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The Nineteenth Century Through Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*

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Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos, orientada pelo Professor Doutor Jorge Miguel Pereira Bastos da Silva

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

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Membros do Júri

Professor

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Classificação obtida:

Dedico este trabalho aos meus pais. Para sempre com o vosso amor e sacrifício.

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Porto, 27/05/2025

Francisco Luís Ribeiro de Castro

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Abstract

The nineteenth century was a period in British history characterized by strong transformations observable within several aspects of this nation's way of life. Exploration of this era has identified several subjects which, despite not being the sole engines of change or the only resulting effects of the latter, held considerably more weight in their influence on the social sphere, as well as a greater presence in the minds of the Victorian people. As a result, it appeared beneficial to contribute to this ongoing study by analysing an author who had both experienced and written about the newly industrialized world around her, and to interpret the way in which this was accomplished. For this, Elizabeth Gaskell was selected, specifically her novels *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, which prove themselves to be the most proper for such matters. This was done not only for the aforementioned reasons, but because of the author's tendency for both observing and interacting with her environment and the people who she shared it with, the result being a production of literature that works as a reflection of the real world.

For this research, there was an identification of the most relevant matters of nineteenth century Britain within the author's novels, allowing for an understanding of Elizabeth Gaskell's views on these issues, how they are portrayed and how we may draw connections between them and this woman's own life experiences. Through this process, it was recognized that the author possessed remarkable awareness of social and economic affairs, having elaborated in her novels' depictions of the consequences of an increasingly industrial society, be it in the condition of the working class, in the opposition of ideals or in the clashing of class interests, all of them contributing to a more informed understanding of life during this period.

Key words: Elizabeth Gaskell, nineteenth century, Industrial Revolution

Resumo

O século XIX foi um período na história da Grã-Bretanha caracterizado por intensas transformações observáveis dentro dos diversos aspetos do dia-a-dia. A sua exploração tem identificado vários tópicos que, apesar de não se apresentarem como os únicos agentes de mudança ou como os efeitos resultantes destes, possuem uma superior influência na esfera social, assim como maior presença nas mentes da população vitoriana. Como resultado, parece-me relevante contribuir para este continuo estudo através da análise de uma autora que simultaneamente experienciou e escreveu sobre o mundo progressivamente mais industrializado em seu redor, interpretando a forma como tal foi realizado. Para tal propósito, Elizabeth Gaskell foi selecionada, especificamente os seus romances *Mary Barton* e *North and South*, que se denotaram como os mais apropriados para os referidos objetivos. Isto foi feito não apenas pelas razões anteriormente elaboradas, mas também pela tendência que a autora demonstra na observação e interação com o seu ambiente e com aqueles com que este é partilhado, o resultado sendo uma produção literária que funciona como um reflexo do mundo real.

Para esta investigação foi elaborada uma seleção dentro dos romances da autora das temáticas mais relevantes na esfera britânica no decorrer do século XIX, tornando possível a compreensão das opiniões de Gaskell em relação a tais questões, como estas são representadas e como podem ser conectadas com as experiências pessoais desta mulher. Através deste processo, foi observado que a autora possuía notável conhecimento relativo a questões sociais e económicas, havendo elaborado nos seus romances representações das consequências de uma sociedade cada vez mais dedicada à indústria, podendo tal ser observado nas condições dos trabalhadores, na existência de ideais opostos e no conflito entre os interesses das diversas classes sociais, contribuindo isto para um conhecimento esclarecido em relação à vida no decorrer deste período.

Palavras-chave: Elizabeth Gaskell, século XIX, Revolução Industrial

Introduction

To begin reading any literary work is to open ourselves to the inherent knowledge it is able to provide us with in its capacity for exposing the reader to the countless elements that are contained amongst its pages. In the case of the novels to be here explored, the historical age they wish to represent, coinciding here with the one lived by the author herself (Cazamian, 1973, p. 214), are of special importance as the intentions they demonstrate are directly tied to the various afflictions that affected the daily life of nineteenth century Britain. As such, it would be wise to provide a contextualization that correctly positions us at a similar historical position as the author. It is to be noted that in no way is there an attempt at a full chronological description of the events that preceded this era, but instead a series of highlights of pertinent information for the topic at hand.

With the aforementioned matters settled, as the century turned many found themselves in the midst of battling ideologies and movements, each with their concerns and distinct manners of interpreting the rapidly changing society they belonged to. For most of the history of this territory, the blood running through an individual's veins was the foremost indicator of the position they should occupy within the pre-established hierarchy of power, but this new era brought with it change, and barely any aspect of life escaped it, not even those with the deepest and strongest roots. What is here mainly referred to is to the rise of a portion of the population which, enjoying the fruits of having invested in the swiftly expanding manufacturing industry, together with the technology that accompanied it, gained tremendous amounts of wealth and power. Indeed, with more fortune than the lowly working-class man or woman could ever hope to achieve but yet lacking the ancestry required to fit the label of "aristocracy", we witness the gradual emergence of the middle class, often referred to as the "new bourgeoisie" (pp. 15-16).

Such a powerful blow to a system that had been established in British society for countless generations couldn't have come without reason, or with lack of previous developments. As formerly mentioned, if this middle class has anything to give thanks to its unprecedented rise in influence within the hierarchy it held an advantageous position in, then it should direct it towards the astonishing developments in the technological fields that

allowed for extraordinary levels of production and to the market that both benefited from and made it possible to be so (Hobsbawn, 1996, p. 32). The period we now designate as the "Industrial Revolution" is usually given a starting point in the eighteenth century, having gained notable momentum in the 1780s, and has been described as "probably the most important event in world history, at any rate since the invention of agriculture and cities" (p. 29). However, the act of investing on ever-evolving means of manufacturing the products that were desired by a great number of the population alone wouldn't be enough to create the reality that came to take place in Britain during this century. After all, before investment can be done there needs to be an object to invest in. It is here that we are also able to theorize why this "revolution" took its first steps in this territory and not overseas or in any other European nation. In the simplest and most direct of ways, Britain possessed neither technological nor scientific superiority compared to other regions of the old continent, being further impaired by an education system that was dull at best. What this country did possess was an agricultural system that gave increasing priority to providing products for the market and that was ready to contribute to the upkeeping of the growing numbers of population, many of which would find their means of income in labouring at the industries of the expanding urban centres. A healthy market also meant more available funds for the infrastructures needed for further oiling the gears of the industrial machine, while also assuring that those who possessed them sat comfortably at the table with the most influential figures of society (pp. 29-32).

With respect to all the previously discussed points, one would then determine that what we could observe in the nineteenth century was the rise of a decently sized sector of the British population who had obtained for themselves considerable public influence and steady income while rejecting the ideas of the past and embracing those of liberty and enfranchisement (Cazamian, 1973, p. 16). These industrialists had risen above the masses not with the aid of their governments or by claiming an aristocratic title, but by their own vigour and ingenuity. If an investment succeeded, only they were deserving of laying claim to its profits, and if it did not, the money lost would come straight out of their pockets and no entity would be there to ease this economic damage. More importantly, this new reality, including the market that was simultaneously shaping and being shaped by it, was a sea of opportunities and, just like any other sea, there were those who successfully sailed through

its waters and those who met their untimely demise, and if a vessel ceased its activities in such treacherous domain, the freer the remaining were to navigate, now with increased ease

> Men would have to cut themselves off from their native society and become free and independent, relying on the strength of their intelligence or wealth, if they had any, and their muscular strength if they had not. Thus, they would enter the merciless battle of each against all for life. (p. 16)

This new world was one of competition, be it in the economic sense or in the hierarchy of Victorian society, for if one must be the victor, one other must suffer the consequences of defeat. In this hostile environment, the industrialist middle class flourished with "a love of struggle bred in its bones" (p. 16). There existed the acknowledgement that no triumph comes without before walking the hazardous road that leads towards it, a simple and inevitable fact which this class embraced. Individual freedom was the most important element of a successful society for these manufacturers and any obstacle in achieving it, such as the "remainders of feudalism" and "relics of old institutions", were the enemies of real and immediate progress:

> Contest was the framework (...) and the world seemed an arena in which the weak and strong joined battle under the free light of commercial competition. The fallen were trodden underfoot: so much the worse for them. ´Each for himself and the law of England for all` was the motto of industrialism. These men were filled with pride when they contemplated the great wealth they had amassed from the product of their own energy. (p. 16)

Through their endeavours, the "new bourgeoisie" carried with them a set of ideals that both shaped their actions and were reinforced by them. This standard that accompanied them into battle was that of "Individualism". Perhaps the most relevant ideology of the nineteenth century, it is described as providing a "higher moral value to the individual than to the community or society", which, as a consequence, leads to appealing to a greater

individual freedom, especially in acting according to what benefits one's self-interest. What is most significant to us, at least in the present case, is the extension of the definition of this "individualism" through its application to businesses two centuries ago. Interestingly, the same set of ideals and their nomenclature were treated as "an actual economic system" (Eatwell *et al.*, 1989, p. 149). In this case its essential characteristic was:

> a competitive market system which lets the direction of the economy be the unintended outcome of the decisions made my myriad individuals about the uses to which they will put their own labour and resources. (p. 149)

It may seem odd that such ideals could become as widespread and impacting as they did, but it might be possible to explain this phenomenon in similar manner to how Right Reverend Littlejohn, Bishop of Long Island (1881), did in one of his sermons at the University of Cambridge in the final decades of the nineteenth century, with the words of this man greatly focusing on the growth and tendencies of Individualism, its presence in the modern world and how these ideals affected, and were affected by, Christianity (Littlejohn, 1881, pp. vii-viii). Experiencing this era first hand, the bishop held the belief that the "development of the individual" was both the cause and the result of our evolution as a civilization. In the early stages of society, man did not belong to himself, rather "the monarch owned the subject, the father the son, the husband the wife, the man the slave", with the same being the case for his property, capable of being removed from him by both State and Church (p. 3). With the belief that the "more aggressive, if not the more highly developed forms of modern life, are democratic in their tendency" and that Democracy itself emphasizes the "majesty of the individual" and the search for its absolute potential, it is no wonder that the man, who had until then been "long checked, repressed, often crushed by organizations and institutions", and who now possessed the tools to do so, had the desire to place the individual at the forefront position of the developments of Victorian society, even if, Littlejohn warns, he was tempted to "overrate himself" and to "underrate what is external to himself" (p. 7-8).

However, as this new, energetic and individualistic middle class rose, it encountered a fierce opponent in the aristocracy. Due to the titles and hereditary rights this social class

had under its possession, many individuals belonging to this group of individuals had the right to the ownership of land, the great majority of it utilized for farming. Unlike the manufacturers who saw themselves as having worked to be in the position in which their monetary gains were considerable, the landed aristocracy merely inherited these riches and were seen as undeserving of them (Cazamian, 1973, p. 23-24). Furthermore, the "Corn Laws", a protectionist measure that forced imports making their way into British territory to pay hefty taxes, assured that this same landed aristocracy could have control over the production of food, increasing prices as they wished, to the great displeasure of the majority of the population, and going against the free-market ideals that the industrialist middle class valued so much (Amigoni, 2011, p. 188).

It is here, amidst a conflict of classes, that possibly the most important one of them in relation to the novels of Gaskell makes itself known. The battle against the aristocracy was a harsh one, and the middle class was aware of it. If they were to defeat, or at least weaken, this social class that had had its place engraved into the hierarchy of British life for countless centuries they would need numbers, and the working class had plenty:

> there was the political and administrative battle of the middle class as they tried to force open the historical English social alignments, against the opposition of the conservative landowning aristocracy of the established order. The bourgeoisie wanted the assistance of the masses in this struggle, and succeeded in gaining their involvement by conjuring up the image of common middle- and working-class opposition to the holders of power, and vaguely promising a better future once the oligarchical base of government had been extended (Cazamian, 1973, p. 24)

One of the most significant and devastating blows that the aristocracy suffered in this prolonged class war was most certainly the Reform Act of 1832. Its implementation in society was most relevantly felt in the extension of voting qualifications to freeholders with the possession of the value of ten pounds, together with a desired erasure of the fraction of the population that held hereditary voting rights and for the political representation of new areas of the nation (p. 22). Despite the working and middle class engaging together in an alliance towards this goal, even if uneasy in nature (p. 30), it benefited mostly the former,

who naturally possessed the needed ten pounds to be able to exercise their newly obtained voting rights. In fact, the agreement between classes itself would soon come to an end as it was dissolved almost immediately after the "new bourgeoisie" found itself in a position of power and reverted their policies into a more conservative state with the objective of maintaining it (p. 28).

Truly, independently of who held the power, the men and women of the working class seemed to be the defeated party. The aristocracy had failed them due to their lack of foresight when it came to governing, giving greater importance to maintaining their status in a world that seemed to increasingly reject it with each passing day, and the middle class had abandoned them upon achieving its goals, shifting its attention to attaining the most profits possible (pp. 61-86). Life was hard for those at the lower levels of the hierarchy, and this new Industrial Revolution that tore through British society seemed to only emphasise this fact. Unstable moments in the economic sectors meant unreliability in living. The urban centres grew fast and with very little planning, leading to sanitation existing at an abysmal state. Furthermore, the mechanization of production ruined the market for small business owners and the big industries that took over manufacturing provided their workers with wages that were barely enough to put food on the table. These workers operated for astonishingly long hours and suffered under horrible conditions. At this time, more than half of these people's days were spent labouring their lives away, with misery spreading to the younger portions of the population as countless positions in these factories were filled by children (Bowditch, 1961, p. xi).

If anything, the nineteenth century is an age of dualities or, more specifically, of division. In the field of ideals, we have the struggle between Individualism and the Chartist movement, which would manifest itself mainly as a working-class response to the first (Cazamian, 1973, p. 30). At the same time, and as was previously mentioned, there is the back and forward between the middle class and the aristocracy, with the latter now fighting the growing power of the "new bourgeoisie" with "Factory Acts" (p. 73), and with each representing the new and the old, in unison with the rural and urban settings that often accompanied them (p. 15-16).

Amongst this deeply divided nation, Elizabeth Gaskell comes into the picture and, in the novels that will be here studied, word after word this author focuses on the radical division

between rich and poor (Adams, 2012, p. 104) and between classes and regions in an attempt to heal the wounds that tore the British nation apart (d'Albertis, 1997, p. 46). Believing that the acts of reading and writing were capable of shaping society (p. 13) and that they could be combined with dialogue, the essential tool towards dealing with social tensions (Fowler, 1991, p. 7), she would publish both *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, two novels that would cause an everlasting impact in the genre they are often fitted into.

1. A Mechanized Revolution

The stage is set, or at the very least we have hopefully achieved an understanding of the circumstances that came together in the past to create the social scenes that demanded Gaskell's attention. We have taken a glimpse into the Industrial Revolution and an even briefer one into the impact it had on the lives of the lower classes of the British social hierarchy, but it seems proper, if not necessary, that we explore these elements in greater depth as they possess considerable importance as the author's inspiration for the settings of her narratives here under scrutiny (Gaskell, 2008, p. x). In similar manner to the former chapter, I will exclusively give greater importance to the aspects of this historical period that are relevant to Gaskell's literary works. In fact, every component of what will now be exposed will be observed to be an essential factor in the author's writings, as will be recognized at a later occasion.

