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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Bakalářská práce se věnuje vlivu konkrétní lokality na vývoj viktoriánské literární hrdinky ve vybraném díle Elizabeth Gaskell. V teoretické části práce bude nejprve vysvětlen pojem regionalismus a nastíněn jeho vývoj, do něhož bude zařazena i analyzovaná autorka. Dále bude provedena kulturně-historická analýza období, v níž bude zdůrazněna měnící se povaha a role regionů v době vrcholící průmyslové revoluce a kořeny rozdílů mezi severní a jižní Anglií. Zdůrazněna bude i otázka postavení žen a hodnot spojovaných se ženami. Samotná literární analýza díla pak bude vycházet z teoretických poznatků a bude konkrétně zkoumat nejen historickou podstatu tzv. North-South divide, ale také vliv regionu na jednání a charakteristické rysy ženské hrdiny románu E. Gaskell.

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TITLE

Regionalism in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South

ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the origin and characteristics of regionalism and its representation in the novel North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell. It examines the genre itself, its characteristics and purpose in the first half of the nineteenth century alongside the historical development of both regions during the heyday of the first industrial revolution. Furthermore, it also mentions the position of women of all classes at the time with their lives' hardships and delights.

KEY WORDS

Gaskell, regionalism, industrialization, 19th century, Britain, England, North, South, working-class, middle class, women

NÁZEV

Regionalismus v díle Elizabeth Gaskell Sever a jih

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na původ a charakteristiku regionalismu a jeho reprezentaci v díle Sever a jih od Elizabeth Gaskell. Práce zkoumá žánr jako takový, jeho rysy a cíl v první polovině 19. století spolu s historickým rozvojem obou regionů během vrcholné industriální revoluce. Dále se potom zaměřuje na postavení žen všech tříd toho času se všemi jejich životními radostmi a strastmi.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Gaskell, regionalismus, industrializace, 19. století, Británie, Anglie, Sever, Jih, dělnická třída, střední třída, ženy

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1. Introduction

The nineteenth century is usually depicted as an era of a rapid technological and social development, however, these changes were not experienced equally by all member of the society, namely the working classes and women. The aim of this thesis will be to explore and analyse these notions in greater detail using Elizabeth Gaskell's socio-political novel *North and South*.

The text is divided into four separate chapters. The first one closely introduces the genre of regionalism, its history and some of its most prominent features while also introducing the author - Elizabeth Gaskell, her life and her work.

The following chapter focuses on the contemporary historical context on the industrial revolution and especially on the experiences of the working class citizens as well as on their political involvement.

The third chapter discusses the position of women in the society of the nineteenth century England and separates the experiences of the lower- and upper-class women into two separate parts.

The last chapter represents the practical part of the thesis. It considers the information previously stated in the theoretical part and explores them through the story of the novel in question and its vibrant, colourful characters. The conclusion then summarizes Mrs. Gaskell's efforts raised by her work and decides whether her attempts at stirring the reader sou were successful or not.

2. Regionalism

Regionalism as a literary genre could be shortly described as a narrative depicting life in a particular place, town or a region. Keith D. M. Snell in his *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland* offers a rather longer and far more profound definition:

By 'regional novel' I mean fiction that is set in a recognisable region, and which describes features distinguishing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of the culture of that area and its people. Fiction with a strong sense of local geography, topography or landscape is also covered by this definition. In such writing a particular place or regional culture may perhaps be used to illustrate an aspect of life in general, or the effects of a particular environment upon the people living in it.¹

Prior to the emergence of the genre itself, regional identity appeared in literature in a form of various cultural stereotypes or simply as characters' personality traits. Only gradually regional narratives began to be perceived as a tool for learning about culture, language and inhabitants of particular areas through a story, either spoken or written. However, the origin of the regional writing known to this day dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century with two most prominent names – Walter Scott and Maria Edgeworth. Her *Castle Rackrent*, published in 1800, is considered to be the first regional novel ever.² She is acknowledged as the founder to of the genre, which was then later expanded further by her successors.

The nature of regionalism allows it to contain various other literary genres, for instance romances, sagas, historical novels, works dealing with local folklore or industrial - also known as working-class - novels. However, while attempting to illustrate the local atmosphere, the stories often blend imagination and reality together. Each author deals with facts as their own personal truth, and therefore they do not always correlate with the true events, although some aspects might still be accurate.³

Nevertheless, the regional fiction does not serve as a piece of historical evidence; its primary function is to represent and depict things as they are. It is not only concerned with the nature of social change but also its causes and consequences on individual lives, communities or lifestyles.

¹ K. D. M Snell, *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland, 1800-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

² Ralph Pite, *Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 60.

³ Snell, *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland, 1800-1990*, 3.

Snell elaborates further:

Many regional novels use region or place in crucially important ways, to explain or interpret, to develop characterisation, to indicate how character grows out of certain occupied localities, how people respond to particular circumstances and environments, to evoke good and evil through landscape contrasts, or to intensify, mood or convey a sense of irony.⁴

The genre allowed to create a far firmer sense of regional setting while showing awareness of the influences it has on people and mutual relationships within the area. Using these connections helped to develop far more complex and descriptive depths of a character. Moreover, not only does the regional writing help to depict a particular environment for the outside world, it's also a tool for a person to be capable of better understanding of their own existence.⁵

Furthermore, a large number of works touched various political or social topics, allowing the authors to use the medium to express their personal opinions, intentions or attitudes, which also held a great deal of importance in the development of the regional novel. They must have felt themselves to be interpreting local issues and grievances for national political purposes, while attempting to appeal to the regional readership as well as the metropolitan audience at the same time.

However, regional novelists often stood in the position of an outside witness, occasionally even as an anthropological visitor, participant-observer or an investigator. This attitude could have been caused by being displaced by education or by distancing from the people and landscape the fiction initially described, leaving authors to experience a sense of dislodged or multiple belongings.⁶ From this point of view, Snell suggests that regional fiction:

... has often been a complex product of nostalgia, partial recollection, regret, ambivalence, uncertainty, guilt, hesitantly assumed superiority, recognition or reconciliation, brought about by the losses and gains associated with mobility and new horizons, and by the consequent difficulties in communicating feelings to those who become the authors' subjects.⁷

The regional novel aimed to reach the widest possible readership, however, the writers' primary focus lied within their local audience, hoping for a connection over common knowledge of the area. Furthermore, the growth of mass paperback publishing and general levels of literacy

⁴ Snell, *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland, 1800-1990*, 35.

⁵ Svatana Urbanová, Iva Maláková, *Souřadnice míst* (Šenov u Ostravy: Nakladatelství Tilia, 2003), 40.

⁶ Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 92-93.

⁷ Snell, *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland, 1800-1990*, 43-44.

assisted the genre to extend and reach to a rich, cross-class readership. In fact, the biggest group of both consumers and creators of the genre was formed by women.⁸

Overall, the audience's response to the regional literature varied greatly. Nevertheless, the choice of universal and wide-ranging themes gained regional writing a particular appeal as one could notice in the response to writers such as Scott, the Brontës, Hardy, Doyle or Elizabeth Gaskell.

Although the regional fiction served as a key medium in the presentation of the various different parts of culture and responses to them throughout the nineteenth century, in the present day it is considered to be obsolete and its future is quite bleak.

2.1. The importance of a dialect

One of the most prominent features of regional fiction is attempted realism in a form of a dialogue. When it comes to the representation of local language and speech, there can be only very few sources comparable to the works of regionalism. Snell elaborates:

Dialect used by so many authors, particularly after Scott, has been fundamental in fictional characterisation, for speech is the firmest expression of emotion, variously carried by dialect and its regional and class associations, stereotypes and emotional expectations.⁹

Furthermore, the fictional use of dialect speech depicts one of the most prominent attempts made in any medium to handle questions of class difference in regional contexts. It had been frequently used to demonstrate how closely tied to a locality characters were or to show their social status – not necessarily of low social standing, although it had been a popular theme. Nevertheless, it definitely allows open space for a discussion about the link between the social status and regionality itself. Local speech is sometimes a tool for fashioning a level of character differentiation that has to avoid the stereotypes, however, the authenticity can be the authors' ascent or their downfall as the reactions to a representation of a dialect in some cases could have been quite angry and dismissive.¹⁰

When speaking of the northern dialect specifically, on one hand it appeared to be a rich source of cultural imagination and a strong source for expression of local and regional identities. On the other, however, it had been used as a base for a big wave of stigmatization and prejudice as

⁸ Russell, *Looking North*, 80

⁹ Snell, *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland, 1800-1990*, 34.

¹⁰ Stephen Wade, *In My Own Shire: Region and Belonging in British Writing, 1840-1970* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 18.

many outsiders struggled with understanding of what was being said. On top of that, as mentioned previously, the North had been often associated with unsophisticatedness and barbarism, which painted their way of speaking as vulgar, comic or, rather rudely, as the accent of the working-class, due to the association of the area with its culture, people and perhaps the biggest, widely-known social group at the time.¹¹

2.2. Rural vs. Urban

Rural fiction is closely related to the tradition of ruralism. It emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century in travel-writing, painting and anecdotal depictions of country life, encouraging a celebration, challenge or reformation of landscapes and ideals.¹² Ralph Pite in his *Hardy's Geography* comments:

Country life possesses the advantages of commercial development and none of its drawbacks. It is both a retreat from industrialization and an example to the industrialist of the society they ought to create... The rural was represented as a lost world whose characteristic virtues of simplicity, mutual help and stability should and could be retrieved in the present.¹³

This type of fiction was predominantly enjoyed by the urban-based readers, who sought an “imaginative escape from familiar townscapes and recognisable social problems and into worlds peopled with slightly exotic characters and associated with pleasure, relaxation and freedom.”¹⁴ The changelessness of the countryside contrasted with the industrial instability - the freedom, softness and simplicity in the country compared well with the greyness and exhaustion of their city life. Authors such as Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot or Thomas Hardy all dealt with the rural setting in their works, however, they lived in an age of cultural transition and although they were presenting quite socially or politically progressive ideas, they treat their attitude towards the countryside, to quote Margaret Drabble in her *Writer's Britain*: “with varying degrees of regret and nostalgia, to the apparently eternal worlds of their own childhood, to the older that had seemed so stable.”¹⁵

¹¹ Russell, *Looking North*, 111-114.

