

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Tlemcen



Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English

Section of English

**British Women in Lady Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters
and Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
a Master's Degree in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Civilisation*

Presented by

Miss. Meriem HAMADI

Supervised by

Dr. Wassila MOURO

Mrs. Souad BERBAR

Academic Year 2015/2016

Dedication

I dedicate this fruit of my study:

To my lovely parents Mohamed and Fatna.

To my grandmother Fatima, to whom I wish a long life.

To my sisters: Salima, Fatima, Hanane and my dearest Aya.

To all my friends.



Acknowledgements

Great thanks go to my supervisors: Dr. Mouro Wassila and Mrs. Berbar Souad, who have always been with me till the last second to finish this simple work.



Abstract

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters and Elizabeth Gaskell's forth novel North and South seem not to be the only literary works that tackle the issue of women, but in fact, both authors introduce the real world where British women lived during the 18th and 19th centuries. What Montagu and Gaskell are doing is drawing a real painting about the hell where British women passed the worst times under men's control and society's neglect. On the other hand, they show that these oppressed women did not stay silent, but they made their best to advance their status. Throughout Turkish Embassy Letters and North and South, mainly through Lady Montagu and Margaret Hale, as the main characters, the reader can see difficult circumstances in which these two women are obliged to struggle and fight to live a respectful life, without any restrictions; the norms that benefit only men and at the same time oppress women. In this research, both of Lady Montagu and Elizabeth Gaskell are considered as the representatives of British women in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are just two examples of British women who resisted and fought for their rights, to change their status; and in fact they realized more than they expected, of course after harsh struggles.



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General Introduction

General Introduction

Each era in English history is remarkable for its circumstances that produce different powers in different fields including literature. Literature masters, in other words, the writers take their pens and start to draw paintings about each period that mirror, on the whole, people's life; and this is one of the great missions of literature as an art. On this circle, women were hardly included to share men in writing and expressing their thoughts and views concerning different spheres of life.

Men did not accept the ability of women to deal and integrate in various matters of life; they were expected to be just beautiful and successful housewives. They enjoyed limited freedom in the patriarchal society (Karabi 354). In both 18th and 19th centuries, men had the authority and power to control women's lives; they othered them as a weak sex.

The 18th century literature was remarkable by the appearance of a new genre that was the novel; the prose developed greatly starting from this age. So, many writings appeared to criticize women status in this age, shedding light on the real world where these women lived. They did not dare to voice such opinions in society. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was one figure of 18th century authors; she is remembered for her letters, precisely Turkish Embassy Letters that were written during her travel to Turkey. Her letters presented the real life of Turkish women in contrast to British women at that time. Lady Montagu as a British woman was surprised with all what she discovered about Turkish women who enjoyed unlimited freedom to do whatever they wanted. She was an example of 18th century British women who suffered in their life, but they gathered their braveness and

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challenged men's authority and broke many norms; they became an educated category as men, started to travel as well, and realized many advances.

The same for 19th century women who continued to face harsh circumstances and dared expose their opinions in society. On one side, we cannot deny the great progress in life that British society witnessed during this era, but on the other side, there were many social problems as poverty which pushed children as well as women to work anything to survive, and this created a division between rich and poor people. What was seen was that even rich women suffered a lot, because they missed their freedom to enjoy life as they wanted. Fortunately, they did not remain silent but they started to move and challenge society; and after a long resistance, British women could reach progress in many fields, they proved that they deserved to exist in society.

From the Feminist perspective, the interest of this research work is centred on the following question: to what extent did Montagu and Gaskell convey British women's identity in the two works?

Through Gaskell's North and South, and mainly the heroine Margaret, British women were considered as the symbol of strength, patience and wisdom. So, the most important matter was that women became educated as men and could compete with them on equal basis.

In this simple research work, the focus is on Turkish Embassy Letters (1763), the famous letters of the 18th century author Lady Mary Wortley Montagu;

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and North and South (1855), the fourth novel of the Victorian writer Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell.

This research work is divided into two chapters; the first chapter will be devoted to shed light on the main characteristics of British society during 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the most important stations in the lives of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ‘18th century representative’ and Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell ‘19th century representative’.

The second chapter deals with British women’s power in Turkish Embassy Letters and North and South; firstly, relying on a kind of comparison between British women and Turkish women; then, introducing British women’s personality through the heroine Margaret Hale in North and South, and at last and not least, claiming British women’s strength in both literary works.

Chapter One:

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Chapter One: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Elizabeth Gaskell, the Artists

1.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to shed light over two eras in English history, the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries; when British life witnessed a turning point which led British people to live in heaven and hell at the same time.

It also focuses on the literatures of these two periods as well as on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Elizabeth Gaskell, as the representatives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain.

1.2. Pre-Victorian Life

The period from 1660 to 1800 witnessed the huge transformation of English society and politics, in addition to developments in English literature. Politically speaking, the return of the monarchy left many questions unanswered concerning the king's power versus that of parliament; "In May, 1660, invited by parliament, king Charles II returned from exile, and the Restoration of monarchy in England became a fact" (Sherburne and Bond 699).

Although Charles II tried to avoid the conflicts that might have brought many problems; his successor, his brother James II, fell into trouble with parliament in his attempt to strengthen the Catholic Church power. Then, William and Mary (daughter of James II and her husband) were asked for succession; it is a period "when parliament was establishing its control over the throne by inviting Charles II to return and William and Mary to displace James II" (Sherburne and Bond 705). So, the government reached, in some extent, a point when it became a matter of expediency, it continued to become stronger and stronger.

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This period was also characterized with what has been called the ‘Glorious Revolution’ that helped to initiate the modern system of limited monarchical power and opened the door to England’s Bill of Rights (Sanders 277). This Revolution helped to ensure the rule of law and the dominance of parliament in England; and what was important is that Scotland and England were joined to become one nation called Great Britain in 1707 (Sanders 277).

On the social side, British society was marked, in the eighteenth century, with a tiny aristocracy and landed gentry at the top and a vast mass of poor at the bottom. Most people lived in villages and small towns; this is why there was much greater sense of solidarity and cohesion between them. In addition, they had opportunities to travel, especially by water that was not difficult; they were mobile. Most importantly, “much economic activity was at domestic level”; people limited themselves to work in the context of household or a family (Jacob 01).

