From Travelling Heroine to Social Explorer: Discourses of Gender and the Process of self-realisation in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my two lovely daughters, Lisa and Feline, who are the pride and joy of my life. Your sparkling personalities always helped me recharge my batteries. I love you both more than anything.

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I would never have completed my thesis successfully without the assistance of some people who I am indebted to, and it is a pleasure to thank them in this way.

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Abstract

From Travelling Heroine to Social Explorer: Discourses of Gender and the Process of self-realisation in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*

Elizabeth Gaskell's third novel, *North and South*, describes the passage of a heroine from daughterhood to womanhood. Margaret Hale is a central consciousness in this novel, one of the persons through which moral and psychological issues are explored. Gaskell uses geographical settings as a basic framework for this exploration. The characters are grouped by place and each place represents and explores different aspects of life and society. Through these imagined spaces Margaret can reveal, respond to and interpret for the reader the various social realms through which she moves. These distinct societies mould her personality, marking her development, thus forming a setting for Margaret's progress to maturity. Margaret is not however the single consciousness. Her progress parallels John Thornton's, and their conflict is central to the novel.

Elizabeth Gaskell integrates the social issues of the novel with the position of women, for the exploration as much concerns the condition and role of women as it does the social conditions and standards in a society in transition.

In my MA thesis I shall try to show that the book's locales provide the underlying structure of the heroine's development, since these settings enable her to explore different societies, and contrasting ways of life and standards, which expand her personal progress. I shall do this by means of a social feminist analysis of *North and South*, one which is informed by the insights of cultural materialism.

Introduction

This thesis argues two things. Firstly, it intends to show that the geographical settings in Elizabeth Gaskell's third novel *North and South* (1855) provide the underlying structure of the heroine's process of self-realisation. Margaret Hale, the novel's heroine, reveals, responds to and interprets for the reader the various social realms through which she moves. These distinct societies mould Margaret's personality, marking her development, thus forming a setting for her progress to maturity. Secondly, this thesis asserts that in particular the book's locales frame the characters' and the reader's understanding of the position of women.

I shall try to demonstrate this dual argument by means of a 'socialist feminist' analysis of *North and South*, one which is informed by the insights of cultural materialism. The phrase 'socialist feminism' connects the oppression of women to other forms of oppression in society. Socialist feminists prefer to integrate their struggle against women's oppression with the struggle against other injustices based on race, class or economic status. They want to work with men to correct the inequities between men and women. Socialist feminism is a branch of feminism that focuses upon both the public and private spheres of a woman's life and argues that liberation can only be achieved by working to end both the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression.[1]

Well-known socialist feminist critical works include: Terry Lovell's *Consuming Fiction* (1985); Julia Swindell's *Victorian Writing and Working Women* (1985); and Cora Kaplan's *Sea Changes: Culture and Feminism* (1986). Another important figure associated with this group is Catherine Belsey, whose books, such as *The Subject of*

[1] Barbara Ehrenreich, 'What is Socialist Feminism?', *The New American Movement (NAM), Working Papers on Socialism & Feminism* (1976), p.1

Tragedy (1985), and *John Milton: Language, Gender, Power* (1988), are part of this same socialist feminist British tradition.[2]

Socialist feminism draws upon many concepts found in Marxism and radical feminism; like Marxism, it diagnoses the oppressive structure of capitalist society. Like radical feminism, it recognises the fundamental oppression of women in patriarchal society. However, socialist feminists reject the Marxist notion that class and class struggle are the only defining aspects of history and economic development, nor do they recognise gender and only gender as the exclusive basis of all oppression.[3] Rather, socialist feminists assert that women are unable to be free due to their financial dependence on males in society. They see economic dependence as the driving force of women's subjugation to men.

This thesis strives to illustrate that Margaret Hale gains an independent position in society and therefore control over her own life as well as over Thornton's immediately upon acquiring financial autonomy, thus linking the themes and discourses of the novel to the notion of social feminism.

The second literary theory which I base my thesis on, cultural materialism, traces its origin to the work of the literary left-wing critic, Raymond Williams. Cultural materialism emerged as a theoretical movement in the early 1980s along with New Historicism, its American counterpart, with which it shares much common ground. The term was coined by Williams, who used it to describe a theoretical blending of leftist culturalism and Marxist analysis. Williams himself first used the term in a short essay published in the hundredth issue of the *New Left Review*. Cultural materialism, he explained:

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[2] Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester, 2009), pp.119-120

[3] Ian Buchanan. "Socialist Feminism." A Dictionary of Critical Theory. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 20 October 2011.

> is a theory of culture as a (social and material) productive process and of specific practices, of 'arts', as social uses of material means of production (from language as material 'practical consciousness' to the specific technologies of writing and forms of writing, through the mechanical and electronic communications systems).[4]

Williams invented the term 'structures of feeling': these are concerned with 'meanings and values as they are lived and felt'. Structures of feelings are often antagonistic both to explicit systems of values and beliefs, and to the dominant ideologies within a society. The result is that cultural materialism is optimistic about the possibility of change and is willing at times to see literature as a source of oppositional values.[5]

Cultural materialists deal with specific historical documents and attempt to analyse and recreate the zeitgeist of a particular moment in history. The British critic Graham Holderness defines cultural materialism as a "politicised form of historiography".[6] According to Peter Barry, we can explain this as meaning the study of historical material (which includes literary texts) within a politicised framework, this framework including the present which those literary texts have in some way helped to shape.[7] Cultural materialists seek to draw attention to the processes being employed by contemporary power structures, such as the church, the state or the academy. To do this they explore a text's historical context and its political implications, and then through close textual analysis note the dominant hegemonic position. Due to its insistence on the importance of an engagement with issues of gender, sexuality, race

[4] Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London, 1980), p. 243
[5] Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory*, p.175
[6] Ibid., p.175
[7] Ibid., 175-176

or class, cultural materialism has had a significant impact on the field of literary studies, especially in Britain.[8]

In order to interpret the zeitgeist of *North and South* and to explore its impact on the characters in the novel, particularly Margaret, I will study the political and social schemas in each geographical setting through a close textual analysis, applying a cultural materialist outlook on *North and South*.

This thesis will be structured so that each chapter covers one geographical setting of the novel. The characters are grouped by place and each place explores different aspects of life and society. Chapter One deals with the bourgeois society as it exists in Victorian London, and it will specifically focus on the position of middle-class women in society and marriage. In Chapter Two, Margaret's upbringing and affections towards country life are examined and, furthermore, religious sentiments are touched upon. Chapter Three explores the industrial setting of Milton Northern and the class tensions of the novel with the female position. Chapters Four and Five show Margaret Hale as redefining the conventional gender roles in the light of her experiences of industrial society as it exists in Milton. Hence a process of self-realisation is completed due to the settings which correspond with the phases of Margaret's life.

Locality is, of course, plainly expressed in the title *North and South* itself; however, Elizabeth Gaskell's own working title for her novel, first published in Dickens's *Household Words* between September 1854 and January 1855, was 'Margaret Hale'. It is little wonder that for some time Mrs Gaskell thought of this title, for Margaret is the central character and most of the events of the novel are seen through her eyes. Under pressure from Dickens the title was changed to *North and South*, though it is uncertain

[8] Mina Aghakhani Shahrezaee and Zahra Jannessari Ladani, 'Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*: A Cultural Materialistic Approach', *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences Vol. 30* (2014): pp. 17-23, p. 17

who devised the name. As Dickens wrote on 26 July: "'North South' appears to me a better name than 'Margaret Hale'. It implies more, and is expressive of the opposite people brought face to face by the story."[9]

The origins of *North and South* may be found in Mrs Gaskell's correspondence with Charlotte Brontë during the summer of 1850. In these writings, Gaskell follows up a previous conversation about *Shirley*: "I think I told you that I disliked a good deal in the plot of *Shirley*, but the expression of her own thoughts in it is so true and brave, that I greatly admire her."[10] In *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (1975), W.A. Craik states that Margaret's character is in line with Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse, who are "clever and attractive, accomplished and self-ignorant. Like them, she [Margaret] is a central consciousness through which her author can explore moral and psychological issues, who, though sometimes deluded and judging wrongly, yet reveals right and truth by her own mis-estimates."[11]

Gaskell uses geographical settings as a basic framework for this exploration. The four places in which the actions takes place are, in the order in which we see them: London; Helstone in the New Forest; Manchester (here disguised as Milton Northern); Oxford (which is only briefly visited); and then Helstone and London again. In the structure of the novel it is important to note that Milton-Northern occupies the greatest space since it is central to the development of the main character, yet all the other settings have their own influence and purposes. Helstone and Milton are both 'invented' in that they have neither the names nor all the attributes of actual places, and are therefore more representative than a real southern English village, or actual Manchester, could be.[12] Thus Gaskell can devise her own essential aspects of a city

[9] G. Storey, K. Tillotson and E. Eason, *The Letters of Charles Dickens* (Oxford, 1993), p.378
[10] J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, *The letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester, 1966), letter 72, p. 116
[11] W.A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (London, 1975), p. 126
[12] Ibid., p. 111

or hamlet needed for the plot, alongside the sense of reality of an actual place with which the reader can have some familiarity.

London reveals 'typical' upper-middle-class standards and behaviour; Helstone represents the natural life of the country and the old rural standards; Oxford signifies the life of the mind; and Milton a new world still in the process of creating itself, the realisation and emblem of industry and of all the social issues that result between 'master and men'. Though this might be an over-simplified and schematic representation of the different social realms, 'The North' in mid-Victorian fiction, however, exemplifies as a figure for the experience of capitalism of which Manchester was often the symbol. 'The South' on the other hand was, in industrial novels, the natural location of the educated and comfortable middle class. In the *Country and the City* (1973), Raymond Williams points out that:

> Manchester is at the centre of explicit industrial conflicts in ways that London was not. . . Elizabeth Gaskell writes in a city in which industrial production and a dominant market are the determining features, and in which, in quite different ways from London, there is the new hard language of class against class.[13]

The function of the South is not merely to provide a contrast with the industrial North but to be itself the subject of changing perspective,[14] as Margaret experiences in the final chapters of the novel.

The characters are grouped in one way by place. Edith Shaw, Margaret's cousin, and her mother, Margaret's aunt, belong to London, along with Captain Lennox and his brother Henry; Margaret and her parents and Dixon the maid belong to Helstone;

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[13] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford, 1973), p. 219

[14] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, '*North and South*: A Permanent State of Change', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Vol. 34, No. 3* (1979): 281-301, p. 284

the Thorntons, mother, son and daughter, the Higginses, and the Bouchers belong to Milton; Mr Bell is the sole but potent embodiment of academic Oxford.[15]

According to Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *North and South* falls within the subgenre that has come to be known as the 'industrial' or 'social-problem novel': that is, work distinguished by its focus on specific social problems raised during the process of industrialisation. Such novels set themselves in a dramatic way to the task of giving fictional shape to social questions that were experienced as new, unpredictable, and without closure.[16] By writing industrial novels, middle-class authors were seeking ways to address the huge social frictions in the relationship between capital and labour. Especially middle-class women writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell composed novels displaying the social development of middle-class heroines who struggled with concepts of class and gender. Bodenheimer has distinguished a story pattern in this type of work, one which she calls "the romance of the female paternalist":

> In simplified outline, the pattern goes like this: a wealthy and intelligent young heroine is awakened to a crisis of class conflict in which the ruling men in her neighbourhood, relying on laissez-faire arguments, are perpetrating crimes of injustice or neglect against the working class. Learning to see through their rhetoric, the heroine is horrified by its implications, and goes into action to rescue the oppressed or to reform the minds of the oppressors.[17]

Though *North and South* has long been considered an example of the typical industrial novel, and indeed shares many characteristics of this genre, it lacks,

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[15] W.A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel*, p. 120

[16] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The politics of story in Victorian social fiction,* (New York, 1988), p.4. The English social novel was first defined by the French critic Louis Cazaman in 1903 in *The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850*, trans. Martin Fido (London, 1973).

[17] Ibid., p.22

however, a few essential traits. For instance, it is not exactly a 'social-problem novel', for it does not identify a clear version of industrial crisis and call for a solution, as is the case with *Mary Barton*. It is rather a novel about irrevocable change, and about the confused process of response and accommodation that attends it.[18]

North and South indeed signals a change; a change in Gaskell's purpose of writing. W.A. Craik claims that "compared to her former two novels, *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*, Gaskell is more concerned now with bringing out the human issues, of conflicts of groups and pressures of society within itself, and pressures upon the individuals who compose it."[19] *North and South* links the themes of love and class war in a quite different way from her first novels, recognising the seductiveness of power as well as the need for humility. She is preoccupied with the pressure of change, with its losses and gains, painting the energy as well as the misery of the new towns, and the hardships as well as the beauty of the countryside.

The most impressive parts of Gaskell's writing in this novel are the interior analyses of the major characters inner reflections (rather than what they say). The lesser characters reflections, when put into dialogue, reveal not just their personal convictions, but express some element of industrial society's common ways of thinking. Craik states that "Elizabeth Gaskell's method tends to the psychological study of a nature not simply capable of change, but necessarily changing under outside pressures".[20] Margaret Hale, originally the symbol of the South, is transformed by her life in Milton into a different person both as an individual and as a woman**.** Hence, social change entails personal change. Joseph Kestner notes that "with her experience

[18] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, '*North and South*: A Permanent State of Change', pp.281-282.
[19] W.A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel*, p. 93
[20] Ibid., p.133

of both the northern and the southern counties, Margaret Hale functions as a reader surrogate in evaluating cultural differences".[21]

Gaskell employs from the outset, the major technique of the novel, the seeing of most things through Margaret's consciousness. In this novel, Margaret is not, however, the only centre of consciousness. Her progress parallels John Thornton's, and their conflict is central to the novel. Through the ego struggle between the mill-owner John Thornton (a prickly, urban male as his name suggests) and Margaret Hale, theoretical prejudices of class are broken down into recognitions of individual character and worth.[22] Margaret deliberately overruns the separation between men's and women's spheres. By arguing with Mr Thornton, Margaret is, as John Pikoulis expresses it, "staking her claim for identity in a male world".[23] Margaret and Thornton's combative relationship provides a way of arguing the need to tear down the high barriers between the sexes and the classes.

North and South represents a breakthrough in the patterns of conceptualisation that dominated the industrial fictions of the 1840s. Revising paternalistic images of government, views of the working class, and the separate woman's sphere, Gaskell's narrative itself enacts the experimental social activity it recommends, for it takes us through a gradual breakdown of traditional ways of thinking about society and into the confusion generated by the process of working towards new ones.[24]

By writing this novel, Elizabeth Gaskell examined the struggle of opposing worlds which, though dependent, are yet in conflict: present and past, masters and workers, men and women, country and city, *North and South*.

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[21] Joseph Kestner*, Protest and reform, The British Social Narrative by Women* 1827-1867(London, 1985), p. 166
[22] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The politics of story in Victorian social fiction*, p.61
[23] J. Pikoulis, 'North and South: Varieties of Love and Power', Yearbook of English Studies, vol. 6. (1976): p.184
[24] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The politics of story in Victorian social fiction*, p.55

Chapter 1

London

'Are all these quite necessary troubles?'[25]

The opening scene of *North and South* is set in the milieu of fashionable London. Social conventions and trivialities govern life in Harley Street: fashion, gossip, dinners and visits, the latest review, indeed the whole paraphernalia of indolence that has seemed typical of bourgeois society.

This chapter deals with middle-class society as it exists in Victorian London, specifically focusing on the position of women and the understanding of marriage. The London setting is where Margaret spends part of her childhood and her adolescent life, hence this milieu has undoubtedly influenced her norms and values. It is therefore relevant to examine its consequence on Margaret's personality. The realm is furthermore worthwhile studying since it acts as a contrast to *North and South*'s other important urban setting, that is, the industrial society of Milton, which will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

In considering this novel, I shall try to analyse London bourgeois society from a cultural materialist perspective. As explained in the Introduction of this thesis, cultural materialists attempt to analyse and recreate the zeitgeist of a particular moment in history, revealing the conflict and dissent within a society. In order to interpret the zeitgeist of *North and South,* and to explore its impact on Margaret, I will therefore study the historical context and social schemas in this first geographical setting.

Our perspective on the middle-class urban family has been more often stereotyped than studied since "the social histories often abound with generalisations about their

[25] Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Penguin Classics, 1995), p.8. Further references to this edition will appear in the text.

life style".[26] The relative lack of personal data describing the life history of the 'typical' middle-class household has caused many studies to rely heavily upon the fiction of the day. As Patricia Branca has pointed out in *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* (1975), the works of the nineteenth-century novelists, such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and William Thackeray are familiar and popular today. However, we tend to forget that they were first and foremost story-tellers and not social historians.[27] Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider other sources apart from literature which might constitute a more direct approach towards interpreting the middle-class household. We can to some extent rely, for instance, on material that was written especially for the English housewife, while being aware that such books were themselves imbued with an ideological position on the family, and are therefore hardly neutral witnesses. For nineteenth-century England, there is an overwhelming amount of printed material of this sort in the forms of household, health, marriage and child care manuals, and women's and family magazines. These sources were written by and for the middle class.[28] Although again there are problems with relying on such material, other ways of deducing what was actually going on in homes is to look at diaries, letters, or biographical studies of eminent bourgeois men or women. These sources taken together deal with the daily activities of the average middle-class household and therefore offer a more significant and representative image of the bourgeois family than the literature of the day.