¹² Pite, *Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel*, 51.

¹³ Pite, *Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel*, 54-57.

¹⁴ Russell, *Looking North*, 86.

¹⁵ Margaret Drabble, *A Writer's Britain* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 78.

Snell then explores some of the most prominent features of rural fiction:

... ‘fate’, cruelty, backwardness, remoteness, ‘paganism’ – a view of rural existence mediated through an outsider, written sometimes for urban self-assurance, that reinforced stereotypes of rural workers as primitive and unenlightened, and that hinted strongly at the cultural advances attained by those who had migrated from the land.¹⁶

However, from the present-day perspective, some of the rural novels can be nearly considered an informal ethnographical guide.

Although the regional novel is frequently perceived as rural, the urban novel has eventually exceeded it, even though it is not exactly known when or whether it was somehow related to rural depopulation, urbanisation and other cultural changes. Nevertheless, it had been closely tied to industrialization and therefore, it is no surprise that the urban novel had been largely popular in the northern regions.

The industrial North had been often depicted as a dark, different, bleak, harsh and unforgiving world of the working class. Writers frequently described it with a critical eye and defined the region in a highly specific light, including their “depictions of the despoiled physical landscape, the drabness of daily life and the mindset of ‘alien’ peoples, whether working- or middle-class.”¹⁷ The novels frequently dealt with the idea of a brutal environment, violence between employers and employees and the machinations of the self-seeking political demagogues, intensifying the idea of North being unsophisticated and barbaric.

The industrial novel was intended to be a tool of reconciliation, to encourage better understanding between classes and regions. However, as mentioned above, a large number of the regional works were written by outsiders, resulting in a rather distanced or an anthropological point of view towards the core values of the North, only reinforcing the sense of difference. On top of that, a small group of highly influential texts established a very distinct version of the North and kept the image alive as a result of their popularity. Thankfully, these attitudes soon improved and eventually helped to correct these specific ideas about the North, however, genuine northern voices never took proper control of the regional narratives, leaving their position in literature unequal.¹⁸

¹⁶ Snell, *The Regional Novel In Britain And Ireland, 1800-1990*, 22.

¹⁷ Russell, *Looking North*, 87.

¹⁸ Russell, *Looking North*, 89.

2.3. Elizabeth Gaskell

Elizabeth Gaskell was born Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson in 1810 as a second child. She was brought up by her aunt in Knutsford, Cheshire, after her mother's demise in 1811. She had an older brother John, who had unfortunately disappeared while on a voyage to India between the years 1828 and 1829. During these years Elizabeth moved to live with her father in Chelsea, however, not long after he dies as well, in March of 1829. She spent the following years in various places, one of them being Manchester, where she eventually moved after marrying Revd. William Gaskell in 1832. Later, in 1848, she released her first novel – *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*.¹⁹

Although she spent most of her adult life in the smoky industrial North, her love for the countryside was very deeply rooted. As Drabble comments: “both in life and in her work she would escape into the rural idyll of childhood, remembering and vividly recreating the happy days she spent in the small town of Knutsford in Cheshire.”²⁰ However, her work did not only depict the peacefulness of the countryside as she was one of the most prominent authors of the urban, working-class novel. She held a high level of compassion for the Manchester workers and their uneasy life and perhaps due to these experiences she believed in the restorative power of nature and natural surroundings. As the industrialization and overpopulation gradually made working and living conditions in the cities significantly intolerable, there was a natural tendency to idealize country labour, overlooking the truth of their hardships.

Gaskell was a reflective novelist and she was deeply interested in the causes and long-term effects of the Industrial Revolution. Since she spent a vast majority of her adult life in the city of Manchester, she was realistic and more sympathetic to the worker's cause. As Drabble says:

As we have seen, she was brought up in a small country town, and loved country life and landscape... she did not find the cobbled alleys and cellars of the city exciting. But as a conscientious minister's wife she was familiar with them: her descriptions of little paved courts with open gutters and lines full of washing are closely observed. She notices the little contrivances whereby women make themselves comfortable in the most unpromising surroundings... She also notices the hopelessness of those who have given up, who have been reduced to pawing their last possessions... Gaskell sees the streets

¹⁹ Gaskell, "A Chronology Of Elizabeth Gaskell," xiii.

²⁰ Drabble, *A Writer's Britain*, 84.

and cellars through the eyes of those obliged to live in them and she shares their disgust.²¹

Additionally, her writing consistently sought out to resolve various conflicts by introducing her readership to the concept of mutual dependency and it frequently argues for reconciliation between warring factions, e.g. North and South, master and man, Anglican and Dissenter, ancient and modern, all repeatedly differentiated by her novels and set against each other.²²

²¹ Drabble, *A Writer's Britain*, 212-214.

²² Pite, *Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel*, 71.

3. The Industrial Revolution

Throughout the entire recorded history of mankind, humans managed to achieve incredible accomplishments in various fields, ranging from philosophy through science to technology, and the Industrial Revolution was undoubtedly one of the most progressive leaps in development. With the British Empire as its notional cradle, the rapid technological advancement spread across the globe while changing people's lives significantly alongside it. North and South closely portrays the struggles of the contemporary working-class and therefore it is necessary to delve into the topic further.

The most important materials of the industrialization were coal and especially cotton. The late eighteenth century brought onto the table a number of brand new inventions, which allowed the textile industry to grow from the small home-based manufacturing process into the well-known large-scale factory production, causing a notable positive impact on the British economy.²³ Lancashire became the main centre of the development, mainly thanks to the already existing coal fields, ports, efficient water system and generally favourable weather. With the cotton textile industry quickly becoming the most profitable trade on the British Isles, Manchester, the heart of the operation, quickly found itself standing on an equal footing of importance as the capital - London.²⁴

However, not only there were numerous technological advancements, the industrialization also brought quite large-scale social changes. As previously mentioned, the textile production had previously been predominantly home-based craftsmanship, yet as the demand for the goods had risen, people abandoned their agricultural roots and relocated into towns, causing large waves of migration and urbanisation, offering conveniently cheap and easily-accessible labour right at the manufacturers' fingertips.

On the other hand, with the population growing at such a fast rate, urban areas gradually became far too overcrowded and due to this issue, many workers suffered from poor health and lived in awful housing conditions, i.e. cellar dwellings, which Alannah Tomkins describes as "the worst form of urban accommodation – comprising one or at most two dark, damp, low-ceilinged

²³ Deane Phyllis, *The First Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 87-91.

²⁴ Russell, *Looking North*, 21.

rooms with poor ventilation.”²⁵ On top of that, they had to deal with the inhumanly high prices of food caused by the political incompetence of the country after the Napoleonic Wars²⁶ and therefore it is no surprise that practically all contemporary working families experienced poverty in some regard throughout their lives.²⁷ Needless to say, working side-by-side with heavy machinery every day also often resulted in horrific accidents, causing a fairly high number of workers to be either killed or suffer disfigurement, and therefore force them into unemployment and inevitable poverty.²⁸

Nonetheless, the industry began to weaken towards the half of the nineteenth century and prices of the produced goods gradually began to fall, yet often the factories’ profits remained balanced thanks to the manufacturers’ constant effective strive for innovation. However, instead of investing into their employees, entrepreneurs usually turned their profits into more machinery and newer inventions to efficiently keep up with the fast-paced flow of the industry, albeit unsuccessfully.²⁹ This behaviour frequently resulted in underemployment, depression or even starvation of the workers.

Nevertheless, the working-class did not keep quiet and suffer in silence; in fact, various socio-political movements began to form within their communities all throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. They were usually considered a local matter, however, by the 1830s they began to spread nation-wide.³⁰ Generally, personal relationships between neighbours, friends and co-workers had been a crucial part of creating any sort of social movement as they had the strength to bring people together and act as one. These groups rallied for protection and recognition of collective rights, although the protesters were usually met with a strong opposition from the nation’s side.

Luddism was amongst one of the first populist movements of the early nineteenth century. It rooted in the local communities and kept within those boundaries, although it partially focused on more general political and economic issues as well. Craig Calhoun in his *The Question of*

²⁵ Alannah Tomkins, “Women and poverty,” in *Women’s History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker, Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), 158.

²⁶ Elaine Chalus. Fiona Montgomery, “Women and politics,” in *Women’s History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker, Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), 248.

²⁷ John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early industrial capitalism in three English towns* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 91-92.

²⁸ Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early industrial capitalism in three English towns*, 88.

²⁹ Phyllis, *The First Industrial Revolution*, 100.

³⁰ Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution*, 8.

Class Struggle comments: “they campaigned for the right of craft control over trade, the right to a decent livelihood, for local autonomy, and for the application of improved technology to the common good.”³¹

The movement was later followed by Robert Owen’s Owentism, which aimed for cooperation with the higher ranks of society and rallied for a significant social change through unification of the population instead of mobilization of a specific group.³² The idea usually appealed to craftsmen since it targeted underemployment or the wastage of productive forces, however, the rest of the workforce such as the factory workers did not find their place within the movement and usually opted for Chartism in the end.