Besides, “this century is the time of the Enlightenment, the ‘Age of Reason’” (Haward 16). All branches of science were developed and resulted in great technical progress, and what was noticeable was that the middle class families gave importance to literacy and education that spread throughout the country.

In literature, there are famous writers as: Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), who uses black humour and irony in his satirical pamphlets; Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) with his famous book Robinson Crusoe that is still one of the most read books among children; Henry Fieldings (1707-1754), with his famous work: Tom Jones (Haward 16).

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At that time, for male writers, women were always inferior, they laugh at their faults; “Jonathan Swift looks at human beings as miserable creatures and saw women accordingly” (Endre 42). The idea of the superiority of men and their ownership of women was supported by English law involving women (Karabi 352). But, what is interesting in 18th century English literature is that women did not remain silent about that.

In the same context, some literary works show that women were projected as inferior stupid creatures who had to stay ignorant without education, they had to stay at home to serve men, at this level, “Simone de Beauvoir argued in her book The Second Sex that all the negative characteristics of humanity as men perceive them are projected onto women” (Karabi 354). In addition, women were expected to be beautiful in the society at that time, needless to say, that unfortunately their marriage was built mainly on economic purposes; this was as a nightmare for them. “Moreover, the first and foremost traditional motive for marriage was the economic or social consolidation during 18th century in English society” (Karabi 354).

Even in writing, men preferred to let women ignorant without education, they considered them as emotional creatures. Man was everything, the smart creature in the world; the man who was “able to distinguish the faults and beauties of writing” (Karabi 354). On the whole, men were perceived as more important than women; and the best example, was that most gentry families preferred to have a son to continue the name and the strength of the family.

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Despite these facts, there are some women writers in the Augustan Age, who improved themselves with their great literary works as: Mary Astell (1666-1731), her best known work is A Series Proposal to the Ladies (1694); Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), who travelled through Europe and studied the Harems in Turkey (Endre 41). Unfortunately, “since 18th century, women did not dare to voice such opinions in public” (Endre 42).

What was interesting in literature, as well, was travel writing as a genre; “much recent critical attention has considered travel writing, although its status as a genre remains ambiguous” (Ammar 03). There were numerous men’s travel writings, as well as women’s, as those of our writer Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. In the 18th century, travelling for women was inappropriate, but

Despite the dominant conception of travel as being inappropriate for women on the grounds that it led to all sorts of possible contacts with ‘others’ (sailors, pirates, savages etc), that could be a threat to feminine purity, bodily integrity...[...], but one that ultimately benefits, instead of endangers, English colonial or mercantile projects overseas (McQuigge 05).

Among women travelers, there is Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had the chance to travel to many places, especially to Turkey, and it is noticeable, through her work Turkish Embassy Letters, the great effect of this place upon her personality as a woman.

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1.3. Lady Montagu's Life and Works

This talented English lady is the eldest daughter of Evelyn, duke of Kingston, and his wife Lady Mary Fielding. She was born about 1690 at Thorsby in Nottinghamshire. She grew up in the London high society (Partington 393).

Her mother died young after giving birth to four babies within three years. Her father planned to wed Mary as he did all of his children, for the sake of family power and glory (Grundy no page). The loss of her mother when she was four, and the absences of her father was a life-long burden (Ammar 11); “the Earl enjoyed the company of women and was not much inclined to take an interest in the children. After they were grown and out of the house, he married a woman younger than any of them” (Bear 04).

On the one hand, Wortley Montagu had great grievances against her father's neglect, but on the other hand, his associations and wealth helped to shape her intellect and wit; “She enjoyed the benefits of a classical education, and she taught herself Latin so well that she was as capable of the language as most men” (Ammar 12). Wortley Montagu had to respect her responsibilities of the management of the household, but at the same time, she had time to spend with her father's associates from the Kit-Cat club, that was a group of fashionable men devoted to the Hanoverian succession (Ammar 12). “In her twentieth year, she gave an extraordinary proof of her erudition by a translation of the ‘Enchiridion’ of Epictetus, which was revised by Bishop Burnet, by whom her education was ultimately superintended” (Partington 393).

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Concerning the subject of marriage, “in the eighteenth century, it was a market, dictated by monetary matters, and indifferent to matters of the heart” (Ammar 13). At that time, marriage was built on the basis of material purposes. On this circle, Mary’s father decided to marry her to a boorish lord who could offer more money than Montagu; and Mary was expected to obey her father’s decision as any girl at that time, but she determined to elope with Edward Montagu who stole her from an inn in the middle of the night, and the story ended with marriage in 1712 (Bear 05).

Mary was active promoting the political career of her husband. One important point in Montagu’s life is that, in 1716, her husband Edward was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the court of Turkey; he held this post for a year. Lady Montagu went with him and with their first born son (Ammar 13). For her, Constantinople was full of wonders; this is why she had a strong desire to explore it and to understand things related to Turkish people. And what was perfect is that she could master the Turkish language as well (Bear 05).

She introduced the inoculation of smallpox to England when she had returned from Turkey (Grundy no page). She had many experiences, as well as events that she witnessed during her time in Turkey; she sent letters to her family and social circle, telling them about life in such a place as Turkey. She wrote the Turkish Embassy Letters that were not published until 1763, a year after her death (Ammar 13). At the time of her return to England for the last time, she asked to publish her Embassy Letters; but unfortunately when her family heard about this,

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they offered five hundred pounds for it, but to their horror another copy had been made and the work was published finally (Bear 07).

What we know as the Turkish Embassy Letters were read by Montagu's contemporaries:

Lady Mary Wortley has been held up as an exemplary model of womanhood. Montagu is frequently taught alongside her eighteenth-century British 'sisters', Aphra Behn, Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, all of whom carved significant spaces outside of traditional feminine roles in their lives and writings (Ostrov Weis 44).