The middle class took shape during the turbulent decades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though naturally the notion of a 'middle class' existed before this era. It was the crises of these decades which brought out common interests

[26] J.F.C. Harrison, *The Early Victorians 1832-1851* (London, 1971); op. cit.; Best, op. cit.
[27] Patricia Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* (London, 1975), p. 12
[28] Ibid., p. 12

and drew bourgeois society's disparate membership together, so that it took that shape familiar to us from novels and paintings of the period. Although the eighteenth-century middling groups had many affinities with aristocracy and gentry, the basis of their property and their value system and, not least the nonconformity of many in their ranks, set them apart.[29] The English middle class was being forged at a time of exceptional turmoil and threatening economic and political disorder. The proportion of the population who could be included as middle class varied from place to place, but generally appears to have been expanding from the eighteenth century onwards. Branca states that: "As the century progressed more and more people prospered, especially the middle class. This new prosperity brought about significant changes in the middle-class life style".[30] John Brewer estimates that by the start of the period, the population with family incomes of from £50 to £400 a year had increased from 15 to 25 per cent, and Robert Morris claims that the 13 per cent of £10 a year household heads registered as voters increased to 25 per cent by 1847.[31] The bourgeoisie occupied between a fifth and a quarter of the population.[32] At the top end, part of the upper middle class mingled with aristocratic Society.[33]

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[29] Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: *Men and Women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (London, 1997), p. 18. Contemporaries spoke of 'the middling ranks', the 'middling sort', or the 'middling strata' since the concept of 'class' was rudimentary in the eighteenth century and only became common parlance in the nineteenth. See Asa Briggs, "The Language of "class" in early nineteenth-century England', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History* (1967).

[30] See Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home*, p. 6

[31] [31] J. Brewer, 'Commercialisation and politics', in N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth- Century England* (1982), p.24; R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect, and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class : Leeds, 1820 -1850* (Manchester, 1990)

[32] Bessy Rayner Parkes, *Essays on Woman's Work*, 1865, calculated that the middle ranks were about three times as numerous as the upper ranks, and that "of thirteen units, one would represent the aristocracy, three the middle ranks, and the remaining nine would stand for the masses."

[33] Joan Perkin, in *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London,1989), p. 233 explains that "At the bottom end, the lower middle class overlapped in income, though not necessarily in lifestyle, with the prosperous working class from which many of them had been recruited. In between was a 'middle middle class' with sufficient financial security to place them socially above the lower middle class but insufficient wealth for them to mingle with High Society".

The social range of Harley Street embraces this upper middle class. Elizabeth Gaskell, who came from a middle-class background, was a novelist deeply critical of her society. She usually framed her stories as critiques of contemporary attitudes and questioned the limitations of the feminine role. She writes of women who find that in the end they must rely on their own strength, not the illusory strength of father or husband. They have to learn to step out from the shadow and speak and act for themselves, according to their conscience.[34] In *The Rise of the Woman Novelist* (1986), Jane Spencer notes that: "The Gaskellian heroine is a woman who can rise above trifling and frivolity and deserves to be treated as a rational creature. . . Gaskell integrates her thinking heroines into society as it is."[35]

Thus far "society as it is" generally took London as the accepted social and moral point of reference. However, in *North and South*, Elizabeth Gaskell does not take London as the centre of the social world. Therefore the cosmopolitan is not felt as a norm against which character, ethics and society may be measured, but one which can be criticised and disparaged.[36] This is precisely what Mrs Gaskell does in the opening chapter 'Haste to the Wedding'.

In our first introduction to the heroine of *North and South*, the eighteen-year-old Margaret sits in the back drawing-room by the side of her sleeping cousin Edith Shaw, silently brooding over "the change in her life" (7) occasioned by Edith's marriage to Captain Lennox. *North and South* does not open in Gaskell's usual fashion with a walk

[34] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories* (London, 1993), pp. 25-26

[35] Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford, 1986), p.168

[36] In *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (London, 1975) W.A. Craik articulates the idea of the provincial novel and the provincial novelists. Elizabeth Gaskell, the Brontës, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy form a group apart from the other great novelists of the nineteenth century, for they all write of a world which is provincial. All these seven novelists see the world from a viewpoint which is not metropolitan. Independent of the traditional values and social order of London, the Brontës' Yorkshire, Elizabeth Gaskell's northern England, Trollope's Barsetshire, George Eliot's Midlands, and Hardy's Wessex, all enable them to interpret anew the world they live in.

through a landscape into a story. It begins in mid-scene, in an interior, with one young woman calling to another. The setting of Harley Street calls forth the irony and humour through which Mrs Gaskell mocks the trivial existence of the middle class and especially of middle-class women. Her chief weapon is humour in the sense that to Gaskell it is more effective to ridicule the absurdities of a particular social realm than to attack it bluntly. Throughout the novel Mrs Gaskell applies to the Shaws and the Lennoxes her quiet irony and wit. They are kind, yet they only have their own interests at heart. Their own way of life and their own circle with its trivialities are all that matters. Mrs Gaskell perfectly knows how to reveal the supercilious snobbery of the middle-class ladies by means of their conversations, but also through her added narrative commentary:

> Margaret heard her aunt's voice again. . . 'Edith! Edith!' cried she; and then she sank as if wearied by the exertion. Margaret stepped forward. 'Edith is asleep, Aunt Shaw. Is it anything I can do?' All the ladies said 'Poor child!' on receiving this distressing intelligence about Edith; and the minute lap-dog in Mrs Shaw's arms began to bark, as if excited by the burst of pity. (9)

Three instances in this quote illustrate Gaskell's display of irony perfectly, and she specifically uses irony here in order to show the superficiality of the ladies surrounding Margaret. The first ironic occurrence presents itself when aunt Shaw is "wearied by the exertion", the exertion being calling her daughter, therefore "wearied" seems rather an overstatement for this type of activity. The second example comprises the ladies' reactions when they receive the "distressing intelligence" that Edith is asleep. The final instance concerns the dog; even he seems distressed by the "burst of pity", which entails nothing more than a sleeping girl.

What Gaskell portrays in this scene, is what is generally viewed as the Victorian middle-class woman's role in society; that is, a merely ornamental rather than functional or responsible role.[37] This implies that the middle-class woman did not have to be practical in the sense that she had to concern herself with household affairs or domestic duties, but rather that she should live up to the elevated image of the idle Victorian woman. She is often depicted as the "doll-like, bread and butter miss swooning on a sofa, the frivolous, irrational, irresponsible creature of whim, the devotee of fashion . . . With these stereotypes predominating, her life has been dismissed as a 'mass of trifles.'"[38] One of the cries of the 1840s was against this purposelessness of middle-class women's lives, powerfully stated in 1851 by Geraldine Jewsbury's heroine Marian Withers: "I have nothing to occupy me; nothing to interest me . . . My whole life is stagnating . . . I feel as if I were buried alive. I am good for nothing . . . I am stunned and stupid - nothing seems real, not even I myself."[39] Florence Nightingale was another who inveighed against the terrible ennui of a life like that of her mother and sister, 'lying on two sofas and telling each other "not to tire by putting flowers into water'". Her fictional heroine, Cassandra, bitterly questions the position of women: "Why have women passion, intellectual, moral activity - these three - and a place in society where no one of these can be exercised?" Privately Nightingale wrote: "I see the numbers of my kind who have gone mad for want of something to do."[40]

Elizabeth Gaskell had likewise seen numerous idealistic young women, suffocated by the prospect of what Margaret comes to see as "the eventless ease in which no

[37] Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880*, (London, 1969)
[38] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman,* (London, 1971)
[39] Geraldine Jewsbury, *Marian Withers* (London, 1851), chapter3, pp.124-5
[40] Florence Nightingale to Mary Mohl, *Ever Yours, Florence Nightingale: Selected Letters*, 3 September 1867, ed. Martha Vicinus and Bea Nergard (London, 1990), 39. See Cecil Woodham- Smith, *Florence Nightingale*, 1820-1910 (London, 1950), 79, and Florence Nightingale, 'Cassandra', in R. Strachey, *The Cause* (London, 1928), 395-418.

struggle or endeavour was required" (364), in which one could so easily become "sleepily deadened into forgetfulness" (364). Edith's character and superficial life fit this image of the typical middle-class woman when she regards "the difficulty of keeping a piano in good tune . . . as one of the most formidable that could befall her in her married life" (7). Novels have thus contributed greatly to the image of the completely leisured, ornamental, helpless and dependent female with no other occupation besides inspiring admiration and bearing children. Spencer argues that women novelists in the nineteenth century: "are still working within a patriarchal society that defines and judges them according to its notions of what femininity is. They may internalise their society's standards of femininity and reflect this in their writing. Or they may write in opposition to those standards".[41]

An additional bias that limited the Victorian woman was that she was elevated (or degraded) to an object of patronising sympathy, as a helpless and insipid creature for men who needed to render her functionless to bolster their own egos. In their book *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1997), Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall explain that:

> An indication of the increasingly protective and authoritative role of men is seen in the age differentials between husband and wife. Until the seventeenth century, there was an idea that a man would do well to marry an older woman with property and skill, but by the end of the eighteenth century, this was increasingly viewed as distasteful. The young, dependent, almost childlike wife was portrayed as the ideal in fiction,

[41] See Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*, Introduction p. ix

> etchings, songs and poetry. Such an image of fragility and helplessness enhanced the potency of the man who was to support and protect her.[42]

Although there are many obvious exceptions, nonetheless, this reading does correspond to elements in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*. We observe this "image of fragility and helplessness" and the depiction of an "almost childlike wife" during the farewell dinner in honour of Edith's approaching marriage. Mr Henry Lennox, the Captain's brother, observes all the table arrangements being made by Edith and Margaret:

> [Edith] was in a humour to enjoy showing her lover how well she could behave as a soldier's wife. She found out that the water in the urn was cold, and ordered up the great kitchen tea-kettle; the only consequence of which was that when she met it at the door, and tried to carry it in, it was too heavy for her, and she came in pouting, with a black mark on her muslin gown, and a little round white hand indented by the handle, which she took to show to Captain Lennox, just like a hurt child, and, of course, the remedy was the same in both cases. (16)

The description of Edith's "little" hand which she took "to show . . . just like a hurt child", again shows Gaskell's sarcastic treatment of the role middle-class women accredit themselves. The belittling treatment of women corresponds to the new bourgeois ideology of femininity, according to which women were very separate, special creatures**:** "the idle wife was becoming a man's status symbol".[43] In an interesting correspondence, Elizabeth Gaskell and her friend, Tottie Fox, argue about the difficulties women face in finding a role. Gaskell admits that:

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[42] Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall*, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English middle class, 1780-1850*, p. 323

[43] See Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*, p. 13

> I long (weakly) for the old times when right and wrong did not seem such complicated matters; and I am sometimes coward enough to wish that we were back in the darkness where obedience was the only seen duty of women. Only even then I don't believe William would ever have *commanded* me.[44]

According to Jenny Uglow "this suggests how ingrained the notion of submission was. Even while [Gaskell] chafed against it and portrayed it so bitterly in her fiction, she held to some model (a romantic fantasy as much as a social belief) of the strong, stern man ruling the impulsive, imaginative woman - a pattern which provided the dramatic and sexual tension of *North and South*".[45] It would, however, be a mistake to think that all middle-class wives were the domesticated and dutiful paragons that serve as a "man's status symbol". Indeed, Margaret Hale, the central consciousness of the novel, forms a sharp contrast with this representation.

As I have now broadly defined the milieu Margaret belongs to at the beginning of *North and South*, I shall henceforth turn to the influence all this has had upon her. I shall do this by first tracing Margaret's line of thought; her interior motives and ideas. Thence I will expand my analysis to Margaret's exterior as perceived by the other characters. This analysis will show in what ways Margaret differs from conventional standards for women set by the social milieu she partakes in.

For much of the narrative we are inside Margaret's consciousness. The narrator seldom tries to stand back and generalise, and the social and familial issues, therefore, are first related associatively through their simultaneous presence in Margaret's mind. This so-called 'free indirect discourse' is a technique Jane Austen made sustained use of in the representation of figural speech and thought. Austen is generally

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[44] J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, *The letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester, 1966), letter 109, p.378
[45] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, pp. 78-79

acknowledged to be the first English novelist to have employed this technique,[46] and we can apply its use to Gaskell's novels too. *North and South* deploys free indirect discourse in conjunction with a "trustworthy, authoritative narrative voice"[47] and it repeatedly intertwines free indirect discourse with narratorial commentary, sometimes inside of a single sentence:

> Mr Henry Lennox stood leaning against the chimney-piece, amused with the family scene. He was close by his handsome brother; he was the plain one in a singularly good-looking family; but his face was intelligent, keen, and mobile; and now and then Margaret wondered what it was that he could be thinking about, while he kept silence, but was evidently observing, with an interest that was slightly sarcastic, all that Edith and she were doing. (16)

After the narratorial frame provided by Mr Henry Lennox being "amused with the family scene," which has an ironic undertone in it, the second sentence would be classified as free indirect discourse: it is free-standing, reflects Margaret's subjectivity throughout (especially in "but his face was intelligent, keen, and mobile"), and might be read as a transcript of conscious thought. Language such as "Margaret wondered" marks the continuing presence of narratorial subjectivity. Thus the prose moves in and out of a complex array of voices, including that of the narrator herself.

There are typically two subjectivities expressed in these passages of free indirect discourse: the subjectivity of the imitated character and the underlying subjectivity of the narrator. Helen Dry defines two different sorts of third-person narration: "first, that which might represent a transcript of a character's conscious thoughts during the action, and second, the so-called 'exposition,' which constitutes reports of settings and

[46] Daniel P. Gunn, 'Free Indirect Discourse and Narrative Authority in Emma', *Narrative Volume 12* (2004), p. 35
[47] Ibid., p. 35

action, and which is usually felt to be the product of the narrator".[48] For Dry, the former is "marked as [Margaret's] conscious thought"; the latter consists of "everything that could not be transposed into first-person, present tense and appropriately regarded as part of a character's internal sentences".[49]

In *Transparent Minds* (1978), Dorrit Cohn explains that in free indirect discourse characters are presented "'from within,' through a profusion of narrated monologues".[50] Thus Elizabeth Gaskell renders the heroine's thought-process in narrative; she advocates self-knowledge and shows her heroines reaching it "from within", just as Cohn has proposed. Though the first geographical setting does not offer many instances of this technique (the setting only covers one short chapter), it will, however, be used throughout the rest of *North and South*.

Though much of Margaret is explained via introspection, we can further perceive her emotional nature through retrospection. The first extended attention to her past which gives us glimpses of Margaret's character and emotional state comes as she remembers arriving at the London household nine years earlier: "that house with which she had become familiar nine years ago, when she was brought, all untamed from the forest, to share the home, the play, and the lessons of her cousin Edith"(10). The association between the words "untamed" and "the forest" are worth mentioning since they contain in themselves a conventional way of viewing the contrast between country versus urban life: Margaret had to be 'tamed' (as if she was a wild creature) since "the forest" had produced a girl who does not seem fit for the standards set by bourgeois society. After her mother had died, Elizabeth Gaskell herself grew up in the

[48] Helen Dry, 'Syntax and Point of View in Jane Austen's *Emma*', *Studies in Romanticism 16* (1977): 87-99, p. 88
[49] Ibid., p.89
[50] Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, 1978), p. 122. Cohn's discussion of narrated monologue is subtle and perceptive, and she acknowledges that "the continued employment of third-person references indicates, no matter how unobtrusively, the continued presence of a narrator" (112).

countryside, in Knutsford (the place she was to re-create later as Cranford). She lived there with Hannah Holland and Aunt Lumb, "my more than mother."[51] Her father, William Stevenson, had married again when Gaskell was four and lived in London. Mrs Gaskell belonged to two places, two families - Cheshire and London, Holland and Stevenson. In *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories* (1993), Jenny Uglow notes that:

> to a small girl the London streets were strange after the leafy lanes and open heaths of Knutsford. The loneliness of a similar country child among city relatives is felt in *North and South*, when Margaret Hale looks back on her arrival at her aunt's house in Harley Street.[52]

Margaret reminisces over "the tears shed with such wild passion of grief by the little girl of nine" (10) at the unfamiliar rituals and ceremonies of the place. These recollections form an outline through which we can comprehend Margaret's loneliness, sense of alienation, and the ability to withdraw into herself. When her father comes to say goodbye to his little daughter who will, from now on, spend the rest of her childhood in her aunt's household, she "hushe[s] her sobs" and pretends to be asleep "for fear of making her father unhappy by her grief" (10). Uglow remarks that: "of course, the picture of Margaret's loneliness in *North and South* is fiction not autobiography, imagined not remembered. But it shows Gaskell well understood the buried feelings of a young girl in such a household."[53]

By means of this remembrance we perceive a key character trait of Margaret, which is her capacity to efface herself for peace's sake. This is made even more striking by her present employment "as a sort of lay figure" (11) modelling shawls[54] to her aunt

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[51] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, p. 12
[52] Ibid., p. 20
[53] Ibid., p. 22
[54] The whole episode of Margaret Hale standing draped like an eastern princess in Indian shawls while her aunt's friends exclaim at their cost, is based on Gaskell's own experiences when she visited Capesthorne to see her friend's (Caroline Davenport) trousseau for her wedding to Lord Hatherton. Mrs Davenport's wedding finery was

Shaw's guests while Edith sleeps on the sofa next door, thus indicating her obedient nature and her capacity for service to others. She feels as if she has to "play the part of Figaro[55], and was wanted everywhere at one and the same time" (17) in the household in Harley Street.