This being the case, one of the best descriptions of the Industrial Revolution we could utilize is the following:

> shackles were taken off the productive power of human societies, which henceforth became capable of the constant, rapid and up to the present limitless multiplication of men, goods and services. (Hobsbawn, 1996, p.28)

Though its beginnings are often attributed to the previous century, the nineteen-hundreds were the age where its effects became most apparent, obtaining for itself a certain aspect of eeriness that many times tormented the minds of the artistically inclined, especially those in the field of literature, being this of special interest to us (pp. 27-28). The main development, and a very credible reason why "revolution" is utilized for the description of this era, is that British living was forever altered, a change that, from that point on, would come to manifest itself throughout the rest of the world, with significant emphasis in its western hemisphere, forever mutating the very nature of our presence on this planet.

The crude means of product manufacturing were mostly replaced as machines were introduced into the process. The strength and certainty of steel allowed for unstopping and

untiring “workers”, these themselves combined with newly optimized sources of energy to reach levels of manufacturing that the individual worker was incapable of. All these elements came together to enjoy a coexistence which would manifest itself inside factories, the monuments of industrialism whose sole purpose was one and one only: to increase the rate of production. Behind these efforts was the manufacturer, the middle-class businessman who had the capital needed for the risks that investment in these emergent technologies required (Bowditch, 1961, p. iii).

If I am to speak of the impact of the Industrial Revolution, I must necessarily make reference to its most important industry, one which would propel the British economy for a remarkable amount of time. Indian cotton goods had for some time held considerable importance in the overseas market, a material that the industries of Europe desired to emulate by their own means. Though they were successful in producing the lower quality examples of these textile products, the ones that required a more intricate process were still beyond their reach, at least when it came to assuring that their production was competitive when compared to what was being exported out of the East. Luckily, the national industry would enjoy a comfortable presence in the market when prohibitions on importations were set in place, allowing for a chance at growth. However, this opportunity for expansion would find its nourishment elsewhere, far from the borders of British land (Hobsbawn, 1996, pp. 33-34).

Another important tool that Britain had at its disposition was its vast colonial empire. These foreign territories had presented the nation with opportunities in the field of trade, and these very same had allowed for the industry around cotton products to exist and benefit from it with increasing demand. Plantations in the West Indies, where slave labour was not uncommon, provided the country with the majority of the raw material it required. At the same time, intent on maximizing the rate of production for cotton-based materials, the textile industry enjoyed the support of inventive minds which created machines to be employed at mills. These were wonders of engineering, a fact that did not stop them from being relatively straightforward in their constitution. This meant that, were an aspiring industrialist wishing to increase his productivity, the investment needed for acquiring the aid of these contraptions would quickly pay for itself. With such steady income of raw material and with the investments of the middle class, now completely enamoured with this

new industry's potential, it is no wonder that what followed was an expansion which led to what was essentially a monopoly over the cotton trade, one that was further encouraged by the British government itself (pp. 34-36).

It is undeniable that the Industrial Revolution brought with it several positive components to the British sphere. For instance, it is indisputable that the railway system, born from the investment of the wealthy middle class, was a valuable asset for this territory, connecting different locations within the country and allowing for a speed of travel that would be thought impossible a few centuries prior (pp. 44-45). Simultaneously, the revolutionary sentiment, the desire for innovation and the change felt throughout the nation made it so that cities like Manchester would be recognized not only as bastions of industry and commerce, but also as a "growing centre of scientific and literary activity" (Flint, 1991, p. 5). Ultimately, this new "Industrial Era" appears to revolve around its untapped potential:

> Industrial civilization had a certain grandeur and beauty. It shared the solid merits of the men who had built it: dogged energy and initiative. If its environment was joyless, its capacity for human passion ran strong and deep. (...) It was harsh, unyielding soil, but it might bring forth the fruits of peace and justice when tilled by gentle intelligence and religious humanitarian missions. (Cazamian, 1973, p. 227)

However, as is always the case, there were the less fortunate, those whose lives had been tarnished by this Industrial Revolution with a level of misery that can evoke no feeling other than pity in those who witnessed it.

1.1. Social Effects

It would be an understatement to classify the living conditions of the British working class of this age as anything other than a total human catastrophe:

> Labourers huddled together in crowded, insanitary dwellings; fever was almost universally chronic. Decent food was unknown; a rasher of bacon constituted a

> special treat, and the workers were undernourished and fearfully ravaged by drink. (Cazamian, 1973, p. 63)

As was referenced previously in our introduction to the world of nineteenth century Britain, this social class would have felt as if it had been abandoned. Men and women were left to their own endeavours when attempting to make a living in a society that had seen great shifts in its structure in what was a relatively short amount of time. The impact of the position they suddenly found themselves in was there for all to see, were they to step into the streets of the industrial urban centres:

> there were clearly far more who, faced with a social catastrophe they did not understand, impoverished, exploited, herded into slums that combined bleakness and squalor, or into the expanding complexes of small-scale industrial villages, sank into demoralization. (Hobsbawn, 1996, p. 202)

Despite available social aid existing at this time, as will be explored in this chapter, these forms of support would not always reach every individual of the lower classes of Victorian society. It is no wonder that, in a desperate attempt to escape this anguish, mass alcoholism would settle itself amongst this weakened sector of the population. It was essentially a fact that this social ailment was an "invariable companion of headlong and uncontrolled industrialization and urbanization" (p. 202).

It is this very last development in urban expansion that was the key source of many of the complications that we are able to detect when looking at the living conditions of the working class. Similarly to the manufacturing phenomenon itself, urban zones surrounding the factories that had the responsibility of providing the market with the goods it required were spreading at an unsustainable rate. There was work to be found here[1], industry was

[1] A great number of positions were now being filled by those who had previously worked the fields. In the past, the agricultural world had to forcefully adapt to the eradication of communal cultivation, a characteristic of medieval practices. This system aimed at self-sufficiency rather than commercial practices, but was gradually discarded leaving British fields in the hands of a small number of landowners. There was resistance by these members of the social hierarchy when agriculture seemed to progressively turn towards a more industrial state with the growing presence of revolutionary ideals. An example of this resistance was the implementation of the Corn Laws. However, the continuous victories of the middle-class in the political, economic and social sphere, together with the agricultural depression of 1815, essentially destroyed any hope for this sector. Life

expanding at an unprecedented rate, and it demanded the manpower needed for it to keep its development thriving, but every other aspect of what we have come to expect from any form of human settlement was severely lacking, if not non-existent. The streets were filthy and neglected, the supplying of water ineffective and housing for the working class itself was not assured. This combination of factors resulted in such deficient levels of sanitation that epidemics of contagious diseases like the dreaded cholera had favourable grounds that allowed them to re-appear and terrorize the population (p. 203).

Meanwhile, amongst all the misery, the classes which possessed the means to assure their own comfortable living conditions, such as the middle class, who actively benefited from the workers who lived their daily lives walking through the city's filth, were none the wiser, or at least wished to appear as such. As the urban centre grew, these sectors of the population assured that the economic and governmental areas, together with higher-class residential zones, remained far from the opposing side of town where the unwanted, dishevelled and penniless men and women scrambled hopelessly in an effort to make ends meet. Only when the health afflictions that emanated from these areas grew rampant enough to affect the wealthy did they implement plans to rebuild and reform the city. Meanwhile, the population grew increasingly demoralized. Crime and violence were regular elements of everyday life. It was not uncommon to witness infants being killed, women falling into prostitution, desperate to make a living, or people giving in to their torment and taking their own lives. In a world that grew to resemble an apocalyptic landscape with each passing day, it was no wonder that so many would fall into this pattern of behaviours. (pp. 203-204).

Another major aspect of British society, and one that had been the guiding hand of many throughout the centuries, was that of religion, specifically Christianity. Despite its significance for the people that held on to their faith, religious institutions saw themselves being overwhelmed by an atmosphere of disaster of such dimensions that made it increasingly difficult to provide aid for the growing number of people that required it. A clear example of this took place in Hastings during the fifth decade of the nineteenth

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in these fields had become increasingly miserable and, even if they had previously resisted it, workers now saw greater economic stability waiting for them in the manufacturing towns, something that seemed impossible for them to achieve in the decaying rural world (Hobsbawn, 1996, pp. 47-49).

century. This was a period in which the town experienced significant hardships, and it was during this time that the Church contributed to the amelioration of the situation through the employment of a “Parish Relief”, providing the poor who led a “blameless, pious life” with monetary aid. However, due to increasing levels of unemployment amongst the city’s working class, this religious institution found its dutiful attempts at offering assistance to be insufficient in reaching the entirety of those in need (Wotjczak, 2002). The topic of Christian charity, however, never found itself excluded from the minds of British society. The increasing necessities of the poor were a great motivator for this, as well as the existence of a portion of the wealthier sector of the Victorian population who embraced traditionalism and saw in this a tool against the threat of equal rights which seemed to stir the minds of a great number of individuals (Hobsbawn, 1996, p. 201). Nonetheless, it would be both unfair and dishonest to claim that ulterior motives were always behind such initiatives. Utilizing a different example of charity born from Christian beliefs at a similar period in time to that of the Parish Reliefs, Lord Ashley worked towards “rescuing women and children from their servitude in mines and factories” through his work in establishing “Ragged Schools” for this very purpose. According to him, God had chosen to walk among us on Earth as Jesus Christ, “a poor person of no reputation”, and, though his sacrifice on the cross, redeemed us from our sins. Furthermore, and adding to these ideals, Lord Ashley affirms that, as every child that is born into our world is “made in God’s image and likeness”, we as humans inherently possess dignity and worth, as well as rights that we should not be deprived of (Wilson, 2002, pp. 167-168).

During the harsh times of the nineteenth century, many were those to whom Christianity was a valuable companion, its teachings allowing for comfort where it appeared that none could be found. This historical time coincided with the increase of influence originating from Evangelicalism, among other denominations, and religion seemed to possess the ability to influence the morality of the general public, as well as their actions. Many were those who came to understand the benefits that these doctrines brought upon those who were strong in their belief. Various towns where worship was common differed from other industrial centres in elements like the quality of homes and the way in which people presented themselves, this being “well dressed and happy in appearance”. We see testimonies of recently converted workers whose lives had changed in positive manner and of orderly

towns where violence and conflict were restrained by the pious quality of its citizens. More importantly, Christian morality did not limit itself to the believers of this faith, with the example of the conduct of the religious members of society having noticeable influence on those around them (Schlossberg, 1998, para. 1-5).

Even if this was the case, having in consideration the number of changes that had taken place, and accounting for the discontent they generated amongst a large portion of the populace, the nineteenth-century was developing into an era in which a multitude of social movements would materialize themselves, perhaps the most famous of which being Chartism.

I have previously discussed the alarming circumstances in which many members of British society lived, and have also verified that, ironically, the biggest victim[2] of this was the very class that came into being due to the Industrial Revolution itself. This working class lacked awareness of its own position within the country's social order and had little to no political standing. Though it naturally possessed a substantial amount of raw power as a result of the sheer volume of this class when all its members were considered, it had so far failed to produce any consequential attack against the forces that kept it down. A great majority of these workers showed worrying levels of ignorance, a lack of concern in regard to public life or a detrimental passivity towards the various outcomes of crisis within the nation (Cazamian, 1973, pp. 62-63). Most troubling, however, was the inability this class demonstrated when it came to communicating its problems and sorrows (p. 63), an issue that Gaskell would attempt to ameliorate with her work by acting as a "middle-man" between classes and between the misery she had witnessed and the readers who might be unaware or apathetic towards it (Gaskell, 2008, p. xx).

In his literary work concerning this topic, Mark Hovell (1970) described the Chartist movement as one born out of desperation for better standards of living and as an effort to

[2] Though the working-class was admittedly the one in which individuals faced the worst conditions of living, it is unwise to ignore the differing sectors of society who were also presented with similar hardships. For instance, within the lower middle-class we could find artisans who, be it because of insufficient monetary resources or due to depending on others for the aforementioned, found themselves in the clutches of the revolution and of the individualism that nourished it. The continuous industrialisation of the manufacturing of textiles also served as a vicious blow against independent weavers who had previously been able to provide for their families but were now exploited and deprived of their title of master craftsmen, instead being provided with the treatment that was aimed at any other common worker (Cazamian, 1973, p. 62).

mitigate the referenced troubles that arose from difficulties in articulating the workers' general unhappiness:

> It was a purely working-class movement, originating exclusively and drawing its whole following from the industrialised and unpropertied working class which had but recently come into existence. For the most part it was a revolt of this body against intolerable conditions of existence. (...) It was an attempt on the part of the less educated portion of the population to legislate for a new and astounding condition of society whose evils the more enlightened portion had been helpless or unwilling to remedy. (p. 1)

One of the most important elements of this movement is that from which it received its name, the "People's Charter". This document functioned as a draft for an Act of Parliament which would at a later occasion function as a Bill to be presented to the United Kingdom's House of Commons. In its composition lay the "Six Points", five of which have since been implemented into the governmental structure of the British nation. These consisted in demanding voting rights for every male citizen, said act being performed by ballot, a fair division of constituencies, yearly elections for Parliament, the erasure of property ownership as a means for being qualified as a voter and, finally, all members of Parliament should receive a monetary sum for their labours (pp. 1-2). Other than poor living and working conditions, Chartism also came to be due to the great resentment felt by the working class in regard to the Reform Act of 1832, which benefitted their former "allies", the middle class, but did very little in favour of their own interests, as was formerly addressed in this work. Moreover, the recently elaborated Poor Law was seen as a failure and as a system that served to further penalize the already destitute members of the population (Cazamian, 1973, p. 75).

At the House of Commons, the political enfranchisement which the working class sought, as demonstrated by their Charter, was not a matter to which great concern was shown, as in that chamber many had agreed with the idea that the implementation of such demands would come into conflict with the very concept of civilization these men held. Instead, their worries were aimed at "the lack of respect for property, the lack of respect for authority,

and the lack of dignified behaviour" which, according to them, were observable in the various demonstrations organized by the Chartists (Thompson, 1984, p. 237). It is then no wonder that a year following the publication of this Charter, as workers met outside of a Parliament under considerable influence by the middle class, the document was rejected, an occurrence that brought great grief to these members of the working class. This event led to a tear in the movement that split it into two and from which it would never recover. Various instances of bickering amongst its most prominent figures weakened it and it would end up crumbling away. Gradually, workers' struggles would take a shape similar to what we can observe today, being performed in relatively peaceful manner. Though it lacked essential organization and would therefore end up failing, those who witnessed it understood that the working class was under great agony. Opposition to the practices that created such torment would begin manifesting in the public sphere, with the excesses in the behaviour of employers and lack of adequate laws being progressively amended (pp. 75-76).