According to Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery Chartism “grew out of the feelings of disillusion resulting from the 1832 Reform Act’s failure to give the vote to working men, compounded by the economic depression that began in 1837. It was essentially a working-class agitation designed to gain practical rights for the ordinary working man.” It was perhaps the most popular of the movements since it appealed to the working-class’ consciousness of preserving family and domesticity.³³

Aside from these public movements, workers also formed so-called trade unions which specifically focused on a particular trade and centred their dissatisfaction within the factories they had worked in. The gradual growth of trade unions provided a brand new organizational structure for collective action and aimed towards an improvement in workers’ material well-being and working conditions.

When speaking about radicalism and unity, the General Strike of 1842 definitely should be mentioned as one of the most significant turning points in the history of the working-class struggle. Jenkins describes it as: “the most massive industrial action to take place in Britain – and probably anywhere – in the nineteenth century.”³⁴ The idea behind the protest was closely connected to Chartism and the contemporary struggles of the working-class, engaged up to half a million workers at its peak and stretched over a large part of the northern industrial area with its heart in Lancashire.

³¹ Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution*, 65.

³² Chalus et al., “Women and politics,” 244.

³³ Chalus et al., “Women and politics,” 245.

³⁴ Mick Jenkins, *The General Strike of 1842* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), 21.

The second half of 1830s up to 1842 marks a period of great depression and despair due high unemployment and steep prices of food, as mentioned earlier. These economic circumstances made contemporary employers and factory owners either close their factories and go bankrupt or opt for their usual remedy – wage cuts, in some cases as high as fifty percent.³⁵ They attempted to justify their decisions by proclaiming that if employment was to improve, wages simply had to go down, however, the rate kept constantly fluctuating, leaving workers no other choice than to go on a strike. At first, the protest had taken a form of a march through the northern industrial towns, accumulating a significantly large number of supporters and then quickly spread across the whole region as the mass reached Manchester, again cementing its significant position during the period.³⁶

Although some progressive minds had voiced their support for the cause and the strikers had maintained their seemingly endless determination, the strike eventually crumbled down under the power of the ruling class after seven long weeks of protests.³⁷ Their efforts, however, weren't entirely fruitless as employers proved willing to step down from their wage cuts and some even raised the pay rates altogether.³⁸ Nevertheless, no ground-breaking reforms of the factory conditions, union trade rights and the state of the law came until 1928.

3.1. The North and South Divide

As mentioned above, the second half of the eighteenth century up to the first half of the nineteenth century blessed the Great Britain with the most significant growth in its recorded history. A predominantly agricultural country suddenly shifted towards machine-powered production, however, not all regions experienced these innovations on an equal level, resulting in an era of clashes between the northern and southern regions.

Industrialization and mechanization provided people with numerous new job opportunities and thereby helped the northern regions to expand significantly, especially economically, while the south was undergoing the exact opposite. Although the north was experiencing an incredible growth in terms of manufacturing and profitability, the south maintained its strong position thanks to the service sector, which was thriving in the area and even though it could hardly compare to the fast-paced industry in the north, it managed to keep the southern countryside and its towns financially prosperous. The national interest, however, was primarily aimed

³⁵ Jenkins, *The General Strike of 1842*, 54-56.

³⁶ Russell, *Looking North*, 21.

³⁷ Jenkins, *The General Strike of 1842*, 168, 192.

³⁸ Jenkins, *The General Strike of 1842*, 174, 213.

towards the industrial capitalism in the north, putting the south into a very uncomfortable position. London, the seat of the government and one of the most progressive British cities at the time, stood right in middle of the quarrel, never leaning towards either of the regions more than the other. *Geographies of England* elaborates further:

Whilst it is possible to argue that socially and politically its instincts were of the ‘South’, economically London moved to a rhythm dictated as much by northern industry as by southern commerce and in this sense, it was a law unto itself: neither of the North nor the South; in fact, neither one thing nor the other.³⁹

The previously mentioned waves of migration to the urban areas also caused the countryside and the cities to stand in contrasting positions. Some of the most prominent differences were: “education, opportunity and mobility.”⁴⁰ However, any sign of a clear – perhaps geographical – division still remained ambiguous as the concept more or less depended on one’s perception of the matter and their understanding of the cultures of each region.

Nevertheless, there were particular stereotypes assigned to the regions and their inhabitants, too. The south was perceived as a rural land of leisure, nature and relaxation whilst the north embodied hard work and exploitation the working-class. The Northerners themselves were also often looked down upon as unsophisticated or barbaric in comparison to their outsiders. On the other hand, they did not let such slander break their spirits and actively accepted it, reclaimed it or simply rejected it completely.⁴¹

Finally, Dave Russell in his *Looking North* comments:

Much of the "North-South" discourse in England has always operated at a relatively humorous level (although humour can be cruel and disabling) and regional differences have often been sunk in wider English, British and imperial mentalities.⁴²

In conclusion, the true differences between the regions rooted in sentiments and experiences of the perceiver since the divide was, in fact, a mere metaphor.

³⁹ *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined*, 98.

⁴⁰ *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined*, 103.

⁴¹ Russell, *Looking North*, 35-36.

⁴² Russell, *Looking North*, 36.

4. Women of the Nineteenth Century England

Although the nineteenth century is predominantly seen as the time of great men and their grandiose achievements, women held equally as important role both on the inside and on the outside – at home, at work and in the public’s eye. Throughout the history, they had frequently faced various hardships, which forced them to adapt to their surroundings and the nineteenth century witnessed a great deal of what could be considered mistreatment from the present-day perspective. Women, however, despite their circumstances, fought through valiantly and sometimes quite literally.

4.1. Life of the Working-Class Women

Although the novel in question does not incorporate the lives and familial struggles of these women in great detail, their presence and importance within contemporary affairs definitely should not be omitted in this text.

Firstly, it was believed that men and women were created differently by nature and each gender had its own unique role and level of intelligence, which poorly reflected on girls’ access to education at the time. Mothers were responsible for the early education of their children, however, their offspring could later enrol in schools, services or apprenticeships, although boys frequently experienced the preferential treatment and girls were usually taught different subjects than their male classmates, e.g. needlework or religious studies. It was assumed that if women of lower classes acquired similar education, they would “learn their place in society” and it would “make girls idle and fit for nothing.”⁴³

Undoubtedly, women had always worked alongside men, however, the status of their labour was often perceived as low and their work frequently went unnoticed. In the pre-industrial era, women were predominantly employed in agriculture, domestic manufacturing and household service - mainly home-based and seasonal work, which did not crucially interfere with their responsibilities in child care and household duties, however, the arrival of the industrial process could not tolerate an erratic workforce and brought a conflict between the two female roles by separating the place of work from home. Nevertheless, it was generally believed that the male’s wage alone should be enough to support a whole family, yet female labour was, in fact, essential to the early factories, where women and children constituted a large part of the total labour force while they were paid only about half as much as their male counterparts.⁴⁴ However, if

⁴³ Deborah Simonton, “Women, consumption and taste,” in *Women’s History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker, Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), 35-39.

⁴⁴ McBride, “Women’s Work and Industrialization,” 71.

women were able to contribute to the family income on regular basis, they frequently gained higher status in family decisions, and therefore, when faced with a conflict between their family obligations and their ability to earn money, women simply changed their occupational choices. Married ones usually opted for agriculture, domestic manufacturing or retailing while single women could choose to work in the factories or as domestic servants. From the political standpoint, women and the female body were frequently used as symbols within the British political culture, however, the true significance of their presence is debatable. Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery comment on their involvement:

As a result of birth, inheritance, necessity, or personal interest and commitment, women at all levels of society took part in politics: their activities ranged from the popular politics of food riots, machine-breaking, Chartist actions, protests against the New Poor Law or the repeal of the Corn Laws, through politically inflected humanitarian causes like the abolition of slavery, to various forms of social politics, patronage, and electoral involvement.⁴⁵

Women played an important role in building familial networks within their communities, creating women's informal networks for community support, which proved to be incredibly useful during the times of hardship as a commonplace to exchange vital resources or services, often essential for one's survival. Nevertheless, their political involvement was generally accepted as long as their activities aligned with the traditional female roles.⁴⁶ Radical organizers often benefited from their presence at their meetings as they provided an unthreatening familial feeling for the movement, yet sadly, women often apologized for their incursion into public politics, which was predominantly ruled by men.

During the late 1820s, Owenism began to cover the sympathies of the working-class radicalism and supported the idea that women's superior capacity to love could help transform the society. As the movement expressed its interest in feminist and socialist ideals, it supported the creation of co-operative trade unions and shops established by the supporters during the late 1820s and early 1830s.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the movement pledged the emancipation of women through the co-operative organisation of domestic responsibilities, in reality, however, the system had no effect. On the other hand, Chartist women were quite hard-working organisers and they made themselves highly visible during the mass Chartist demonstrations and rallies. They even established educational institutes for their children; Chalus and Montgomery elaborate on the

⁴⁵ Chalus et al., "Women and politics," 219.

⁴⁶ Chalus et al., "Women and politics," 219-220.

⁴⁷ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 31.

matter: “they ran schools and youth clubs, and took part in Chartist churches and temperance associations. They were well aware of their role as educators and how essential this was to a changed world.”⁴⁸ Female members of the movement frequently expressed their wish to see an end to their factory labour, worked hard to secure the male breadwinner wage that would enable their families to be supported solely by their husbands and rallied for a vision in which the family would be respected and prioritised.