Though this acquiescent nature forms one part of Margaret's character, her independence of spirit becomes evident in this chapter too, for she is critical of the "never-ending commotion about trifles" (12) that constitute so much of the preparation for Edith's marriage. Caught up in and exhausted from the "whirlwind" (12) of planning before her cousin Edith's wedding, Margaret asks Henry Lennox: "But are all these quite necessary troubles?" (13). Taking on a serious tone, Henry answers affirmatively: "There are forms and ceremonies to be gone through, not so much to satisfy oneself, as to stop the world's mouth, without which stoppage there would be very little satisfaction in life" (13). He views the social norms of preparing for and going through the marriage act as a source of satisfaction. For Margaret, however, these norms are simply arrangements for a "pretty effect" that leave her with "a sense of indescribable weariness" (13) rather than satisfaction.

Mrs Gaskell's own relative freedom and independence in matrimony are reflected in Margaret's character, especially her distaste for these social norms concerning love and marriage. When Margaret is asked to describe her own idea of how a marriage should be arranged, she says: "I should like it to be a very fine summer morning; and I should like to walk to church through the shade of trees; and not to have so many

'quite like the Arabian nights. . . six beautiful Indian shawls, endless jewellery. . . including two complete sets of diamonds and opals etc.' Elizabeth was stirred by the sheer beauty of the shawls, lilac, crimson and blue, embroidered and fringed in gold: 'oh, *dear*! They were so soft and delicate and went into such beautiful folds!' Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, p. 299

[55] The reference is to Rossini's opera, written in 1816 and based on Beaumarchais's *The Barber of Seville* (1775). It refers to Figaro's complaint in 'Largo al Factotum' that everybody wants him at once. As merely adoptive daughter, Margaret is made use of by everyone, like Figaro.

bridesmaids, and to have no wedding-breakfast" (13). As a humorous afterthought she acknowledges this to be the reverse of Edith's wedding: "I dare say I am resolving against the very things that have given me the most trouble just now" (13). The gilded cage of bourgeois marriage called forth strong reactions both from those who idealised its comfort and security and those who found it claustrophobic and frustrating. Joan Perkin mentions that "the marriage market had the unintentional consequence of providing a breeding ground for rebellion against the traditional role prescribed for wives".[56] Considering Margaret's recalcitrant attitude towards marriage and everything that this entails, we can deduce a picture of a heroine who is far from fitting the stereotype of the passive, docile woman: the words "resolving against" indicate an assertive, opinionated character who prefers to have a certain amount of liberty and sovereignty. This notion of independence, which will be studied in the upcoming chapters of this thesis, is what Margaret has to work out for herself in order to fulfil her process of self-realisation.

The first chapter of *North and South* ends abruptly, as if enough words have been spent on setting the stage of London's society. Mrs Gaskell seems to simply dismiss this London arena with the sentence: "After this evening all was bustle till the wedding was over" (16), so as to indicate that it is time to move forward to the more important things in life. This first setting has its purpose in that Mrs Gaskell wants the reader to deduce Margaret's background, her mental processes and her motivations. It is important to remember that Margaret comes in part from this bourgeois background and that it is a conditioning influence in her early attitudes to Milton Northern.

[56] Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*, p.250. The common view of marriage for the middle class was that matrimony served as an economic and social building block; it was the basis of a new family unit. Compared to the other social classes, it was middle-class wives who were most affected by the laws of marriage, and who most reacted both for and against them.

Chapter 2

Helstone

'' It really sounded like a village in a tale rather than in real life" (14)

The action of the novel properly opens at Helstone, the place Margaret thinks of as home. After the experience of turbulent bourgeois society in London, we now enter the idyll that Helstone is to Margaret. Our heroine is still a young, inexperienced girl, anxious to see what life has in store for her. Two important things happen at Helstone that set things into motion and that causes the bubble of innocence that Margaret is living in, to burst.

First, there is a marriage proposal that forces Margaret to reconsider her self-image as a young girl that, although in the eyes of society, she clearly is not one anymore. This proposal therefore causes Margaret to feel "guilty and ashamed of having grown so much into a woman as to be thought of in marriage" (34). This self-awareness signifies a first step of Margaret's process to self-realisation.

Secondly, Mr Hale's religious doubts form the catalyst of the disruption of the Hales' idyllic family life as it exists at Helstone, and it furthermore puts to questions the doctrines of the Church of England. Thus, by means of Mr Hale, Mrs Gaskell indirectly airs her criticism of religion.

Since Mrs Gaskell herself spent her childhood in the country, I will first study the autobiographical parallels between Helstone and Mrs Gaskell's own life. From thereon I will examine the issues concerning marriage, and finally the religious controversy that will ultimately lead to the removal of the Hales' family from the South to the North.

'Helstone' is taken from the name of Charlotte Brontë's heroine in Shirley (1849), Caroline Helstone. The nearby New Forest glades of Southampton, which Elizabeth

Gaskell visited during the summer months of 1853, inspired her description of Helstone. This small town renders its enchantment through the eyes of a sentimental and nostalgic Margaret. When asked to describe Helstone she replies:

> Oh, [it's] only a hamlet; I don't think I could call it a village at all. There is the church and a few houses near it on the green – cottages, rather – with roses growing all over them . . . all the other places in England that I have seen seem so hard and prosaic-looking, after the New Forest. Helstone is like a village in a poem – in one of Tennyson's poems . . . I can't describe my home. It is home, I can't put its charms into words. (13/14)

Mrs Gaskell was a great admirer of Tennyson - she even used some stanzas from *In Memoriam* as epigraphs for the chapters in *North and South*. Elizabeth Gaskell displays the richness of Tennyson's imagery and descriptive writing in her depiction of Helstone. Sensuously she presents the physical details of the New Forest:

> The forest trees were all one dark full, dusky green; the fern below them caught all the slanting sunbeams; the weather was sultry and broodingly still. Margaret used to tramp along by her father's side, crushing down the fern with a cruel glee, as she felt it yield under her light foot[57], and send up the fragrance peculiar to it, - out on the broad commons into the warm scented light, seeing multitudes of wild free, living creatures, revelling in the sunshine, and the herbs and flowers it called forth. (18)

[57] Though I am not going to analyse this passage in relation to sexuality and female control (since this will be dealt with in later chapters of this thesis), I would, however, like to point out a striking sentence in this passage. Notice the way Margaret crushes down 'the fern with a cruel glee, as she felt it yield under her light foot'. In terms of a feminist analysis of *North and South*, this is an interesting sentence in the sense that it might provide us with an outline of a young Margaret already aware of the feeling of power and control, which turns out to be a crucial feature of the novel.

This kind of epitomising scene is characteristic of Gaskell, and of the period. She uses figurative language sparingly, achieving the same effect through description and dramatization. Rather than saying that, “Mr Hale was eating a pear”, she shows Mr Hale sitting in the garden with a pear “which he had delicately peeled in one long strip of silver-paper thinness, and which he was enjoying in a deliberate manner” (32). Her purely descriptive passages of the provincial surroundings are brief and enchanting. These descriptions bear autobiographical resemblances to Elizabeth Gaskell’s own nostalgia concerning country life. Gaskell’s diary and letters show what a great deal of time she actually stayed away from Manchester. She was happiest when she could link her old life (her youthful days spent in the countryside where she grew up) and her new life (her family life in Manchester). When she stayed at Sandlebridge in May 1836, she wrote ecstatically to her sister- in-law:

> I wish I could paint my present situation to you. Fancy me sitting in an old-fashioned parlour, “doors and windows opened wide”, with casement window opening into a sunny court all filled with flowers which scent the air with their fragrance - in the very depth of the country- 5 miles from the least approach to a town - the song of birds, the hum of insects the lowing of cattle the only sounds - and such pretty fields & woods all round.[58]

They wake with the birds and sit on the old stone steps, breathing the scent of flowers, ‘“far from the busy hum of men, but *not* far from the busy hum of bees”’. To Mrs Gaskell this Eden, primitive, in touch with nature, cried out to be painted in words:

> I have brought Coleridge with me, & am doing him & Wordsworth- fit place for the latter! I sat in a shady corner of a filed gay with bright spring flowers- daisies, primroses, wild anemones, & the ‘lesser

[58] J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, *The letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester, 1966), letter 4, pp. 5-6

> celandine', & with lambs all around me- and the air so full of sweet sounds, & wrote my first chapter of W. yesterday in pencil- & today I'm going to finish him- and my heart feels so full of him I don't know how to express my fullness without being too diffuse.[59]

When Gaskell was in her own rural retreat, studying Wordsworth in the May sunshine at Sandlebridge in 1836, her world seemed almost too perfect: "Oh that life would make a standstill in this happy place."[60] Compare Gaskell's utterance to Margaret's feelings towards Helstone: "I think Helstone is about as perfect a place as any in the world" (29), and the autobiographical cross-reference is hard to miss.

However, Elizabeth Gaskell also offers a sarcastic view on this over-idealised picture of the country life by means of Henry Lennox's remarks. After Margaret's picturesque description of Helstone he retorts that: "it really sound[s] like a village in a tale rather than in real life" (14). He even goes as far as to tell Margaret that he had "always felt rather contemptuously towards the poets before, with their wishes, 'Mine be a cot beside a hill,' and that sort of thing" (29). Mr Lennox quotes from 'A Wish' by Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), four stanzas of stereotypes about an idyllic country life. Lennox's etcetera is apt. It shows that he does not know the country life and would not like it if he did, even though he admits during his visit to Helstone that he sees "what a perfect life [Margaret] seem[s] to life here" (29). Lennox's pejorative view on country life might be simply there to illustrate why Margaret and he would be unsuitable for each other and why their marriage would be ill-matched, if she were to accept his hand. To Margaret the only logical thing is therefore to reject Lennox's proposal of marriage, and turn her back on a marriage like her cousin Edith's. As soon as Mr Lennox starts building up to his proposal, Margaret has the perception to sense that there is

[59] J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, *The letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, letter 4, p. 8
[60] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, p. 105

something wrong when he stops and hesitates: “it was so unusual for the fluent lawyer to hesitate that Margaret looked up at him, in a little state of questioning wonder; but in an instant - from what about him she could not tell . . . she was sure he was going to say something to which she should not know what to reply” (30). This passage shows Mrs Gaskell’s adeptness at indicating change of mood. As W.A. Craik points out in *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (1975):

> Changes of mood within [*North and South*] are not artificially created by a change of scene, or area of interest, but are such as seem to happen out of the sheer nature of human experience, the motion of the human mind, and the discrepancy between the human tongue and what it wishes to convey. Such changes both intensify impressions, and relieve them, by the contrasts produced, whether of essential difference, or partial resemblance. They are always relevant to character or theme, never merely arbitrary.[61]

These changes of mood often forewarn a transition in the novel from one locale to another, which inherently generate a development in the novel’s plot. These variations are not explicitly stated by the characters themselves, yet they are implicitly revealed to us by the inklings and imitations that the characters get through their observations. For instance, Margaret ponders her father’s behaviour which bear all the signs of a “heavy heart” (23), and she tries to “find the cause for the lines [in his countenance] that spoke so plainly of habitual distress and depression” (18). She also notices “an absence of mind, as if his thoughts were pre-occupied by some subject, the oppression of which could not be relieved by any daily action” (22). All these hunches are hints of an inward burden which Mr Hale is shortly to reveal to Margaret. He tells her that they

[61] W. A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (London, 1975), p. 107

must leave Helstone[62] since in conscience he cannot continue to be a minister of the Church:

> "It is all myself Margaret . . . I can meet the consequences of my painful, miserable doubts; but it is an effort beyond me to speak of what has caused me so much suffering."
>
> "Doubts, papa! Doubts as to religion?" asked Margaret, more shocked than ever.
>
> "No, no doubts as to religion; not the slightest injury to that . . . you could not understand it all . . . my efforts to quench my smouldering doubts by the authority of the Church". (35)

Mr Hale never fully explains these 'doubts'[63], but they are most likely about accepting the rigid doctrines of the Church of England to which Mr Hale must subscribe. He resigns his Anglican living, unable any more to live a lie by accepting the Thirty-nine Articles. Mr. Hale's doubts have long puzzled readers since his resignation is somewhat covered in a cloud of haziness. However, to Craik:

> the scene in which Mr Hale finds himself unable to acknowledge the authority of the Church of England, or to make his declaration of conformity to the Liturgy, is quite intelligible and acceptable, despite many readers' uneasiness because he never defines the nature of his

[62] Angus Easson points out in 'Mr Hales Doubts in *North and South*' (*Review of English Studies* 31 (1980), pp. 30-40) that there was a novelistic need to take the Hales north. When Mr Hale gives up his ministry in the Church of England, his move to Milton Northern from Hampshire to eke out a living as classical tutor provides the mechanics for Margaret's removal from the South to her encounter with the North and its industrial conditions.

[63] Mr Hale supports his resignation by referring to John Oldfield (?1627-82): "This is the soliloquy of one who was once a clergyman in a country parish, like me; it was written by a Mr Oldfield" (36). Oldfield was ejected from his living for rejecting Anglican doctrines. The soliloquy had been used in *The Apology of Theophilus Lindsey, M.A. on Resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire* (1774) when Lindsey left the Anglican church after a crisis of faith and became a Unitarian minister. According to Angus Easson in 'Mr Hale's Doubts in *North and South*' (1980), Mr Hale's quotation of Oldfield's soliloquy is presumably Gaskell's source that "justifies his leaving of the Anglican fold because of conscientious differences" (p. 31) See Easson's interesting analysis of the soliloquy in reference to Gaskell, which support his interpretation.

> doubts. The nature of his doubt is not germane to the novel; the state itself of doubting is.[64]

Elizabeth Gaskell herself was a Unitarian who did not accept the doctrine of the Trinity, nor the divinity of Christ, as the Articles required. Unitarianism was a very open church, which asked of its members only a belief in the one God, an acceptance of the divine mission of Jesus and a reliance on the scriptures. Unitarians refused to accept the notion of original sin or the doctrine of atonement: Jesus was revered as a teacher and example, not a vehicle of grace. No one was 'chosen' and there was no elect. Above all they believed in freedom of thought and stressed the role of reason in the quest for truth. In ethics this challenge to convention put equality before hierarchy, moral justice before legal judgement. Unitarians asked, as Gaskell does in so many novels and stories, "why do we live in an unjust world if we are all equal in the eyes of God?" To the predominantly Anglican establishment, this made the Unitarions suspect on political as well as religious grounds. They were identified with revolution because they believed that men and women should speak openly against the things they felt were wrong, in personal and social life as well as on issues of faith. Although their numbers were relatively small compared to other sects, their influence was great. Unitarian women were as influential as men in social reform. Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, Barbara Bodichon, Bessie Parkes, Emily Shaen and Mary Carpenter all shared a Unitarian background to some degree, and most were Elizabeth Gaskell's personal friends.[65]

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[64] W. A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (London, 1975), p. 97

[65] This is an extract from the chapter Learning Voices: 1810-48, Far and Near, pp. 5-8 (Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*). This chapter gives a thorough account of what role Unitarianism played in the Gaskells' lives. For facts and figures of different religious movements during the 19th Century, see Part One: Religion and Ideology (Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English middle-class 1780-1850*, pp. 71-192).

Some biographers and critics claim that there is a relationship between Mr Hale's rejection of the Church and William Stevenson, Mrs Gaskell's father, who gave up the Unitarian ministry. However, this is very unlikely since William Stevenson was young when he made his decision and this could not have affected his family directly. Besides that, he was already a Unitarian. Furthermore, Stevenson's objections were not to Church discipline or doctrine but to a paid ministry. Jenny Uglow suggests that the model for Mr Hale was J.A. Froude, whose doubts caused him to resign his fellowship at Oxford and settle for some time with his wife near Manchester. She states that:

> although the fictional character and situation are quite different, Elizabeth [Gaskell] undoubtedly had Froude in mind. When he read *North and South*, Froude told her, "it gave me such a strange feeling to see our drawing room in Greenheys photographed as that of Mr Hale.[66]

However, Angus Easson argues in 'Mr Hale's Doubts in *North and South*' (1980) that the link made with J.A. Froude is tenuous, since:

> though [Froude] did tutor in Manchester his doubts were more fundamental and yet more vague than any Mr Hale feels. Froude might be called a sceptic and Mr Hale, Mrs Gaskell stressed in a letter, might have doubts, but was no sceptic . . . Whatever William Stevenson or Froude contributed, they were not the primary figures Mrs Gaskell had in mind when she planned Mr Hale's part in *North and South*.[67]

According to Easson, it is Theophilus Lindsey's situation (see footnote 63) which Mrs Gaskell uses as a model for Mr Hale, though their personalities are quite different:

> As Lindsey was the first minister of Essex Street, an eminent preacher, and the most prominent Anglican to leave his Church for Unitarian beliefs,

[66] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, p. 229
[67] Angus Easson, 'Mr Hale's Doubts' in *North and South*, p. 33

> whose writings were in wide circulation, Mrs Gaskell could be sure that many Unitarians at least would be aware whom she was thinking of as historical parallel or type when Mr Hale's affairs came to crisis.[68]

This whole clerical theme signalled the end of a friendly, even flirtatious relationship between Dickens and Gaskell. Dickens objected to this part of the novel as "a difficult and dangerous subject."[69] He insisted that this episode should be firmly compressed: "make the scene between Margaret and her father relative to his leaving the church . . . as short as you can find it in your heart to make it".[70] Mrs Gaskell totally ignored him. In late August, when Dickens saw the proofs, he was horrified to find the text "as it originally stood, and unaltered by you". As it had to go to press immediately she must alter the proofs and "will you be so kind as to do so at once". She did not.