Chartism is unquestionably the most important movement to present the readers with when Gaskell's novels are the subject of analysis, as Manchester, the city where the author lived and the inspiration for her work, was an important hub for Chartist ventures (Flint, 1995, pp. 4-5). However, it would be imprudent to ignore other examples of movements born from working-class revolt. The Luddite movement, for instance, came to be due to enmity felt by workers towards a specific element that flourished due to the Industrial Revolution. Private business and a market that encouraged harsh competition promoted innovation, which in turn gave origin to new varieties of machinery. It is undeniable that this technological phenomenon allowed for rapid manufacturing, but it is also apparent that workers tended to see it as a threat to their employment, demonstrating fears of being gradually replaced by steam-powered automatons and other sorts of apparatus. Their reaction to said worries was violent (Hobsbawn, 1996, pp. 38-39, 201-202). A considerable amount of them set out to destroy these kinds of machinery:

> The first industrial protest also took the form of blind, destructive violence. Machines were perpetually creating unemployment and hunger by making men redundant when they were introduced. And so the installation of new machinery led to furious riots in which looms and spinning-frames were torn to pieces. This

> form of strike was particularly strong at the beginning of the century, when steam-power was revolutionising the textile industry. The Luddite riots took place in 1812. But hatred of machinery lasted until 1830. (Cazamian, 1973, p. 74)

In a curious manner, these men and women found support towards their behaviour in the local farmers and small businessmen who saw themselves as victims of the endeavours of technological innovators. They believed the latter acted with disregard for the subsistence of the members of the working class, which their mechanical innovations were replacing, and as such the actions of these Luddites were justifiable and seen as a form of fighting back against those who would take bread away from their tables (Hobsbawn, 1996, pp. 38-39, 201-202). The textile industry is a proper example of the ramifications that the continuous innovation in manufacturing brought:

> Everywhere weaving was mechanized a generation after spinning, and everywhere, incidentally, the handloom weavers died a lingering death, occasionally revolting against their awful fate, when industry no longer had any need of them. (p. 37)

During this historical period, "Socialism" and its ideals would also make themselves known within Victorian society. Although it is here referred to in its singular form, Socialism in Britain manifested itself as various unique systems, a result of a development marked by "diverse traditions, ideologies and backgrounds" (Diniejko, 2015, para. 1). However varied these were, the characteristic common to all of them was that of a strong dissatisfaction with the effects the Industrial Revolution had had on the nation's social affairs, particularly in regard to industrial conditions. When it came to the market, during the course of the nineteenth century a great number of people had started losing faith in the doctrines of classical economics, specifically in regard to concepts such as the *laissez-faire* and the lack of interventionism and outside regulation it encouraged, being the emergence of these ideologies a fairly natural outcome. In the case of this nation, Socialism was shaped by "Traditional British liberalism and radicalism" in far greater manner than with the employment of the ideas of Karl Marx. This is of notable interest as the latter's works, often credited as having acted as one of the main influences behind similar social, political and economic movements in other European nations, only attracted considerable public interest

in Britain after their author's death, demonstrating a certain lack of appeal that this ideology's more orthodox form possessed when it came to what Victorian socialists wished for. This phenomenon is explained in part by the existence of a voting system, a characteristic of democracies that was still not commonly practiced at the time, or even available to every citizen, but that had the potential to be seen as a tool for change, the result being that, within Britain, "parliamentary reforms seemed a more promising route than revolutionary socialism advocated by Marx" (Diniejko, 2015, para. 3-4, 9).

These are just two examples of movements within what we would now refer to as "labour movements". In no way is it to be implied that these were unique to the nineteenth-century and that their presence was unheard of before this era, or specifically prior to the Industrial Revolution. This peculiar period of time differentiates itself from others because it was in it where definite awareness of social classes and their respective aspirations were recognized. Though many still acted accordingly to this view, the battle no longer seemed to be fought between the destitute members of the population and those who held immense amounts of wealth. The discussion had then shifted towards a "working class" and the "employers", these acting in opposition to one another (p. 209). The existence of two differing classes was admittedly recognized, but their powers weren't balanced, as has been elaborated upon. This being the case, labourers quickly concluded that, were their goals to be achieved, they would have to rely on mobilization. For this, they depended on various "tools", such as newspapers and pamphlets, campaigns targeting the political sphere, gatherings of workers for all to see and even riots when all else appeared to fail (p. 211).

It is impossible to speak of this type of action by the working class without referencing "trade unions". Over the years, societies like these have been described as a "continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives" (Webb et al., 1973, p. 1), and their existence allowed for some level of thoughtful cooperation and planning within what was generally perceived to be a numerous yet crudely organized group of people (Cazamian, 1973, p. 73). Though a significant instrument in the working-class' aspirations for the acquisition of improvements in their positions as labourers, the negative side of trade unions deserves acknowledgement. It wasn't uncommon to witness these societies of workers engaging in practices not dissimilar to those found within secret societies, be it "masonic rituals of initiation and oath-taking to

make conspirators of their new members" or "torchlight meetings on the moors at midnight" (pp. 74-75). Gaskell herself didn't shy away from representing these less fortunate elements of trade unionism, be it the "fierce terrible oaths that bind members of Trades' Unions to any given purpose" in *Mary Barton*, resulting in the planning of a man's murder by members of a trade union (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 185), or in the mistreatment of fellow workers who refused to join these societies or follow what had been dictated as being their desired means of action in *North and South* during times of great tension between employers and labourers (Gaskell, 2008b, pp. 232-233).

Finally, in the discussion pertaining to the aspects of life in Britain which find themselves connected to this Industrial Revolution, a curious aspect that is often spoken about in records from the nineteenth century, and once more in Gaskell's accounts of the working class, as will be later noticed, is that of the existence and of the relevancy of charity. Though I have spoken of the negative effects the Industrial Revolution had on the religious and moral foundations of the lower classes, it appears that the damages to these people were not enough to compromise their integrity. The bourgeoisie themselves, often critical of the manner in which this social class conducted itself, were forced to admit this very fact:

> they were men of high moral worth. Above all, the workers' care for each other was admirable. They made thousands of tiny sacrifices daily in automatic response to the promptings of common humanity. (...) The social canker which had ravaged the lower classes for fifty years had only done superficial damage to their moral nature. (Cazamian, 1973, p. 71)

In the case of Elizabeth Gaskell, charity is profoundly connected with Christianity, with the opposite being also true. The author, when exposing the reader to the conflicts arising from the world of manufacturing, reflects on how we should interpret these in accordance with our "moral attitudes" (p. 215). The morality that emanates from the figure of Christ allows for the potential arrival at social unity through the acknowledgement of common interests. This was not something new to classical economists, but what they hadn't accounted for was nature's tendency for entropy, as opposed to gradually achieving a state

of order when existing without any outside input (pp. 215-216). In the author's logic, we derive our sense of morality from Christianity, but we can't expect God to do all the work:

> Man has a part to play in the full realisation of the divine order; the inadequacies of daily life must be corrected by love, justice, and charity. It is the duty of the rich to help the poor (...) *Mary Barton* proposes compassionate interventionism based on a religious ideal of human brotherhood. (p. 216)

Charity is born of "the region of sentiment", not that of the cold logic demanded by industrialism and the trade that accompanies it. At this time, awareness of the outcomes economic systems had on life in the United Kingdom were denounced. These directly opposed ideas like altruism and, at the same time, failed to provide a solution to problems that had come to be as a direct result of their own foundations. Perhaps worst of all, they "sanctioned the deplorable destiny which made the rich richer and the poor poorer" (102). The potential for charity and the actions it implies were noted to have likewise manifested themselves within the middle class when members of this sector of the population, at this time holding great political and social power, demonstrated active concern for the lives of the less fortunate, with proof of the aforementioned developments making itself known through industrial legislation (p. 100). It is understood that:

> most people came to accept the idea of legislative intervention. It was not the outcome of logical thought, (...) rather it was an irresistible spontaneous impulse to see some corporate gesture of charity made (...) Obstinate prejudice and self-interested resistance were overcome by strenuous exertions of moral and religious sensibility. (p. 102)

Adding to this, and in connection to the rise of Evangelicalism and the encouragement of interventionist practices that it preached, philanthropic ideals began to influence the actions of a considerable sector of nineteenth century's British population, being of specific interest the manner in which this phenomenon manifested itself within the upper classes of society. It was through visits born from a desire to partake in aiding the destitute that women in particular were able to exercise "their only approved scope for action in the larger world",

acting not only as “visitors and nurses”, representing the capacity for charity within their respective social class, but also as “agitators for reform”, contributing to the changes in societal outlook that followed (Banarjee, 2019, para. 3, 6).

2. The woman behind the novels

I have finally arrived at an instance in this work where I am to directly explore the author whose novels are to be the central element of analysis. As has been previously stated, Gaskell's inspiration was derived in great measure from the world around her, having her lifetime coincided with various significant moments of the period of Industrial Revolution (Cazamian, 1973, p. 214). To understand both *Mary Barton* and *North and South* must be to also understand their author, Elizabeth Gaskell. This endeavour to comprehend the birth of these nineteenth century novels through the exploration of their creator will be the aim of this chapter.

Not a century had passed since Gaskell had passed away and her merits and influence were already being recognized. In her work in the field of social sciences, Josephine Johnson (1928) presented arguments for the impact the author's novels had on society, and especially on the practices of social workers who employed and emulated many of the principles that had been attributed to Gaskell in the past (pp. 224-225, 227). What is perhaps more interesting to us is how the latter is here described: "Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1910-1965) an earnest social worker, a liberalist, a dissenter, a humanitarian, and a prophetess of distinctively modern methods" (p. 224). Though it is true that this might not be a universal description and interpretation of Gaskell as both the novelist and the individual, it is nonetheless interesting how ideas such as those of compassion, individual liberty, opposition to the wrongdoings of those in positions of power, concern for her fellow men and women and progressive methods are attributed to this author.

It was in 1910, merely a decade into the nineteenth century, that the author, then Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, was born. From her early life we can observe the existence of elements that would find themselves reflected within the novels she would come to write in her adulthood, one of these being her Unitarian background, brewing in her a concern for the tackling of issues utilizing rationality[3], together with the protection and encouragement of freedom of thought (Flint, 1995, p. 2). These religious beliefs also included the idea of "an underlying principle of social progress". Such doctrine was different from many in the sense

[3] Though we can observe that the author gave great value to the ability of applying rationality to the solving of societal issues, her writing and personal life also demonstrate an interest in "superstition, dreams, and the supernatural" (Flint, 1995, p. 2).

that it did not shy away from the science and innovations it brought, instead choosing to embrace them as a means of achieving progress. However, such was only the case when it, along with other elements that were capable of influencing society, were driven by the "actions performed by the morally self-aware and responsible individual" (p. 2). To Elizabeth Gaskell, the world might have seemed like a perfect demonstration of the concept of opposition. On one hand, she had been raised according to a set of ideals that obtained much of their strength from the notion that the world, and therefore the man-made constructs that were part of it, demonstrated a tendency for improvement, one which can and should be aided by the men and women within it. On the other, she bore witness to the hardships faced by the British populace in this new industrialized reality, the misery of daily-life and the almost complete human catastrophe one might observe should they step into the streets of expanding urban centres (p. 2).

These same concepts I have mentioned can be later easily identified in the author's literary works:

> Thus Gaskell's fiction is marked by a tension created through the opposition of optimism and pain. In turn, her writing both demands from the reader a rational response, as the workings of industrial society or of family dynamics are laid bare in front of us with a good deal of circumstantial detail, and deliberately plays on the reader's emotions, often employing conspicuously fictional devices of melodrama and coincidence to this end. (p. 3)

Another prevalent element in both *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, which is directly influenced by the author's own life experiences, is that of a lack of maternal figure, particularly when it comes to the novels' main characters. Gaskell had not been a part of this world for a whole year when her mother unfortunately passed away (p. 3), and the same grief of losing this figure would haunt both Mary Barton (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 20) and Margaret Hale (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 250) The importance the author places on this parent and the effects a lack of it causes on a person are common in her writing and are a piece of the foundation that holds the emotional aspect of these works of fiction. Upon losing her mother, the future author moved to Knutsford, Cheshire, where she would be exposed to a way of living that was characterized by its rural setting, its genteel nature and by its worries

of self-preservation (Flint, 1995, p 3-4), similarly to what we can observe in Margaret Hale's life in Helstone (Gaskell, 2008b, pp. 17-22). Much like the latter, Gaskell would also leave behind this provincial context in favour of the "rapidly expanding city of Manchester", which will be of utmost importance for the settings of her novels, as I have previously made mention to, particularly in relation to the effects this change in scenery has on an individual (p. 4). Adding to this, it is important to note that Gaskell's moving from Cheshire to Manchester did not occur at random. This decision was made after the future author married her husband, William Gaskell, in 1832. It just so happens that, much like her father[4], the man was to become a Minister, exercising his duties to his faith at the Cross Street Unitarian chapel, leading to the couple building a life together in the city of Manchester (Allott, 1971, p. 7).

Sixteen years would pass until Gaskell released her first novel. In this period of time, the recently married author would give birth to six children, though two of them would unfortunately never live past their early infancy state (Flint, 1995, p. 4). The loss of one of her last surviving sons, Willie, who was only nine months of age in the autumn of 1845 when he perished victim of scarlet fever, was especially impactful to the author's life (Gaskell, 2008a, p. vii). It was following this episode that, with the encouragement of her husband, Elizabeth Gaskell became increasingly invested in the creation of her first novel as an attempt to lessen the grief of losing her beloved boy. This would manifest itself in the publication of *Mary Barton* in 1848 (Allott, 1971, p. 8), with echoes of this event manifesting themselves in, for example, the grief the character of John Barton experiences due to the death of his own son who, in the same fashion as Gaskell's young William, perished due to having contracted scarlet fever, with this incident marking a point in which this figure's view of the world comes to suffer a great shift (Gaskell, 2008a, pp. 24-25).

Her marriage to William Gaskell, and in particular the nature of his occupation, are behind many of the experiences the author would live through and later utilize as inspiration for her written works, specifically the novels which will be here analysed. It was common for Gaskell to assist her husband in the responsibilities that his position as Minister demanded of him (Flint, 1995, p. 4). Being in charge of Cross Street Chapel meant that a

[4] Elizabeth Gaskell's father, William Stevenson, had himself been a Unitarian minister in the past, but later opted for resignation from this position. This fact also mirrors both the religious background and the actions performed by Margaret Hale's father in *North and South*.

helping hand was required of the couple for all types of situations, and it naturally involved several and frequent contacts with the downtrodden residents of Manchester:

> Gaskell had direct knowledge of these hardships through helping her husband with his duties as Minister in charge of the Cross Street Chapel, distributing soup tickets, food and clothing through her work for the District Provident Society, a local philanthropic organization, and visiting the homes of her Sunday-school pupils. She saw at first hand the number of children who died from epidemics, the families who had to sell their furniture to buy food. (p. 4)

It is then no surprise how accurate and personal her descriptions of working-class life are in her novels, as we will later witness, and it was the first of these, *Mary Barton*, that allowed her to establish a reputation amongst her peers and to reach the status of a "minor celebrity" (Allott, 1971, p. 8). Respected amidst fellow artists, Elizabeth Gaskell built relationships with the likes of Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle and Charlotte Brontë, somewhat unexpectedly considering the apparent differences in personalities between the two women. Halfway through the nineteenth century, the author was considered a successful novelist and enjoyed traveling to foreign countries where she would also build various friendships. It seemed like everywhere people yielded to the author's graceful personality. Despite these occasional trips and her career as a novelist, the woman never allowed herself to drift away from her children and kept frequent contact with them through the exchange of letters. She valued family greatly, and it was amongst it that in 1865, after a cup of tea and at her country retreat away from the turmoil of the city, Elizabeth Gaskell would topple to the floor never to rise again in this world, leaving unfinished the final passages the novel she was working on at that time, *Wives and Daughters* (p. 9).

2.1. Outlook

We now possess the benefit of having an understanding of Elizabeth Gaskell's life, this functioning as a tool for locating various elements that found themselves materialized in the author's novels. However, one might wonder what were, in a more concrete manner, the

views and beliefs that this woman held and how they emerge once we dive deeper in the study of her literary work.