Her Turkish Embassy Letters, written between 1716 and 1718, remain one of the best-known travelogues of the eighteenth-century, and Montagu herself was one of the most celebrated women writers of that time. She had numerous works, she wrote essays and poems (both romantic and satirical); and a play; she participated in a wide range of genres, including travel writing.

Fewer than twenty British women published travel narratives during the eighteenth century, and Montagu was a pioneer of this small but highly significant cluster of women, whose works provide a fascinating, often oblique, commentary on the cultural and political trends of their time" (Clark 113).

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During her full and varied life, Lady Montagu had friendship with a number of continental writers from France and Italy; as Jean-Baptiste Rousseau and Abbé Conti (Halsband 59); “She was a pioneer feminist, and in fact won the friendship and admiration of Mary Astell” (Halsband 57). She was corresponding with leading literary figures such as Alexander Pope, as well as family and friends (Clark 113).

In middle age, she met a young Italian author and ran away with him to Italy, but the passion soon passed. She lived the rest of her life abroad, in France and Italy, until she died in 1762 (Endre 41).

After the eighteenth century, the Victorian age came with the progress in many fields of life; touching, of course, women’s world.

1.4. Victorian Society

Queen Victoria reigned over Britain from 1837 until 1901. During her reign, the period was characterized by rapid change and developments in nearly every sphere; from advances in medical, scientific and technological knowledge to change in population growth and location. “This was an age of extremes: the working classes were poor, and lived and worked in terrible circumstances; the middle classes grew rich and comfortable” (Carter and McRae 126).

During this era, the British Empire witnessed a demographic boom that was considered as the key explanatory factor behind many social problems as the phenomenon of urban poverty. Although Britain became the richest manufacturing

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country in the world and needless to add the great success that was witnessed, there was what is called the conception of England as ‘two nations’, and of course, these two nations were the poor and the rich. This state of affairs gave rise to the novels of social conscience by Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens. They brought through their works the horrors suffered by certain sections of the working classes (Mathews 53); “although on the surface this was a successful society, below the surface there were many problems” (Carter and McRae 126).

On the side of religion, “it remained a powerful force in Victorian life and literature” (Sanders 398). This age was the age of conflicting explanations and theories, of scientific and economic confidence as well as of social and spiritual pessimism; “like all ages, it was an age of paradox” (Sanders 398). It was as well, an age of applied art and of the application of new technologies to all aspects of design and production.

The Victorian age had its continuities, its revivals, and its battles of styles in painting and architecture as much as in literature. It was as much an age in which the Greek, the Gothic, and the Italianate could vie with one another [...] as it was an age of experimental engineering (Sanders 399).

On the other hand, women during the Victorian era did not have many rights. On the whole, they were treated as secondary citizens to men in society; they were expected to be successful housewives and mothers to their children. Those

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were the only acceptable roles for women during this period; in other words, “Victorians believed that a woman’s proper and only place was to be within a household environment” (Barrett no page). They were believed to be inferior to men, and their position was similar to that of children; they were not even allowed to vote, as well as were denied education, because it was considered unnecessary (Danielová 08).

In addition, because life was so harsh with some women, they were forced into working situations outside of their households; and the Victorian society did not try to understand them, but it saw them in a negative way. Many women needed to have an income to support their families to survive, and unfortunately, women workers were not welcome in the work place or in society (Barrett no page). Although working class women held many positions, they were not paid the same wages as men were. It was noticeable that society made it impossible for women to make any advancement; they were always under men’s mercy (Barrett no page).

As another important part, the conventional voice of Victorian society exposes its own contradictions by denying women education, and then blaming them for their lack of knowledge. These Victorian women find many troubles to construct their identities as women writers (Jenner 15).

Similarly, Victorian literature witnessed many changes and advances at such levels, especially in the side of women writing that mirrored the hell where women used to live at that time.

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1.5. Victorian Literature

The 19th century, or the Victorian era is a period of progress in Britain in many fields, including literature; “the history of English literature is itself like a well written novel or drama. Events build on one another, as each new wave of writers impacts both the overall body of work and the subsequent effort of other writers” (Luebering 09). As with any good story, English literature in the 19th century represents an era of prolific productivity and creativity.

Although the literary field was affected by the bank crisis that Europe witnessed in 1825, which led to the failure of several main publishing firms; reading became so charged as never before, thanks to the increased affordability of print (Adams 11). Besides, “various schemes of progress and reform became united under the banner of ‘March of mind’ grounded in the distribution of reading matter to an ever-wider audience” (Adams 12).

Victorian writers created literature that was related to the societal, economical, religious and philosophical ideas of the time. It criticized the increased industrialization of the world dealing with its two sides, the positive side and the negative as well (“Victorian Literature” 1). In addition, Victorian literature tackled the themes of conflict among the classes as well as the strong wave that called for women’s rights. On the whole, it focused on morality; the Victorian writers mainly used heroes who were the oppressed members of society, such as the poor; reflecting their hard work and strong virtue, “Victorian fiction was often written with the intention of teaching a moral lesson to readers” (Idem).

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In the 19th century, the novel became the leading form of literature in English. This era is often regarded as a high point in British literature; “every age naturally gravitates towards a genre that is expressive of its inner purposes and for the Victorians this genre was without doubt the novel” (Mathews 122). The novel became the most popular and important literary form in Britain and all over the world. “During the Victorian age, novels in which writers described English society with all its characters became the most popular literary form” (Haward 16).

Under the spirit of realism, many novelists tried to reflect different social problems in their writings. Among them there are: Sybil or The Two Nations (1845) by Benjamin Disraeli, Yeast (1850) by Charles Kingsley, and Mary Barton (1848) by Elizabeth Gaskell (Mathews 89). In addition, the novelist Charles Dickens was perhaps the most widely read novelist of the Victorian era; he was so famous for his novels that were popular at their time of publication (“Victorian Literature” 2). His famous literary work is Hard Times that “still remains the most vivid and familiar of the novels which deal with the social and industrial problems of mid-Victorian England” (Sanders 409).

In this age, many of the most prolific novelists were, of course, women such as: Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot. The main reason for this phenomenon was that women were more interested in reading and writing than men at a time when novels were considered the only entertainment, and this was a great chance for women to be close with all the horrors that happened in society (Mathews 58).