From now on Dickens and Gaskell clashed violently, with endless wrangles over the serialisation of *North and South*, and finally settled into a wary and stubborn truce. The final episode of *North and South* eventually appeared in *Household Words* on 27 January 1855. Dickens wrote to congratulate her and as a conciliatory gesture added £50 to the £250 which was due. While she had driven him to fury, he grudgingly admired her spirit, as stubborn as that of her heroine.[71]

The implication of a strong religious interest in the novel did not only concern Dickens. Charlotte Brontë commented on the early chapters of North and South. She admired them, although she thought Mr Hale's religious doubt "a difficult subject". She wrote to Mrs Gaskell:

> What has appeared I like well, and better each fresh number; best of all the last (today's). The subject seems to me difficult; at first, I groaned

[68] Angus Easson, 'Mr Hale's Doubts' in *North and South*, p. 37
[69] G. Storey, K. Tillotson and E. Eason, *The Letters of Charles Dickens* (Oxford, 1993), p.356
[70] Ibid., p. 582
[71] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, p. 367

> over it. If you had any narrowness of views or bitterness of feeling towards the Church or her Clergy, I should groan over it still; but I think I see the ground you are about to take so far as the Church is concerned; not that of attack on her, but of defence of those who conscientiously differ from her, and feel it a duty to leave her fold.[72]

From the beginning of her writing career, Mrs Gaskell has made something of a specialty of handling controversial subjects and of doing so quite deliberately.[73] Religion has a conspicuous place in *North and South*, a remarkably more important one than in any other work of Mrs Gaskell's, even though this theme is often overshadowed by the class conflicts and the love story in the novel. Religion is an obviously controversial topic, and it must have had an appeal on Mrs Gaskell, especially since faith was a constant factor in her life.

After Mr Hale's announcement that he cannot be "a minister in the Church of England" (35) any longer, it is time for Margaret and her family to leave Helstone. Margaret is responsible for moving house at a fortnight's notice. Chapter Six is called "Farewell" and this short chapter forms a link between the past life in the South at Helstone and the new life to come in the North. The motto at the head of the chapter is worth some attention. It is from Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), a collection of elegies in which he immortalised his love for his friend Arthur Hallam. This poem is relevant to Mr Hale's difficulties since it is similar a poem of faith and doubt. It was Mrs Gaskell's favourite poem, and at her funeral service the minister read some lines from it. Here it is expressive of Margaret's grief for the loss of her beloved South.

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[72] The Brontës: *Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondence*, ed. T.J. Wise and J.A. Symington (1932), iv. 153, 30 Sept. 1854; she had just read the fifth instalment, serialisation having begun 2 Sept.
[73] Angus Easson, 'Mr Hale's Doubts in *North and South*', p. 38

The London opening and the proceeding to Helstone set up the ‘South’ of the novel’s title. *North and South* suggests that the time spent before Milton is relevant to the novel’s concerns too. Helstone serves as an idyllic contrast to Milton, the geographical setting the novel moves to now.

Chapter 3

Milton

'Meddling 'twixt master and man is liker meddling 'twixt husband and wife than aught else; it takes a deal o'wisdom for to do ony good' (301)

About two-third of the novel is set in Milton-Northern (an alias for Manchester), a large industrial town in 'Darkshire', that embodies the opposite norms and values of Margaret's beloved South. The Hale family moves to this town in the north after Mr Hale's abandonment of the church and he becomes a classics teacher now.

Elizabeth Gaskell lived in Manchester during her married life, so she herself saw the hardships of an industrial town. Though, it is fair to say that over the years she spent more and more time away from the city. So much so, in fact, that it becomes increasingly hard to see her, as she is often described, as 'the Manchester novelist' *par excellence*. After 1850, she used the setting for only one major work, *North and South*, in 1854, and one story, 'The Manchester Marriage', in 1858.[74] Still, since she knew Manchester so intimately from within, she remains a trustworthy narrator for the industrial novel genre.

When Gaskell writes of Manchester, she vividly conveys the feel of its streets, cobbled courtyards and houses, the factories and crowded pavements, but above all, the hustle and bustle of a manufacturing town that Margaret had "a repugnance to" (60). As readers, we experience this descriptive writing style when we encounter Milton for the first time, seen through Margaret's eyes, who is also a stranger to this society: "For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a deep lead-coloured cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which [Milton] lay" (60). It is as if the "lead-

[74] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories* (London, 1993), p. 85

coloured cloud" is hanging above the city of Milton- Northern as a sword of Damocles, thus indicating the ominous feeling Margaret gets now that she is encountering a life in an industrial city unknown to her.

Gaskell continues her description of Milton, using not only sight as a means of observation, but incorporating other senses as well: "Nearer to the town, the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke; perhaps, after all, more a loss of the fragrance of grass and herbage than any positive taste or smell" (60). Here Milton serves as a contrast to Helstone, the idyll Margaret had to leave behind, with its "fragrance of grass and herbage".

As readers we are now drawn into the city itself where we are shown the excitement of busy urban life: "Quick they were whirled over long, straight, hopeless streets of regularly-built houses, all small and of brick" (60). Interestingly, Mrs Gaskell uses the adjective 'quick' instead of its corresponding adverb. What is even more interesting, is that she did not correct this 'mistake' when she rewrote the serialised episodes before its publication as a novel. This might suggest that 'quick' has a authorial significance in the text; it might be in the text to emphasise the whirling speed of the drive through town, or it might be a hint of entering a less scholarly world than the South Margaret has just left behind. It might even indicate something of the awe and bewilderment that Margaret feels now that she is inside this unfamiliar city which is to become her new home. Naturally, a depiction of a factory town would be incomplete without the portrayal of its most recognisable feature: the "great oblong many- windowed factor[ies]". They are represented "like a hen among her chickens, puffing out black 'unparliamentary' smoke[75], and sufficiently accounting for the cloud which Margaret had taken to foretell

[75] Unparliamentary smoke: the Town Improvement Act of 1847 decreed that every fireplace or furnace should 'consume the smoke arising from the combustibles used'. The law was often disregarded: Thornton, in a later chapter, expresses contempt for it (chapter X, pp. 82-3) and Dickens refers to the outrage of Coketown manufacturers when 'it was hinted that they perhaps need not make quite so much smoke' (Hard Times, II, ch.I)

rain" (60). Equating a factory building to "a hen among her chickens" might be a first pointer to the dominating position of the factories in this industrial society.

From the onset the importance of cotton, the main industry of the North, becomes apparent: "great loaded lurries blocked up the not over-wide thoroughfares. . . every van, every wagon and truck, bore cotton, either in the raw shape in bags, or the woven shape in bales of calico" (60). The industry determined not only who had wealth and who did not, but who was listened to and who had to listen. Manchester forced to the surface problems of 'class', and it spotlighted the social problems of the industrial town. These themes became of increasing interest to novelists during the 1840s, who translated the ongoing conflicts into their novels. In *Victorian Cities* (1963), Asa Briggs points out the relevance of fiction for this turbulent period:

> Novels had special interpretative value[76] because they would take account of many opinions . . . they were both novels and social documents . . . The novels revealed much which it was difficult to find out from other sources, precisely because class dividing lines (and dividing lines between North and South) were sharply defined and people's knowledge of "the other nation" was usually strictly limited. The novelists were recognized to be social explorers . . . The accounts by novelists of their social explorations helped to put Manchester on the map.[77]

Mary Barton, Gaskell's former novel, received a lot of criticism since it focused solely on the workmen and it condemned the masters as cruel, insensitive human beings incapable of any feelings. In *North and South*, on the contrary, Mrs Gaskell tries

[76] Asa Briggs puts in a critical note regarding the writings of the social critics of the 1840s. This relates to their reliance in their contemporary analysis on data which relate to the Manchester of an earlier phase (*Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 107-8): "The social critics of the 1840s ignored the significance of [the] local legislation. . . The writers were concerned with the short-run rather than with the long-run. They saw catastrophe ahead, not adaptation". Furthermore, they "presented not a profile but a simplified model of a whole society." (102)
[77] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), pp. 95-98.

to realise an understanding on both sides, by using Margaret and John Thornton as the mediating narrators of these two opposing views.

Though the social issue is one (yet major) conflict in the Milton episode, there are more conflicts to be solved in *North and South*. This Milton chapter therefore explores three different areas in which power relations are a key element. First, there is the political area, where economic principles are opposed to social problems. Then there is the aforementioned antagonism between 'hands' and 'head' (master versus men), and, finally the gender issue, embodied by Margaret and Thornton.

In order to grasp the correlation between these three seemingly different fields, we first have to get an understanding of the capacity, influence and immensity of Milton-Northern. By first describing the city and everything that connects with it, I can turn to the different sets of power relations, which form a catalyst for the personal progress of Margaret and Thornton, and which ultimately leads to the start of a change of Milton itself.

Manchester was, after London, the most important city in England during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was the site and centre of the first Industrial Revolution, and it represented "a new kind of city in which the formation of a new kind of world seemed to be occurring".[78] In the middle of the eighteenth century a phenomenal growth began to occur in the towns, of which Manchester was the leading example.[79] The local economy was transformed by the development of the cotton industry during the boom years of the 1770s and '80s. Cotton made modern Manchester, enabling it to become one of the commercial capitals of Europe. It created

[78] Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class* (New York, 1974), preface p. vii

[79] Ibid., p. 4. In 1773 the township was estimated to contain 24,000 people; the first census in 1801 listed a figure of 70,000. By 1831 this had doubled to 142,000; 1841 posted a figure of 217,000; and in 1851 the population stood at 250,409. The highest rate of growth was reached in the decade 1821-1831, when Manchester's population increased by almost 45 per cent.

a small class of wealthy men, and a large class of "working men" who were often doomed to severe suffering. No one doubted that the cotton industry explained the increasing size and wealth of the town. The early 1830s had seen a boom in Manchester trade. Cotton goods and yarn made up half of Britain's exports (equal to twice the total export of the Russian empire). By the mid-1830s about a million and a half people were directly and indirectly dependent on employment in the production of cotton.[80]

Cotton also transformed the whole appearance of the neighbourhood. The enormous cotton spinning factories or mills were something new in the world, and Manchester was often known by its name 'The City of Long Chimneys'. Steven Marcus remarks that "the chimneys of Manchester occasioned nearly as much commentary as the factories of which they were a part."[81] One reads repeatedly about "forests" of chimneys, or about their production of "clouds of smoke and volumes of vapour."[82] But Manchester was more than a great chimney; all roads led to Manchester in the 1840s, and the town was felt increasingly to be a kind of symbol, a centre of "modern life". Briggs notes that "there were two 'images' of Manchester in the late 1830s and '40s . . . The first was the older image of the city as a cradle of economic wealth and of social order. The second was a newer image of the city as a cradle both of wealth and of new and formative social values".[83] Contemporary papers, such as the *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal,* confirm this image in their writing:

> Manchester streets may be irregular, and its trading inscriptions pretentious, its smoke may be dense, and its mud ultra-muddy, but not any or all of these things can prevent the image of a great city rising

[80] Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, p. 10
[81] Ibid., p. 46
[82] Cyrus Redding, *An Illustrated Itinerary of the County of Lancashire* (London, n.d., but probably ca. 1842)
[83] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 90

> before us as the very symbol of civilization, foremost in the march of improvement, a grand incarnation of progress.[84]

Alongside this tremendous economic growth was the increasing social segregation, and this brings us to the first set of power relations, which involves the political area wherein economic principles are opposed to social problems.

As the city grew, the separation of middle-class and working-class areas became more and more marked. As early as the 1780s, writers were describing a growing gap between rich and poor. In 1839, Rev. R. Parkinson, canon of Manchester, noted that: "there is no town in the world where the distance between the rich and the poor is so great, or the barrier between them so difficult to be crossed . . . the separation between the different classes, and the consequent ignorance of each other's habits and condition, are far more complete in this place than in any country of the older nations of Europe, or the agricultural parts of our own kingdom."[85] When Margaret and Mr Thornton are having one of their many discussions, it becomes clear that Mrs Gaskell – in the voice of Margaret – concurs with Parkinson on this matter. Margaret confesses that she gets "puzzled with living here amongst this strange society . . . I see two classes dependent on each other in every possible way, yet each evidently regarding the interests of the other as opposed to their own; I never lived in a place before where there were two sets of people always running each other down" (119).

In order to bridge the gap between these opposing classes, Mrs Gaskell created Margaret, who serves as a mediator to overcome – or at least point out – the differences and misunderstandings in an industrial society. According to Pamela Corpron Parker: "Margaret's journey moves both the heroine and the reader toward a

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[84] Taken from *The Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* (1858), quoted in Asa Briggs, p. 81

[85] Canon Parkinson, *On the Present Condition of the Labouring Poor in Manchester* (1841), quoted in Asa Briggs, pp. 110-11

more sympathetic and well-informed understanding of the complexities of industrial relations."[86] When Margaret leaves Helstone she is still an inexperienced and ignorant young woman "who accepts conventional standards, is happy to be generously kind to the Helstone poor, and can reject "shoppy"[87] people as possible acquaintances . . . She is therefore a perfect medium for presenting Milton, with its ways and standards as alien, possibly, to the reader as to Margaret herself."[88] The moment Margaret encounters the working-class man Nicholas Higgins and his sick daughter Bessy, this unfamiliarity becomes evident. When she proposes a visit to the Higgins's home – as a gesture of sympathetic condescension from a well-bred lady to a sickly working-class girl[89] - this suggestion is met by a gruff: "Whatten yo' asking for?" (74) from Higgins, when asked for his name. Margaret is surprised at this question, "for at Helstone it would have been an understood thing, after the inquiries she had made, that she intended to come and call upon any poor neighbour whose name and habitation she had asked for" (74). Now, in this new cultural context, "it seemed all at once to take the shape of an impertinence on her part; she read this meaning too in the man's eyes" (74).

This house-to-house visiting is the standpoint that Mrs Gaskell chooses in order to explore the so-called "complexities of industrial relations", as seen through the eyes of

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[86] Pamela Corpron Parker "Fictional Philanthropy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South"*. *Victorian Literature & Culture*, vol. 25, issue 02. Sept. 1997, pp. 321-331, p. 328

[87] *North and South*, p. 20. Shoppy is a pejorative term originating in the nineteenth century for those engaged in retail trade. According to Cazamian, Margaret "condemns the spirit of commerce without knowing anything about it, and dismisses the work of the industrial bourgeoisie as all being selfishly motivated" Louis Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England 1830-1850*, p. 228. In this first of many discussions of social class Margaret relies on a conventional definition of gentleman depending on birth, property and appropriate (or no) occupation. Milton tests and changes her view on this.

[88] W. A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (London, 1975), p. 126-27

[89] Though I am not going to examine the nature of different manufacturing diseases, it is however interesting that Mrs Gaskell takes notice of the disease *byssinosis*, which was first medically described in 1860, by means of Bessy Higgins who got "fluff" into her lungs that poisoned her: "fluff. . . Little bits, as fly off fro' the cotton, when they're carding it, and fill the air till it looks all fine white dust. They say it winds round the lungs, and tightens them up. Anyhow, there's many a one as works in a carding-room, that falls into a waste, coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff," (*North and South*, p. 102).

the workers. By the mid-nineteenth century, charitable organisations enjoyed unparalleled public support, and ladies' visiting societies were in their heyday.[90] Unlike Margaret, most women visitors were representatives of some organisation, either philanthropic or religious. It is significant that Margaret meets and begins visiting in a working-class neighbourhood on her own accord. In her 1997 article, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*," Dorice Williams Elliott claims that "although some mid-nineteenth-century middle-class women did visit on their own authority, having Margaret do so in *North and South* is critical to the claims Gaskell is making for women's participation in the social sphere".[91] The social sphere can be defined as a space that is both private and public, and which blurred the boundaries between these categories. Historian Denise Riley describes some of the activities that characterised the social sphere:

> The nineteenth-century "social" is the reiterated sum of progressive philanthropies, theories of class, of poverty, of degeneration; studies of the domestic lives of workers, their housing, hygiene, morality, mortality; of their exploitation, or their need for protection, as this bore on their family too. It is a blurred ground between the old public and private, voiced as a field for intervention, love, and reform by socialists, conservatives, radicals, liberals, and feminists in their different and conjoined ways.[92]

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[90] F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth- Century England* (Oxford, 1980), p. 97. Gaskell was not the only one to make use of the notion of the female visitor. In *Bleakhouse*, Dickens created Mrs Pardiggle, who represented the bad or "dangerous" female visitor. Margaret, unlike Mrs Pardiggle, always treats those she visits with respect, courtesy, and friendliness, always fearing to intrude and never prying or pushing advice on them. Margaret's interactions with the Higginses are always exemplary, and her character serves as an antidote to Dickens's negative caricature of the female visitor.

[91] Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's North and South" (Nineteenth-Century Literature, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Jun., 1994), p. 33

[92] Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?": Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History (Minneapolis, 1988), p. 49

In Riley's explanation of the social sphere, we can ascertain the overlap between the traditional division of the public and private realms. It shows that the social sphere can be classified as public with its "theories" and "studies," which is typically associated with the middle-class male professional and his expertise. However, it can also be categorised as a private realm, since the object of social observation and intervention was very often the family, of which women were considered to be the "experts". Thus, all women's work could now be defined as social, or, in other words, as at least partly public. And, Elliott argues, "when a middle-class woman left her own home to visit in the homes of the poor, she used her domestic "expertise" to authorise herself as an expert, masculinised observer of the social".[93] This implies that when women took up the position of expert they were assuming a masculinised position, thus creating an overlap between the private and public sphere.

In Gaskell's version of society, women play a vital role in this newly defined social sphere, and through Margaret's philanthropic intervention she challenges society's division of separate spheres. Margaret succeeds in "commanding a central position in a set of market relations from which, according to the domestic ideology of separate spheres, she should be excluded".[94] Parker's proposition that "visiting the Higgins family enables Margaret to extend her range of domestic influence into the public arena of social and economic intervention,"[95] thus links up to the assumption of the aforementioned social sphere with its blurred bounds between the traditional realms. This transgression of spheres ultimately helps Margaret in her role as lady visitor who performs the vital function of mediating between industrial class relations.