Firstly, it seems that, despite her involvement in all sorts of social matters, Gaskell was unsure about her position on the political spectrum (Matus, 2007, p. 150) and that her literary efforts were born from personal objectives that rise far above any matters of public acclaim (p. 178). Instead, the act of settling in Manchester, as I have made previous mention to, had a deep effect on the author. It was there that she witnessed the conflict between the working class and their employers, as well as the "strife and suffering" that were not mere creations of her artistic mind, but "based on personal observation and interpretation". Knutsford's rural living was of great contrast to the world she now found herself in, and the kind woman could not help but sympathize with the struggles of the people she had since come to interact with on a daily basis (Gaskell, 2008a, p. viii). Moreover, Gaskell was not blind to the radical division that had been increasingly developing between rich and poor, or to the social order that had formed within Manchester due to the importance of labour to the prosperity that was obtained from the manufacturing activities of this city (Adams, 2012, pp. 104-105). The author was also very aware of the growing displeasure felt by the people towards the country's policies, with this many times rupturing into acts of violence and unrest that posed a serious risk to the nation's strength and union. Where the author differs from many is in her understanding that the aforementioned volatility felt in every corner of the country was born from the poor living conditions of the population of the lower ranks within the social hierarchy who grew increasingly desperate (Gaskell, 2008a, pp. viii-ix). It is here where her literature comes into play: "Gaskell, both observer and inhabitant of 'dear old smoky grim Manchester', was bold enough to present these hardships and apparent injustices to a readership many of whom were unprepared to receive the truth of her depiction" (p. ix).

In her observation of Victorian society, Gaskell seemed to reach the conclusion that many of the issues that plagued the lives of the men and women of Britain were born from ignorance. From the first pages of *Mary Barton*, we can observe this very idea as John Barton, Mary Barton's father and a member of the working-class, tells us:

> will a rich lady come and take me to her own home if need be, till she can look round, and see what best to do? No, I tell you, it's the poor, and the poor only as

> does such a thing for the poor. Don't think to come over me with th' old tale, that the rich know nothing of the trials of the poor; I say, if they don't know, they ought to know. (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 11)

Elizabeth Gaskell, through this intervention by one of her characters, communicates the concept that ignorance is no excuse for the wrongdoings that she associates with the middle class (p. xxi). If we do not understand, it is our obligation to try and open our eyes to realities outside our own, being this one of the fundamental characteristics of the author's novels, to reach an audience that would otherwise remain unaware (Matus, 2007, p. 149). This very same ignorance is guilty of worsening the social tensions that were already present between different social classes. Recognizing this, Gaskell determines that the tool against such factors should be the employment of dialogue between the parts involved in the conflict. The author's "communicative model for successful human relations involves dialogue; the sharing of perspectives", with her novels reflecting these intentions utilizing a "relaxed, conversational intimacy" (Flint, 1995, p. 7).

Gaskell's fight against ignorance towards realities different from our own doesn't confine itself to the division found between members in different steps within the social hierarchy. As I have stated, the author understood she would be writing for many readers whose world might be very different from those she establishes within her novels. As such, Elizabeth Gaskell shows concern not only in representing Manchester and its people as well as she can, but also in communicating the natural differences one might find when coming into contact with individuals from different geographical locations, even if in these novels the regions that are focused on all find themselves contained within English territory:

> Gaskell writes for an audience of outsiders, and her documentary impulse similarly functions as a kind of ethnography – particularly in attention to local idiom (...) The novel (*Mary Barton*) incorporates a good deal of anonymous dialect poetry (...) which typically circulated in broadsides or as oral tradition, capturing working-class travails in a form that middle-class readers would rarely encounter. (Adams, 2012, p. 105)

Perhaps the most important element in Gaskell's literary work is her focus in human feelings and emotions. Previously I have mentioned how the Industrial Revolution and the "Individualism" that formed a vicious symbiosis with it tended to give value to a particularly cold and logical vision of the world. **T**he same could not be said about the way our author tackles the matters concerning the lives of the men and women of the Victorian era. From the very beginning of *Mary Barton*'s creation, human feelings have been at centre stage. As mentioned in our short biography on the author, this novel was created as an escape from the grief of losing a child. This suffering, Gaskell concluded, was not only devastating due to the pain it causes us, but also possessed the characteristics of being raw, honest and natural to the human condition. As such, the walls that exist between social classes are incapable of resisting the compassion we feel when witnessing someone experiencing a pain that is so familiar to us (Flint, 1995, p. 11). Alastair Fowler (1991), when writing on the subject of Gaskell, recognizes and emphasises this very same "truth of feeling" as being the author's greatest strength, especially when relationships born from the reality of environments relating to labour are concerned:

> This communicates itself not only in pathetic scenes (which convinces even as one recognizes their designs on the emotions), but also in portrayals of general social conditions. She treats labour relations as having naturally an emotional dimension: an obvious thing to do, once she has done it. (p. 291)

Confirming this focus on the emotional realm, *Mary Barton*, and by extension *North and South*, do not offer concrete solutions to the problems that were brought to life, or at least worsened, by the Industrial Revolution. Instead, Gaskell makes an attempt at "awakening a spirit of compassion and sympathy in the reader", believing that this could be a solid foundation for gradual improvement (Flint, 1995, p. 14). Curiously, to not obtain a solution is a solution of itself, and this is purposefully done by the author:

> a careful manipulation of the reader to a position where no concrete solutions to social problems may be offered, but a model which stresses the importance of two-sided communication – between characters, between classes, between author and reader – is established. (p. 19)

Tying all of these elements together is what lies at the centre of the purpose of Gaskell's fiction, the author's unwavering belief in a "common humanity". In fact, while other writers may have tackled similar subjects to that of the author's novels, this is possibly what differentiates her most in the opposition to the systems in place at that time and an important element in the author's call for harmony between social classes (Gaskell, 2008a, p. xvii). Our first novel, *Mary Barton*, demonstrates this perfectly when Carson, a member of the wealthy middle class, shares a handshake with both Job Legh and Jem, working-class men, in the book's conclusion:

> this is a gesture towards democracy, an acknowledgement, albeit brief, that there is an essential equality between people. For some twentieth-century critics, such radicalism, far from being deplorable, is one of the novel's strengths. (...) praised for challenging the hegemonies of Victorian class structures and employment hierarchies. (p. xvii)

In her observation of the world around her, Elizabeth Gaskell understood the existing "competing discourses" that manifested themselves both in their most theoretical sense as well as during the usual communication between individuals. Showing her cunning adaptability, the author utilized the oftentimes rigid social conventions she had perceived, together with the specific ways of thinking of her age, in an effort to demonstrate how the very same are actively damaging "the important goal of human understanding and sympathy" (Flint, 1995, p. 67). Her ideas of "common humanity" are apparent in her effort to remove, or at the very least ease, the varied obstructions that impede us from acknowledging one another as equals:

> Her novels and shorter stories are concerned with the breaking down of barriers: between individuals, between classes, between genders, between intellectual disciplines. Simultaneously, however, her fiction derives much of its power from the dramatization of the tension created by the barriers themselves. (p. 67)

The importance the author gives to each man and woman, the reason for her efforts in assuring all are treated fairly and with dignity, comes from her doctrine of envisioning the potential in each unique individual, particularly the potential for goodness, which, if evoked

properly and handled correctly, could aid in the solving of social issues. For Gaskell, a person's wealth, their position in the social hierarchy and even their religion, are of little concern. Instead, men and women face judgement in regards to what they are able to become, as opposed to who they have been: "Kindly toward every man, rich or poor, because (...) they were all men alike" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 370), differing only in the inequality of the opportunities they have been dealt (Johnson, 1928, p. 224).

2.2. Purpose

As has been discussed, Elizabeth Gaskell began her literary career with certain intentions in mind. Other than the personal issues the author attempted to cope with by diverting her attention to literary production, Gaskell had become a part of a much bigger movement that manifested itself in the artistic world of the time. It was not until the 1830's came around that many began to become fully aware of the repercussions the Industrial Revolution had had on British society, and it is only in the next decade that "the great stream of official and unofficial literature on the social effects of the Industrial Revolution became a mainstay of Victorian literary tradition (Hobsbawn, 1996, p. 27).

The novelists of nineteenth century Britain had great care in depicting the evils that arose from the implementation of a manufacturing mindset into the nation's living. As has been seen in reference to the novels of Gaskell, there was a desire to inform the general public of the misery felt by many who, victims of circumstances, had little choice other than to participate in factory systems or similarly deplorable means of labour (Johnson, 1928, p. 224). Though the impact of *Mary Barton* is undeniable, Elizabeth Gaskell was not the first to tackle the genre we often refer to as "industrial fiction". In fact, this category of literature was well documented by 1848, the year of the novel's publication (Frykstedt, 1980, p. 11). The question then arises on why, if there were previous publications on the subject, *Mary Barton* received the attention it did upon its release to the public. For that we can ascertain our answer from Thomas Carlyle, fellow renowned writer who showed similar interest for the industrial question, and who, in a letter to the author herself, communicated the following in relation to her first novel:

> A beautiful, cheerfully, pious, social, clear and observant character is everywhere recognisable in the writer (...) your field is moreover new, important, full of rich material (...) I gracefully accept it as a real contribution (about the first real one) towards developing a huge subject, which has lain dumb too long, and really ought to speak for itself, and tell us its meaning a little, if there be any voice in it at all. (Gérin, 1980, p. 89)

If we find Carlyle to be agreeable in his assessment, Gaskell, through her literary endeavours, had managed to separate herself from previous attempts at tackling the affairs relating to a society suffering from the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. This is done by applying to her work not just the theme of manufacturing and working-class suffering, but also doing so utilizing her "beautiful, cheerfully, pious, social, clear and observant character" (p. 89), meaning the content of her novels found a balance between demonstrating concrete quality in her use of language while simultaneously being able to communicate a rhetoric that concerned itself with appealing to the reader's compassion in relation to the pain felt by many within British society.

What has just been elaborated upon is, however, but a small part of the objectives Gaskell had when she produced both *Mary Barton* and *North and South*. Firstly, if the author invested her time into literature, it is because she had a genuine belief in the capacity for this medium to influence the reality it was part of (Matus, 2007, p. 8). On this very same subject, Deidre D'Albertis (1997) explains it best when she tells us:

> Elizabeth Gaskell was, above all, a "wordly" writer. (...) she believed that her writing had a force, a weight, which could be felt and measured in the world. Repeatedly drawn to the social-problem fiction, Gaskell perceived a direct link between the role of writing/reading literature and the dynamic process of shaping social reality. (D'Albertis, 1997, p. 13)

This could be possible if her literature, and therefore the circumstances she exposed in this very same, was able to reach a greater audience, especially those readers that were ignorant to the suffering described by the author (Matus, 2007, p. 149). This was accomplished in no small measure due to the woman's remarkable ability of creating characters who, despite being entities within her fiction, felt like real, physical people.

Through this, the readers of Gaskell's novels would depart from the pages of her works with the impression that they had been a part of an authentic interaction that allowed them to become aware of the origin of the joys and sorrows of the working class, the author being successful in communicating what had been previously dismissed as "inarticulate complaints" (Cazamian, 1973, p. 231), and in both explaining the unrest felt by these men and women as well as humanize their struggle, which was often tarnished by the members of the upper classes (Adams, 2012, p. 105).

This exposition of working-class concerns by Gaskell was part of a sentiment that becomes apparent the more we read the author's work. The sympathy she felt for the working men and women, together with the belief that, due to the state of affairs they found themselves in, these very same had a great amount of feelings that they were unable to manage or correctly communicate due to the powerful nature they retained, made the author desire to act as a sort of "spokesperson" for this social class, particularly when it came to providing written testimony for their pain (Matus, 2007, pp. 30-33).

More than acting as a sort of representative of the working-class' suffering, Gaskell enjoyed the position of a "mediator", that is, an individual at the centre of two opposing forces, working to make possible the two-sided communication the author believed to have great importance in achieving a solution, as I have mentioned at a previous occasion. From the very beginning, Elizabeth Gaskell did not want to portray the working class as merely representations of the effects of deprivation and misery, opting for demonstrating to her readers, the great majority being part of social classes standing above that of common labourers, that these could contribute to Victorian society, doing away with the preconceptions associated with this part of the British populace (Gaskell, 2008a, p. xiii).

It is notable that, together with the previous feelings, this desire of exposing the world of working-class life extended itself onto the field of regional specificity. Elizabeth Gaskell saw the people originating from Lancashire as having a unique and abundant measure of culture that had not received the respect or attention it deserved. Her intention of emphasising this northern region can be confirmed by *Mary Barton*'s own subtitle, "A Tale of Manchester Life" (Readioff, 2023, p. 147). In fact, this very same novel is many times credited as having placed the "Industrial North" on a literary map that had until then overlooked it. The point of placing the reader in the streets of Manchester was not only to bring attention to the singularities of this region, but to provide aid to middle class readers, notably to the

inhabitants of London, when it came to understanding the industrial life that was so characteristic of the north of England (D'Albertis, 1997, p. 56). This representation of reality was spontaneous, not exclusively relying on forethought, and aimed at demonstrating a great degree of accuracy in its depictions, especially when it came to the portrayal of the culture of Manchester (Cazamian, 1973, p. 222). Above all, when it came to specific settings for the action to take place, and having in consideration her aforementioned position as mediator between social classes, *Mary Barton* saw its author attempt to "translate the experience of urban poverty into a humanistic language that would reflect working-class life through the lens of middle-class morality back to the workers it purported to represent" (D'Albertis, 1997, p. 56).

The degree of veracity that we find present in Gaskell's novels is remarkable, but unsurprising. Rather than imagine scenes, characters or settings, the author obtains her inspiration from reality, from what she had experienced, and it is these almost palpable graphical descriptions that create in us the sense of urgency born from the need for imperative intervention (Cazamian, 1973, p. 220). That we are able to experience the nineteenth century through the writing of an individual who experienced it in the first place, who witnessed the pain of the destitute and, as such, decided to involve herself with such affairs[5], is plenty of justification for this current study. This noteworthy capacity for observance and expression of the world around her gives Gaskell increased authority in her endeavours, such as with the example of the characterization the author provides for the characters of her novels:

> Gaskell's capacity for seizing on individualizing details in her descriptions, as well as the relative fidelity with which she records dialect forms and speech patterns, underpins this novel (*Mary Barton*) with an authority drawn from direct observation. (Flint, 1995, p. 17)

[5] The reader is reminded of Elizabeth Gaskell's direct contact with the poor of Manchester (Fowler, 1991, p. 4), which serves to explain how the author's works are utilized as depictions of real scenes and of topographical specificities she had likely encountered (Gaskell, 2008a, pp. x, xii).

3. The world and the novel

I have, at last, arrived at a moment in the present literary study where the focus will shift entirely onto the industrial novels of Gaskell. Following an introduction to the nineteenth century, contextualization of the time frame at hand and a brief, yet necessary, biographical segment that will hopefully have aid us in understanding the author behind these works, as well as the reasoning behind their genesis, I first proceed with the identification of the genre of the publications here under analysis, namely *Mary Barton* and *North and South*.