When speaking of family life, it was undoubtedly one of the central concerns of the era, however, majority of marriages were based upon financial needs, since couples could only hope to battle their hardships together and only for some love and affection could flourish. Tanya Evans comments on the situation: “it was assumed that all women became wives and mothers, and, if they did not, then prescriptive literature, the law, and much of society, labelled them deviants.”⁴⁹

Women’s experiences with marriage were significantly varied. Certainly, not all of them were predominantly miserable, however, the society heavily supported the idea of a husband’s authority over his wife and their children. Domestic violence was not anything unusual at the time either. Male-dominated sectors witnessed very high occurrence of domestic violence, usually supported by heavy drinking and a senseless belief that husbands possessed some kind of right to beat their spouses. On top of that, women rarely had any legal entitlement to their own earnings and property as they all into possession of their husbands – the head of the household. Thankfully, despite the idea of an obedient submissive wife, some women strongly stood their ground and refused to “obey” their spouses; some even opted for using the marriage settlement to protect their right to own their own property.⁵⁰

Thanks to the availability of considerably well-paid work, not all women had to force themselves into marriage simply for economic reasons. However, their subordinate position in the workplace had only been reinforced by patriarchal family relationships alongside local customs, which pushed the double role of both a labourer and a homemaker onto women. Households frequently experienced quarrel over money which occasionally resulted into acts of violence. Lastly, Evans offers the ideal scenario for a successful marriage:

Successful marriages depended upon mutually agreed duties shared between husbands and wives. Women, as mistresses of households, were responsible for the household’s

⁴⁸ Chalus et al., “Women and politics,” 246.

⁴⁹ Tanya Evans, “Women, marriage and the family,” in *Women’s History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker, Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), 57.

⁵⁰ Evans, “Women, marriage and the family,” 58.

orderly and successful management, while their husbands had a duty to provide and care for their family. Both roles involved public, as well as private, functions and both were deemed to be crucial. Women certainly owed their husbands obedience, but men were also expected to respect and support their wives.⁵¹

Until the arrival of the Victorian period, working-class marriages were fairly easy to dismiss, however, as legal marriages became the norm, a large number of people would simply marry a new partner illegally - without a proper divorce - after leaving the previous relationship.⁵² Nonetheless, women were quite hesitant to leave their partners, because only a few could survive without their crucial financial support. If a marriage ended as a result of death or desertion of their husbands, women often opted for a remarriage, since it was the only possible option to avoid possible poverty, although many had found it quite difficult to find a new partner as widowhood had rendered them too poor to be attractive in the marriage market.⁵³

4.2. Life of the Middle- and Upper-Class Women

In regards to education, the experiences and expectations of middle- and upper-class girls were significantly different from those of lower social classes. Although there were various opportunities to attend schools, they usually received their education at home, where they were taught by their mothers or governesses, alternatively then within a female relative's home, e.g. their aunts' household. Their curriculums varied considerably, although some girls received a scholarly education as well, although most were offered only the typical set of subjects which, according to Deborah Simonton included: "various needlecraft skills, the art of polite conversation, dancing, music, drawing, painting, French, perhaps Italian, and subjects such as history, geography, and astronomy, with which to make polite conversation."⁵⁴ This type of education served little practical purpose, however, its main purpose was to prepare a girl a desirable object or marriage.

Women of higher social classes in the nineteenth century were usually portrayed as financially, intellectually and emotionally dependent upon their male relatives, who, on the other hand, engaged in various forms of public affairs. According to Kathryn Gleadle in her *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*: "they were encouraged to perceive themselves as 'relative creatures', whose path in life was to nurture the family and to provide unstinting support for the head of

⁵¹ Evans, "Women, marriage and the family," 63.

⁵² Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 45.

⁵³ Tomkins, "Women and poverty," 157.

⁵⁴ Deborah Simonton, "Women and education," in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker, Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), 44-45.

the household.”⁵⁵ Therefore, the types of labour they usually performed were social work, domestic work or estate management – generally unpaid work.

However, not all women of the higher classes could take financial security for granted and on top of that, previously predominantly feminine occupations were suddenly becoming male pursuits and ladies therefore had to seek employment in different fields such as needlework or dressmaking. Only a gifted few were able to obtain an income from creating arts, although even then the most successful female writers had to fight their way through a complex maze of gendered assumptions. Due to a particular social convention, it was believed that women did not write for money, and therefore quite a large number of female writers had to adopt male pseudonyms to contradict their assumed artistic abilities.⁵⁶ Some had taken these precautions even further and found quite extraordinary ways to bypass their troubles, e.g. by dressing up as men.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, to a certain degree, women were expected to take part in running of the family business. In fact, their contribution became crucial if their husbands suffered from poor health, were heavy drinkers, or were simply incompetent to run it by themselves. A considerable number of women clearly enjoyed the opportunities offered by their husbands' business concerns and became active business agents in their own right.⁵⁸

From the end of the eighteenth century, middle-class women began to organise themselves into various charitable organisations, which focused predominantly onto philanthropic work. As a part of these activities they took up the practice of home-visiting in an attempt to create cross-class relationships. On the other hand, upper-class women approached philanthropy on a far smaller scale by giving attention to the varied possible needs of their closest locals. On top of that, they frequently played an important role in organising and hosting all sorts of social gatherings, e.g. dinners, balls or banquets, which often helped to strengthen their political standings within the local community. However, apart from these traditionally female individual activities, women were ordinarily expected to take place at the side of their male acquaintances, yet, as Sarah Richardson suggests: “As long as they had money, property, and political ambition women could succeed as well as any man.”⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 51.

⁵⁶ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 55.

⁵⁷ Hannah Barker, “Women and work,” in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker, Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), 140-141.

⁵⁸ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 60.

⁵⁹ Sarah Richardson, “The Role of Women in Electoral Politics in Yorkshire During the Eighteen-Thirties,” *Northern History* 32:1 (1996): 145, doi: 10.1179/007817296790175236.

When it comes the direct political involvement of these women, the topic remains fairly ambiguous, since politics were usually perceived as a solely male business and womanly nature was deemed unfit for such responsibility. Their participation was commonly along the lines of philanthropy, humanitarian causes, various forms of social politics or patronage.⁶⁰ Occasionally, however, since the vote had been considered a family property, they could contribute to the discussion regarding the elections, which provided them at least a certain degree of political representation as they were not allowed to vote themselves.⁶¹

Generally speaking, women's political participation was accepted as long as their activities complied with traditional female roles and clearly supported their male counterparts. Some women, however, began to take part in actions beyond the family-oriented politics and made political demands in their own rights. Chalus and Montgomery elaborate on the matter:

... middle-class women involved themselves in issues-based, morally inflected campaigns such as slavery and the Anti-Corn Law movement, which stemmed from their wider involvement in philanthropy, religion, education, or empire, and were driven by a belief in women's 'special duty' to promote a more moral, Christian approach to the nation's affairs.⁶²

Eventually, the early 1850s witnessed the rise of feminism as its own movement, since the preceding decades had recognized it only as a part of far more generalized radical humanitarian campaigns, which were also usually lead by men.⁶³ At last, it allowed a spectacular progression for women and their public appearance.

The early Victorian period experienced a significant changes in attitude towards family life and the act of marriage and highlighted the utmost importance of a satisfying relationship. According to Gleadle: "it was usually assumed that marriages would be formed on the basis of affection and trust, if not love."⁶⁴ Majority of women were allowed to court whoever they liked as they were actively involved in their choice of husbands, however, they frequently continued to rely on the advice of family and friends before making their final decisions.⁶⁵ Although the older customs, e.g. arranged marriages, fell back significantly at the time, some families would still occasionally strive for a potentially higher status through their daughters' favourable marriages.

⁶⁰ Chalus et al., "Women and politics," 219.

⁶¹ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 71.

⁶² Chalus et al., "Women and politics," 235.

⁶³ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 77.

⁶⁴ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 87.

⁶⁵ Evans, "Women, marriage and the family," 62.

Contemporary middle-class families partook in so-called 'private social occasions', which often played an important role in either business matters or courtship itself.⁶⁶ These events occurred in the privacy of one's home, frequently incorporating dinners, tea servings or playing music by one of the household residents - usually the daughters.

As mentioned before, marriages were believed to be founded on love, affection and mutual respect, however, unsatisfying or unhappy relationships were fairly common, similarly to those in lower classes. Yet again, the husbands felt themselves to represent a particular kind of an authority in the families, supposedly meant to rule over the other members under the idea of a familial hierarchy. Gleadle elaborates on the situation:

Under common law, once a woman married she became a 'feme covert'. All her personal property became her husband's and any freehold land passed into his possession; a married woman was not even able to enter into contracts... A husband could legally enforce his wife to live with him, even if this should necessitate her virtual imprisonment. The prevalence of informal separations is difficult to ascertain, but divorce, as we have seen, was extremely difficult to obtain if the marriage broke down, and, until 1857, separated women might still have their earnings and property taken by their husbands.⁶⁷

Contemporary divorces were truly hard to obtain for women, since the society heavily leaned towards patriarchy, which supported the idea of an obedient wife. Husbands generally found it easier to dismiss their marriages because offences risen against their person were commonly treated as far less severe than those of their female spouse's. In theory, their legally binding relationship could be disbanded if at least one of the partners was successfully accused of adultery, cruelty, heresy, or apostasy, however, women's concerns were regularly dismissed as unjustified.⁶⁸

The act of marriage itself commonly also incorporated bearing and upbringing of children. As mentioned at the beginning of this segment, mothers played important roles of a teacher as well as a parent, educating their children in various practical and theoretical disciplines, although in a fairly limited manner. Although it is generally believed that Victorian women did not have a particularly close relationship with their children and they behaved rather distantly towards their offspring - possibly because there were so many to take care of at the same time - Evans

⁶⁶ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 80.