[93] Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*", p. 27
[94] Ibid., p. 33
[95] Pamela Corpron Parker, "Fictional Philanthropy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*", p. 328

This intervention comes about through Margaret's discussions with Nicholas. In consequence of their exchange, Margaret is able to report of the discontented Manchester working classes and their wretchedness which seem to madden them against the rich. Manchester had a huge working-class population; Faucher[96] estimated that 64 per cent of Manchester's population were wage-earners in 1836. The city itself was divided into different districts according to the social and economic divisions:

> Its narrow streets, its courts and cellars, have been abandoned to the poorest grade of all. There they live, hidden from the view of the higher ranks by piles of stores, mills, warehouses, and manufacturing establishments, less known to their wealthy neighbours, - who reside chiefly in the open spaces on Cheetham, Broughton, and Chorlton.[97]

The most notorious area was 'Little Ireland', south-west of Oxford Road, not far from the Gaskells' home. "This unhealthy spot lies so low," wrote J.P. Kay in 1832, "that the chimneys of its houses, some of them three stories high, are little above the level of the road." The district was "surrounded on every side by some of the largest factories of the town, whose chimneys vomit forth dense clouds of smoke, which hang heavily over this insalubrious region."[98] Inside the houses several families might be living under one roof or even in "the pestilential atmosphere" of one room.[99] Engels, who arrived in Manchester in late 1842, observed that the Irish race "must really have reached the lowest stage of humanity."[100]

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[96] Léon Faucher, who wrote an essay on Manchester in *Études sur l'Angleterre* (2 vols., 1845), and also wrote *Manchester in 1844: its Present Condition and Future Prospects* (1844)

[97] W. Cooke Taylor, *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire* (London, 1842), p. 10

[98] Kay-Shuttleworth*, The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture of Manchester* (London, 1832), pp. 34-35

[99] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 88

[100] Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844* (Cambridge, 1892), p. 60. The Irish were denigrated on all sides, even by Engels (1844): 'These Irishmen who migrate for fourpence to England . . .

The ugliness of living conditions in the worst parts of the city and the failure of politicians to see the needs of the poor, ultimately led to disorder and political unrest: "In the course of the Reform Bill struggles of the years 1831 and 1832 Manchester enhanced its national reputation as a centre of social disturbances, even as a possible cradle of revolution."[101] Though things would even get worse in the upcoming decade. After the boom in trade of the early 1830s, a great crash followed in 1839:

> American banks[102] had been giving credit to planters so that they could hold back cotton and demand high prices. Lancashire manufacturers retaliated by refusing to order and slowing down production. Workers were laid off by the thousand and hundreds of mills lay idle. Other pressures heightened potential unrest. There was nationwide agitation against the new Poor Law of 1834, which had introduced the harsh workhouse system. Chartism took root and spread . . . In the same year the Anti-Corn Law campaigners began to mobilise the merchants against the protective tariffs which, they claimed, served only the landed interests. . .These simultaneous movements converged and clashed. All were in conflict with each other. . .The rumbling threat of violence was increased by poor harvests and higher prices.[103]

As a result, a period which is referred to as 'the hungry forties' followed forthwith. Innumerable contemporary accounts describe the suffering in Lancashire from 1840 to

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insinuate themselves everywhere. The worst dwellings are good enough for them . . . shoes they know not; their food consists of potatoes and potatoes only; whatever they earn beyond these needs they spend upon drink. What does such a race want with high wages?' (ed. V. Kiernan*, The Condition of the Working Classes in England* (1987), pp. 124-125)

[101] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 87

[102] The notion of American interference is mentioned in *North and South* by John Thornton: "The Americans are getting their yarns so into the general market, that our only chance is producing them at a lower rate. If we can't, we may shut up shop at once, and hands and masters go alike on tramp". (pp. 143-144) This was criticised as an example of Gaskell's ignorance by the *Leader Reviewer* (14 April 1855), who claimed that American competition was "altogether a bagatelle" (CH, pp. 335-336). But in fact Gaskell seems to be right.

[103] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories* (London, 1993), pp. 138-140.

1842. Many children were starving. Penniless families sold their furniture, or were turned out of their houses: their diet was oatmeal, skimmed milk and water. As in her former novel, *Mary Barton*, Mrs Gaskell tries to shed light on the desperate conditions of the working class in *North and South* too. One of the functions of the lady visitor (this notion has been examined earlier in this chapter), was to serve as the chief investigator of the working-class condition: "thus alone can the higher classes acquire . . . intimate knowledge of the wants and habits of their inferiors".[104]

Margaret, in the role of the lady visitor, is not merely an onlooker who narrates an impersonal account of what happens in society. Instead, she is made an eye-witness to scenes from within the privacy of the homes of working-class people. Gaskell shows the reader these social circumstances of the poor by means of John Boucher, Higgins's impoverished neighbour, who, distressed by his hopeless circumstances, sees no way out other than committing suicide. In a compelling discussion with Higgins, Boucher cries out despairingly:

> Hoo cannot stand th' sight o' the little ones clemming. Ay, clemming!. . . There's our lile Jack lying a-bed, too weak to cry, but just every now and then sobbing up his heart for want o'food. . . our lile Jack, who wakened me each morn wi' putting his sweet little lips to my great rough fou' face, a-seeking a smooth place to kiss,- an' he lies clemming. (153)

Apart from the horror that this tragic scene describes, it also depicts an intimate family portrait of Boucher's family as it used to be in better times. It describes a little boy's affection towards his father, as he caresses his father's face with kisses from "his sweet little lips." This makes the current situation of "lile" Jack starving even more poignant, since the loving gesture of the boy touches upon the sentiment of care and

[104] Christopher Benson, "A Sermon Preached in Behalf of the General Society for Promoting District Visiting," in *The District Visitor's Manual*, 2d ed. (London: John W. Parker, 1840), p. 31

affection that a family bond can provide. By using the characters' personal space as the setting where social issues are worked out, Gaskell succeeds in creating a more personal, and therefore more moving, atmosphere in the novel.

The scene further more shows us the father's desperation when he describes his little ones "clemming", which causes Higgins to look up to Margaret "with eyes brimful of tears" (154). Gaskell felt the urge to show these circumstances in her novels, since she hoped to evoke people to help others in need. Therefore, *North and South* could also be considered a protest novel instead of an industrial novel *pur sang*.[105]

Misunderstandings between the classes led to riots and strikes, and all the violence associated with it. In 1810 the first great strike of factory workers took place in Manchester; several thousand cotton spinners walked out in concerted effort, and organised their activities. Polarised Manchester was the appropriate place for this huge strike to have occurred because of the intense class warfare.[106] Archibald Prentice, the Manchester radical journalist, complained that "two classes were ranged against each other in a hostility, which daily grew more bitter, each taking that antagonistic position to the other that they should have taken against that which occasioned the distress of both."[107]

And this brings us to the second of this chapter's three sets of power structures, which concerns the "antagonistic position" of 'head' and 'hands'.

The restless and turbulent 'Manchester times' as described above are the feeding ground for Gaskell's factory-city Milton. Margaret's exclamation in chapter XV, "A

[105] See Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women 1827-1867* (London, 1985) for an exhaustive discussion on the protest novel as form of the social narrative.
[106] In August 1842, Manchester was plunged into the Plug Plot Riots – (so called because the workers removed the plugs from the great steam boilers in all the factories that cut wages). The dramatic events which followed anticipate *North and South*, although the attack on Thornton's mill stems from a grudge against a particular owner rather than a general strike (Ibid., pp. 145-46).
[107] Quoted in Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 86

Strike! . . . What for? What are they going to strike for?" (115), signals the beginning of the lengthy controversy, central to the narrative, about the significance of a strike. There is the continuous battle between the oppressed mill-workers who strike for the wages to which they feel entitled, but which the mill-owners, owing to recessions in trade, cannot pay. Both the workmen as well as the masters are prisoners of their beliefs and codes, immured within stone walls of pride and misunderstanding: "Here there seems no sympathy between the upper and lower classes of society," a local newspaper complained in August 1819, "there is no mutual confidence, no bond of attachment."[108]

This is probably Gaskell's main complaint about the industrial society; without understanding on both sides, nothing in society improves or will ever improve. Parker notes that "in *North and South*, the events and dialogue surrounding the mill strike encourage a deeper analysis of the proper middle-class response to the social and economic ills of industrialism."[109] There is the view of the workers, represented by Nicholas Higgins, who thus experiences the masters' attitude:

> th' masters! They'd tell us to mind our own business, and they'd mind theirs. Our business being, yo' understand, to take the bated wage, and be thankful; and their business to bate us down to clemming point, to swell their profits. That's what it is. I'll tell yo' it's their part – their cue, as some folks call it – to beat us down, to swell their fortunes; and it's ours to stand up and fight hard, - not for ourselves alone, but for them round about us – for justice and fair play. (134)

On the other side are the masters, who regard the mill-workers' conduct as following:

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[108] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 86

[109] Pamela Corpron Parker, "Fictional Philanthropy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*", p. 329

> They, who haven't the sense to see that, if we don't get a fair share of the profits to compensate us for our wear and tear here in England, we can move off to some other country; and that, what with home and foreign competition, we are none of us likely to make above a fair share. (144)

Mr Hale has an interesting position in the novel when it comes to the opposing position of the manufacturers and workmen. Mr Hale had his own acquaintances among the working men, and was depressed with their earnestly-told tales of suffering and long-endurance during the strike. However, he also managed to build up a strong friendship with Mr Thornton. He is literally in the position to coin the views of both classes in order to generate some understanding on both sides.

As mentioned before, Margaret also functions as a mediator, however father and daughter do this each in their own way, and both therefore fulfil a different purpose. Margaret is the one who sets things into motion due to her active involvement and actions, whereas Mr Hale is the one who gathers the necessary background information for the readers to understand the foundations which the social conflict is founded on. We may consider him more a witness instead of a judge as he mediates to and fro between 'master and men'. He would listen to each workman who "brought witness of his own causes for irritation" (151) and thence Mr Hale:

> [would bring] all his budget of grievances, and laid it before Mr Thornton, for him, with his experience as a master, to arrange them, and explain their origin; which he always did, on sound economical principles; showing that, as trade was conducted, there must always be a waxing and waning of commercial prosperity; and that in the waning a certain number of masters, as well as of men, must go down into ruin, and be no more seen among the ranks of the happy and prosperous. (151)

This notion of “waxing and waning of commercial prosperity” is typical for the new industrial middle classes who believed that the strength of the middle class depended upon active economic competition between the members of the class. Briggs commented that:

> Part of the excitement of Manchester was that behind its smoke and its squalor it seemed to be creating a “new order” of businessmen, energetic, tough, proud, contemptuous of the old aristocracy and yet in some sense constituting an aristocracy themselves – an urban aristocracy – men who were beginning to seek political as well as economic power, power not only in Manchester but in the country as a whole.[110]

John Thornton is both a representative of the masters, e.g. a ‘Manchester businessman’, as well as a man who has risen from those ‘men’ whose representative is Nicholas Higgins. Thornton is a self-made man. His father killed himself because he could not bear the disgrace of being bankrupt, leaving his family debts which had to be paid off by his son’s hard work. John Thornton got employment in a draper’s shop and earned a weekly income of fifteen shillings, out of which his mother made him save three shillings: “this taught me self-denial . . . I thank her silently on each occasion for the early training she gave me” (85). Thornton worked on, his attention directed to the ambition which has become the focal point of his life: to win and maintain an eminent place among Britain’s industrialists. This ambition is echoed by Mrs Thornton when she expresses her view on Milton men to Mr Hale and Margaret:

[110] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 90

> "Having many interests does not suit the life of a Milton manufacturer. It is, or ought to be, enough for him to have one great desire, and to bring all the purposes of his life to bear on the fulfilment of that".
>
> "And that is - ?" asked Mr Hale.
>
> . . ."To hold and maintain a high, honourable place among the merchants of his country – the men of his town. Such a place my son has earned for himself". (113/114)

The Manchester businessmen did not believe, as Mr Taylor puts it in *Encounter* (1957), in "putting the needs of the majority first. They had succeeded by their own energy; and they supposed that the duty of society was discharged if it gave others the chance to do the same."[111] Not surprisingly, Manchester businessmen disliked prestige without achievement. The ideology of 'self-help' is clearly represented in Thornton's character when he discusses the workings of the distribution of power in society:

> "It is one of the great beauties of our system, that a working-man may raise himself into the power and position of a master by his own exertions and behaviour; that, in fact everyone who rules himself to decency and sobriety of conduct, and attention to his duties, comes over to our ranks; it may not be always as a master, but as an overlooker, a cashier, a book-keeper, a clerk, one on the side of authority and order."
>
> "You consider all who are unsuccessful in raising themselves in the world, from whatever cause, as your enemies, then, if I understand you rightly," said Margaret, in a clear, cold voice.

[111] There is enough literature about Manchester businessmen in the Victorian age to attempt profiles of the different sections of the business community. The literature ranges from Mrs. Linnaeus Bank's novel *The Manchester Man* (1876) to Beatrice Webb's account in *My Apprenticeship* (1926), from the study by Katherine Chorley, *Manchester Made Them* (1950), to Mr. A.J.P. Taylor's portrait of Manchester in a number of *Encounter* (March 1957). This quote is taken from Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 101

"As their own enemies, certainly," said he. (85)

This familiar excuse of the capitalist that with self-help and self-reliance any man can rise to the top in most spheres, is famously expressed in Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859): "Rising above the heads of the mass, there were always to be found a series of individuals distinguished beyond others".[112] However, Thornton generalises from his own experience, and his struggle has cut him off from any understanding of hardship. He is hard on the weak, and is too strong-willed to make any allowance for their weaknesses: "I simply look upon them with contempt for their poorness of character" (85).

Margaret is appalled by Thornton's account of how, according to him, "the great beauties of the system" work, thus emphasising the harsh mentality of a manufacturer, which lacks any compassion. She wonders how he could boast about himself and the system "without ever seeming to think it his duty to try to make [the workmen] different, - to give them anything of the training which his mother gave him, and to which he evidently owes his position" (87). This touches upon the notion of paternalism, which Mrs Gaskell suggests as the solution to the inequalities in this urban society.

However, Mrs Gaskell has a somewhat experimental view on social government in mind, which challenges the assumptions of both the traditional paternalistic thought of Margaret and the market ethos of Thornton: neither is allowed to stand in its original formulation. Margaret's paternalistic ideas gradually change once she is educated by the class antagonisms of the north, which help her uncover the social realities of the south. As for Thornton, he "releases his firm theoretical views in favour of openness to experience and a spirit of concrete social experiment".[113] The stern manufacturer who "had no general benevolence, - no universal philanthropy; few even would have given

[112] Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (London, 1859), chapter 1.
[113] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (New York, 1988), p. 59

him credit for strong affections" (211), learns to accept the value of charity which he has never thought about before.

The lesson we might anticipate for Thornton in the traditional paternalist mode would be that he treat his workers with kindness, using his power to look after their welfare in return for their obedience. However, in *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (1988), Rosemarie Bodenheimer argues that Gaskell instead focuses on the problem inherent in the paternalist idea itself: "Thornton's task in the story is not to take better care of his worker-children but to bend his attention away from his status as a merchant-prince toward a working attachment to his labourers and a genuine encounter with the differences in their points of view."[114] Mr Thornton's initial position is that he refuses to interfere in the lives of his workers. He insists that his relationship to his workers must end at the factory gates:

> The masters would be trenching on the independence of their hands, in a way that I, for one, should not feel justified in doing, if we interfered too much with the life they lead out of the mills. Because they labour ten hours a-day for us, I do not see that we have any right to impose leading-strings upon them for the rest of their time (121) . . . If I were a workman, I should be twenty times more impressed by the knowledge that my master was honest, punctual, quick, resolute in all his doings. . . than by any amount of interference, however kindly meant, with my ways of going on out of work-hours . . .You [Margaret] suppose that our men are puppets of dough, ready to be moulded into any amiable form we please. You forget we have only to do with them for less than a third of their lives; and you seem not to perceive that the duties of a manufacturer are far

[114] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, pp. 56-57

> larger and wider than those merely of an employer of labour; we have a wide commercial character to maintain, which makes us into the great pioneers of civilization. (123) . . . I choose to be the unquestioned and irresponsible master of my hands. (124)

Mr Thornton's strong language when he talks of "trenching" on the independence of his workpeople, arguing that he has no "right" to interfere, and that he does not "feel justified" to do so, suggests that he denies any social responsibility that restricts a master. He even acknowledges that he prefers to be "the unquestioned and irresponsible master" of his workforce, hence distancing himself as much as he can from his hands, according to true laissez faire authority.

However, Margaret stresses the importance of personal contact with his employees, and she urges him to take his moral responsibility as a master who ought not follow a policy of non-interference. According to Margaret, Thornton is a man who deals with a set of men over whom he has, "whether he rejects the use of it or not, immense power", and whose lives and welfare are so "constantly and intimately interwoven" (122). As a final note she argues that even "the most isolated of all your Darkshire Egos has dependants clinging to him on all sides" (122), which emphasises once more Thornton's obligation towards his hands.

In order to stress this correlation between duty and dependence, Margaret introduces the social paternalists' metaphor in which workers are likened to children and employers to fathers in the important "Masters and Men" dialogue between Mr Hale, Mr Thornton and Margaret (117-124). Margaret argues that the "masters would like their hands to be merely tall, large children – living in the present moment – with a blind unreasoning kind of obedience" (119). Mr Hale takes up on this metaphor by making a comparison with the raising of children into adolescence, arguing that

workers should be given more independent authority: “a wise parent humours the desire for independent action, so as to become the friend and adviser when his absolute rule shall cease” (121).