I have previously addressed the works here under analysis as "industrial novels", and this is the common classification given to both of these literary productions. Placing these two novels together in an exploration of the author's work in relation to the reality lived during the nineteenth century, especially in a northern urban setting, seems only logical, but it is a fact that, despite their many similarities and parallels, *Mary Barton* and *North and South* are not entirely identical in their subject matter. I have stated Elizabeth Gaskell's concerns with providing the working class with a means of communicating their ailments, with the result being the production of a literary piece that possesses as its focal point a narrative that deals, in almost all of its composition, with the viewpoint of this social class. The contrasts we observe between the rich and the poor in *Mary Barton* give way to a level of revolt and indignation that are not seen in *North and South*, even if hints of this working-class suffering are still present and directly addressed[6]. Instead, the latter concerns itself with extending perspectives on social issues to the middle class and attempts to continue the arguments presented by the first novel, adding on top of these concerns relating to social and religious consciousness as well as economic and political ones (Gaskell, 2008b, pp. x-xi). Even with their thematic variations, they both fall into the mentioned category of "industrial fiction", which was, at the time of the release of the author's first novel, already well established and recognized as the artistic reaction to Britain's greatly expanding manufacturing population and the effects that this change in demographics implied (Fryckstedt, 1980, p. 11).

[6] Due to the author's priority in presenting readers with a direct addressing of industrial issues that were related to the suffering of members of the working-class, *Mary Barton* was often favoured by literary critics interested on this topic. In more recent times however, *North and South* has been recognized for the intricacy it exhibits when tackling matters relating to class and gender, as well as those that explore "industrial unrest" in a "wider social and cultural framework than that employed in *Mary Barton",* making both of these novels equally valuable means of obtaining information relating to the reality lived in nineteenth century Britain. (Gaskell, 2008b, p. ix).

Perhaps the most important category in which I can place Elizabeth Gaskell's novels in is that of the "social novel". This variety of literary production, despite having seen occasional application in instances located prior in time to this era, had its most significant employment during the nineteenth century, particularly in its third decade, as it was here that, due to the worsening conditions of the labouring members of the population, it garnered the attention and appreciation of both authors and readers (Cazamian, 1973, p. 36). In its foundation one can find remnants of both the "revolutionary novel", which captured considerable attention in the last decade of the previous century, and of the *roman-à-these*, the "didactic novel", a type of written work to which the British literary sphere has continually demonstrated its affection for (pp. 36, 38). The history of the "social novel" is a complex one, but one of its defining moments can undeniably be attributed to Thomas Carlyle's *Chartism*. Its importance is such that, when addressing the genre of "social novels", this category of literature is often labelled as novels pertaining to the "Condition-of-England Question", the name of the first chapter in the author's aforementioned work. The reasoning behind this is apparent when one reads the words that provide a beginning to *Chartism*:

> A feeling very generally exists that the condition and disposition of the Working Classes is a rather ominous matter at present; that something ought to be said, something ought to be done, in regard to it. To us individually this matter appears, and has for many years appeared, to be the most ominous of all practical matters whatever; a matter in regard to which if something be not done, something will do itself one day, and in a fashion that will please nobody. The time is verily come for acting in it; how much more for consultation about acting in it, for speech and articulate inquiry about it! (Carlyle, 1842, p. 1)

It is evident that, notably in the works of Gaskell, the "social novel" functions as a tool for communicating what "ought to be said" and to attempt to abate the grim emotions that were found looming in the minds of the people of Britain through the course of this era. Indeed, this type of literary endeavour, above all, looks for ways to "reproduce the full misery of industrialism in its pages with telling emotional impact" (Cazamian, 1973, p. 30), formulating through this an attempt at correcting the discernible imbalances arisen from a

growingly individualist society with the employment of the emotional sphere, which would be capable of finding a common ground suitable for the moderation of class hatred. This newly found compassion would then result in the acceptance of the concept of mutual social responsibility (pp. 61, 295).

The definitions we can apply to "social novels" are not always elementary, with even the label we ordinarily attribute to these literary works being in and of itself sporadically disputed (Ford, 1970, p. 169). However, when speaking of "social novels", the existence of common elements is observed in all productions that fall under this classification. Independently of the year they were published, these were composed during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, coinciding with the peak of Chartist activities and:

> deep economic and political crisis, appalling poverty and the first assertion of a vast, popular, democratic social and political movement of the people based on the growth and desperation of the new industrial working class, the mine and factory workers who lived for the most part in the new hideous industrial centres of the North and the Midlands. (p. 171)

Moreover, with the exception of our very own Gaskell, the great majority of novelists in this area did not concern themselves with writing about the affairs of factory workers, even if scenes relating to them made their sporadic appearances. Instead, the destitute population of London took central stage. It was different from the urban centres that were built around heavy industry, such as Manchester, but the social situation was nonetheless increasingly volatile. Furthermore, the target of the literature coming from these writers was not that of the members of the labouring class, but to the "conscience - not to mention the downright factual ignorance – of the middle class" (p. 171). An observation that is often made is that, were a writer to attempt the production of a "social novel", there is a quality that is essential to an effective outcome, and that may at first seem paradoxical, that being placing a limit in one's involvement. Although the addressing of the problems one might witness in society is imperative, the connection an author should create to these affairs must be "emotional and artistic rather than social or political", never to cross the boundary into propagandist writing (Ford, 1970, p. 170). In its most concise form, the "social novel" was a "novel with a social thesis", a "novel which aims at directly influencing human

relations, either in general, or with reference to one particular set of circumstances" (Cazamian, 1973, pp. 7-8).

The very nature of a "social novel" is what drew Elizabeth Gaskell towards it as she considered commencing her literary journey. It was previously mentioned that the author believed writing was unquestionably capable of affecting the world around her and, as such, the adoption of this genre of novels was almost instinctive, were one of its characteristics not the possession of a significant capacity for shaping social realities. It was with the employment of this tool that the author would undertake the task of contributing to the healing of a deeply divided nation, particularly when it came to class relations (D'Albertis, 1997, p. 46). Gaskell was not alone in being compelled to utilize the "social novel" in an attempt of correcting the evils of a society focused on industrialism above all other elements. What commonly characterizes these authors is the possession of a mind that is frequently consumed by religious or moral fervour, finding its sustenance in the realm of emotions rather than in the intellect that was so often associated with the world of manufacturing (Cazamian, 1973, p. 38). Although we would often attribute the viewpoints these authors possess with progressive ideals, especially when the context of the historical period in which they manifested themselves are considered, writers of "social novels" often demonstrated, in somewhat curious manner, conservative tendencies. It was not uncommon to see these men and women speak of a "paternalistic philanthropy", in which the State, or the estates that traditionally held considerable amounts of power, often the Church or nobility, were responsible for mitigating the afflictions that actively injured the nation's society (p. 293).

In the use of "social novels" as a method of portraying the problems the country faces and as a means to foster an interventionist attitude aimed at the betterment of affairs concerning its social sphere, the author must attempt to depict life as it is, the world in paper as it appears to be outside of it. For this endeavour, the more realistic a depiction of such environments was, the more successful the writer's efforts would be. It has been stated that the "social novel", in its pursuit for an accurate portrayal of British living, was responsible for the implementation of "realism" in the way that the men and women of this nation contemplated social affairs (p. 6).

As far as this artistic tool is concerned, Victorian literature seems to take four different routes in its employment of depictions of reality, even if at times these are observed to

coexist. Firstly, we can perceive the option consisting of an "aim at objective realism of content", providing onto whatever the subject might be "fresh detail" and the tackling of previously unexplored territories "so as to approach a fuller representation of life". Secondly, we can acknowledge that which makes an attempt at "heightened feeling", that is, the particular effort at including in "realism" intensity rather than the everyday living with the conventional aspects we expect from it. For this, the author focuses on "moments of strong passion". The next two are of particular concern to us when Gaskell's novels are our subject matter and, having mentioned the idea of the mundane, we may start with what manifests in a literary work utilizing "realism" by demonstrating a specific interest in "normality". In this case, the presentation of "life in its quotidian measure, clarified by thematic patterns but undistorted by any exaggerated emphasis", allowing for both intermissions in the narrative as well as considerable variety in substance for the latter. Finally, we have a strain of "realism" that puts great emphasis on the *mise en scène*, a special care and effort applied to the creation of an exceptional stage for our story. In both *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, these depictions concern themselves with the northern industrial urban centres and have the ability to transport the reader into a world which, mirroring the one the author had witnessed in her private life, never allows itself the chance to shy away from the "remorseless portrayal of the details of injustice, poverty, class hatred and slum conditions", so exceptional are these descriptions in Gaskell's work (Fowler, 1991, pp. 290-291). The truth is that, in the hands of social idealists, realism, here in its literary form, could be utilized as an advantage in the struggle against the individualism that, according to these writers, caused great harm to the British nation and, as such, was greatly valued when the task at hand was to produce a compelling "social novel" (Cazamian, 1973, pp. 5-6).

3.1. "Long, straight, hopeless streets"

As this study now enters the realm of Elizabeth Gaskell's novels, seeking the creation of an image depicting the reality lived during nineteenth century Britain, the author's portrayals of the world around her, the description of the observations she had conducted following her arrival in Manchester, become of exceptional importance. As I have discussed, Gaskell put great care in her representation of these urban centres. Such was their rate of

unrestrained growth, and the resulting abuses and misery that accompanied this phenomenon, that she would not have found it difficult to garner material for her attempts at increasing consciousness towards the condition of the working class. Despite this, it is remarkable just how these depictions are elaborated by the author. In Gaskell's first industrial novel, for instance, the beginning of her ninth chapter perfectly presents the reader with the setting for a common day in the industrial city of Manchester, bringing attention to the pollution to be found, creating a contrast with the flowery areas in the rural side of the country, and combining both elements with the characteristic rainy weather of the northern territories of England. All of this can be seen as a tool to locate us, the readers, within this bleak, weighty environment through which our characters are to make their way in their daily activities:

> it was a warm, pattering, incessant rain – just the rain to waken up the flowers. But in Manchester, where, alas! there are no flowers, the rain had only a disheartening and gloomy effect; the streets were wet and dirty, the dripping drippings from the houses were wet and dirty, and the people were wet and dirty. (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 95)

This characterization of Manchester continues later on in the novel as Mary Barton, our main character, prepares to leave for Liverpool. We are presented with a landscape openly reflecting the effects of "industrialism" and the changes it has contributed to in everyday activities of these urban centres. The author focuses here specifically on the implementation of transportation by rail, a symbol of the power of steam, described by Gaskell as "common (...) in all places as a means of transit, and especially in Manchester". Furthermore, attention is given to the chaos that accompanied this new age, particularly in the way various members of the population performed their daily commute, recorded in this instance in chaotic manner and marked by "the hurry, the noise of people, and bells, and horns; the whiz and the scream of the arriving trains". It is also here that, as our characters walk through the very streets of this city, the landscape is in full view to us, with this train ride having given Mary Barton a full view of the "factory-chimneys" and, more importantly, of "the cloud of smoke which hovers over Manchester", the pollution of manufacturing activities encompassing the entirety of this area (p. 273).

The author's next novel, *North and South*, continues these rich descriptions of the city, in this case Milton, the "thinly disguised" surrogate of Manchester (Gaskell, 2008b, p. xvii). In fact, the novel spares little time before introducing us to the "North of England, the manufacturers, the people, the wild and bleak country" (p. 39), with the animosity towards this region being expressed by Maria Hale[7], Margaret's mother, notably when it is contrasted with the family's living in Helstone:

> 'You can't think the smoky air of a manufacturing town, all chimneys and dirt like Milton-Northern, would be better than this air, which is pure and sweet, if it is too soft and relaxing. Fancy living in the middle of factories, and factory people!' (p. 45)

An outstanding example of a descriptive occasion of the industrial setting is performed in the vividness with which Gaskell depicts Milton as our characters slowly approach the city:

> 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 the contrast with the pale gray-blue of the wintry sky; for in Helstone there had been the earliest signs of frost. Nearer to the town, the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke; perhaps, after all, more of a loss of the fragrance of grass and herbage than any positive taste or smell. (p. 59)

In this instance, the author doesn't limit herself to providing simple information on what our characters might have observed on their trip, but offers instead a description that lets us, the readers, know that their future is bellow a "lead-coloured cloud". Throughout it, it constantly opposes the elements that can be seen in a town marked by heavy manufacturing activities, such as "darker" skies and the "taste and smell of smoke", with those which characterize rural locations like Helstone, the "pale gray-blue of the wintry sky" and the "fragrance of grass and herbage". It is also notable that, for its execution, this description does not exclusively work with our visual senses, but includes others like smell and taste, being able to completely transport the reader into the surrounding areas of

[7] This in no way attempts to attribute the dislike for industrial urban centres solely to Mrs. Hale. In fact, Margaret herself is said to possess "a repugnance to the idea of a manufacturing town" (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 59), an element that Elizabeth Gaskell explores throughout the rest of her novel, namely in the gradual phasing out of this prejudice through her interaction with this new environment.

Milton. In the very same page, and with similarly remarkable quality, the Hale family first steps into the streets of Milton, and the lifelike picture with which we are presented by Gaskell can only be the result of her witnessing this commotion with her very eyes in her daily activities within the city of Manchester. Margaret and her family walk through "long, straight, hopeless streets" while encircled by factories engaged in a constant discharge of "black 'unparliamentary' smoke", the cause of our previous "lead-coloured cloud", and with constant stops due to the constant back and forth of vehicles utilized for the transportation of cotton (p. 59).

As was discussed before, when a deeper examination of the author behind the novels was performed, the experiences of Margaret Hale in *North and South* mirror those of her very own creator, Elizabeth Gaskell. As the latter moved from Knutsford to Manchester, so did the former relocate to Milton from Helstone. The impact the young Hale experienced upon her trading of a rural setting for an urban, industrial one was most likely inspired by those of the author, making the descriptions here analysed possess a deeply personal quality to them, further enhancing their verisimilitude in the context of providing the reader with an accurate picture of the world of Victorian Britain (Flint, 1995, p. 4).

The image of the urban streets provided to the reader by Elizabeth Gaskell are grim, if I were to put it mildly, but were the readers to step out of them and move inside the "regularly-built houses, all small and of brick" (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 59) or the bleak factories where manufacturing takes place, many times at the cost of workers' health, we witness an aggravation of misery that is disquieting. On this subject, it can be observed that *Mary Barton* appears to show greater concern for the living conditions of the working class when compared to *North and South* (p. ix-x). There are various reasons for this, but the main ones are rooted at first in the reception of her first novel and secondly in the historical context during which the second was produced. Some readers were quick to claim the reality the author represented was influenced by her sympathy for the working class (Gaskell, 2008a, p. xvi), with the owners of mills in Manchester being particularly unhappy with the role given to them in the novel. Gaskell was stirred by these claims and, although refusing to abandon depicting the struggles of the working class or to dedicate *North and South* solely to the representation of the realities of the employers, chose to work on the expansion of the questions raised in her first novel to a considerably greater perspective (Gaskell, 2008b, p. x-xi). When it comes to historical matters, in the very same year *Mary Barton* was published,

Europe became a stage for several acts of revolution across varying nations that battered the social order of the time. By the time we reach the year 1850, this date being placed within the timespan of six years which separates both of the author's novels, philanthropic literature, to which the literary works here analysed pertain to, found itself haunted by a sense of ambivalence. The excesses in the actions of the revolutionaries of Paris in particular demonstrated plainly that moderation was vital. It was evident that, were there to be solutions to the issues that distressed the British people, these had to be performed in a wise manner as to avoid utter social turmoil. This approach, which came to influence much of the literary production of this time, is seen too in the works of Elizabeth Gaskell, particularly in the example of *North and South* (Cazamian, 1973, pp. 225-226).