⁶⁷ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 88-89.

⁶⁸ Evans, "Women, marriage and the family," 64-66.

argues: “evidence of early modern maternal affection and the value placed on infant life is not hard to find. It is clear that many parents felt deep affection for their children.”⁶⁹

Nevertheless, as motherhood gained a new status throughout the course of the century, the idea of home started to be observed as a “female-built haven of domestic peace and order.”⁷⁰ The ideology suddenly separated the world of a woman, who was now supposed to overlook and provide a loving home for her male counterpart, who, on the other hand, was to face and deal with the troubles of the outside world and demands of the public and business life. Sadly, this approach only caused women, who had already suffered from a significant lack of legal rights beforehand, to be metaphorically chained down in their own homes, leaving the individual authorities of a husband and wife unbalanced and completely ignored women’s openly expressed dissatisfaction with their assigned roles within the household.

Lastly, similarly to the ladies in the lower classes, middle- and upper-class women were not immune to the possible fate of widowhood and poverty. Remarriage posed a viable option, however, for those lucky enough to be wealthy, widowhood offered a promising path to their economic independence and relative social freedom, as their acquired economic security easily appointed them as heads of households with a substantial social status.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Evans, “Women, marriage and the family,” 69.

⁷⁰ Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, 83.

⁷¹ Evans, “Women, marriage and the family,” 67.

5. Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South

Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell's story of 'North and South' had first seen the light of day on September 2nd, 1854 as a part of Charles Dickens' weekly literature magazine called 'Household Worlds'. Initially it appeared in the publication as an on-going series over the course of several months, which was then later turned into a complete, slightly edited narrative of two volumes the following year. The analytical part of this thesis will focus on the author's intentions behind the release of the novel in question, its socio-political importance in context with the contemporary struggles and concerns of the society as well as the position of a female figure amidst the chaos that was the industrial North of the nineteenth century England. The analysis will also focus on the impact of the main character's experiences on her personality and opinions, and lastly the thesis will focus on the language used within the narrative and its literary significance in terms of regional novel.

Firstly, Mrs Gaskell was no newcomer to the world of regional literature when she started writing the story of North and South. The plot of her first novel Mary Barton, released in 1848, had taken place in the northern industrial city of Manchester, Gaskell's hometown and also a significant source of inspiration for Milton-Northern, the city appearing in North and South. The author aimed to depict its true atmosphere as she had experienced it first hand while walking through the streets on daily basis or while assisting the poor citizens as the wife of a Unitarian minister.

Mary Barton follows the story of a very beautiful, young lower-class girl of the same name – Mary Barton - during the peak era of the Chartist movement between the years 1839 and 1842. Similarly to North and South, it deals with the theme of cross-class conflict but the primary focus lies within the lines of romance and the unsettling inner emotional turmoil experienced by the individual characters. Nonetheless, the reception of Mrs Gaskell's first novel had been very successful overall and her raw realistic depictions of the landscape and human emotions impressed Charles Dickens quite deeply, which led to his offer or participating in his Household Worlds as a fellow literary contributor.

Originally, Mrs Gaskell meant to follow the same naming pattern as with her first novel ever and call her 'North and South' by the name of the main protagonist Margaret Hale, which, according to Angus Easson would fit the novel and its themes perfectly, however, Charles Dickens persuaded her to change her mind, since he deemed 'North and South' a far more fitting name for a story filled to the brim with various forms of contrasts and conflicts, and on

top of that, his suggestion also incorporated the contemporary heated debate about the individual importance of the two English regions.⁷² In comparison to Mary Barton, the focal point of view in *North and South* is removed from the very centre of the socio-political struggle within the lower classes and the main protagonist Margaret Hale - a young, beautiful and confident middle-class woman - only gradually deciphers and recognizes the true depth of the situation and the reasons behind the general unrest within the city as the story progresses.

When it comes to the literary purpose of Mrs Gaskell's novel, critics are fairly divided on the topic. While it is generally believed that she aimed to highlight the contemporary issues through her story by writing a social problem novel, reviewers have voiced their concerns regarding whether she has actually succeeded or not. For instance, Rosemarie Bodenheimer describes *North and South* as "a novel about irrevocable change, and about the confused process of response and accommodation that attends it," because it is "not really organized as a system of contrasts; nor is it exactly a 'social-problem novel,' for it does not identify a clear version of industrial crisis and cry for a solution."⁷³ Eleanor Reeds simply disregards it as "industrial romance,"⁷⁴ while Barbara Leah Harman explains its function as "a narrative of gender conflict"⁷⁵ instead. Regardless of these opinions, Gaskell's involvement in contemporary issues is undeniable and "*North and South* was her explicit contribution to the discussion of strikes and labor disputes."⁷⁶

Elizabeth Gaskell, as a resident of Manchester and an earnest humanitarian herself, did not have to go far to be inspired to write about the class conflict and the working-class struggle. She strongly sympathized with the industrial workers and felt a deep moral responsibility to promote class harmony and alleviate the negative side effects of capitalism.⁷⁷ Through Margaret she appealed on the middle- and upper-class readership for compassion and understanding for the

⁷² Angus Easson, "Introduction," in *North and South*, ed. Angus Easson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), ix.

⁷³ Rosemarie Bodenheimer, "North and South: A Permanent State of Change." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 34, no. 3 (1979): 281-282.

⁷⁴ Eleanor Reeds, "The Ethics of Risk in Elizabeth Gaskell's 'North and South': The Role of Capital in an Industrial Romance." *Victorian Review* 40, no. 2 (2014): 55.

⁷⁵ Barbara Leah Harman, "In Promiscuous Company: Female Public Appearance in Elizabeth Gaskell's 'North and South'." *Victorian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1988): 361.

⁷⁶ Dorice Williams Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 49, no. 1 (1994): 28.

⁷⁷ Elliott, "The Female Visitor and the Marriage of Classes in Gaskell's *North and South*," 29.

workers' cause as well, since Miss Hale had embodied a character of their own class they could relate to.

What set Gaskell apart from other contemporary writers of industrial novel was her approach towards the cause – instead of focusing on the cruelties happening inside of the factories in great detail she turns towards workers' homes and brings a sense of domesticity into their communities through Margaret's philanthropic action. Before coming to Milton, young Hale was completely unaware of the situation, even despised tradesmen, however, with assistance of the Higginsees – especially Nicholas Higgins - she enters the world of their struggles and passionately advocates for the workers' rights to be angry from her position of a middle-class woman when confronting John Thornton - a Milton mill-owner and a cold, die-hard capitalist with very little remorse for the lives of his hands – inside of her own home.

The novel clearly stands against violent means of persuasion and therefore all conflicts between the three most crucial parties – Margaret, Nicholas and Mr Thornton - are sorted through civil communication. Margaret, however, struggles to comprehend the antagonistic relationship between the “masters” and the “hands” because she is accustomed to mutual respect and dependence between people who understand and accept their "place" in the order of things:

...on the very face of it, 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.⁷⁸

Nicholas Higgins, a representative of the ‘hands’, is a proud, articulate, perhaps cynical, yet caring man who speaks the language of the common people. Gaskell presents him as an equal political spokesman as Mr Thornton with “the respect warranted by his ability to think, learn, and change,” as well as “the same kind of critical hearing.”⁷⁹ In one of his early conversations with Margaret he expresses his conviction that the employers are determined to bring their workers down for profit they refuse to share with them, therefore, they give them the reason to strike:

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 118.

⁷⁹ Bodenheimer, "North and South: A Permanent State of Change," 289.

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. We help to make their profits, and we ought to help spend 'em.⁸⁰

He is a proud unionist and defends the union's right to represent the workers and regulate the conditions of a man's working life, even those who are reluctant to abide by its rules. In his conception of the union, there are carefully orchestrated principles for strikers to follow and the organization, as Higgins conceives it, "is admirable and intelligently directed," although it actually creates a division within the labour force itself.⁸¹

One of the victims of this division is his neighbour Boucher, who simply could not afford to strike. He is perceived as a weak, desperate man who first defies a union regulation against rioting and then seeks work below the union rates. Eventually, he takes his life by drowning himself, leaving his large, poor family behind. Nonetheless, not even Boucher's death does alter Higgins's attitude towards the union, although after his passing it is Higgins who volunteers to take care of the man's children, silently cursing him for his cowardice and abandoning all of his responsibilities.

John Thornton, a representative of the 'masters', in fact shares many personal qualities with Higgins, however, what separates them is their class belonging. As Elliot points out, majority of the "middle-class people, even many family members of factory owners, had never been inside a factory and had probably never seen a factory worker, except at a distance."⁸² This statement precisely depicts Mr Thornton's relationship with his workers - distant.

During one of his visits at the Hales he explains his reserved nature regarding his employees, revealing his own history as a factory boy, however, he also voices his opinion on those struggling, leaving Margaret rather upset:

I believe that this suffering, which Miss Hale says is impressed on the countenances of the people of Milton, is but the natural punishment of dishonestly-enjoyed pleasure, at

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 135.

⁸¹ Bodenheimer, "North and South: A Permanent State of Change," 290.