During the ‘Master and Men” dialogue the threesome consider the metaphor from different perspectives, though, according to Catherine Gallagher, by the end of the conversation they have identified “both the analogy’s usefulness and its danger: it might make the masters more responsible for the well-being of their workpeople, but the comparison also degrades the workers and could justify arbitrary authority.”[115] Bodenheimer concurs with Gallagher’s idea by pointing out that “children grow up to become adults; and to imagine the working class as if it enjoyed an endless state of childhood is to perpetrate a monstrosity.”[116]

Instead of holding on to the traditional paternalist ideology that was often the mode in Victorian social fiction, Mrs Gaskell revises this notion into a theory of interdependence by defining adulthood as an acceptance of responsibility both for the masters and the men. Mrs Gaskell offers two solutions in order to establish this new model of class relationships.

The first solution that Mrs Gaskell proposes is that the two different classes should be willing to listen to each other’s ideas and opinions. Communication between them may clear away practical barriers to social harmony. According to Margaret, interchange might bridge the gap of the thus far created misunderstandings: “If [Higgins] and Mr Thornton would speak out together as man to man – if Higgins would forget that Mr Thornton was a master, and speak to him as he does to us – and if Mr Thornton would be patient enough to listen to him with his human heart, not with his master’s ears-” (302). And Mr Hale laments after one of his discussions with Higgins

[115] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 167-68
[116] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, p. 57

that he wishes that "some of the kindest and wisest of the masters would meet some of you men, and have a good talk on these things; it would, surely, be the best way of getting over your difficulties" (227). Eventually, due to Margaret's intervention,[117] Higgins and Thornton are brought into contact with one another and a man-to-man sympathy grows between master and worker. Thornton gradually becomes involved with the lives of fellow-creatures whom he previously chose to ignore.

The second solution entails "giving men intelligence enough to rule themselves" (227), which can be linked directly to Engels's notion that if "the 'proletariat' was to become conscious of its own destiny . . . the workers [could] think for themselves and demand a fuller life in human society."[118] Though we have to take into consideration that Engels was a social scientist and journalist, and therefore approached industrial society differently than a novelist such as Mrs Gaskell, there is an overlapping of common intellectual legacy in the views of both authors. The idea of "workers thinking for themselves" is shaped in *North and South* by means of the dining-room scheme that Higgins works out together with Thornton at the end of the novel. This scheme:

> is designed to address the problem of reimagining the master-man relationship in terms that are neither paternalist nor laissez-faire. . . Rather than charity, it is a plan for collective buying in bulk, carried out by Thornton according to the orders of his workers. It both obliterates Thornton's earlier distinction between his men as workers and as human beings and allows for their independence from his management in the running of the dining room.[119]

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[117] Bodenheimer argues that the structure of Margaret's role as a mediator between classes is quite different from the model that follows from a paternalist idea of social relations. In Margaret's character, the split between activity and passivity, earlier expressed in the doubling of heroines, is represented as a moral and psychological conflict. (Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, pp. 62/63)

[118] Quote taken from Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 91

[119] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, pp. 58-59

Mrs Gaskell proposes the idea of cooperative industrial planning, and transforming class relationships in the workplace itself in order to establish personal equality which overthrows the structure of hierarchy and deference implicit in paternalism.[120] This "personal equality" is initiated by Margaret, who advocates a type of social management, pioneered by women in the social space of the home and based on first-hand knowledge of and practical experience with the poor rather than on the principles of political economy or other theoretical abstractions.[121] Thus, Thornton's initial laissez-faire attitude is revised by a new sense of responsibility to his workers.

Bodenheimer (1988) has commented that "the story of adjustment in Thornton's idea of mastery takes place within a network of related stories, each of which depicts a troubled relation between authority and dependence,"[122] and it is this notion of "authority and dependence" that brings us to the final structured power relationship that I will discuss in this Milton chapter: that is, the gender issues, embodied by Margaret and Thornton. In order to comprehend the final stages of Margaret's individual progress, which will be further dealt with in the final two chapters of this thesis, it is crucial to analyse the way Margaret and Thornton relate to each other.

'Influence' is a key element in *North and South*, especially in the way one is "influenced by others, and not by circumstances" (123). There is the triangle formed by Margaret, Thornton and Higgins, "whose fates become intertwined because each has the power to act independently as an influence on the other."[123] Gallagher points out

[120] The campaigns of the Christian Socialists, a major interest of Mrs Gaskell in the early 1950s, made her think that there might be a way that domestic values could soften mercantile life. In June 1853 she visited the Spottiswoode's printing works in London, where masters and workers shared prayers, meals and outings: "in short they are like a large & happy family" (Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories*, p. 345)

[121] See Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*" (pp.29-33). Elliott claims that many people favoured personal contacts between potentially hostile factions as the best way of reconciling what they saw as conflicting class interests. Such personal contacts took on a crucial ideological significance for those concerned about class relations and working-class unrest.

[122] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, p. 59

[123] Ibid., p. 62

that with regard to the woman's sphere and influence it is important to note that, "in *North and South* the moral influence women directly exert on men is said to be the force connecting public and private life . . . In Gaskell's novel the private and public spheres are associated through their integration in Margaret Hale's life and through her influence over the manufacturer John Thornton."[124] Gaskell exhibits the tension that this influence brings forth by not only explaining the nature and motives of Margaret, but dealing in its place with Thornton's agony of mind as well. The conflict between them is as central to the novel as the social conflict. Thus, *North and South* introduces another angle of perspective within the domestic ideology by presenting Thornton's view of Margaret's power.

Her influence over him manifests itself immediately after the first time they meet: "Mr Thornton was in habits of authority himself, but she seemed to assume some kind of rule over him at once" (63). The word choice of "authority" and "rule" links up to the way Thornton interprets his relation with Margaret, and which he defines as if it concerns a feudal hierarchy in which Margaret "held herself aloof from [him] as if she had been a queen, and [he] her humble, unwashed vassal" (p78).

The interesting thing here is that there seems to be a reversal of roles between them. The 'master' John Thornton, is now turned into the "humble vassal," and the woman Margaret is elevated to the status of 'queen'. Much of the novel suggests that human relation are transactions of power, and what we witness in *North and South* is that there is this ongoing battle between these manifestations of power. It is this struggle between Margaret and Thornton and "this ability to portray masculine as well as the feminine consciousness that gives the novel its tension."[125]

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[124] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, p. 168

[125] Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform, The British Social Narrative by Women 1827-1867,* p. 168

The analysis of the lovers starts after Thornton proposes to Margaret (chapter XIV). From then on, Gaskell shifts her focus towards Thornton's thoughts and feelings and his relations with other characters too. Margaret and Thornton's relationship revolves around two contrasting plot episodes, one public and one private which generate the lovers' dilemmas. Bodenheimer notes that "both times Margaret suffers the consequences in the form of doubts cast upon her womanliness."[126]

The first episode, in which Margaret is forced into public action, climaxes in the riot at Thornton's mill. Margaret goes to Thornton's to borrow a water bed for her sick mother and it is precisely at this moment that the enraged rioters[127] march to Thornton's mill, demanding an explanation from Thornton. Thornton refuses to see the angry mob, yet Margaret urges him to "go down and face them like a man . . . Speak to your workmen as if they were human beings. Speak to them kindly . . . If you have any courage or noble quality in you, go out and speak to them, man to man" (175).

However, within moments Margaret realises she has made a huge mistake since she has put Mr Thornton into great danger due to her appeal:

> Many in the crowd were mere boys; cruel and thoughtless – cruel because they were thoughtless; some were men, gaunt as wolves, and mad for prey. She knew how it was; they were like Boucher, - with starving children at home – relying on ultimate success in their efforts to get higher wages, and enraged beyond measure at discovering that Irishmen were to be brought in to rob their little ones of bread. (176)

[126] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, p. 62

[127] Thornton has imported hands from Ireland and this has enraged the Milton people. The importation of Irish labour played an important part in the social history of that period. The temptation to use this cheap work-force was particularly strong for the Lancashire industrialists who were close to Liverpool and could communicate with Ireland easily, and it was a frequent resource for manufacturers faced with strikes.

Margaret rushes downstairs and, in an instinctive move to rescue Thornton from the consequences of a situation for which she feels responsible, she uses her body as a human shield to protect him from the rioters.

The following day, spurred on to believe that she loves him - he misinterprets her act as one of personal feeling - Thornton declares his love: “His heart throbbed loud and quick. Strong man as he was, he trembled at the anticipation of what he had to say, and how it might be received” (191). However, he is wrong in his understanding of her, and when he confesses his love, she distances herself from the possibility of a personal act, claiming that:

> it was only a natural instinct; any woman would have done just the same. We all feel the sanctity of our sex as a high privilege when we see danger. . . any woman, worthy of the name woman, would come forward to shield, with her reverenced helplessness, a man in danger from the violence of numbers. (192/193)

The revelation of this impersonal motive wounds Thornton, but it does not alter his feelings for Margaret. As for Margaret, she starts to contemplate the impact of Thornton’s marriage proposal:

> Not five minutes after, the clear conviction dawned upon her, shined bright upon her, that he did love her; that he had loved her; that he would love her. And she shrank and shuddered as under the fascination of some great power, repugnant to her whole previous life. She crept away, and hid from his idea. But it was of no use . . . She disliked him the more for having mastered her inner will . . . And so she shuddered away from the threat of his enduring love. What did he mean? Had she not the power

> to daunt him? She would see. It was more daring than became a man to threaten her so. (195/196)

The vocabulary here is rather strong for a young woman who has just received a marriage proposal: “power”, “repugnant”, “mastered”, “threat”, “daunt”, “daring”, “threaten,” these are all terms imbued with ideas of power and control that might not normally be associated with love. Yet precisely this, the idea of love as power, is represented in *North and South* as the struggle concerning gender issues, and overcoming this battle will generate understanding and therefore a more evenly balanced love relation. When Margaret reflects that her intercourse with Thornton has been “one continued series of opposition” (195), she sees his declaration of love also as a continuation of this battle. In his essay “The Steam-hammer and the Sugar-tongs: Sexuality and Power in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*” (1989), Michael Heyns argues that “Margaret does not see that the very passion of her response is a tribute to Thornton’s power, a “fascination”. . . The proposal, in short, figures as an act of aggression”.[128]

This is the first time Margaret realises that she is attracted to Thornton and from this point onwards her feelings for Thornton evolve step by step. At the end of the Milton episode Margaret contemplates her feelings at the time of the proposal and recalls “how proudly and impertinently I spoke to him that day! But I did not know then. It has come upon me little by little, and I don’t know where it began” (315). What we can conclude from this, is that Gaskell proposes exactly the same solution for the personal as well as the public areas of the plot; that is, that a conflict can be resolved with understanding and compromise. As a result, this will generate equality, which in turn will overthrow the structure of hierarchy.

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[128] Michael Heyns, “The Steam-hammer and the Sugar-tongs: Sexuality and Power in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*”, English Studies in Africa, Jan 1, Vol.32(2) (1989), p. 80

The second of the two parallel plot episodes, climaxes in the confrontation between Margaret's brother, Frederick Hale, who, as a mutineer, faces hanging if he returns to England. He secretly visits Milton to see Mrs Hale before she dies. When Margaret and Frederick are seen by Mr Thornton walking to the station, Frederick is recognised by Leonards, a man who tries to capture Frederick and turn him over to the authorities. Frederick throws Leonards of the platform, and leaves on the train just in time.

This incident sets off the long misunderstanding between Thornton and Margaret. Thornton suffers under his doubts of her honesty when he mistakes her brother Frederick for her lover: "At that late hour, so far from home! It took a great moral effort to galvanize his trust – erewhile so perfect – in Margaret's pure and exquisite maidenliness, into life" (264). Thornton's inability to believe any longer in her "pure and exquisite maidenliness" because he has seen her at night at a railway station with a man, indicates the Victorian honour culture for women where public reputation is definitive. To seem to lose honour is to do so: "How could one so pure have stooped from her decorous and noble manner of bearing!" (273). However, Thornton is tortured not because it suggests that Margaret is immoral but because it implies she loves someone else:

> It was this that made the misery – that he passionately loved her, and thought her, even with all her faults, more lovely and more excellent than any other woman; yet he deemed her so attached to some other man, so led away by her affection for him, as to violate her truthful nature. (303)

The episode also includes Margaret's interview with the police inspector, in which she decides on the spot to deny that she had been at the railway station the previous evening, thus saving her brother. In this interview Margaret discovers that protecting Frederick entails a violation of her ethical code. She has denied her guiding principle

of truth, of speaking out. The lie causes her immense mental suffering and she condemns herself for her deceitful behaviour: “she had been as ‘a dog, and done this thing” (272).[129] On top of this she discovers that Mr Thornton knows of the lie too, and has protected her from the ordeal of a public inquest on how Leonards met his death.

It is this self-realisation in Margaret that is important here: first that she is not morally irreproachable; second that Mr Thornton’s knowing of her failure is almost as dreadful to her as the fault itself:

> She stood as a liar in his eyes. She was a liar . . . in Mr Thornton’s eyes, she was degraded. . . Mr Thornton, above all people, on whom she had looked down from her imaginary heights till now! She suddenly found herself at his feet, and was strangely distressed at her fall. (277/278)

Again, there seems to be reversal of roles between the sexes in *North and South*. In an earlier analysed scene, Thornton had been degraded to the position of a “vassal” to his queen. However, now it is “queen” Margaret – as a queen, she used to look down from her “imaginary heights” on her vassal –, who finds “herself at his feet”, like a vassal before her king. However, this episode does not entail a cringing submission from a woman to a man. Rather it shows Margaret subjecting her own behaviour to ethical scrutiny. Gallagher notes that Margaret tends to turn all issues, even the most personal ones, into questions of abstract morality. Gallagher furthermore explains that this tendency is one that was common in domestic magazine tales, where private territory was often completely colonised by social considerations, and strictly personal or romantic motives were abolished.[130]

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[129] This occurs in 2 Kings 8:13. Hazael, in response to a prophecy that he will kill his master, asks: ‘Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?’ but he does kill him. So the equations suggests that rightly Margaret feels the guilt of a murderer. I think it is debatable whether Margaret’s penance is proportionate or not, since it was an act of sisterly solidarity to protect her brother.
However, what this condemnation shows is that it is vital for a woman to maintain her moral integrity, otherwise “she must feel humiliated and disgraced in his sight” (296).

[130] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, p. 174

Margaret's love for Thornton gradually grows while at the same time she suffers from knowing he misjudges her, thinking that she has lost his regard, and believing she will never have the chance to explain:

> Why do I care what he thinks, beyond the mere loss of his good opinion as regards to my telling the truth or not? I cannot tell. But I am very miserable! Oh, how unhappy this last year has been! I have passed out of childhood into old age. I have had no youth. (315)

Margaret even starts yearning after the old Harley Street house and the placid tranquillity of that old well-ordered, monotonous life:

> She had found it occasionally tiresome while it lasted; but since then she had been buffeted about, and felt so exhausted by this recent struggle with herself, that she thought that even stagnation would be a rest and a refreshment . . . leisure, in which she could regain her power and command over herself. (322)

To "regain power and command" over oneself is the constant battle for both Margaret and Thornton. In one of Margaret's internal dialogues the word 'mistress' is even used, in order to stress the dominant importance of self-control: "I surely am mistress enough of myself to control this wild, strange, miserable feeling" (321). As for Thornton, he "had always piqued himself on his self-control, and control himself he would" (303), though later on he admits that he has "to convince himself of his power of self-control" (324) when it comes to Margaret. The influence that they have over each other is encoded in their struggle to attain self- control.

It is precisely this battle that defines the third power structure of this Milton chapter in relation to gender. The overturning of the power relation between Margaret and Thornton will be the final conclusion of the novel, which will be dealt with in chapter 5.

Alongside this personal relationship both Margaret and Thornton have to endure other distresses, fundamentally more serious than those of thwarted affection. Thornton sees the ruin of the prosperity he has so painfully built up from poverty, and becomes bankrupt; while Margaret faces the loss, one after another, of her loved ones.

After Frederick's departure and her mother's death, another shock announces itself in the sudden death of her father. Margaret receives news from Oxford, where Mr Hale is visiting an old friend, – Margaret's godfather Mr Bell - concerning her father's untimely death. Bodenheimer explains that "the rapidity of events does not allow Margaret the leisure to learn; rather it creates a new . . . image of woman's life as a negotiation of simultaneous crises, and a continual pressure of responsibility for actions."[131] As the heroine of *North and South*, Margaret is forced continually into making decisions, alone and under pressure, and she is "weary of this continual call upon me for strength" (315).

After having analysed the workings of the three sets of power relations in Milton, which have been explored through Margaret's direct or indirect encounter with them, *North and South* needs another setting in order to create a platform of tranquillity for Margaret which will "allow Margaret the leisure to learn". This self-reflection will ultimately lead to the recognition of her individual growth which has been catalysed by her life in Milton and her encounter with John Thornton.

Mrs Gaskell decided that the best place for Margaret to ruminate on her self-realisation would be to live again in the familiar Harley Street house in London and in this way Margaret is brought back to that "old well-ordered monotonous life" which was the first geographical setting of *North and South*.

[131] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, p. 64

Chapter 4

Helstone revisited

'And I too change perpetually' (391)

Margaret is back in London and all goes smoothly in Harley Street: "the extreme quiet of the Harley Street house . . . gave [Margaret] the natural rest which she needed", and "the wheels of the machinery of daily life were well oiled, and went along with delicious smoothness" (363). However, the contrast with her life in Milton-Northern and London could not have been greater. The word "extreme" suggests as much.