This being the case, let us first begin with *Mary Barton* and with the reason the novel's writer presents us with for the disparity in the living conditions between the working-class and the employers for whom they work. In this, there already existed class tensions in effect, which I will explore further on, contributing in part to the animosity the first felt towards the second, but the main reason behind this bitterness comes, according to Gaskell, from workers witnessing the moving of mill-owners to increasingly lavish residences, together with ultimately retreating to an "estate in the country" with their fortune, having sold their mill, while the labourer, believing it was their hard work that made this accumulation of capital possible, is found "struggling on for bread for his children, through the vicissitudes of lowered wages, short hours, fewer hands employed, &c" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 23). It is especially during times in which "trade is bad" and the worker understands there exists a lack of buyers for the products produced at his place of work, resulting in decreased demand and in employees being asked to endure such periods, that he finds himself appalled as he witnesses the extravagant habitations of his employers "still occupied, while spinners' and weavers' cottages stand empty, because the families that once filled them are obliged to live in rooms or cellars" (p. 23). The cruel reality of the working-class' living conditions is further explored in this same instance in the novel when Gaskell presents us with the following:

> Carriages still roll along the streets, concerts are still crowded by subscribers, the shops for expensive luxuries still find daily customers, while the workman loiters away his unemployed time in watching these things, and thinking of the pale,

> uncomplaining wife at home, and the wailing children asking in vain for enough of food, - of the sinking health, of the dying life of those near and dear to him. The contrast is too great. Why should he alone suffer from bad times? (p. 23)

If I am to speak of concrete examples, the most striking moment in terms of the description of the living conditions of the working class comes from the case of the Davenport family. The times were ruthless, and this household had fallen victim to increasingly lower economic conditions. Their shelter had now been reduced to a dark cellar and their possessions were all pawned away. To worsen this situation, the family had children who "were too young to work, but not too young to be cold and hungry" (p. 58). The portrayal of this scene, the movement from the dirty, unsanitary street into a somehow more abhorrent habitation strikes the hearts of readers and truly puts into perspective the misery in which many working-class families lived, and that Gaskell was a witness to:

> they now lived in Berry Street. It was unpaved (...) As they passed, women from their doors tossed household slops of *every* description into the gutter (...) You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window-panes many of them were broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at mid-day (...) the smell was fœtid as almost to knock two men down (...) they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet brick floor (...) the fireplace was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's lair, and cried in the dark loneliness. (pp. 58-59)

It is then no wonder that disease, like that of the fever the man of the Davenport household was suffering from, was so common at this time (Hobsbawn, 1996, p. 203), resulting from "miserable living, filthy neighbourhoods, and great depression of mind and body" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 59). It is in an attempt to help this poor family that Wilson, a fellow member of the working class, visits their employer with the objective of obtaining medical help for the fever-stricken man. It is in doing so that he witnesses their place of living, a residence existing in pure contrast with the damp cellar the novel had previously presented us with. Contained inside it were numerous rooms with expensive articles decorating every

corner and servants working towards assisting the family with every task. This interior was also blessed with a comfortable fire and great abundance of food, a reality much different from what we had previously witnessed. The people themselves, Mr. Carson and his son, spent their time reading in an extravagant library and enjoying regular meals, spared from the concerns and afflictions felt by those they employed at the family mill (Gaskell, 2008a, pp. 65-57).

Unfortunately, poor conditions did not limit themselves solely to the habitations of the working-class, being also observed at their place of labour. Gaskell makes clear reference to the lack of proper safety measures in factories, and this is exemplified by Jane Wilson, a victim of a workplace accident that had her body permanently damaged by a wheel before these were "boxed up" (p. 87). But if I am to speak on this topic, *North and South* further provides us with the character of Bessy, a near perfect illustration of the health-deteriorating effects similar spaces at this time possessed. In a conversation with our main character, Margaret Hale, Bessy, a young, frail woman (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 103), tells us that, due to her mother's untimely death, she was forced to begin working in the cotton industry at an early age. It is here that the character claims:

> the fluff got into my lungs, and poisoned me (...) Little bits, as fly off fro' the cotton, when they're carding it, and fill the air till it looks all fine white dust. They say it winds round the lungs, and tightens them up. Anyhow, there's many a one as works in a carding-room, that falls into a waste, coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff. (p. 102)

Understandably, and reflecting her unfamiliarity with the urban world, Margaret questions her friend on the possibility of preventing these hazardous conditions of labour, and it is in her answer that the suffering of the workers is further expanded upon. Firstly, it is confirmed by Bessy that there are ways of preventing the contamination of the air by cotton fluff, but that for this to happen it would take considerable investment by the masters' part on a device described as a "great wheel" (p. 102). Since this implementation would reveal itself to be costly and would not provide immediate profit, many were the employers who decided against it. But, in perhaps even more heartbreaking manner, we are also told the following:

> I've heard tell o' men who didn't like working in places where there was a wheel, because they said as how it made 'em hungry, at after they'd been long used to swallowing fluff, to go without it, and that their wage ought to be raised if they were to work in such places. (p. 102)

Both Bessy and her father were aware of the risks involved in working at a mill such as this had on the worker's health, but necessity dictated it had to be done. More importantly for this young woman is being able to provide for her family, in particular her sister, so that she might pursue her studies and avoid working herself under these deplorable conditions. For this objective she tells us: "I just worked on till I shall ne'er get the wirr out o' my ears, or the fluff out o' my throad I' this world" (p. 102).

3.2. The people of the industrial world

I have made mention of the aversion the characters of Maria Hale and, to a lesser degree, Margaret had towards the inhabitants of urban locations, with this being especially relevant considering their aristocratic background (Parrinder, 2006, p. 209). How the people of Manchester, and its "stand-in" Milton, are here referred to as by these two women accustomed to a way of living characteristic of their rural home in Helstone is not reflective of Elizabeth Gaskell's own judgement, and it with this very sentiment towards the working class and, to an extent, all of the inhabitants of these urban centres that, with knowledge of the real contact the author had with these people (Adams, 2012, p. 104), we might obtain insight into the men and women who walked the streets of nineteenth century Manchester.

Firstly, and in accordance to the observations previously elaborated upon, these urban centres were not homogenous, in fact, the very opposite was the case, as the chaos in the way these new manufacturing settlements were organized provided "heterogenous social spaces" that allowed for the interaction between opposing classes (D'Albertis, 1997, p. 46). The main societal groups that are deserving of our attention are those at the centre of the rising tensions in the field of labour at this time, the middle and working classes. Of the first, it is understood that manufacturers, at least the successful ones, hold considerable influence within the society they are a part of. In Milton, upon the arrival of the Hale family,

and while they made an attempt at settling in, their new landlord is said to gladly do for "Mr. Thornton, the wealthy manufacturer" what he would not for "a Reverend Mr. Hale, unknown in Milton" (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 65). Industry is very important for the people of this city, and, together with it, innovation. I have referenced Mr. Thornton, this happening due to the importance of his position in the setting of *North and South.* He is a member of the middle class and a mill owner, serving as a representative for them, be it in their shortcomings or in the qualities they might possess (p. 80-83). John Thornton embraces the struggle and tumult of Milton, claiming the following:

> I won't deny that I am proud of belonging to a town (...) the necessities of which give birth to such grandeur of conception. I would rather be a man tolling, suffering – nay, failing and successless here, than lead a dill prosperous life in the (...) more aristocratic society down in the South, with their slow days of careless ease. (p. 81)

Other than displaying appreciation for urban life, Thornton also makes reference to the "aristocratic South", demonstrating a rupture between the employers and the traditional ideas that had until the nineteenth century been commonplace in Britain. In fact, northern manufacturers seemed to demonstrate clear opposition not only towards the aforementioned, but also to "acts of parliament and all legislation affecting (...) mode of management (...) at Milton" (p. 82), and, by extension, to forms of central government.

Despite every other factor, the intensity with which life is lived in cities marked by industrialism is, at least to Margaret's father, Mr. Hale, remarkable: "there was something dazzling (...) in the energy which conquered immense difficulties with ease; the power of the machinery of Milton, the power of the men of Milton, impressed (...) with a sense of grandeur" (p. 69).

Industrial civilization, with acknowledgment of its various imperfections, showed greatness in what it shared with those who were responsible for its beginnings: "dogged energy and initiative" (Cazamian, 1973, p. 227). All of these qualities were rooted in the very nature of trade and product manufacturing. So powerful were these that grooming the youth into pursuing a career related to a life directly connected to these industries was common, if not encouraged:

> They were mostly of the age when many boys would be still at school, but, according to the prevalent, and apparently well-founded notions of Milton, to make a lad into a good tradesman he must be caught young, and acclimated to the life of the mill, or office, or warehouse. (p. 68)

This is, however, how the middle class, its mill-owners and employers, were presented by Gaskell. At the same time, what was the great majority of citizens in these cities, the working-class, were a separate entity with its own existence and traits. An element in the character of these people that easily calls attention to itself, particularly due to information on it originating from Margaret Hale's account, a character who was unfamiliar with the culture of manufacturing towns, is the unpolished, yet earnest, way in which these people express themselves. As our main character makes her way through the streets of Milton, she experiences:

> The tones of their unrestrained voices, and their carelessness of all common rules of street politeness, frightened Margaret a little at first (...) She did not mind meeting any number of girls, loud and boisterous though they might be. But she alternately dreaded and fired up against the workmen, who complemented not on her dress, but on her looks, in the same open fearless manner (...) But the very out-spokenness marked their innocence of any intention to hurt her delicacy (...) there were other sayings of theirs, which, when she reached the quiet safety of home, amused her even while they irritated her. (pp. 71-72)

Though very different from the way people carry themselves in the usual environments Margaret previously found herself in, these men and women were well-meaning and honest. In addition to this, Elizabeth Gaskell attributes other qualities to the working class, with the most important being its ability to aid one another and their capacity for charity, even if they too are suffering from the afflictions caused by the industrial world. In *Mary Barton*, for example, John Barton, a factory worker himself and father of our main character, upon hearing from Wilson, a friend of the family, about a fellow labourer, the father of the Davenport family whose conditions of living I have made mention to, offered "the remains of his dinner, hastily put together for supper" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 58) as he did not have the money to help. What further elevates the nobility of this gesture is that it took place during

a time in which “trade was very slack; cottons could find no market" and “as trade continued dead, other mills shortened hours, turned off hands, and finally stopped work altogether” (pp. 56-57), meaning the relinquishing of this food for his fellow man cost Barton dearly. This instance of carrying out acts of kindness when in great personal discomfort is not isolated, demonstrated through, for example, Mary Barton’s mimicking of her father’s gesture by forgoing her own “scanty remnant of food which the cupboard contained” to a hungry foreign child in the streets of Manchester, or when, knowing there was little nourishment to be had at Mary’s home, Job Legh, a friend to the Barton family, invites her to dine at his house, displaying what Gaskell describes as “the feeling of hospitality, so strong and warm in most of those who have little to offer, but whose heart goes eagerly and kindly with that little” (pp. 223, 251).

The thematic choice of demonstrating the sense of fraternity existing between workers extends itself to *North and South*. A particular instance of this happens when a factory labourer, Nicholas Higgins, compares the men and women who participate in strikes to soldiers:

> don’t yo’ think I can keep three people (...) on sixteen shillings a week? Dun yo’ think it’s for mysel’ I’m striking work at this time? It’s just as much in the cause of others as yon soldier – only m’appen, the cause he dies for is just that of somebody he never capt eyes on, nor heerd on all his born days, while I take up John Boucher’s cause, as lives next door but one, wi’ a sickly wife, and eight childer, none on ‘em factory age. (p. 134)

In this instance, participating in demonstrations against the treatment of the working class by employers isn’t done as a result of one’s own situation, as Nicholas lets Margaret know his salary is sufficient to provide for his family, but for those whose income is inadequate, resulting in tragic living conditions.

If there’s a way to describe the relationship the people of the working class had towards each other, as far as Elizabeth Gaskell’s account through her novels is concerned, it is found in the words of Bessy Higgins as she tells Margaret Hale: “You’re not to think we’d ha’ letten ‘em clem, for all we’re a bit pressed oursel’; if neighbours doesn’t see after neighbours, I dunno who will” (p. 156). The care members of the working-class demonstrated towards

each other was well recorded as being a striking aspect of the great majority of these people's character. It makes sense for this to be the case considering the circumstances, but more than born out of grave needs, it seemed to occur due to a willingness to partake in sacrifices contributing to an idea of "common humanity" (Cazamian, 1973, p. 71).

These ideas of charity and of a shared sense of human compassion are deeply rooted within Christian teachings, which are particularly relevant in the case of Elizabeth Gaskell. We find these theological tenets to be present from early on in the author's personal life[8], causing us no wonder when we witness the representation of religious beliefs in considerable abundance in the two novels here under study. Christianity appears, in both *Mary Barton* and in *North and South*, in substantially different manner. There are instances in which, amidst the misery of these times, comfort is provided to both characters and readers by Gaskell utilizing the concept of God, as are the examples of the moment Mr. Davenport passes away in our first novel, with the words of his wife being: "Oh, Lord God! I thank thee, that the hard struggle of living is over!" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 69) and the remaining of the scene being described with religious imagery and concepts:

> He could not speak again. The trump of the archangel would set his tongue free; but not a word more would it utter till then (...) The face grew beautiful, as the soul neared God. A peace beyond understanding came over it (...) No more grief or sorrow for him. (p. 70)

The idea of waiting "patiently on the Lord, whatever your trouble may be" (p. 144) continues through her second industrial novel, with the character of Bessy relying on the "grand words of promise" found within "Revelations", which assure us of a place "far different fro' this dreary world" and provide her with "more comfort than any other book i' the Bible" (pp. 137-138).

The words of these holy scripture are additionally a source of guidance for the people portrayed in Gaskell's works. Mr. Carson, the main figure representative of mill-owners in *Mary Barton*, found in these texts the guidance for his conduct in regard to the "different lots of the brethren of mankind" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 357), as seen in:

[8] As has already been stated, Christianity had been present in the author's life from an early age, be it in her upbringing as a Unitarian (Flint, 1995, p. 2), her father's role in the Church, or in her marriage with a minister (Allott, 1971, p. 7), together with her assistance in the latter's religious duties (Flint, 1995, p. 4).

> Years ago, the Gospel had been his task-book in learning to read. So many years ago, that he had become familiar with the events before he could comprehend the Spirit that made the Life. He fell to the narrative now afresh (...) He began at the beginning (...) understanding for the first time the full meaning of the story. He came to the end; the awful End. And there were the haunting words of pleading. He shut the book and thought deeply. All night long, the Archangel combated with the Demon. (p. 357)

Indeed, Elizabeth Gaskell makes sure to communicate the message that, if our actions are righteous, if they are for the good of others and not for our own benefit, God is with us, with Mary Barton holding this belief in great regard: "But surely God will help me. When I know I'm doing right, I will have no fear, but put my trust in Him; for I'm acting for the innocent and good, and not for my own self, who have done so wrong" (p. 252). By extension of this notion, to help those in need is to act according to God's will, with the author encouraging intervention in the mending of society's afflictions.

