리의 양을 키우다가 이제 마지막 양 한 마리를 안고 시장으로 가는 목동의 눈물을 통해 부조리한 구빈법의 희생양을 양산하는 사회복지의 폐해를 비판하면서, 빈곤이 자율적인 정신을 해치고 가정에 대한 애정을 파괴하고 있음을 보여준다. 이 두 시를 비교 연구함으로써, 빈곤은 물질적 소유를 박탈당한 사람을 극심한 감정의 고통에 사로잡히도록 내몰고 있음을 알 수 있다. 또한, 물질적

빈곤과 감정의 과잉은 시의 기원으로 의미가 있으며 이는 고통을 겪는 당사자의 인간성을 외면하지 않고 오히려 그들의 환원 불가능한 감정을 세심하게 살피려는 따뜻한 마음을 강조한다.

주제어: 소유, 박탈, 감정, 빈곤, 『서정담시집』, 워즈워스

박미경
소속: 경기대학교 영어영문학과
주소: 경기도 수원시 영통구 광교산로 154-42
전화번호: 031-249-9138
E-mail: mkpark@kgu.ac.kr

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