Chapter XLIV ('Ease Not Peace') which relates the story of Margaret's emotional development when she returns from the North to Harley Street after her parents' death, was heavily altered by Mrs Gaskell once the novel was published in volume form. *North and South* was first serialised in weekly parts in Dickens's periodical *Household Words*. Gaskell had to write under pressure due to miscalculations on Dickens' part, and what from her viewpoint constituted the worst compression was that made in the last few chapters of the novel. Consequently for the first volume edition, also published in 1855, the narrative was considerably extended. Three chapters were altered in the sense that they were expanded, while two new chapters were added (chapter XLV, 'Not All a Dream', and chapter XLVI, 'Once and Now'). Chapter XLV includes Mr Bell's visit to Margaret in London, and his suggestion to her that they should revisit her father's former living at Helstone. Chapter XLVI describes this visit. Both chapters dilate, as Gaskell evidently originally intended, on Margaret's reconsideration of her early life.

My main focus in chapter 4, will be on the importance of the Helstone visit, which enables us to understand how far Margaret has come in her journey towards self-realisation and therefore focusses on Margaret's individual psychology. However,

before turning to the Helstone episode directly, I will first analyse Margaret's feelings towards London society now that she experiences it again after a three years absence. Milton has evidently changed Margaret, yet the question is to what extent.

Elizabeth Gaskell's attitude and comments on London life in chapter 1 of the novel are relatively mild and humorously described, compared to the impression she creates when Margaret returns, three years later. The changed Margaret is responding, or rather not responding, to the familiarity of Harley Street. The fact is that her life experiences, her involvement with working people, with class divisions, and above all, her having known grief and as yet unacknowledged love, have given her a distaste for this kind of indolence:

> She was getting surfeited of the eventless ease in which no struggle or endeavour was required. She was afraid lest she should even become sleepily deadened into forgetfulness of anything beyond the life which was lapping her round with luxury . . . There was a strange unsatisfied vacuum in Margaret's heart and mode of life. (364)

Though Mrs Gaskell has already described bourgeois society in *North and South*'s first chapter, that description merely conveyed a comically satirical description rather than a direct criticism on middle-class society. In this first chapter, Margaret, still a young girl then with little life experience, had been cast in the role of observer instead of an actual participant. However, Margaret's whole perception of life and society has changed thanks to her Milton experiences. She now questions the absence of a necessity of struggle to achieve some virtuous end, if life is not to be found pointless. The chapter title 'Ease Not Peace' fits this notion of indolence beautifully well.

This critical attitude towards bourgeois society also influences the whole concept of what is required from a woman within that society. A middle-class woman's role was

often seen as merely ornamental rather than functional. According to Bodenheimer, Margaret "carries on a fierce internal battle between conventional female roles and feelings and the uncharted territory of personal impulse."[132] She violates the traditional idea about the place of a woman and she does not wish to live by the rules governing their conventional role. When Margaret tells us that she is really fond of Captain Lennox, she adds:

> excepting when he was anxiously attentive to Edith's dress and appearance, with a view to her beauty making a sufficient impression on the world. Then all the latent Vashti in Margaret was roused, and she could hardly keep herself from expressing her feelings. (364)

Margaret has a quite modern reaction to Lennox treating his wife as a status symbol. By using 'Vashti'[133] as a metonym for emancipated thought, Gaskell wanted to stress the importance of independent thought for women, and she especially addresses the middle-class women in this way. This metonym clearly shows Margaret's "internal battle" between the concepts of conventionality, feelings and impulse, as described by Bodenheimer. On the one hand, Margaret knows that the traditional gender role expects middle-class women to make a "sufficient impression on the world". On the other hand, Margaret is too much of a ''Vashti', alias for a person of independent thought, for her to yield to this established role. Although Margaret observed these conventional gender roles when she formerly lived in London, she now has an aversion to doing so, and she can hardly restrain herself from expressing her feelings and thoughts on this matter. This illustrates how much Margaret has changed throughout

[132] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, "North and South: A Permanent State of Change", *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Dec., 1979), p. 293

[133] Vashti (Esther I) was the wife of King Ahasuerus who refused to come to his feast because he commanded her through chamberlains. She was in this period the symbol for a strong-minded woman. Charlotte Brontë, for instance, gives this name to the famous actress Rachel in *Villette* (1853), chapter 23.

the novel, and we may take the 'Vashti-metonym' as a prophetic sign as to what to expect from the rest of the novel.

Margaret is left alone much during this London season, and halfway through chapter XLIV when she is home alone again, she has a sudden visit from Mr Bell, her godfather and her father's best friend. Mr Bell suggests that they go to Helstone the next day and Margaret is delighted. So three years later Margaret goes back to Helstone, for a single day, with Mr Bell.

This return to Helstone is obviously very important from Margaret's point of view; first we have seen Helstone through her idealising eyes in the first few chapters of *North and South*, and now we experience it through Margaret's mature vision which create a different scene, and a different judgement. Helstone has changed, both to reveal the changes in Margaret that make her see it now with a wiser perception, and in itself, so that it demonstrates the operation of time:

> "I did not think I had been so old," said Margaret after a pause of silence; and she turned away sighing.
>
> "Yes!" said Mr Bell. "It is the first changes among familiar things that make such a mystery of time to the young, afterwards we lose the sense of the mysterious. I take changes in all I see as a matter of course. The instability of all human things is familiar to me, to you it is new." (378/379)

This is an important contribution to the education of Margaret's feelings. She has looked forward to re-entering the idyll, but instead she is faced with the reality of change. Though the nostalgia remains of rural enchantment in woodland walks, and the delights of washing in spring-water scented by "fresh-gathered roses plunged head-downward in the water-jug", and "lavender-scented towels" (377), or a lunch of "strawberries and cream, a loaf of brown bread, and a jug of milk (together with a Stilton

cheese)" (378), it is a nostalgia firmly put in its place. When Margaret interviews an old woman whose cat has been stolen by her neighbour, she loses all faith in rural innocence when she hears of the following horrific superstition:

> "How is old Betty Barnes?"
>
> "I don't know," said the woman rather shortly. "We'se not friends . . . "She stole my cat."
>
> "Did she know it was yours?"
>
> "I don't know. I reckon not."
>
> "Well! Could not you get it back again when you told her it was yours?"
>
> "No! for she'd burnt it."[134]
>
> "Burnt it!" exclaimed both Margaret and Mr Bell.
>
> "Roasted it!" explained the woman. It was no explanation. (380)

In accordance with a local superstition, roasting a cat would bring back clothes stolen by a gipsy: "the poor woman evidently believed in its efficacy; her only feeling was indignation that her cat had been chosen out from all others for a sacrifice. Margaret listened in horror" (381). This episode reveals that the apparently idyllic Helstone can simultaneously be a place of primitive superstition and cruelty. The countryside no longer seems a picturesque sketch or "a village in a poem – a poem by Tennyson" (14), as Margaret described Helstone to Mr Lennox in chapter I.

The parsonage too is completely changed. The new clergyman and his wife have altered it immensely: "it was not like the same place" (383). The alterations at the parsonage evoke a strong nostalgic feeling in Margaret about her childhood:

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[134] The practice originated in pagan sacrifices of human beings and animals. The burning of cats in particular to bring good luck, survived into the seventeenth century in Paris on Midsummer (or St John's) Day. See J. Goudsblom, *Fire and Civilization* (Penguin, 1992, p.133)

> A sense of change, of individual nothingness, of perplexity and disappointment, overpowered Margaret. Nothing had been the same; and this slight, all-pervading instability, had given her greater pain than if all had been too entirely changed for her to recognize it. (390)

Due to the changes Margaret sees all around her at Helstone, she begins to look beyond this life for an absolutely static and therefore meaningful world: "I begin to understand now what heaven must be – and oh! the grandeur and repose of the words – "The same yesterday, today, and for ever" (390). She is now allowed the leisure to examine her musings on heaven and mortality more carefully, and this ultimately leads to a reflection on the deaths of her parents, and all the other losses she has suffered in life so far: "I am so tired – so tired of being whirled on through all these phases of my life, in which nothing abides by me, no creature, no place" (390).

By now she not only mourns the loss of her parents but of Thornton as well. Gallagher notes that Margaret continues to struggle with the conviction that she has lost Thornton's good opinion and cannot console herself with the idea that there is some static reality unchanged by the misinterpretations of others[135]: "[Margaret] tried to comfort herself with the idea, that what he imagined her to be, did not alter the fact of what she was. But it was a truism, a phantom, and broke down under the weight of her regret" (390).

The important germinating effect of this return to Helstone is that it moves Margaret to confession; she tells Mr Bell the whole story of Frederick and how she fears Mr Thornton's assumption have made him cease to respect her. In this confession, there is also the secret wish that Mr Bell may be able to help: "if you can, if there is a good opportunity . . . will you tell him the whole circumstances?" (388).

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[135] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, p. 183

During the Helstone visit, Mrs Gaskell pinpoints the sources of Margaret's depression and sense of loss, yet she also conveys the continuum of life through change. At the end of the visit, Margaret has learnt to accept the inevitability of change:

> Looking out of myself, and my own painful sense of change, the progress all around me is right and necessary. I must not think so much of how circumstances affect me myself, but how they affect others, if I wish to have a right judgment, or a hopeful trustful heart. (391)

The insistence on the centrality of change in human experience is a constant theme in Gaskell's work. In *North and South*, Gaskell illustrates narrative's ability to shape transformation. Thus the novel itself can be seen as a form committed to change and to development. It is this lesson of accepting change as a part of life which is "right and necessary" that Margaret had to learn in order to metamorphose from a girl to a woman.

The Helstone visit signals a time of personal change and revision, demanding internal adjustments. This process of self-realisation in Margaret will be further dealt with in the next chapter, which will mainly focus on the pervasive questioning of conventional roles in the light of socialist feminism. The setting for this final exploration will be, for a final time, London Harley Street.

Chapter 5

London revisited

'I wanted to see the place where Margaret grew to what she is, even at the worst time of all, when I had no hope of ever calling her mine'

This chapter covers the final six chapters of *North and South*. One of the six chapters, 'Changes at Milton', is set in Milton and deals with Thornton's thoughts and feelings. The other five chapters are set in London, and have Margaret as their focus. The final two chapters describe the coming together of Margaret and Thornton.

In this thesis chapter, I will apply a socialist feminist approach in order to show Margaret Hale as a character who redefines the conventional gender roles in the light of her experiences, both in the private as well as the public sphere. Socialist feminists integrate their struggle against women's oppression with the struggle against other injustices based on race, class or economic status. I will focus on the latter one, since this is the struggle that will influence Margaret the most. Socialist feminists assert that women are unable to be free due to their financial dependence on males in society. They see economic dependence as the driving force of women's subjugation to men.

I shall try to illustrate that Margaret's independent position in society, which brings forth control over her own life as well as over Thornton's, is only acquired after an inheritance, thus linking the themes of 'female independence' to the notion of social feminism. The first part of this chapter will focus on the concept of 'independence', that is occasioned by the inner changes that take place in Margaret, thus completing her process of self-realisation.

In the second part of this chapter I will concentrate on the so-called "happy ending" and final outcome of the novel. Gaskell is commonly faulted for failing to follow through

with the potentially radical implications – Marxist or feminist – of the social issues she raises in *North and South*. Specifically, such critics object to the novel's "happy ending," which is almost universally read as a retreat from the troubling problems of the public sphere into a romanticized private and personal reconciliation.[136] However, I will argue that this "happy ending" of *North and South* offers something more than a novelistic convention, as it also has its relevance in connection to the socialist feminist theory. Some socialist feminists want to work with men to correct the inequities between men and women, and precisely this is the solution Mrs Gaskell proposes at the end of *North and South* in order to create harmony in both the private and public sphere.

After the Helstone visit, Margaret is back in London taking her expected place in the Lennox's household. She continues to experience how she has changed over the years and how she resents the London society life. Margaret's struggle to define her life is also presented as a battle against forms of idleness.[137] How she is to spend her days is an explicit issue at the beginning and the end of the novel. The round of daily comforts, family affairs, trivial occupations and dinners all contribute to "the monotony of [Margaret's] present life, which was beginning to pall upon her" (395). The nature of the Lennox family's superficiality is represented through the account of the parties and the way they are formed, and though "these dinners were delightful, even here Margaret's dissatisfaction found her out" (397).

Then Mr Bell suddenly dies, and his death seals Margaret's solitariness. There is no hope now of Mr Bell telling Thornton the reason for her lie, and she realises that she will never be able to reinstate Thornton's good opinion of her. Margaret reflects on

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[136] Dorice Williams Elliott, *The Angel out of the House : philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Virginia, 2002)**.** Even Sally Minogue, a feminist trying to rehabilitate Gaskell, maintains in her essay "Gender and Class in *Villette* and *North and South*" (New York, 1990), p. 76 that "the ending belies the emotional, social, and moral complexity of the novel".

[137] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The politics of story in Victorian social fiction*, p.63

her life, and she remembers that when she was a young girl, she had promised herself "to live as brave and noble a life as any heroine she ever read or heard of in romance" (401). Thus, the process of self-realisation that started at Helstone, unfolds itself more and more to Margaret now that she engages herself in its development by questioning her own destination and purpose in life.

Another, yet more crucial, twist in the plot is Margaret's inheritance of her godfather's legacy: "The legacies bring about two thousand pounds, and the remainder about forty thousand, at the present value of property in Milton"[138] (402/403). Hence Margaret gains financial independence, and with this, ironically, comes the role of landlord to Mr Thornton. The impact of this will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

In the autumn, Margaret goes on holiday to Cromer with the Lennox family. By the sea at Cromer she sits long hours upon the beach "gazing intently on the waves as they chafed with perpetual motion against the pebbly shore" (404), brooding about the course her life has taken and Thornton's opinion of her. Gradually the "eternal psalm" (404) of the sea sooths her, though the people around her start to wonder and whisper "what she could find to look at so long, day after day" (404). Yet "those hours by the seaside were not lost", since "all this time for thought" (404) allow Margaret the chance to get everything into perspective, "both as regarded her past life and her future" (404).

When they return to town, Margaret fulfils one of her sea-side resolutions, and decides to take her life "into her own hands" (406). This resolve marks "a fundamental redefinition of the self"[139] which forms an integral part of self-realisation and change. As discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis, *North and South*, like so many of its

[138] Compare this with 170 per annum which the Hales had to live on in Milton, and we understand why Margaret "is afraid of it" (403).

[139] Nancy Hartsock, "Feminist Theory and Revolutionary Strategy" (*Quest: a Feminist Quarterly 2*, no. 2 (1975), p. 61

contemporaries, is above all concerned with change, both in the private as well as the public sphere. Margaret changes in relation to people who are themselves changing, and according to Zillah Eisenstein, "a beginning [of change] is already in progress as women try to take some control over their lives"[140], as Margaret clearly does at the end of the novel.

Nancy Hartsock explains in her essay "Feminist Theory and Revolutionary Strategy" (1975) that feminism recognises the idea that human activity changes us, and that we "produce our existence in response to specific problems posed for us by reality". Thus, "the realisation that we not only create our social world but can [even] change it, leads to a sense of our own power and provides energy for action".[141] Margaret becomes aware of this sense of her "own power", and she realises that the most significant experience to her is to become a human agent in her own right.

Hartsock notes that developing an independent sense of self necessarily calls other areas of our lives into question: "we must ask how our relationships with other people can foster self-definition rather than dependence and can accommodate our new strengths".[142] What Hartsock basically claims is that Margaret has to distance herself from her dependent position within the Lennox's household, since "changed consciousness and changed definitions of the self can only occur in conjunction with a restructuring of the social (both societal and personal) relations in which each of us is involved".[143]

Margaret starts to restructure "the social relations" as she reflects that before she went to Cromer, "she had been as docile to her aunt's laws as if she were still the

[140] Zillah Eisenstein, "Developing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism" (*The Insurgent Sociologist 7*, no. 3 (Spring 1977), p. 35
[141] Nancy Hartsock, "Feminist Theory and Revolutionary Strategy", p. 60
[142] Ibid., p. 61
[143] Ibid., p. 61

scared little stranger who cried herself to sleep that first night in the Harley Street nursery" (406). However, in those solemn hours of thought at the sea, Margaret had realised that "she herself must one day answer for her own life, and what she had done with it" (406). With her financial future secured "by what the world called her good fortune" (406), Margaret decides it is time to take charge of her life, and this includes working out what advantages this financial freedom generates. Therefore, Margaret resists the idle sociability of the household, and shows an interest in the administration and investment of her money for which she consults Mr Lennox to help her with this.

Furthermore, Margaret is determined to follow where duty calls, and takes up social work: "She tried to settle that most difficult problem for women, how much was to be utterly merged into obedience to authority, and how much might be set apart for freedom in working" (406). Mrs Gaskell here subtly expresses through her character the woman problem: what can an intelligent woman with a sense of moral and social responsibility do in life, if she doesn't marry? Gaskell wrote in a letter to her close friend, Eliza Fox: "that discovery of one's exact work in the world is the puzzle . . ."[144]

Though Elizabeth Gaskell felt profound sympathy for single women, indeed she recurrently wrote about the strength of single women as well as their struggle, she was also firmly locked in the domestic sphere as the following passage from one of her letters shows: "I see every day how women, deprived of their natural duties as wives & mothers, must look out for other duties if they wish to be at peace."[145] Especially the word "deprived" and the phrase "natural duties" is significant since it indicates that Elizabeth Gaskell, though aware of the notion of separate spheres which she often ventilated in her novels, held fast to the traditional view of domesticity. Gaskell uses the same expression for Margaret who states that since she has "neither husband nor

[144] J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, The letters of Mrs. Gaskell (Manchester, 1966), letter 69, p. 109
[145] Ibid., p.117

child to give me natural duties, I must make myself some, in addition to ordering my gowns" (407).