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As it is mentioned above, among these women novelists there is Elizabeth Gaskell; the Victorian author who is known for her remarkable industrial novels which are widely read even nowadays.

1.6. Elizabeth Gaskell's Life and Works

Elizabeth Gaskell is an English author, who wrote social problem novels that explored the ills of industrial England as well as novels of small-town life. Her full name is Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson. She was born on 29th September, 1810 in Chelsea, London. Both her parents came from families with a long tradition of dissent, her father was a Unitarian minister.

Because her mother died in 1811, when she was very young, she was sent to live with her aunt in Knutsford; a small country town near Manchester. At the age of 15, she went to school at Stratford-on-Avon, where she remained for two years. Her father died in 1829, and in 1832, at the age of 21, she married the Reverend William Gaskell; a Unitarian minister in Manchester (Gravil 07). “Apart from her writing, she had a full life as the wife of Unitarian minister in Manchester and the mother of a large family; she had what may be called the serenity of the fulfilled” (Allen 182).

The couple settled in industrial Manchester where Elizabeth was close to poor people, their problems, and their misery. She observed the extreme hardship of the workers and their struggles with the factory owners for a greater share in profits of the mills (Introduction to North and South i), “the Manchester of the 1840s

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exposed the human problems of rapid industrialization as starkly as it embodied the commercial success of manufacture” (Sanders 409).

Gaskell assisted her husband in his mission, by teaching working class girls and inviting them to the Gaskell home. John Mc Veagh argues that “Gaskell’s novels reflect the moods and problems of her society, or that part of society which she knew well, with the minimum of distortion or exaggeration” (Landquist 03). In addition, “Elizabeth Gaskell was significant in providing an example of both conventional femininity and intellectual ambitions” (Mitchell 152).

Focusing on representations of women’s literary celebrity in nineteenth-century non-fiction and fiction, Weber argues that “discursive representations of the legitimately famous woman used celebrity as a tactic for altering perceptions about femininity and female identity” (Ashgate 11).

Gaskell’s writing career began with the publication of a poem “Sketches among the Poor”, written with her husband in 1837 (Gravil 07). As a novelist, she had two sides: the countryside and the city side. Her novels which were based on countryside include Mary Barton (1848), her first novel that was rejected by critics because of its strong social message defending industrial workers against their masters. In this novel, she describes how a good man (Mary’s father) changes to a bad one because of poverty. And because of Mary Barton, Elizabeth Gaskell was asked to contribute stories to Charles Dickens’s magazine Household Words (Gravil 08).

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The Victorian author Gaskell published several novels and short stories between 1848 and 1865, her writing reflects her time. “She lived in the aftermath of the industrial revolution, which brought not only benefits, but also misery to the people” (Landquist 03).

In 1853, Gaskell wrote Ruth in which she again called for a change of heart in the public. The next step in her writing was turning from social problem novel to the novel of village life; she wrote Cranford. “In Cranford, the quiet humour and the equally quiet disasters of the lives of middle-class ladies in a small country town are caught perfectly” (Allen 183). Her fourth novel which is North and South appeared in 1855. This novel follows one woman’s growing sympathetic identification with the poor around her. It tries hard to present both sides of the conflict at the heart of the Industrial Revolution; but does little to propose solutions to the problem. In it, “the theme was what was called ‘The Condition of England’ question: the clash between capital and labour” (Allen 184).

Because Elizabeth Gaskell was especially close to Charlotte Bronte, after the latter’s death, she wrote the celebrated biography: The Life of Charlotte Bronte (1857). The following novel was Sylvia’s Lovers (1863), and a novella “Cousin Phyllis” (1864). Her final novel Wives and Daughters (1866), a novel of life in a quiet country town, was left unfinished when Elizabeth Gaskell died suddenly of heart failure in November 1865 (Introduction to North and South i). Wives and Daughters is not an industrial novel.

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It differs from Mary Barton and North and South where Gaskell seems to be obsessed by the impact of industrialization on human beings, society and on human relationships. Gaskell is, much of the time, considered as a writer of social problem novel. Thus, the difference is striking since Wives and Daughters is her last and maturest novel which is devoid of social reform. It is, in fact, a novel about human relationships where there is no contribution to the Condition-of-England Question as were her previous works (Mouro 04).

On the whole, all what was written by this great novelist touched deeply the mind as well as the heart of the reader; since she dealt with different dimensions of life.

1.7. Conclusion

British life witnessed a great change during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in nearly every field. British people lived different circumstances, and women started to fight for their identity. So many famous names of women writers appeared; they used their pens to criticize women status at that time. Among these women writers, there was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the representative woman voice of the eighteenth century; as well as Elizabeth Gaskell as the representative woman voice of the nineteenth century.

Chapter Two:

British Women's Power in
Turkish Embassy Letters *and*
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Chapter Two: British Women's Power in Turkish Embassy Letters and North and South

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, we shall try to focus on women as central characters in Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters that reflect British women's reality in the 18th century; as well as in Gaskell's North and South mainly through her heroine Margaret Hale. We will try to concentrate on women spirit during these two periods, showing their strength to deal with harsh circumstances to face men's authority and realize their wishes.

2.2. British Women versus Turkish Women in Turkish Embassy Letters

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, as a prominent woman of Enlightenment, is known for her great support of women's rights. In her writing, she always criticizes the status of British women and shows how they are limited in their life as if they are prisoners in British society.

Through her letters, her vision about the Orient is totally different from the previous travel-writers' accounts of the East. Halsband mentions that Montagu says: "now I am a little acquainted with their ways, I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of (Turkish women)" (quoted in Modarresi and Anbarani 48).

So, Montagu's expedition to Turkey and the intimate relationship with Turkish ladies permitted her to see their real world, where the Eastern women enjoyed a happy life under their cultures. Though, she stayed a short period living

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with stranger ladies, she noticed the wrong normative masculine vision of her predecessors, correcting her previous image in her mind about the Orient (Modarresi and Anbarani 48).