⁸² Dorice Williams Elliott, "Servants and Hands: Representing the Working Classes in Victorian Factory Novels." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 2 (2000): 379.

some former period of their lives. I do not look on self-indulgent, sensual people as worthy of my hatred I simply look upon them with contempt for their poorness of character.⁸³

Nevertheless, Thornton does not fear objections on his character – he is convinced his stance is right, yet, under the influence of Mr Hale, his tutor, and Margaret, his love interest, he changes. In fact, deep down he has not been that much different from his workers from the very start. He also has a complicated, almost rebellious relationship with authorities above him and this fact has showed a potential for change on which the virtue of Thornton's character is built. Eventually, he learns to respect his workers' rights to strike and recognizes that he indeed cannot consider his beliefs the law for the sake of the larger economic community.⁸⁴

The two men – seemingly polar opposites – meet in the middle on a bridge built by Margaret's mediation. Before that, however, Nicholas considers moving South, charmed by the idea of a simpler life in the countryside only to be stopped by the young Hale:

You must not go to the South,' said Margaret, 'for all that. You could not stand it. You would have to be out all weathers. It would kill you with rheumatism. The mere bodily work at your time of life would break you down. The fare is far different to what you have been accustomed to.'⁸⁵

Instead, she sends him to see the mill-owner. Although he's rejected at first, Thornton later approaches him in his home to offer him a place at his factory, deeply impressed by his determination and patience that have "made him forget entirely the mere reasonings of justice, and overleap them by a diviner instinct."⁸⁶ After that Mr Thornton figuratively switches tutors and becomes the pupil of Higgins' teaching in order to reach new levels of self-discovery, similarly to Margaret herself.

Elizabeth Gaskell heavily advocated for reforms within the factories to improve the rights and opportunities for the labour workers and one of her schemes included a central dining hall

⁸³ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 85.

⁸⁴ Bodenheimer, "North and South: A Permanent State of Change," 287-288.

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 306.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 325.

within the workhouse, which would serve nourishing food to the labourers.⁸⁷ As the author of *North and South* she incorporates this modern idea within her story as well. Bodenheimer elaborates on the fact:

The dining room where Thornton eats by invitation is a symbol of his willingness to obliterate his earlier distinction between the men's lives as workers and as human beings. It is also a tentative forum for discussion, awaiting the growth of trust and the formation of personal respect between Thornton and his workers. No claims are made for its effectiveness, but the shifts in attitude to which the dining plan attests are consistent with the novel's theme of change through personal contact. Thornton refuses to present the plan as a model, but his way of talking about it stands for a change of heart.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, as the story progresses, the question of the working class struggle becomes subdued by the novel's romantic subplot and they resurface only when highlighting Thornton's and Higgins developing cooperation. Gaskell has been criticized for raising large social issues only to diminish them later, however, Elliott suggests that it was caused by the fact that as a writer, Mrs Gaskell had no real power in altering or reconstructing factories and public workspaces herself, therefore, although raising important questions in her work, she opts for a romantic plot due to the conditions and conventions of her time.⁸⁹ On the other hand, she has been highly praised for her ability to convey human emotions and mutual understanding between the characters, which includes her employer-employee relationships as well.⁹⁰

Apart from the roughness of a heated socio-political conflict taking place on the streets of Milton, Mrs Gaskell also presents the reader with a sense of fictional philanthropy through a well-rounded, yet rather unusual Victorian heroine Margaret Hale. She originally comes from a humble rural vicarage named Helstone in Hampshire, however, she had spent vast majority of her childhood living with her aunt in London, where she had been studying alongside her cousin Edith. Although she is used to living in the bustling English metropole, she is not very fond of its busy streets and fast-paced style of living; instead she admires her home in the middle of the English countryside, which she vehemently defends whenever someone attempts to slander its reputation or pokes fun at her colourful descriptions, e.g. when Henry Lennox notes

⁸⁷ Josephine Johnston. "The Sociological Significance of the Novels of Mrs. Gaskell." *Social Forces* 7, no. 2 (1928): 226-227.

⁸⁸ Bodenheimer, "North and South: A Permanent State of Change," 297.

⁸⁹ Elliott, "Servants and Hands," 387.

⁹⁰ Harman, "In Promiscuous Company," 360.

that her depiction of the place resembles a fairy-tale more than a real, existing location right in the first chapter of the book.⁹¹

Sadly, she is expelled from her childhood home due to her father's religious doubts not long after and her family is forced to relocate into a northern industrial city, where she finds herself at the very centre of a growing public unrest. While there, she has to learn and adapt to the new social circumstances and raise above her initial prideful distaste for whom she calls 'shoppy people'⁹², as well as deal with immensely devastating personal affairs, which assist in her personal growth and development as a character.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the public and the private or domestic spheres were fairly strictly separated, however, the social sphere created in the nineteenth century blurred the lines between the two and created a space for women to at least partially engage in public affairs through charitable efforts such as philanthropy. Since their observations and interventions were primarily focused on the idea of a family and domesticity, it was deemed an appropriate female occupation by the public, however, the term 'social' covered a wide variety of concerns and therefore, women suddenly found themselves observing 'industrial relations, political unrest, regulative legislation, sociological investigation, and scientific experimentation' freely.⁹³ Elizabeth Gaskell, an active philanthropist herself, used philanthropy in North and South as an essential power for mediating social conflict.

While most women visitors carried out philanthropic home-visitations as representatives of some sort of an official organization, e.g. the Church⁹⁴, Margaret does so out of her own volition while in Milton. Back at Helstone it was her parents and especially Mr Hale who – as the local pastor – served as the mediator between the classes, however, the mentality of the workers in the industrial city significantly differs from the humble, poor locals he had been accustomed to and his efforts bear no fruit, e.g. when trying to convert Higgins to Christian conformity, Nicholas answers:

As I was a-sayin, sir, I reckon yo'd not ha' much belief in yo' if yo' lived here,—if yo'd been bred here. I ax your pardon if I use wrong words; but what I mean by belief just now, is a-thinking on sayings and maxims and promises made by folk yo' never saw, about the things and the life yo' never saw, nor no one else.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 12.

⁹² Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 19.

⁹³ Elliott, "The Female Visitor," 27.

⁹⁴ Elliott, "The Female Visitor," 33.

⁹⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 226.

Therefore, Margaret serves as a better cross-class mediator, primarily because she adapts her attitudes and charitable practices in order to fit the new social circumstances she encounters in the industrial North. However, while most people agreed that women visitors were crucial to maintain harmonious class relations for the sake of a smooth functioning society, only a few would have actually advocated for women's intervention in the industrial class relations or politics, and yet that is exactly what Margaret does in Gaskell's story. Thanks to her ability to communicate with both Higgins and Thornton she imposes a certain level of influence on the two men when she interprets and translates their opinions to each other while mixing them with her own new-found moral beliefs. This solidifies her position as a mediator between the two parties.

Nevertheless, as Elliot claims: "the novel bases its case for women's mediation between classes on an analogy between marriage and class cooperation."⁹⁶ Margaret's attempts occasionally fail and she is reminded of her perceived position within the society as, for instance, in one of her heated debates with Mr Thornton, in which he defends his treatment of his rebellious workers by comparing it to Margaret's dealings with her servants.⁹⁷ However, the analogy of marriage goes even deeper. Elliot offers a comparison of women and the working classes: "because women were like the working classes, they could stand in for the working class; if women could be managed, the dangerous working classes could also be kept under control."⁹⁸ Therefore, marriage serves as a metaphor for restriction and control, although both instances are challenged in *North and South* – by the strike in case of the workers and by Margaret's refusal to marry when proposed by both Lennox and Thornton.

Although John Thornton serves as the love interest in *North and South*, his relationship with Margaret appears almost antagonistic at times due to their opposing views and beliefs. She finds his coldness and steely industrialist heart revolting, yet cannot deny her respect towards him and his hard work ever since she's revealed his origins.⁹⁹ On the other hand, Thornton is taken aback by her right from their first meeting in the Milton hotel and although they often land in clashes, he is mesmerized by her existence. In fact, Elliot pointed out that the way the pair observes and treats each other shows a possible sexual subcontext.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Elliott, "The Female Visitor," 25.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 117.

⁹⁸ Elliott, "The Female Visitor," 45.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 87.

¹⁰⁰ Elliott, "The Female Visitor," 46.

However, Margaret's experience with her public appearance, sexuality and self-awareness is rather complicated. In her rural home in Helstone she feels safe and sheltered as it is "bound up with Margaret's maiden innocence."¹⁰¹ This idea is, however, shattered with Henry Lennox's proposal, leaving her feeling uncomfortable as well as "guilty and ashamed of having grown so much into a woman as to be thought of in marriage."¹⁰² This occurrence results in her safe space being violated, leaving her feeling unsafe within its boundaries, as seen with her sudden rush of anxiety while in the vicarage's garden before moving to Milton.¹⁰³

Her experience with the streets of the city pushes her sense of vulnerability even further as working class men do not hesitate to express their – often rather vulgar – sympathies towards her person when seeing her walking unaccompanied.¹⁰⁴ However, Harman points out that the "verbal and physical invasions are meant to disrupt the very sense of class distinction that Margaret, for one, has been so eager in the past to maintain,"¹⁰⁵ meaning that both parties now stood on an equal footing within the society.

As mentioned in the third chapter, women had a scarce opportunity to participate in public political affairs, however, their presence and body was frequently used as a symbol. Elizabeth Gaskell incorporates this factor within her story as well through the strike scene, in which Margaret shields Thornton against the angry strikers with her own body, resulting in her getting injured.¹⁰⁶ Although her act could be considered going against the typical assigned role of a woman in the public space, the supporting characters are assured her action stemmed from a romantic or sexual desire towards Mr Thornton.¹⁰⁷ In the aftermath, however, she feels deeply ashamed for involving herself in such a disturbance, as well as the possible misunderstandings regarding her relationship with John Thornton: "I, who hate scenes— I, who have despised people for showing emotion—who have thought them wanting in self-control— I went down and must needs throw myself into the melee, like a romantic fool!"¹⁰⁸ When confronted by Thornton the following day, she disregards her act as a mere kindness and compassion of a woman's heart, denying any personal feelings: "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

¹⁰¹ Harman, "In Promiscuous Company," 363.