Though Mrs Gaskell might have had a traditional view on domesticity, Emily Jane Morris claims that Gaskell's novels present a new norm for gender that is "radically feminist in the way that it suggests women's capabilities and agency in contrast with men's".[146] And this brings us to the second part of this chapter, that will focus on the "happy ending" from a socialist feminist outlook. However, the novel does not head at once to the coming together of Margaret and Thornton. Since it is crucial to understand not only Margaret's development, but Thornton's changes as well, the reader first gets an insight into his life in chapter L, "Changes at Milton". Only then can Gaskell's "happy ending" be understood and recognised correctly for what it stands for.

Chapter L starts with the sentence: "Meanwhile, at Milton the chimneys smoked, the ceaseless roar and mighty beat, and dizzying whirl of machinery, struggled and strove perpetually" (407). The word "meanwhile" shows the parallel in time between Margaret's and Thornton's lives. The quote is most expressive in describing the vigour of Milton's industrial society with its smoking chimneys and its ongoing machinery. Amidst this activity, we can find Thornton, the hero of *North and South*, wrapped up in business. Thornton's attitude toward his workmen has undergone a change that the narrator hints is due to Margaret's indirect effort (the bracketed words "or so it seemed" suggest as much):

> He and they had led parallel lives – very close but never touching – till the accident (or so it seemed) of his acquaintance with Higgins. Once brought face to face, man to man, with an individual of the masses around him, and (take notice) out of the character of master and workman, in the

[146] See Emily Jane Morris, "Some Appointed Work to Do: Gender and Agency in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell", (Saskatchewan, 2010), p.59

> first instance, they had each begun to recognize that 'we have all of us one human heart.'" (409)

This quote echoes Margaret's earlier expressed hope that Thornton will one day "listen with his human heart, not with his master's ears" (302). Thus, Gaskell's proposed paternalistic solution of communication and seeking understanding on both sides, is finally realised by means of Thornton, and it is this kind of active, interpersonal struggle which enables real progress. When Thornton reflects on his position as a Milton manufacturer, he realises that: "until now, he had never recognized how much and how deep was the interest he had grown of late to feel in his position as manufacturer, simply because it led him into such close contact" (409). Becoming familiar with others, reasons Thornton, leads to understanding; and understanding leads to affection.

Nevertheless, business is bad: "market failing brought down the value of all large stocks; Mr Thornton's fell to nearly half" (410). Mr Thornton, "architect of his own fortunes", felt the decline of his business "acutely in his vulnerable point – his pride in the commercial character which he had established for himself" (408). He has to give up the business "in which he had been so long engaged with so much honour and success, and look out for a subordinate situation" (415), and eventually he is forced to shut down his mill.

This change of circumstances causes Thornton to come up to London, since he has to discuss his contract with his landlady, indeed, Margaret. London is now the meeting-ground for the reconciling of the conflicts between Margaret and Thornton, and for their final coming-together. When the two lovers meet in London, it had been "considerable more than a year since [Margaret] had seen him" (418). Thornton reports his improved relations with his workmen to her, and hearing of his reforms and of his

failure, she approaches Thornton not as a "queen to vassal" (78), but as a partner in business. She offers to invest in his company, explaining to him that:

> If you would take some money of mine, eighteen thousand and fifty-seven pounds, lying just at this moment unused in the bank, and bringing me in only two and a half per cent. – you could pay me much better interest, and might go on working Marlborough Mills. (424)

Thus Margaret's unexpected legacy, which is, according to Williams (1958), the "device that solved so many otherwise insoluble problems in the world of the Victorian novel",[147] gives Thornton the financial independence to continue his experiments in industrial relations. However, this business proposition is not only an act out of love from Margaret; it is also a sound investment. Anna Algotsson argues that "in this way, Margaret proves her financial awareness in a way which is not traditionally connected to her gender".[148] Yet according to Elaine Showalter, there is more to the matter than a good investment. She argues that Margaret humiliates Thornton through the "self-sacrifice" of lending him her money.[149] Similarly, Morris sees Thornton as "feminised" by being rescued by Margaret on several occasions.[150] I do not completely agree with both Showalter and Morris on this matter, since I think that Margaret's economic advantage over Thornton makes her more equal to him instead of making him a dependent of her. They now meet as equals; he will be the man who gets "the opportunity of cultivating some intercourse with the hands beyond the mere 'cash nexus'"[151] (420), yet it will be under a woman's patronage. I concur with Algotsson,

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[147] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (London, 1958), p.92

[148] Anna Algotsson, "Transgression and Tradition: Redefining Gender Roles in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*" (Linköpings, 2014), p. 11

[149] Ibid., p. 11

[150] Ibid., p. 11

[151] A frequently used phrase meaning 'the financial relationship', usually attributed to Carlyle, who spoke of it as Thornton does here: "For in one word, *Cash Payment* had not then grown to be the universal sole nexus of man to man" (*Chartism* 1839, chapter 6).

who claims that it is Margaret's own effort to "learn about economic matters . . . that emphasises Margaret's strength in action rather than her passive inheritance as the empowering of women that Gaskell was aiming for".[152]

At this point, Thornton can no longer restrain himself and declares his love to Margaret. His voice is "trembling with tender passion" (424) when he says:

> "Margaret!"
>
> He knelt by her side, to bring his face to a level with her ear; and whispered – panted out the words: -
>
> "Take care. – If you do not speak – I shall claim you as my own in some strange presumptuous way. – Send me away at once, if I must go; - Margaret! - " (424)

This declaration of love is simultaneously a threat: if Margaret does not "send [Thornton] away", he will "claim" her, meaning that she has to submit to his command. Margaret finally yields, and with "gentle violence" (425) – a phrase that contains a remarkable antithesis of the notion of power - she takes the Helstone roses out of his hand, thus sealing their love.

Elliott suggests an interesting link between the ongoing social and personal battles in *North and South*. He claims that there is a likeness between the women's position in marriage and the working class:

> Like the 'hands' in the factory, married women were in a subordinate position. In *North and South*, the chief power that both women and workers have is to refuse to submit to such control and – to withhold either

[152] Anna Algotsson, "Transgression and Tradition: Redefining Gender Roles in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*", p. 11

> their labour (figured as a strike, in the case of the workers) or their sexuality (figured as the refusal to marry, in Margaret's case).[153]

Thus, Elliott represents marriage as a form of authority imposed by one partner upon the other. Though according to Bodenheimer, Margaret's consent to the marriage does not automatically mean such a submission to control, rather it paves the way to a "negotiated settlement that asserts a power of choice even in the acceptance of dependence".[154] Bodenheimer further states that "the romantic solution with which Margaret is finally rewarded includes such negotiations: Margaret's marriage to Thornton is carefully defined as an economic and social partnership as well as a domestic settlement."[155] Bodenheimer's view accords with Mrs Gaskell's idea of marriage, which includes the ideal of woman as 'helpmeet'. Married to William Gaskell, a Unitarian clergyman, Gaskell saw marriage as a working partnership between individuals with different tastes and inclinations. Unitarians believed marriage should be based on give and take, not rule and submission. Thus, in Gaskell's view, the conventional "happy ending" of *North and South* is used to "strengthen the metonymic connection between private and public life."[156] Gaskell uses the marriage as a statement of her proposed social agenda; Thornton's management practices have changed due to Margaret's influence, and now this practice can be continued by means of the consolidation of Margaret's inheritance within matrimony.

Although the marriage at the end of *North and South* may be considered by some as a novelistic convention, the marriage itself is not conventional, at least within the terms of the genre. While we do not know what exactly their marriage is like, since the novel ends even before the wedding, we do know, presumably, what it is not like,

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[153] Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*", p.46
[154] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The politics of story in Victorian Social Fiction*, p.63
[155] Ibid., p. 63
[156] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, p. 177

because in *North and South* at least four different models of marriage are presented – and rejected.[157]

The marriage of General and Mrs Shaw is a marriage of convenience, contracted on the basis of exchange of property and rank. Mrs Shaw insists that Edith should marry for love. However, Margaret finds Edith's society marriage disturbing; Edith is little more than the passive object of a process over which she has little control. Margaret also rejects Henry Lennox, although they share many tastes and sympathies. Yet what Lennox most wants from his prospective wife is dependence: "his eye brightened with exultation. How she was learning to depend upon him!" (433), and this would entail that Margaret's role would be an extension of her private role, not an independent role within a social space defined as both private and public. Her parents' marriage is based on love, but Mr and Mrs Hale nonetheless seem unable to communicate with each other on even the most important matters affecting their life together.

By contrast to these rejected models of marriage, all grounded in the separation of men's and women's spheres, the relationship of Margaret and Thornton follows the formula that *North and South* gives for class harmony: familiarity with the other's language leads to understanding, which leads to affection and cooperation.[158]

Thus, the "happy ending" of North and South does not mark Gaskell's retreat from the problems in the public sphere into a romanticised plot in the private sphere, but it rather serves as a metaphor for the newly constructed social sphere, which overlaps both the traditional spheres.

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[157] Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*". The following paragraph will be a shortened version of Elliott's design of the four different models of marriage. See page 48 for a full account.

[158] Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*", p.48

Though Margaret and Thornton's marriage might be more equally balanced than the conventional marriages displayed in the novel, this does not mean that they look forward to a future without strive. Mrs Gaskell never expected that all the old battles could be ended by marriage. Her ending of the novel suggests as much:

> "How shall I ever tell Aunt Shaw?" she whispered, after some time of delicious silence.
>
> "Let me speak to her."
>
> "Oh, no! I owe it to her, - but what will she say?"
>
> "I can guess. Her first exclamation will be, "That man!"'
>
> "Hush!" said Margaret, "or I shall try and show you your mother's indignant tones as she says, "That woman!"' (425)

The last lines of the novel show that under the apparent harmony remains the idea that Margaret and Thornton, although united as lovers, are still "that man" and "that woman." This implies that despite the apparent reconciliations achieved by the end of the novel, the energies of the novel are not readily contained by the classic pattern of resolution, since there is still the tension between the sexes, between the classes, and family members.

Many critics share the idea that the marriage of Margaret and Thornton serves as a "unification of the practical energy of the Northern manufacturer with the developed sensibility of the Southern girl",[159] yet I would like to add that *North and South*'s ending could also be interpreted as a recognition that their marriage will be incomprehensible in both the north and the south, as the distinction of "that man" and "that woman" shows. Seen in this light, the ending ironically implies that "the meaning of the marriage

[159] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950,* p.92

will be lost on the observers"[160], who are blinded by conventionalism, and who regard north and south as still wholly separate worlds.

However, *North and South* also fosters a hope that even though this unification is not recognised by "the observers" yet, this might become a reality by merging north and south in love and marriage, thus building a bridge for a less polarised future generation.

[160] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, p. 183

Conclusion

Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *North and South* is concerned with a woman's right to autonomy and self-determination, and her freedom to choose her own path in life. Through what Rosemarie Bodenheimer calls her "powerful psychological intelligence"[161] Gaskell accounts for her heroine's moral progress, illustrated to the reader through the interplay of variety of experience and diversity of thought. Gaskell shows how Margaret Hale in *North and South* ends up having a lot more to her personality and character than the "ladies' business" (12) Henry Lennox speaks of in the opening chapter.

The first time I read *North and South*, I was struck by Margaret's capacity to move forward even under the difficult circumstances of losing her loved ones and having to adapt continuously to different societies. Especially these various social realms that Margaret is confronted with, intrigued me. I wondered in what ways these geographical settings might have influenced Margaret in her youth, yet better still, how they affected her present and future life. I therefore examined the influence of these distinct societies, and how they have provided the underlying structure of Margaret's process of self-realisation.

In Margaret's case, the social realms indeed contributed to her progress to maturity. In every geographical setting Margaret discovered new strengths within herself, and each experience challenged her to question her own destination and purpose in life, thus generating her personal progress. She has become a more complete character now that her personality has been moulded through the social realms presented to her in *North and South*.

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[161] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, '*North and South*: A Permanent State of Change', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Vol. 34, No. 3* (1979): 281-301, p. 297

So does this mean that every person has to become a "travelling hero/heroine" in order to walk the illuminated path to self-realisation? Does each and every one of us have to transform into a "social explorer", as the title of my thesis suggests, so as to attain this high ideal of self-realisation in life? Probably not, since there are, of course, other ways to achieve this objective in life. Yet what this thesis tried to show is that this – a travelling heroine who transforms into a social explorer - is one way of doing it, and it is the route Mrs Gaskell specifically chose for *North and South*, in order to let her heroine mature.

Mrs Gaskell used Margaret as the novel's "central consciousness"[162], the term W.A. Craik has used for identifying Margaret's role in the novel. As I explained in this thesis, Margaret is made an eye-witness to scenes from within the privacy of the homes of working-class people. She then reconciles the issues central to their lives with the laissez-faire policy of John Thornton. I therefore concur with Pamela Corpron Parker's statement that "Margaret's journey moves both the heroine and the reader toward a more sympathetic and well-informed understanding of the complexities of industrial relations."[163] Mrs Gaskell creates in Margaret a mediator of opposing classes by letting her participate in the so-called social sphere, a realm that functions, according to Denise Riley, as a "blurred ground between the old public and private, voiced as a field for intervention, love, and reform by socialists, conservatives, radicals, liberals, and feminists in their different and conjoined ways."[164] Thus, the transgression of spheres will generate equality, which in turn will overthrow the structure of hierarchy. This shows that Gaskell's idea to use a travelling heroine in order to explore the social

[162] W.A. Craik, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel* (London, 1975), p. 126
[163] Pamela Corpron Parker, "Fictional Philanthropy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*". *Victorian Literature & Culture*, vol. 25, issue 02. Sept. 1997, pp. 321-331, p. 328
[164] Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?" *Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History* (Minneapolis, 1988), p. 49

issues was a vitalising one, the notion of movement between places and locales being central to the process of liberation and the achievement of understanding. Yet how does this notion work out when considering discourses of gender, as described in the second part of my thesis title?

It may seem that redefining gender roles does not have much in common with the book's distinct locales, yet in fact the two are inseparably intertwined. London society showed Margaret the kind of life to which she does not aspire; a life in which one could so easily become "sleepily deadened into forgetfulness" (364). Nor does Margaret pursue a marriage of convenience, as demonstrated in Harley Street, or a marriage too firmly grounded in the separation of men's and women's spheres, as presented in Helstone. I therefore believe Rosemarie Bodenheimer's claim comes closest to Mrs Gaskell's idea of marriage. Bodenheimer states that matrimony is a "negotiated settlement that asserts a power of choice even in the acceptance of dependence."[165] In Bodenheimer's statement, we can define the clashing principles of 'power of choice' in opposition to 'acceptance of dependence'. As discussed in this thesis, several power structures had a conditioning influence on Margaret. The overturning of the power relation between the sexes is central to the struggles contained in gender relations in *North and South*. Overcoming this tendency to use marriage and love as a power struggle will generate understanding and therefore a more evenly balanced love relation.

Again, Gaskell proposes exactly the same solution for the private as well as the public area; that is, that a conflict can be resolved with understanding and compromise. Seen in this light, the seemingly contradictory assumptions of 'power of choice' and

[165] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (New York, 1988) p. 63

'acceptance of dependence' are not an opposition at all. Instead, they form a strong bond now that the two of them merge into the 'negotiated settlement' of marriage.

The more I studied and contemplated the material on which my thesis is built, the more I understood that precisely the notion of self-realisation itself, is the one thing that is least influenced by the notion of the travelling heroine. Though the surroundings and social (both societal and personal) relations may indeed influence us, it eventually comes down to whether or not a person takes his or her responsibility to learn the lessons life teaches us. Human activity changes us and, according to Nancy Hartsock: "we produce our existence in response to specific problems posed for us by reality."[166]

Therefore, we all have a choice as how to interpret and react to the social realms that we encounter within our lives. In the end of *North and South* Margaret, the heroine, realises that: "she herself must one day answer for her own life, and what she had done with it" (406). As readers, we tend to read the protagonist's experiences in terms of our own experiences. This process brings us the opportunity to discover new dimensions in our own lives that has remained obscured until then.

In the pages of this work I have tried to illustrate how the various geographical settings affect not only the characters - Margaret in particular - in this novel, but also how it affects our understanding of such larger social issues as gender and class conflict. I think the relationship between the 'travelling heroine' and the 'social explorer' can thus provide us with knowledge that can tell us much about the social differences and the societies and cultures we live in, hence forming a link with cultural materialism, one of the two literary theories this thesis is based on.

According to Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, cultural materialism as a critical literary method emphasises the historical context that "undermines the transcendent

[166] Nancy Hartsock, "Feminist Theory and Revolutionary Strategy" (*Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1975) p. 60

significance traditionally accorded to the literary text".[167] Here the word 'transcendent' roughly means 'timeless'.[168] If we are today still studying and reading Mrs Gaskell's novels then her work has indeed proved itself 'timeless' in the simple sense that it is clearly not limited by the historical circumstances in which it is produced, and in this way it opens up an understanding of the present, as well as the past. Peter Barry claims that the aim of cultural materialism is "to allow the literary text to 'recover its histories' which previous kinds of study have often ignored".[169] The kind of history recovered in this thesis involves relating the novel to the aforementioned social issues of gender and class conflict.

Therefore this study might shed light on the task literature can play in constructing human identity as part of a social realm. Thus, we are provided a chance to deepen our understanding of the process of self-realisation within ourselves, which will hopefully lead to a fuller understanding of human nature as that is framed in narrative and critical writing.

[167] Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester, 1994), preface p.vii.
[168] Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester, 2009), p.176

[169] Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, p.176

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