Montagu, as a British noblewoman, is surprised with the life that Turkish ladies have, and from time to time, in her letters there is a kind of comparison between women in Britain as well as in Turkey. She provides her family, aristocratic personalities and intellectual friends with vivid description of people, their culture and civilization, focusing on the details of women's life (D'amore 68).

Lady Mary can notice the liberty that Turkish women enjoy at that time in their society; "and here, the ladies are at liberty to show their fancies; some putting flowers, others a plume of heron's feathers, and in short, what they please" (Montagu 95). In contrast to British ladies who lose their freedom under the control of men; "'tis very easy to see they have in reality more liberty than we have" (Montagu 96). First, she uses the East; more precisely Turkish women as a mirror for her own status as a woman back home in England. Secondly, she uses the East as an 'Other' to criticize the West and its principles. This is how Montagu mentions Turkish ladies being "the only free people in the Empire" (quoted in Petit 16).

Montagu shows in her letters, her admiration toward the culture of the Orient, the freedom that Oriental women feel under their culture in which they practice many beautiful customs, and the interactions that exist between these

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women, reflecting the reality of the Western culture where such things are ignored or lost (Modarresi and Anbarani 48). In short;

Lady Montagu in her letters of Turkish Embassy shows a very new and different engagement in oriental discourse. Besides, because during her journey Montagu had access to some places that no men traveler have ever had, she was able to find some first hands information that could be matched with no previous accounts about oriental women (Modarresi and Anbarani 49).

On the other side, Montagu makes a comparison between the women's baths and English coffee-houses: "in short, 'tis the woman's coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, etc" (Montagu 80).

Though women and the Harem are the primary focus to see the East, and women being presented as immodest, uncontrollable who make the East corrupt and weak, Montagu is denying every word mentioned in previous male traveler's reports, stating that "these men did not even have access to Turkish women, the harem, or other strictly female areas, and received their only information from previous travelers' reports or texts like Arabian Nights" (Petit 04).

During Montagu's sharing bath with Turkish ladies, she refuses to take her clothes off as all Turkish women do in bath, and this refusal "can be interpreted as portraying herself as an object being imposed upon and dominated by her husband

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and his wishes” (Petit 12). She seems as the woman who is limited, singular and oppressed by her husband.

Another important point is that the Turkish women, in contrast to Westerners, can accept differences and can simply accept Montagu and her behavior without dealing with her as a strange person of different culture or different religion (Petit 11).

I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible (Montagu 79).

Moreover, Montagu takes the veil, which is a traditional symbol of oppression, as an example not for oppression but for their freedom. In her opinion, this veil frees the women to do what they wish; since it allows Turkish women to go where they want to and do whatever they want without any danger of being discovered: “The veil, paradoxically, gives the Turkish women freedom and control over their own bodies-something that Montagu clearly finds lacking in England, as she describes her corset and stays as a ‘machine’” (Petit 16). In addition, Montagu states that her friend Achmet Beg sees the Turkish women as more free than Western women; “He assures me there is nothing at all in it; only, says he, we have the advantage that when our wives cheat us, nobody knows it” (quoted in Petit 17). But, when Montagu states the liberty of Turkish women to do whatever they want

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under the veil, she arouses the more negative aspect of Turkish society that is the Turkish women's many opportunities for sexual freedom and infidelity (Petit 20).

Montagu also claims that Turkish women have a right to divorce, and can hold property in their own name; they "are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take with 'em upon a divorce with an addition which he is oblig'd to give 'em" (Petit 17). Montagu tries to tackle these benefits, because she finds these aspects lacking in England; she is not basically interested in the situation of Turkish women; rather than her own status as an English woman. On purpose, Lady Montagu "uses the Turkish women's status and role in Turkish society to mirror and criticize the role of women in England" (Petit 17).

In addition, Montagu finds the chance to criticize Christian notions of morality and good conduct, presenting the good behavior in Islamic culture (Petit 19); "As to their morality or good conduct [...] 'tis just as 'tis with you; and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians" (Montagu 96).

Regarding slavery in the East, Montagu thinks the Turks treat these creatures in good way:

'Tis true they have no wages; but they give them yearly clothes to a higher value than our salaries to our ordinary servants. But you'll object that men buy women with an eye to evil. In my opinion they

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are bought and sold as publicly and as infamously in all our Christian great cities (Montagu 169).

As many women of her day, Montagu shows how woman moves from the control of her father to the control of her husband. Lady Mary explains her obedience saying:

I have no hand in the making of settlements. My present duty is to obey my father. I shall so far obey blindly as not to accept where he refuses, tho' perhaps I might refuse where he would accept [...] my father may do some things disagreeable to my inclinations, but passive obedience is a doctrine should always be received among wives and daughters (quoted in Ammar 13).

All in all, Montagu “uses the East as an Other to provide a better look at the West. She picks through her observations and uses the ones that will best further her critical examination of England” (Petit 21). In one letter, it is mentioned that Turkish women are the only free people who have a perfect life. “Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire; the divan pays a respect to them” (Montagu 97). In fact, she uses the East to mirror and criticize the Western society as well as the Western culture.

She presents the real world where British women lived in 18th century, and even in 19th century, there were many women who had the same situations in society; they were neglected and controlled by men's power, but with strong

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personality they could break their slavery, and put a sense to their words, so many famous writings show these points as Gaskell's novel North and South.

2.3. British Women's Personality in Gaskell's North and South

Personality plays an important role in the construction of women's identity; so many women figures could achieve a high status by imposing their names and works in society. From the Feminist perspective, in most Gaskell's novels, a woman is always the central character. According to Philippe Séjournée, in North and South; "it is on Margaret's personality that the development of the plot is woven" (quoted in Bedrani 02). On one side, Gaskell uses Margaret, the main character, as a wise woman to show the importance of education; "I heard, moreover, that it was considered to the advantage of the masters to have ignorant workmen—not hedge-lawyers, as Captain Lennox used to call those men in his company who questioned and would know the reason for every order" (Gaskell 139). Margaret tells her friend Bessy if the poor people have the chance to be educated, they would never be oppressed (Bedrani 34).

The story of North and South turns around a young woman who is Margaret; this woman is forced by her father's decision to leave the place that she is fond of, and move to Milton, a Northern city where she cannot live because of the great difference between the industrial North of England and the agricultural South (Bedrani 51).