This approach of extending a hand for our fellow men and women is expanded upon and further applied to the relationships between workers and employers. In this first novel, for example, John Barton comments on what he perceives to be the reality of the labourers and of their masters, which seem to him to entail completely different worlds that never intertwine, as when an impoverished member of the community is in need of aid it is those in similar situations that offer their help and support, never the rich who, according to this man, "know nothing of the trials of the poor" (pp. 10-11). For this, Elizabeth Gaskell, through the character of John Barton, employs the use of Dives and Lazarus, a parable within the Bible that tells the story of a rich man and of one other, Lazarus, poor and wounded, begging for crumbs off the rich man's table, but to no avail. Upon their death, the first is received in Hell while the latter finds himself in Heaven next to Abraham, these two realms being separated by a "great gulf". Lazarus finds the comfort he did not possess in life while the rich man, having lived luxuriously with no concern for the less fortunate, suffers tormented by flames (The Bible: Authorized King James Version, 2008, St. Luke. 16: 19-31). John Barton makes mention of this "great gulf", offering a different interpretation of this element as functioning in similar manner to the immense distance that separates the rich

from the poor in nineteenth century Britain (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 11). A similar example of this can also be observed in the author's second novel, with Margaret Hale speaking of God's plan to make us "mutually dependent", independently of the position we may hold in the social hierarchy (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 122), and of the priority our moral and religious duties in regard to offering aid to our fellow humans should hold in regard to our legal rights (p. 166).

When it came to industrial disputes, such as those between employers and employees, Christianity seems to hold particular importance to Gaskell not only because of its prevalence in the author's life, but because, when it came to our attitude towards these conflicts, this religion offered a sense of morality that was capable of assuring social peace through the insistence on the idea of common interests and of love, justice and charity being the tools that would be capable of ridding Britain of "the inadequacies of daily life". In a more candid way, Gaskell's novels suggest an interventionism born from compassion and rooted on the Christian ideal of "human brotherhood" (Cazamian, 1973, pp. 215-216), being this ideal elaborated upon with Margaret Hale's beliefs in God's plans consisting in making us "mutually dependent" in a manner that did not concern itself with the position we may hold in the social hierarchy (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 122), and with our ideal priorities resting on our moral and religious duties in regard to offering aid to our fellow humans (p. 166).

Despite Gaskell's emphasis on the presence of Christian values in the lives of the people of nineteenth century Britain, be it in the manner in which they express themselves or in their guiding principles, this relationship with religion is not always unwavering. With the state of the world at this specific period in time and while witnessing the prevalent despair that accompanied urban centres, it is no surprise that scepticism revealed itself amongst the populace. Nicholas Higgins is a figure that Elizabeth Gaskell utilizes do demonstrate this very phenomenon, as seen in a conversation between the first and Margaret Hale when, on the topic of religion, the first claims:

> I believe what I see, and no more. That's what I believe, young woman (...) a man must speak out for the truth, and when I see a world going all wrong at this time o' day, bothering itself wi' things it knows nought about, and leaving undone all the things that lie in disorder close at its hand – why, I say, leave a' this talk about religion alone, and set to work on what yo' see and know. That's my creed. It's simple, and not far to fetch, nor hard to work. (p. 91)

His daughter, though a believer in the Christian faith, goes through moments of weakness in which she possesses doubts about the existence of God, these being further worsened by the ideas her father speaks of, affecting her deeply and leaving her in need of her friend, Margaret, to reassure her by confidently claiming that “we have a Father in Heaven” (p. 101).

In addition to exploring the theme of an impaired faith in religious beliefs, Gaskell makes it her responsibility to criticize the failure she had observed in a portion of the population when it came to following the teachings of the Christian faith relating to the aid of our fellow men and women. A great example of this are the words of John Barton to his daughter after Parliament had refused to listen to labourers regarding the question of the increasing torment observed within the lives of members of the working class: “Mary, we mun speak to our God to hear us, for man will not hearken; no, not now, when we weep tears o’ blood” (Gaskell, 2008a, pp. 95-96). This is an instance of Elizabeth Gaskell communicating her beliefs in a clear manner, directly tackling the question of the lack of compassion shown between the people of England at this time, especially in concern to a lack of answers which should be provided by those in charge of the nation’s administration. Furthermore, this lack of regard for a conduct that would be classified as righteous in accordance with Christian teachings is openly attributed by the aforementioned Nicholas Higgins to the middle class, particularly the mill-owners, as this labourer says:

> I reckon yo’d not ha’ much belief in yo’ if yo’ lived here – if yo’d been bred here (...) There’s many and many a one wiser, and scores much better learned than I am around me, - folk who’ve had time to think on these things, - while my time has had to be gi’en up to getting my bread. Well, I sees these people. Their lives is pretty much open to me. They’re real folk. They don’t believe i' the Bible, - not they. They may say they do, for form’s sake; but, Lord, sir, d’ye think their first cry I' th’ morning is, “What shall I do to get hold on eternal life?” or “What shall I do to fill my purse this blessed day? Where shall I go? What bargains shall I strike?” (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 226)

Here we can determine the existence of three main points presented by this member of the working-class. Firstly, the observation that, due to the daily struggle for survival, the less

fortunate members of society have little time to dedicate to matters such as theological questions. Secondly, in places such as Milton, and by extension Manchester, the very nature of a life revolving around activities like manufacturing and trade twists the priorities of men. Rather than demonstrating concern for a devotion to a life marked by an attempt at the absence of sin, the accumulation of wealth becomes the primary interest of these people. Finally, Higgins criticizes the hypocrisy displayed by the individuals his speech addresses when they claim to follow the teachings of the Bible "for form's sake" (p. 226), an attempt at projecting a favourable righteous front with no real substance behind it, as proven by their actions in their most tangible state.

3.3. A world of oppositions

On several occasions, this study has made mention of the fractured state of English society throughout the nineteenth century, be it in terms of clashes between social classes or in issues relating to, for example, geographical peculiarities. For the duration of the stories presented in Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, the author makes sure to represent these circumstances, as will briefly be observed.

Once more, Elizabeth Gaskell utilizes John Barton as a representative of the working class, a technique not too dissimilar from Sir Walter Scott's own skill in portraying opposing forces in an historical context by assigning to those forces "typical" characters (Readioff 2023, p. 143), and utilizes this very figure to attempt an explanation that could enlighten the readers when it came to the rationale behind the hatred the labouring men and women felt towards their employers:

> John Barton's overpowering thought, which was to work out his fate on earth, was rich and poor; why are they so separate, so distinct, when God had made them all? It is not His will that their interests are so far apart. Whose doing is it? And so on into the problems and mysteries of life, until, bewildered and lost, unhappy and suffering, the only feeling that remained clear and undisturbed in the tumult of his heart, was hatred to the one class, and keen sympathy with the other. (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 165)

From the working man's perspective, the disparity between these two different groups of people, and the cruelty born from its unfairness, are reason enough for the hatred. "Whose doing is it?", John Barton asks himself, and, refusing to believe that it would be God's plan to bring upon them this misery, concludes that, if someone is to blame, it is surely those who benefit from these factors. In John Barton's case, the starving to death of his son further made him consider love for the masters, like the Gospel dictates, seem like an impossibility (p. 358). Further exploration of the reasoning behind the actions of the working class is provided in, for example, the disrespect employers directed towards the workers who argued in favour of better conditions (pp. 182-183), or in our second novel, as seen in an episode where Nicholas Higgins, while in a conversation with Mr. Hale, makes the point that, due to the dreadful state of education, workers were unable to grasp, or to even attempt to understand the complexities of the economic systems to which their labour contributed, prompting them to respond to hard times in the only ways they were capable of (Gaskell, 2008b, pp. 229-230).

It is at this time that I find myself greatly encouraged to proceed with this discussion by speaking of Gaskell's representation of the tools utilized by the working class in their struggle for better conditions. Much like what we can observe with the character of John Barton, many were the labourers who, in their displeasure towards the hand they had been dealt, joined together in an attempt to increase their capacity for altering the system. This man in particular is stated as being a Chartist (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 25). Mentioning of the People's Charter is made within *Mary Barton*, with John having been, in the novel, a delegate and a member of the group of representatives that travelled to London with the objective of presenting this petition to Parliament in a time in which trade was notably unfavourable and desperation among the lower classes of society was rapidly increasing (pp. 82-84).

A characteristic of these tougher times is that the activity of Trade Unions saw significant growth, as represented by Gaskell (p. 115). The author, in remarkable manner, had a respectable level of knowledge in regard to the inner workings and activities of these societies, as seen with her description of the relationship they held with others of the same sort hailing from differing regions, of the shared capital possessed to be dedicated to their cause and even in concerns with the support, organization and guidance of fellow members, here during a strike organized by this association:

> Many other Trades' Unions, connected with different branches of business, supported with money, countenance, and encouragement of every kind, the stand which the Manchester power-loom weavers were making against their masters. Delegates from Glasgow, from Nottingham, and other towns, were sent to Manchester, to keep up the spirit of resistance; a committee was formed, and all the requisite officers elected; chairman, treasurer, honorary secretary: - among them was John Barton. (p. 167)

Striking, as a working-class tool, is an important element in Gaskell's novels. We see it in both *Mary Barton* (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 167) and in *North and South* (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 115), being described by a Nicholas Higgins, a working-class leader, as a type of ultimatum, giving employers the options of either providing a "fair rate of wage" or of seeing their business falling apart (pp. 132-133).

Though Elizabeth Gaskell understands the reasoning behind the rallying of workers behind these associations, she does not shy away from portraying the negative consequences or the less pleasant aspects of these very same. For once, the author informs the readers that, if a worker is to join a Trade Union, or openly refer to himself as a Chartist, there is a tremendous risk that he will be denied employment by the mill-owners, be it in the case of John Barton (p. 111) or in that of the workers who partook in a major riot in *North and South* (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 231). Furthermore, there is inner conflict within the working class, be it in the contempt held towards those who filled in the positions of striking workers (pp. 173-175) or in partaking in actions that went against the methods desired by the Trade Unions, notably here with the example of an instance in which the character of Boucher planned an assault on Thornton's property in direct defiance to the civil conduct desired by Higgins (pp. 199-200, 228). Adding to this, the reasoning behind such actions is justified by Boucher, a fellow labourer, being under constant crushing pressure. It just so happens that, in the case of a mill worker on this occasion, there were only two options: to join the Union and starve, together with one's own family, for the period coinciding with the duration of the strike consisting with a refusal of work by these men, and therefore with the earning of no wages, or to refuse to cooperate with his fellow workers and suffer a life of

social exclusion, being essentially cast out despite sharing a work environment (pp. 232-233, 292-294).

I have so far commented on what is, in its great majority, the viewpoint of the working-class, as presented by Elizabeth Gaskell, but the author, in her attempt of creating dialogue and easing class tensions, is wise enough to present the reader with both sides of the industrial argument. It is in *North and South*, in particular, that I am able to gather arguments coming from the middle class. The Thornton family, mother and son, are who Gaskell utilizes as a catalyst for this. For example, contrary to the opinion workers held on striking, this method of protest is seen as simply a power struggle between masters and workers, with Mr. Thornton being unyielding in his position in regard to having no legal obligation to explain to the men under him how his wealth is spent or how his business is managed. Furthermore, in opposition to Margaret Hale's thoughts on the subject, the mill-owner also believes that he holds no responsibility towards the labourers who contribute to his manufacturing once they are out of their work environment, and therefore no longer under his command (pp. 115, 117-124).

This is a point that Gaskell insists on, the lack of communication between classes and the consequences such phenomenon brings (Cazamian, 1973, p. 229), this also being confirmed by the character of Nicholas Higgins as he states:

> Ask th' masters! They'd tell us to mind our own business, and they'd mind theirs. Our business being, yo' understand, to take the bated wage, and be thankful; and their business to bate us down to clemming point, to swell the profit. That's what it is. (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 134)

Thornton's thoughts on trade and manufacturing are quite different from those of the working class. It is true that the manufacturer recognizes early members of the middle class held a great power which they failed to use in a fair way, but also believes that, as this realm evolves, the scales between masters and workers is bound to reach a better balance. It is also notable how he holds considerable faith on the capitalist system, considering it to function in a way that allows simple men to rise through the ranks, assuming they have the will to do so. However, it is his vision of the working-class that is the most striking. John

Thornton concludes that much of the suffering found in the lives of these people comes from lack of discipline and from acts of self-indulgence, designating this element as "poorness of character". Though some could find these opinions to be disagreeable, Thornton's past, which consists in the achieving of his current position while having come from a background of great poverty, provides strength to his claims (pp. 81-88), with this character being shown to be well-respected even by the workers who act in opposition to his practices (p. 134). The values and ideals of the middle class, as Elizabeth Gaskell presents them, are deeply rooted in trade and manufacturing, being moulded by what practices and concerns contribute to results in these fields, much like what we see in Mrs. Thornton's intervention as she claims the sole concern of a Milton man should be to "hold and maintain a high, honourable place among the merchants of his country – the men of his town" (pp. 113-114).

Despite this, Elizabeth Gaskell makes sure to present, be it in *Mary Barton* or in *North and South,* instances nearing the conclusion of the novels where dialogue and understanding are reached between members of these two differing classes, be this done with the employment of religion and with the sharing of a common pain found in the death of a child, as with the case of John Barton and Mr. Carson (Gaskell, 2008a, pp. 358-359), with a civil conversation, as the one which takes place between the latter and both Job Legh and Jem Wilson, or even between Mr. Thornton and Nicholas Higgins, in moments of socialization that are extended to the remainder of his other workers (Gaskell, 2008b, pp. 361-363).

Many exchanges of arguments regarding industry and all it concerns take place between Margaret Hale and Mr. Thornton, both representing geographical areas of the country, the North and the South of England, together with its urban and rural environments respectively, and the aristocracy and middle class, while also functioning as a struggle between "old and new value systems, between a nostalgic view of the past warmed by personal associations, and the acknowledgement of the necessity of change, with its (accompanying) new, fragile structures of understanding" (Flint, 1995, p. 62).

Industrial cities, like Milton, and therefore Manchester, are presented by the author as places where "North and South has both met and made kind o' friends in this big smoky place" (Gaskell, 2008b, p. 73), but this does not always happen in harmonious matter. The

dislike for industrial areas and elements they encompass are shared with readers through the words of Mrs. Hale and Margaret (pp. 45, 59), but with this animosity towards the North being strongest in the character of Mrs. Shaw, Margaret Hale's aunt:

> Mrs. Shaw took as vehement a dislike as it was possible for one of her gentle nature to do, against Milton. It was noisy, and smoky, and the poor people whom she saw in the streets were dirty, and the rich ladies over-dressed, and not a man that she saw, high or low, had his clothes made to fit him. (p. 363)

This, however, is found working in reciprocal manner, with Mrs. Thornton working as a catalyst for the dislike of the South and its culture, while at the same time exalting that of the North. The woman speaks of Milton's "magnificent warehouses", of "places unique in the kingdom" and of "every improvement of machinery (...) in its highest perfection" (p. 98), while also attributing negative characteristics to the people of Southern England. Of these she says: "South people are often frightened by what our Darkshire men and women only call living and struggling" (p. 116), while also speaking of their inherent prejudice and ignorance which "was to be expected from (...) southern breeding" (p. 210).