¹⁰² Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 32-33.

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 54.

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 72-74.

¹⁰⁵ Harman, "In Promiscuous Company," 365.

¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 178-180.

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 180-185.

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 190.

danger."¹⁰⁹ Therefore, although Elliot and the supporting characters view her actions as sexual and driven by passion, Mann argues for Margaret's almost child-like purity of mind when dealing with them as a true Victorian heroine. In fact, in her eyes:

She is quite blind to the true nature of her own feelings, and very often equally blind to the feelings of those around her. For instance, she has no idea until, believed to be unconscious, she overhears the vulgar remarks of Thornton's sister Fanny and the servant Jane, that anyone could seriously consider Thornton as a desirable match for herself-although the idea has presented itself immediately to others.¹¹⁰

The second half of the novel challenges Margaret again when she's forced to lie in the face of the law to protect her brother. On top of that, this act is linked to yet another occurrence, which triggers her deep sense of shame and guilt again – Mr Thornton seeing her at the train station with a mysterious gentleman, unaware of who he was.¹¹¹ Although he is prepared to withhold information during the investigation of Leonards' death in order to protect her and her honour, his opinion on her is corrupted by her "crime of adulterous sexuality"¹¹² until the misunderstanding is cleared up by Higgins.¹¹³

In the meantime, Margaret suffers through her hardships alone; even though one of her most prominent personality traits is an immense emotional strength, enabling her to support those around her even if she herself feels drained and miserable - which that might be caused by the fact she has always been the one forced to deal with difficult situation on her own, e.g. packing for Milton¹¹⁴ - she is now left to dwell and boil in her anxiety, convinced of never repairing her morality in the eyes of Mr Thornton.

Towards the end of the novel, after suffering the heart-breaking losses of both of her parents, Margaret is offered to return to London or to her beloved Helstone, yet upon visiting she clearly sees and feels the way both locations have changed since she had left months ago - especially in Helstone she notices poverty everywhere and what once seemed picturesque is now ruined, leaving her feeling out of place, yet with fond, distant memories from the past. In fact, it is during her visit to the village she finally comes to terms with her guilt and shame and faces

¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 194.

¹¹⁰ Nancy D. Mann, "Intelligence and Self-Awareness in "North and South": A Matter of Sex and Class." *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 29, no. 1 (1975): 30-31.

¹¹¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 263.

¹¹² Harman, "In Promiscuous Company," 370-371.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 280, 422.

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 49-52.

them head on, accepting her possibly tainted pride with honesty and bravery, as well as her romantic feelings towards Mr Thornton.¹¹⁵ Therefore, shame, in fact, proves to be beneficial as it helps Margaret to reassess her life and find herself in the midst of chaos: “Margaret may castigate herself for her moral failure, but she pays no real price for the adulterous aura that surrounds her actions. Quite the contrary, she reaps its rewards.”¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, the story of *North and South* follows a well-established novelistic convention and closes with a marriage, yet a very nonconventional one. Margaret is left practically financially independent after Mr Bell’s sudden passing, yet she decides to use her newly acquired funds to save Thornton’s business as well as marry him based on their mutual affections. In comparison to the four other marriages taking place within the story that rally for the separation of men’s and women’s spheres, the relationship of Margaret and Thornton follows the formula Gaskell gives for class harmony - understanding, which leads to affection and cooperation. By claiming this she establishes that communication and civil discussion is the key for balance and eventual peace in the future.

Although Elizabeth Gaskell herself was not a native Northerner, she had spent a large portion of her life as a resident of Manchester, which enabled her to observe and then subsequently incorporate key features of the region within her work, including *North and South*. The novel in question shows cultural and custom differences, as well as examples of the distinct Northern way of speaking experienced through the eyes and ears of a Southern visitor.

First instance of a regional difference is shown through Margaret’s initial impression of Milton-Northern upon her first arrival, which offers the reader a very vivid picture of the location and its atmosphere:

For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a deep lead-coloured cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which it lay. It was all the darker from contrast with the pale grayblue of the wintry sky... Nearer to the town, the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke... Quick they were whirled over long, straight, hopeless streets of regularly-built houses, all small and of brick. Here and there a great oblong many-windowed factory stood up, like a hen among her chickens, puffing out black

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 384-401.

¹¹⁶ Harman, "In Promiscuous Company," 372.

'unparliamentary' smoke, and sufficiently accounting for the cloud which Margaret had taken to foretell rain.¹¹⁷

Clearly, coming from the open, picturesque rural South she is rather shocked by the visual at first, yet thankfully grows accustomed to it overtime while residing in the city.

Nevertheless, perhaps the biggest regional and cultural differences are represented in peoples' behaviours and their local customs, which – to her initial embarrassment – Margaret frequently misreads or misinterprets. For instance, when bidding goodbyes at the end of one of Thornton's first visitations to their household, she incorrectly interprets his outstretched hand and creates a rather awkward situation:

When Mr. Thornton rose up to go away, after shaking hands with Mr. and Mrs. Hale, he made an advance to Margaret to wish her good-bye in a similar manner. It was the frank familiar custom of the place; but Margaret was not prepared for it. She simply bowed her farewell; although the instant she saw the hand, half put out, quickly drawn back, she was sorry she had not been aware of the intention.¹¹⁸

In a similar manner she later accidentally assumes Nicholas Higgins for being a drunkard when she misinterprets Bessy Higgins' words and immediately associates "drink" with perpetual drunkenness.¹¹⁹ Elliot argues, however, that "her difficulties arise not from her lack of sympathy or moral capacity but from her failure to understand the Higginses' words and gestures."¹²⁰ Nonetheless, Bessy considers an occasional drink a normal part of a working life.

Eventually, about half way through the story, Margaret reaches a successful assimilation and even incorporates some of the local slang into her vocabulary, much to her mother's disdain:

... But, Margaret, don't get to use these horrid Milton words. "Slack of work:" it is a provincialism. What will your aunt Shaw say, if she hears you use it on her return?

'Oh, mamma! don't try and make a bugbear of aunt Shaw,' said Margaret, laughing. 'Edith picked up all sorts of military slang from Captain Lennox, and aunt Shaw never took any notice of it.'

'But yours is factory slang.'

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 59.

¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 85-86.

¹¹⁹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 136.

¹²⁰ Elliott, "The Female Visitor," 39.

'And if I live in a factory town, I must speak factory language when I want it. Why, mamma, I could astonish you with a great many words you never heard in your life. I don't believe you know what a knobstick is.'

'Not I, child. I only know it has a very vulgar sound; and I don't want to hear you using it.'

'Very well, dearest mother, I won't. Only I shall have to use a whole explanatory sentence instead.'¹²¹

Undoubtedly, Elizabeth Gaskell had always paid an immense amount of attention to properly convey the setting of her novels by highlighting and incorporating a large variety of small localized details, which also included the local dialect.¹²² In *North and South* she does so predominantly through the Higgins family and their fellow workmates or neighbours - generally speaking, the working-class inhabitants of Milton. They provide the reader with a colourful representation of the local speech since Mrs Gaskell managed to skilfully reproduce their way of speaking by a fairly accurate transcription which actually proved to be somewhat difficult to decipher and understand at times. Nevertheless, it truly helps to paint the atmosphere of the story, build a proper background for the characters – especially those coming from the working-class - and add authenticity to the general mood and setting of the narrative.

However, not only does Gaskell's depiction of the regional dialect provide a well-rounded illustration of the area, it also highlights the class and educational differences. Although the Northerners – and especially the working classes - were often perceived as harsh, violent, barbaric and uneducated, most prominent Northern figures of Mrs. Gaskell's story – Nicholas Higgins and John Thornton – both strive for a certain type of education in their free time. While one would assume that Nicholas perhaps lacks any profound higher education from his obvious way of speaking with a strong regional dialect, it is revealed by his daughter Bessy that he's actually constantly spending money on books and professional lectures at the Lyceum.¹²³ The quality of such schooling is debatable, mostly due to the nature of such lectures, however, the fact perfectly aligns with Higgins' undying desire to be a better version of himself at any given moment.

¹²¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 237.

¹²² Drabble, *A Writer's Britain*, 86.

¹²³ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 102.

John Thornton, on the other hand, seeks education with an assistance of a private tutor – Mr. Hale. Their lectures fall under so-called “adult education”¹²⁴ and incorporate studying of non-commercial matters such as literature or debating, resulting in the two men forming a close friendship. However, as ... points out: “Thornton claims that his studies under Mr. Hale are purely for enjoyment and have no practical benefit for a Manchester (or “Milton”) man,”¹²⁵ meaning he only participates in such leisure activities to cultivate his mind, not to improve his trade-related plans and tactics.

Nevertheless, perhaps one of the best examples of the difference between the way Nicholas Higgins and John Thornton express themselves would be the moment the manufacturer seeks Higgins out inside his home to offer him a place at his mill:

'Yo've called me impudent, and a liar, and a mischief-maker, and yo' might ha' said wi' some truth, as I were now and then given to drink. An' I ha' called you a tyrant, an' an oud bull-dog, and a hard, cruel master; that's where it stands. But for th' childer. Measter, do yo' think we can e'er get on together?'

'Well!' said Mr. Thornton, half-laughing, 'it was not my proposal that we should go together. But there's one comfort, on your own showing. We neither of us can think much worse of the other than we do now.'¹²⁶

This excerpt clearly shows the distinction in their way of speaking as well as represents the humble beginnings of their fruitful reconciliation as a master and his worker, overcoming their differences.