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For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a deep lead-coloured cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which it lay. It was all the darker from contrast with the pale grey-blue of the wintry sky; for in Heston there had been the earliest signs of frost. Nearer to the town, the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke (Gaskell 66).

This scene shows that women in the 19th century were still living under men's control, and their freedom to do whatever they wanted was still limited even in the way of their living.

In addition, the strong personality of Margaret appears when she does not surrender to the North's reality, where she finds people are less human and selfish; this leads her to use her sweetness and sensibility to influence the persons who are blind with their strong desire to dominate others. Among them, there is Mr. Thornton, the owner of a local cotton mill who is influenced in a great degree by Margaret's opinions and her way in seeing this world (Bedrani 51).

When the heroine Margaret Hale stands between the mill owner Thornton and his angry workers, who are replaced by Irish workers, she proves that she is a brave woman who sacrifices herself to regulate things, and this reflects that the woman is not a weak creature as many men think in the 19th century.

She tried to rise without his help.

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“It is nothing,” she said, with a sickly smile. “The skin is grazed, and I was stunned at the moment. Oh, I am so thankful they are gone!” And she cried without restraint (Gaskell 213).

Another scene in which Margaret shows her pride, when she protects Thornton from the violence of his workers and later he proposes marriage to her, and she immediately rejects his proposal of marriage, mainly because she feels that he is obliged to do that because she saved his life. Whereas, Margaret as a woman who has good morals is ready to do the same for every person who needs help (Bedrani 51). “Critics have generally lauded this moment as an example of progressive womanhood” (Reeder no page). She is a very helpful person especially when “she begins to integrate with the people in the North and this integration starts by her friendship with Bessy, the daughter of the poor Nicholas Higgins” (Bedrani 57). She makes many friendships with poor people who suffer a lot, because of the difficult circumstances they live in Milton. “Margaret flew upstairs as soon as their visitors were gone, and put on her bonnet and shawl, to run and inquire how Bessy Higgins was, and sit with her as long as she could before dinner” (Gaskell 115). Moreover, Margaret is against the idea of being important just when you are wealthy; the person gets a high social position only because he is rich. For her, money is less important than origins or education; according to her, they have something more valuable and more determining (Koivuvaara 125).

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Needless to say that many Victorian women were forced to enter the working world, where the conditions were not suitable at all for them. These women were viewed negatively by society, although the reason behind this decision was that most of them needed to have an income to support their families to survive (Barrett no page).

In North and South, through the example of Bessy Higgins, we see the woman as the fighter and resistor who sacrifices even with her life to face the difficult times and the hard life she has. Many British women during this period had the same destiny as Bessy Higgins has at the end, which was death after living in harsh situations;

“What is the matter? Pray, tell me, Dixon, at once.”

“That young woman you go to see—Higgins I mean.”

“Well?”

“Well! She died this morning, and her sister is here” (Gaskell 256).

During the Victorian Era, women challenged society and broke its boundaries that limited them to achieve anything; they refused to stay just as housewives and mothers to their children. These women workers were given no opportunity in society, even to be accepted; but what is important is that, women took this step and challenged men's control and society's norms, showing that they could work and struggle with life's different problems to survive, the same as men.

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All in all, in North and South, “its highly perceptive heroine, Margaret Hale, may at first be shocked by a market economy which works ‘as if commerce were everything and humanity nothing’” (Sanders 410). But later, she learns how to live in the North, and reaches the idea that industry has not only negative side, but also positive side from the point it provides a prosperity and progress to society. So, all these aspects show that “Margaret Hale is intelligent, human, willful, and independent” (Sanders 410); and always ready to learn and accept to live new experiences even in hard times. Margaret is only one good example that represented many other British women during the Victorian period; and this leads us to see these women as strong creatures that deserve a great respect from men. This can be seen on many occasions through Montagu’s Turkish Embassy Letters and Gaskell’s North and South.

2.4. British Women's Strength in Turkish Embassy Letters and North and South

What was seen in the 18th century, the same as the 19th century, was that many women were not convinced with their life that was related to men's control, staying limited to be only housewives, and their missions should not pass outside home. So, they started to react by challenging their situations as well as society, and did their utmost to alter their status. For example, they started with education, because they refused to stay ignorant, they also started working to help their families, and they even began to travel to many places in order to discover and see

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the wonders outside England. All these aspects showed the strength of British women to reach what they wanted and realize what men could not realize.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is an example of British women who challenged society's norms and put a limit to men's control over women. First, she faced her authoritative father when she refused to marry the man her father chose, and eloped with her lover William and married him. She took this difficult decision and challenged society and this showed her strength.

Another point was that Montagu at so young an age took most responsibilities of the management of household, because of her mother's death as well as her father's neglect. In addition, she taught herself Latin very well to be capable of the language as most men were (Ammar 12). Moreover, her writings and precisely her Turkish Embassy Letters opened up a window of opportunity for women travelers to go and see the Eastern life (Ammar 11). Although, it was forbidden for British women to travel outside England, especially to the East, Montagu did not care and went to discover a new life in this forbidden land; and the same for many other European women who challenged society and started travelling where they wanted. This was an important step in women's life to construct their own personalities and live new adventures in the world.

Lady Mary Montagu was a brave British woman, who had no fears about telling the truth and standing against male views of the Orient in her day; her writings were an attack on European male assumptions of the Harem (Ammar 11),

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and this was a great work that showed her strength to face men who were the basis of society at that time, and the only creatures that deserved to exist. Lady Mary is only one example of many other European women who faced male's control and broke many needless norms that were set in society at that time.

And even in the 19th century, women continued to advance and showed they were strong creatures that were ready to introduce many benefits to society, up to their abilities. Talking about women issue, their sacrifices and their achievements, Gaskell's "North and South helps construct the social sphere and to claim it for exemplary women visitors like Margaret Hale and for women novelists like Gaskell herself" (Bedrani 03). According to Dorice Williams Eliot, through such women as Margaret, Gaskell wants to state women's participation in society, as well as their reaction against their oppression and refusal to stay always the weak sex (Cited in Bedrani 03). It was true that some women accepted their status in society without trying to change anything, but Margaret continued to fight and to struggle with various problems to make things better.