The sense of pride for the North felt by the mother is shared by her son, a sentiment not only directed at their culture, but also at their heritage. This is seen when John Thornton claims:

> I belong to Teutonic blood; it is little mingled in this part of England to what it is in others; we retain much of their language; we retain more of their spirit; we do not look upon life as a time of enjoyment, but as a time for action and exertion. Our glory and our beauty arise out of our inward strength, which makes us victorious over material resistance, and over greater difficulties still. (p. 334)

The existence of northern and southern regions with their specificities is important for Gaskell, but this clash is also observed by the author to additionally happen between old and new forms of civilization, the "slow-moving agricultural South, pastorally idyllic" and the "feverish energy and tough austerity of the North" (Cazamian, 1973, p. 226) However, within *North and South*, the representation of these poles of the country manifests itself,

not only with the antagonism observed between them, but with their qualities coming together, here with the employment of Margaret Hale and John Thornton. The latter character can be perceived as an attempt at balancing the "biases" the author was accused of with *Mary Barton*, being noticeable how, despite his accomplishments in the realms of trade and manufacturing, he does not fit the label of "self-made industrialist" present in similar literary works. Meanwhile, the first, Margaret Hale, functions as a tool for the education of the readers on both of the regions' specificities within the nation, rather than allowing for further division. This happens because, as this character experiences the North, including its culture and its people, she gains increased awareness of the negative aspects of both the rural living of Helstone and of the aristocratic and idle nature of London (Flint, 1995, pp. 38-40). With their interaction, we observe people of different backgrounds, gentle aristocracy and manufacturing middle class, affect and change each other (Cazamian, 1973, p. 228).

The healing of geographical and class divisions is attempted by Gaskell within this second novel utilizing a courtship plot elaborated with the employment of the two previously mentioned characters. Margaret Hale finds little respect for aristocracy or blood rights in this new northern setting, simultaneously rejecting the values to be found within this region. However, be it through the interactions held between both characters, by the contact Margaret Hale has with the people of Milton, resulting in the gradual abandonment of her family's traditional Tory gentility, or even by the interest John Thornton demonstrates in the study of the classics of literature, both end up being influenced by the characteristics and ideals of their opposite. The union between North and South and the repairing of evident divisions between them is fully consummated through the marriage of Margaret Hale and John Thornton at the conclusion of *North and South*, a political decision by Gaskell. In doing so, the author presents us with praises towards the aristocracy's heritage, together with their possibility for injection of capital, and for their concerns towards the welfare of the lower classes of society, while the middle-class' appreciations are aimed at its commercial initiative, the efforts it holds towards innovation and the ruthlessness it possesses, a quality needed to drive Britain forward through the trials that the future was sure to present it with (Parrinder, 2006, pp. 208-212).

3.4. The female question

Elizabeth Gaskell's concern with the aspects pertaining to the female sphere enjoys unique specificities which justify the dedication of this section of our study to these very same matters.

With the author being herself a woman in this Victorian setting, such aspects had an influence on her own life, and especially in her literary endeavours. In these, Gaskell has been often praised as engaging in a reinvention of the "woman novelist", but also in having acted out many roles which previous chapters have made mention to. As examples of this, the author was a creator of bridges between different social classes, on several occasions having promoted negotiations between labourers and their employers, while also assuming the figure of an educator in a mission to provide knowledge for those in the lower positions within the English hierarchy. Finally, we can also see Gaskell as being a representative of the struggle against the oppression of those who lacked the means to communicate their complaints or an audience that was willing to listen to them (D'Albertis, 1997, p. 58).

Indeed, her existence as a female writer had attached to it certain elements that were seen as inherent to this dimension. Of women, and particularly in connection with the religious sphere that was so important to Gaskell, there existed the belief of a naturally "gentler but more impulsive imagination" that was able to "mark the link between the charitable precepts of Christianity and the duty of social responsibility" (Cazamian, 1973, p. 212), the result of this being an immediate, feminine and Christian interpretation of industrial questions that was pure in its composition because of the truth it held in its corcern with human feelings (p. 214). In its most simple form, Gaskell's literature was an attempt at exploring the possibility of applying the capacity for sympathy and understanding found in the female figure to industrial relationships (Flint, 1995, p. 43).

In relation to all of these factors, it is then no wonder that female writers of this era tended to converge on "social novels" as their preferred method of literature. It was innately both caring and charitable in its use as a channel for the conveying the ideas of an author, sparing it from the characteristic of being "unfeminine", a considerable concern at this time. More importantly perhaps, it provided these women with a tool for the influence

of political decisions at a time when they possessed very limited representation in the political spheres of the nation.

So far, much of the information presented has been connected with Elizabeth Gaskell on a personal level, but the question of what life was like in nineteenth century England for women and how this is represented in the novels of the author is also deserving of our attention. As we know, women were not spared from the wave of industrialism that swept across the nation at this time, with their employment under admittedly low wages in factories being fairly common (Hobsbawn, 1996, pp. 49-50), but their presence in this new social reality was considerably more intricate in its nature. In the case of great urban centres such as Manchester, for example, the conduct of Victorian women was the cause of considerable division. If there still existed a sense of nostalgia for the innocence that had previously been found in pastoral settings, it was shrouded by both the material comfort and the economic independence that these women could find within these rapidly expanding cities. Many were those who, belonging to a younger portion of the female population, rejected "traditional social restraints", together with employment in domestic roles, what had previously been commonly seen as positions appropriate for them, in favour of a personal enjoyment of the earnings resulting from their labour (D'Albertis, 1997, pp. 46-47).

However, and much like what could be observed in several other elements of working-class life, women were not spared from the misery one was able to bear witness to within this section of the English populace. It is here that we are introduced to the concept of "fallen women", individuals who, for one reason or the other, found themselves caught between "the economic hardship and physical dangers of street life" and "the oppressiveness of disciplinary regimes, whether in the family or an institutional 'home'". Despite this, many were the women of the nineteenth century who chose the freedom filled with danger that was available to them as opposed to "illusory comforts" or the "homes" as described (p. 52).

When it comes to Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, the author's opinion on such matters seems to opt for a cautionary tone. Very early in the novel, we are presented with John Barton's ideas on the matter, the desire for his daughter, Mary, to be an apprentice in the business of dressmaking, as "he had never left off disliking a factory life for a girl" (Gaskell, 2008a, p. 25), a fact that causes us no surprise if we are to consider the conditions found at

these sites of manufacture, but also going in accordance with the author's apparent belief in the idea that, due to starting work at factories from an early age, these activities make women unfit for both housekeeping and future motherhood (Cazamian, 1973, p. 221-222). However, the most striking warning in concerns to female existence in urban spaces comes from the character of Esther, Mary Barton's aunt. A tragic figure, she "rebels against a standard of feminine conduct that rewards self-abnegation", but ends up as a "fallen woman", a classification I have discussed, serving as a "cautionary tale" for female readers of the possible social volatility to be found in the streets of Manchester (D'Albertis, pp. 51-53), but also of the suffering, weakness and temptations that could be observed in working-class girls, many times driving them to prostitution (Cazamian, 1973, p. 215).

Despite these grim concerns regarding the women of this era, Elizabeth Gaskell's comments on the female sphere did not limit themselves to the multiple deceptions women in urban environments could fall victims to. The character of Mary Barton has the quality of being self-reliant attributed to her, and, despite the loss of her mother at an early age being an important factor in the development of this independence, her position as a member of the working class seems to be Gaskell's main reasoning behind this advancement in her being. The inclusion of hierarchical positioning in this equation is further expanded upon when we witness the conduct of the daughters of the Carson family. These women are the opposite of Mary in every way, lacking any of the positive attributes the former possesses, which is blamed on their background as progeny of a wealthy member of the middle class, never having experienced the rough conditions our main character is forced to withstand daily and that have provided her with her autonomy (Flint, 1995, pp. 18-19).

Similarly to Mary Barton, now within the second novel in our study, *North and South*, our main character, Margaret Hale, is constructed by Gaskell to possess innate qualities stemming from her existence as a woman. As we have observed, the contact between this character and John Thornton is an important aspect of this literary work. Their specific backgrounds, inherently connected to their particular beliefs, which in turn find themselves influenced by their respective social class, are also deserving of emphasis. However, this instance is marked by an exploration of a different realm altogether. In their interactions, Margaret Hale is capable of teaching John Thornton, the cold industrialist, the quality of sympathy. Through this, the once apathetic man becomes a "desirably thoughtful employer", no longer focusing his worries solely in the obtention of capital from his

manufacturing operations, demonstrating Elizabeth Gaskell's belief in women's capacity for contributing to the solving of industrial disputes with their own specific attributes (p. 41).

It is evident that, independently of the obstacles faced by the author, Elizabeth Gaskell was determined to present the world with her input on issues related to both the female sphere and the manufacturing landscape. Embracing what was seen as her natural inclination towards gentleness, she provided a different outlook on the various industrial questions, many times with concerns relating to the realm of feelings, which had not always been of interest when discussing such matters. In addition, the author presented herself as having a sense of empathy for the women who, much like herself, spent their days in these dynamic urban centres. There was an understanding of the hardships they faced, particularly the members of the working class among them, and of the seductiveness that life in the city presented to a young girl. The cautionary tales which Gaskell includes in her works not only show the concerns she held for these women, but also the awareness the author possessed of the shifting social scene in Victorian Britain.

Conclusions

As has been demonstrated in the present dissertation, the nineteenth century was a period in the history of Britain in which countless developments took place, forever reshaping sectors which concerned themselves with, for example, the economic and social aspects of society, contributing to a divide between the "old" and the "new" perceptions of the world, as well as the one observable between the distinct classes within the country, their ideals and the regions they are often associated with. In addition to this, and in more specific manner, a very important theme in the discussions relating to this century, which naturally demands particular attention, is that of the working class, their living and labouring conditions and the movements which it is affiliated with. These were all aspects that were considered when deciding to develop this research, and it is due to their importance that I set out to contribute to the discussion around this distinct period of history with an inquiry into Elizabeth Gaskell, not only as a figure of British literature, but as a woman who lived through very significant decades within the nineteenth century, having observed first-hand the impact of the Industrial Revolution, the conflict between social classes, the specificities of both rural and urban settings, and the misery that could be observed when in contact with the destitute members of this new volatile configuration of society. These various elements provided the author with considerable authority on such matters, specifically with the knowledge that Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction is elaborated with inspiration from her direct observations and experiences, rather than relying purely on her imagination, be it in her personal life or in her efforts in attempting to provide aid for the poverty-stricken members of her community.

For this research, it was of great importance to find instances of both the representation of the nineteenth century in the author's novels and of her insights on the matters belonging to this period of time in an attempt to obtain an understanding of how someone in Gaskell's unique position as a Christian woman familiar with both rural and urban settings would depict the world around her, with particular interest in the conflicts surrounding industrial questions. In such observations, it was noticeable how the author demonstrates awareness of the unique social order that had been created in areas like Manchester where the market and manufacturing of goods seemed to take priority. Her representation of this

city provides us with awareness of the inner workings of similar locations where the effects of the Industrial Revolution greatly expressed themselves, and it is through it that the author conveys her thoughts on the ignorance people of differing social classes tended to demonstrate towards one another, and how this phenomenon further manifested itself in a lack of dialogue that culminated in further divisions. Elizabeth Gaskell's particular emphasis on the field of emotions and feelings provides her work with the power to more efficiently connect with her readers, and it was with its employment that she attempted to contribute to the betterment of the ailments that tormented British society. The great majority of settings we see present in both *Mary Barton* and *North and South* possess a degree of truth that can only be the result of their conception as portrayals of real scenes which Gaskell had experienced, and this is doubly so when it comes to her characters, the representatives of the real men and women she had met upon moving to the smoky city of Manchester. This is of considerable importance if we take into account the idea that the author's novels serve as a platform for her readers, these consisting mainly of those belonging to higher positions in the social hierarchy, and therefore an audience the working class would otherwise be unable to reach, to come into contact with the culture of the people of industrial centres, doing away with preconceptions and bringing attention to their hardships and their grave needs.

These two novels by Elizabeth Gaskell also take great care in providing the reader with physical descriptions that give us the general idea of what the streets of Manchester were like. In general, smoky skies and the smells originating from factories and similar activities seemed to be common wherever we might go, as was the constant hurry and chaos that accompanied the lives of the citizens of this urban centre. However, neighbourhoods characterized by the heavy presence of inhabitants belonging to the lower classes within British social hierarchy showed particular degradation, be it in the filthy streets the author describes or in the homes of these families which lacked any decency when it came to their quality of living. The fact Gaskell encountered very real cases of misery in her charitable activities, many of which involved visits to these impoverished households, only serves to provide the scenarios she constructs within her novels, such as that of the deplorable living conditions of the Davenport family, with greater validity and accuracy.

Another aspect that was observed in the study of Elizabeth Gaskell's novels was that of a substantial degree of neutrality. This claim is made with acknowledgement of the author's

distinct position as not fitting within the definitions of either the middle or the working class, but also due to the fact that, even with evident sympathy for labourers' pleas and the criticism of the many negative effects of the Industrial Revolution, the author does not refrain from speaking of the qualities that can be found in these centres of rapidly growing urbanism. This is also extended to the people who inhabit these locations, be it in the middle-class energy and initiative or in the honest nature of the citizens of lower classes, even if these demonstrated an unpolished manner of expressing themselves.

Moreover, an aspect that seemed to grow increasingly more important in the analysis of this century and in the further exploration of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South* was that of the presence and influence of Christianity in British society. It is somewhat expected for this to be the case, considering the author's background, but nonetheless religion acts in these literary productions as a provider of comfort and guidance during times of hardship, with its teachings being also worthy of consideration when it comes to questions relating to manufacture, particularly as a common ground between employers and labourers and as a proponent for the idea of a shared humanity. However, this is yet another instance of Elizabeth Gaskell demonstrating the capacity for looking at discussions from varied angles, being capable of recognizing and admitting the existence of religious scepticism, failures in acting in accordance with Christian doctrines, and instances marked by the lack of compassion for our fellow men and women. This is a complex question that the author depicts as being one of the several consequences that result from an increasingly industrial society, be it due to the daily struggles of the lower classes not allowing for the dedication of time to theological matters, or because life in these cities itself often places greater importance on the elements relating to the manufacturing of products or to the market that is directly related to it.

Exploring the worlds Elizabeth Gaskell portrays in her ficiton also serves as confirmation for the progressive divide felt between the various people to be found in Manchester. Working-class movements like Chartism and the establishment of trade unions are evidence of this, as both function as a direct response to the tragic condition of the British working class, with instances of striking demonstrating both the result of an inadequate system of communication between these and their employers, as well as progressively higher tensions, as is evident in the author's novels. Once more, multiple viewpoints are considered as Gaskell gives shape to her depiction of the state of her nation during these

times, with her novels providing the readers with the negative aspects of the aforementioned working-class movements, but also with the perspectives which members of the middle class had on such industrial matters. Similarly, the same method is utilized in the exploration of the relationship between the latter and the aristocracy, but also in the comparison between different regions of the nation, particularly with the division between the northern and southern realities within Britain.

In addition to these aspects of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Gaskell showed considerable concern with providing readers with an idea of the life women led in this newly industrialized world. Specifically, we are given an insight into the changes to the role women were often associated with, how the latter engaged in labour within factories and other locations dedicated to manufacturing, the implications this had on, for example, family life and activities within the household, but also into the dangers the urban landscape held when it came to causing deterioration and increasing instability in young girls' lives.

The study of *Mary Barton* and *North and South* allowed for a deeper understanding of life in Manchester and of the consequences the Industrial Revolution had on the British nation. Elizabeth Gaskell proves herself as being a worthy testimony of the various elements connected with this very same topic, in great part due to her capacity for observation and communication of real experiences. The present dissertation demonstrated that, where the study of nineteenth-century Britain is concerned, this author is a rich source of information on the most varied of matters. This being the case, further exploration of Gaskell's other literary productions would be relevant in adding to the material here presented, potentially resulting in an even greater understanding of the intricacies characteristic of this period of numerous developments, many of which can be observed as being capable of reaching the present time.

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