Finally, *North and South* is essentially a loose-ended novel and the closing scenes of the story remain open for one's interpretation. Although all sides of the personal conflicts appear at peace towards the end, their future stays unclear. Given the information and facts presented in the previous chapters regarding the treatment of women and their property during the nineteenth century, the reader can only hope that the romantic pair preserves their mutual love and respect even after they had been married and that John Thornton does not simply seize Margaret's property as his own behind the scenes, especially after her generous offer to save his business and livelihood.

¹²⁴ David Thiele, ""That There Brutus": Elite Culture and Knowledge Diffusion in the Industrial Novels of Elizabeth Gaskell." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35, no. 1 (2007): 276.

¹²⁵ Thiele, "Elite Culture and Knowledge," 276-277.

¹²⁶ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 326.

In regards to John Thornton, the mill-owner, and his employees, especially Nicholas Higgins, the future remains just as ambiguous. Although both sides agree to cooperate, respect each other and listen to each other's concerns, Thornton is assured strikes are inevitable no matter what.¹²⁷ Therefore, albeit the novel presents the reader with a seemingly happy ending, a sense of uncertainty keeps lingering in the air.

¹²⁷ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 432.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, Elizabeth Gaskell was undoubtedly a remarkable author. She had proved herself to be deeply sympathetic towards the working-class struggle as she had used her platform to raise awareness and rally for compassion towards their cause. With *North and South* she did so through the eyes of a young middle-class woman in hopes of influencing her contemporary middle- and upper-class readers.

Her novel, predominantly taking place in the industrial North, not only showed the dark sides of capitalism but also solidified a woman's presence within public spaces as a strong, positive influence. Her *Margaret Hale*, forcefully thrust into an unknown world of the industrial city, proves her position as a class mediator while experiencing a significant personal struggle and growth at the same time. On top of that, Gaskell's vivid depictions of the local communities helped to shape an idea that although people come from different social classes, they are actually not that different from each other.

In conclusion, despite being criticized for failing to keep the spotlight on the primary issue of her social-problem novel, Gaskell's heroic efforts and the importance of her writing should not be diminished as a simple romantic story. She had offered an insight into the minds of both workers and employers in hopes of creating a better future for everyone while also submitting to the contemporary social conventions, creating an enjoyable story with a strong message - and that is exactly what makes her a remarkable author.

7. Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce je nastínění žánru regionalismu, problematiky industrializace, urbanizace, ale také postavení žen všech tříd skrze dílo Elizabeth Gaskell Sever a Jih. Text se pokouší o zachycení vývoje, historie a charakteru zmíněného literárního žánru, ale vedle toho též rozebírá problematiku vzniku a rozkvětu první průmyslové revoluce od samého začátku, strasti života britské dělnické třídy v první polovině 19. století, jiskry radikalismu, ale také statut žen nižších i vyšších tříd, jejich práva a případné angažmá ve veřejných záležitostech spojených s politikou.

První kapitola se v několika dalších podkapitolách věnuje žánru regionalismu a podrobně ho rozebírá z hlediska historie, vývoje, významu a hlavních znaků. Zmíněný žánr se zrodil koncem 18. století v Británii pod taktovkou anglicko-irské spisovatelky Marie Edgeworth a jedním z jeho hlavních znaků je silné pouto či zájem v určitou oblast a lokální kulturu dané oblasti. První část kapitoly se zabývá historií a vývojem regionalismu, počínajíc krátkou definicí co to regionalismus vlastně je a co obnáší. Dále jsou představeny další podžánry, které v rámci regionalismu můžeme najít a hlavní zakladatelka žánru spolu s jejím dílem Castle Rackrent. Později podkapitola také zmiňuje potenciální politické podbarvení žánru, jež spisovatelé používali k vyjádření svého názoru, či přesvědčení. Konec podkapitoly poté zmiňuje současný úpadek regionální literatury, neb již není tak důležitá pro smysl sounáležitosti. Druhá část kapitoly se věnuje významu lokálního dialektu v regionální literatuře a jejího použití k efektivnímu vylíčení lokální kultury.

Třetí část se zabývá rozdíly mezi venkovskou a městskou tematikou. Valná většina regionální literatury je situována do přírody, ale najdou se i zástupci zaměřující se na městské prostředí. Spolu s tematikou města přichází i zmínky o sociálních problémech a poměrech ve společnosti, často inspirované neklidnou dobou probíhající industriální revoluce. Poslední, čtvrtá, podkapitola se věnuje životu, práci a přesvědčením rozebírané spisovatelky Elizabeth Gaskell.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá tématem samotné industriální revoluce. V první podkapitole je představen postupný proces industrializace a růst britské ekonomiky skrz obchod s bavlnou a bavlněnými produkty. Nastíněny jsou i geografické změny způsobené rozvojem tzv. průmyslových oblastí, které díky svým přírodním zdrojům poskytly perfektní prostor k rozvoji daného odvětví. Nastíněna je i problematika migrace za prací do větších měst a efekty urbanizace. Jsou zmíněny i sociální a společenské problémy způsobené úpadkem průmyslu

kolem 50. let 19. století a neutuchajícím přívalem nových obyvatel do měst a celkovým částečným selháním britské ekonomiky ve stínu napoleonských válek.

Druhá část zmiňuje počátky radikalismu, které často nakonec vedly ke spojení sil, veřejným protestům a stávkám továrních dělníků. Podkapitola zmiňuje několik obecných radikalistických hnutí jako je Luddismus, Owenismus nebo Chartismus, které se zrodily v průběhu první poloviny 19. století mezi dělnickou třídou, a jejich hlavní cíle. Nejpůsobivější částí těchto hnutí byla jejich schopnost sjednotit lidi za jednotnou myšlenkou. Vedle toho jsou zmíněny i hnutí více lokálního charakteru ve formě odborů uvnitř jednotlivých továren.

Třetí část se zabývá specifickou a vysoce historicky významnou stávkou roku 1842, které se aktivně zúčastnil snad největší počet dělníků vůbec. I přes svůj politický neúspěch pomohla rozdmýchat plamínek vzdoru uvnitř srdcí dělnické třídy a efektivně dokázala zastavit celý koloběh ekonomiky během svého několikátýdenního trvání, i když nakonec nepřinesla prakticky žádný dlouhodobý efekt a zlepšení pracovních podmínek pro dělnickou třídu do příchodu nového století.

Čtvrtá a poslední část třetí kapitoly se zabývá ekonomickými a kulturními rozdíly mezi severním, převážně industriálním, a jižním, převážně zemědělským, regionem Anglie v době vrcholné britské industriální revoluce. Nejhlubší propast mezi nimi vzniká při významném ekonomickém vzrůstu severního regionu.

Třetí kapitola se podrobně věnuje problematice postavení žen všech tříd v první polovině 19. století. První část nejdříve pohlíží na ženy z dělnické třídy a přibližuje jejich systém živobytí, rodiny, morálních a pracovních zásad s vlivy zevnitř i zvenčí. 19. století kladlo velký důraz na mateřství, a proto ženy nižších tříd často zastávaly role matek, zatímco také aktivně pracovaly v zemědělství či továrnách. Podkapitola také zmiňuje životy svobodných žen či případně účast něžného pohlaví v radikalistických hnutích, případně jiných formách spolků v podobném duchu, neb výzkum apeluje na ženskou schopnost organizace. Dále je nastíněna i problematika nerovnosti mezi pohlavími a případy domácího násilí, které se ukazují být znepokojivě frekventovanou součástí domovů nižších tříd.

Druhá část třetí kapitoly přibližuje život žen ve středních a vyšších třídách, který je o poznání jiný než ten, který prožívají ženy s tříd nižších. I tato podkapitola představuje typické „profesní“ či volnočasové zaměření těchto žen a jejich postavení ve společnosti či za zdi jejich domů. Zmíněny jsou například sklony k filantropii, charitativní práci či organizaci velkých banketů a jiných společenských akcí. Možná překvapivě, i některé ženy středních tříd se zajímaly o radikalistická hnutí a staly se součástí jejich řad, i když ne až tak aktivně jako jejich kolegyně ze tříd nižších. V podobném duchu je zmíněn také vznik a růst popularity feminismu.

Nastíněn je i postoj žen středních a vyšších tříd jako matek a zároveň učitelek jejich dětí, ruku v ruce s temnou stránkou manželství, stejně jako u žen tříd nižších.

Čtvrtá kapitola se poté věnuje samotné analýze díla skrze jeho příběh a jeho hlavní hrdinku, Margaret Hale. Nejprve je představen původ rozebírané knihy, kdy a za jakých podmínek byla vydána a její hlavní témata jsou porovnána s autorčíným první literárním počinem Mary Barton. Poté kapitola plynule přejde na analýzu mezitřídních konfliktů skrze dva hlavní představitele obou tříd – Nicholase Higginse a Johna Thorntona. Oba pánové, jejich cíle a přesvědčení jsou představeny individuálně a poté je zdůrazněno, jak se navzájem ovlivňují a přinášejí pomyslnou harmonii do konfliktu mezi továrníkem a dělníkem.

Zaměření kapitoly dále přechází na samotnou Margaret a její pozici ve společnosti jako aktivní filantropky, která ovlivňuje chování ostatních postav. Tato část ale také rozebírá její vystupování na veřejnosti, které může vyvolávat nežádoucí reakce jejího okolí či její vnitřní konflikt sama se sebou, svou ženskostí a pocitem viny.

Poslední část kapitoly poté vyzdvihává znaky regionalismu ve zmíněném díle a to přesněji ve formě vizuálního popisu, místních zvyků, ale také lokálního dialektu, který spisovatelka v knize efektivně zaznamenala.

Závěr nakonec shrnuje cíle autorky, které chtěla vyjádřit svým dílem.

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