Poor mamma! How much she must have borne! Oh, I pray Thee, my God, that her sufferings may not be too acute, too dreadful. How shall I bear to see them? How can I bear papa's agony? He must not be told yet; not all at once. It would kill him. But I won't lose another moment of my own dear, precious mother (Gaskell 149).

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Walter Allen regards Margaret as a high spirited and intelligent girl who knows a lot about the values of her age; could attract Mr. Thornton, the manufacturer. She had an important role in putting an end to the struggle and the gap between Northerners and Southerners (Cited in Bedrani 06). In addition, Margaret's strength could be seen in her sensitiveness. This sensitiveness, as Raymond claims, influenced Thornton; as well as her superior gentleness and humanity affected him (Cited in Bedrani 06).

On the other side, there were the inner sufferings that Thornton had; these sufferings were related to his tragic past concerning his father's debts,

Sixteen years ago, my father died under very miserable circumstances. I was taken from school, and had to become a man (as well as I could) in a few days...[...]. We went into a small country town, where living was cheaper than in Milton, and where I got employment in a draper's shop (Gaskell 97).

So Margaret came and appeared in his life to be his "savior who teaches him a valuable lesson about humanity" (Bedrani 72). This woman helped him greatly to solve his conflicts with his workers, as no one did.

In some other situations, British men were weak in confronting some troubles, as Mr. Hale was; when he was unable to inform his sick wife about leaving Helstone, and gave responsibility to Margaret to inform her,

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Margaret, I [Mr. Hale] am a poor coward after all. I cannot bear to give pain. I know so well your mother's married life has not been all she hoped—all she had a right to expect—and this will be such a blow to her, that I have never had the heart, the power to tell her. She must be told though, now, [...] “Yes, indeed she must”, said Margaret (Gaskell 39).

This showed women's wisdom in dealing with such matters instead of men. Besides, Margaret played two roles, the daughter and the wife at the same time, because of her mother's sickness; so she was obliged to be powerful to act especially after her mother's death (Bedrani 56).

For Gaskell, British women were always ready to face harsh circumstances, and this was shown also through Mrs. Hale; although she was sick, she tried to accept the reality of the North “and step by step she starts to be familiar with the smoky climate” (Bedrani 57).

Needless to say that the Victorian social interactions were based, on the whole, on the separation between classes and genders; “Gaskell defends Margaret's transgressions of these boundaries (her visits to the home of factory-workers Nicholas Higgins) through her invocation of the figure of the benevolent ‘lady visitor’” (Dennis 45). In North and South, the heroine Margaret broke these boundaries that were, for her, totally against humanity; and the best example her

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friendship to the poor Higgins family mainly with Bessy, this young woman who faced difficult times in her life.

“Do you think such life as this is worth caring for?” gasped Bessy, at last [...]. Margaret bent over and said, “Bessy, don't be impatient with your life, whatever it is—or may have been. Remember who gave it you, and made it what it is!” (Gaskell 104).

Margaret, most of the time, helped and supported Bessy as well as other poor people that she knew and this reflected her gentleness.

2.5. Conclusion

Starting from the 18th century and moving to the 19th century, British women began to realize that this life was itself a big adventure; and it was not fair that only the male sex had the right to live the life they wanted and discover its wonders to be always the ruler in society. These women refused to stay limited; they were against the idea that women were the weaker sex. So, they began to react by challenging society and men's norms. It was true, that this challenge was not easy at all for them, but they entered the intellectual world, they became educated as men, they also imposed their opinions in society, and they travelled to many places and were free creatures who wanted to realize whatever they wished. All these achievements reflect their strong personality as well as the power they had, on the whole, to reach a high status through history.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research work seeks to highlight both of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's and Elizabeth Gaskell's views inside the circle of women, drawing attention to the real world where British women lived during the 18th and 19th centuries. Turkish Embassy Letters as well as North and South are two artistic literary works that reflect the British world during these two periods; where women were the second-class citizens because they were treated as the weaker sex.

The presence in different fields of life was held just to men, who had the power to control women's lives. Although many things changed in Britain starting from the 18th century, and the great progress which was achieved in nearly every field in the 19th century, there were many dark sides in life. For instance the phenomenon of child labour because of poverty; and women started to work despite of many dangers. Men limited women's freedom; they expected them to be only successful housewives, their missions were related to home and children. And the terrible matter was that they preferred them to be ignorant, so the female sex had no right to be educated. Besides, it was forbidden to voice their opinions in public. Shortly they were treated the same as children, listening without saying any word.

But the surprise was that this oppressed category gathered their braveness and challenged men's authority and society's norms. This mission (challenging) was not easy; women were obliged to sacrifice a lot to reach their aims, and step by step they could impose their ideas and opinions in society and could be out of the prison that men had built to them for a long time.

General Conclusion

Through the literary work Turkish Embassy Letters and Lady Mary Montagu herself, we can notice women's strength that could prove their ability to be educated, then to enter the writing world and to travel to many far places exactly as men. And even in North and South, Margaret Hale was a good example of many patient Victorian women who had the strong will to advance more and more. They did their best to be treated as men in equal ground; and this is really what happened through time.

All in all, there were many scenes which reflected women's power; the power that had no limitations. In other words, the strong presence of women was no more related just to home's matters, with the husband's or children's responsibilities, but it transgressed to reach a high status that even some men could not hold in this life.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 01

Summary of Some Turkish Embassy Letters

Based on a journey to the Ottoman Empire that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu made, in company with her husband who had been appointed as the British Ambassador to Turkey during the years 1716-1718; her travel letters were first published only in 1763, a year after her death (Aravamudan 69).

Her letters were precisely a complex account of habits, manners and beliefs she had experienced through her relations to many British women, especially the aristocratic ones, of course, in the eighteenth century (Modarresi and Anbarani 47).

Through these letters, can be seen how Lady Montagu fell under the magic beauty of Turkish culture, and how Turkish women lived in such paradise, up to her. On her way to Turkey, Wortley Montagu visited some European cities, she did not find a great difference between her culture and their cultures, but she wrote about aspects that attracted her.

After a hard trip that was full of adventures and of course many fatigues; on the 1st April, 1717 in Adrianople, Lady Montagu wrote a letter to her Royal Highness, the princess of Wales, describing the troubles she found on her way to reach Turkey. In another letter she wrote to a lady, she claimed that she reached a

new world where everything appeared to her as a change of scene. She described Sophia, one of the most beautiful towns in Turkey; she was attracted largely by its hot baths that are good for health.

I must not omit what I saw remarkable at Sophia, one of the most beautiful towns in the Turkish Empire, and famous for its hot baths, there are resorted to both for diversion and health. I stopt here one day, on purpose to see them (Montagu 77).

In addition, she described the bagnio, which she found full of women. Montagu claimed that, although she was different in her travelling dress, no one of the Turkish women showed surprise; they dealt with her as if she was not a stranger.

I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible (Montagu 79).

At the same time, Montagu drew beautiful pictures about Turkish women bodies, who seemed very charming with delicate skins and the finest shapes.

There were many amongst them, as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of a Guido or Titian,-and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair, divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the graces (Montagu 79).

Even these women's slaves were admired by Montagu; she stated: "generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen, were employed in braiding their (Turkish ladies) hair in several pretty fancies" (Montagu 80). Besides, Lady Mary described the bath as the Turkish women's coffee-house; as she said, it is the place where these ladies are gathered at least once a week, to talk about the news of the town. She was surprised about their habit, when they come out of the hot-bath to the cold room without feeling cold.

In short, 'tis the woman's coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, etc.—They generally take this diversion once a week, and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediately coming out of the hot-bath into the cold room, which was surprising to me (Montagu 80).

And Montagu had the chance to share the bath with these ladies. "The lady that seemed the most considerable among them, entreated me to sit by her, and would fain have undressed me for the bath" (Montagu 80). Lady Mary saw the civility and the beauty of Turkish Women on the whole, and she wished to pass more time with them.

Also, in a letter to Abbé Conti, Lady Mary showed that not much was known in Europe of Turkish people's manners and religion. She noted how proud the Turks were to converse and to deal with merchants. Then, Montagu described the terrible events in Belgrade and the social positions of people there. She mentioned Belgrade as a place where people suffered from poverty and no security.

“The desert woods of Servia are the common refuge of thieves, who rob, fifty in a company, so that we had need of all our guards to secure us, and the villages are so poor” (Montagu 82).

What was attractive to Montagu there, was that the law or the religion are not different sciences, but they are the same, that is to say: “this set of men are equally capable of preferments in the law or the church; those two sciences being cast into one, and a lawyer and a priest being the same word in the Turkish language” (Montagu 82, 83). She stated that these men did their duty as it should be; they did not abuse the weak people or their belongings as well. “The grand signior, though general heir to his people, never presumes to touch their lands or money, which go, in uninterrupted succession, to their children” (Montagu 83). In addition, she gave details about Turkish religion and morals, through the intimate daily conversation with effendi Achmet-beg, who gave a great attention and respect to her when she talked about Christianity. “I explained to him the difference between the religion of England and Rome; and he was pleased to hear there were Christians, that did not worship images, or adore the Virgin Mary” (Montagu 83). Lady Montagu tried to understand the religion of the people of Turkey.

On the other hand, in a letter to the Countess of B——, she talked about Turkish wedding ceremony; she mentioned the grand signior’s eldest daughter marriage that was before she arrived. She stated how Turkish ladies display all their magnificence on such occasions. “The bride was conducted to her husband’s house in very great splendour” (Montagu 88). In this letter, Montagu also made points on the social control; she showed the absolute power of the

government and harsh punishments. “The government here is entirely in the hands of the army. The grand signior, with all his absolute power, is as much a slave as any of his subjects” (Montagu 89).

Moreover, in a letter to lady Mar, Montagu described herself wearing Turkish dress; she told her (lady Mar) how she was influenced by Turkish habits, giving her more details about the Turkish dresses she wore.

My *Caftan*, of the same stuff with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape and reaching to my feet, with very long strait falling sleeves. Over this is the girdle, of about four fingers broad, which all that can afford it have entirely of diamonds or other precious stone (Montagu 94).

She talked also about their morality or good conduct, on the other side, Montagu claimed directly the liberty that Turkish women enjoyed in contrast to them (British ladies). “I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them. ’Tis very easy to see they have in reality more liberty than we have” (Montagu 96). She also showed how men respected their wives; they did not deal with them as if they were their property. “Those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands. Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire; the divan pays a respect to them” (Montagu 97). Furthermore, Montagu described and admired a Turkish woman who is called Fatima; as well as she gave

details about the time she spent with this lovely Fatima. Lady Montagu was so glad to have such opportunity to see these women's world.

Lady Montagu succeeded in drawing a painting in which she introduced the world of Turkish women as paradise, where they enjoyed happiness, respect, and most important, freedom that was something hard to reach in the eighteenth century. Similarly, even in the 19th century, women were still looking for their freedom and the appropriate status they deserved. And this is what can be seen in Gaskell's fourth work North and South, through the example of Margaret Hale.

Appendix 02

Summary of North and South

The story begins with Margaret Hale, who is so busy in the preparations and arrangements for her cousin Edith Shaw's wedding to Captain Lennox. Margaret has a great happiness because of Edith's marriage, this girl who is considered her companion from her childhood. "They had been talking about wedding dresses, and wedding ceremonies, and Captain Lennox, and what he had told Edith about her future life at Corfu" (Gaskell 01).

Margaret spent nearly ten years living with her aunt Shaw, and now, at the age of nineteen, she is preparing to live with her parents on a regular status. After the wedding, Margaret returns with her father to her home, in Helstone; she was fond of countryside with all its beauties. "It was the latter part of July when Margaret returned home. The forest trees were all one dark, full, dusky green; the

fern below them caught all the slanting sunbeams; the weather was sultry and broodingly still” (Gaskell 15).

One day, Henry Lennox (Captain Lennox’s brother) pays a visit to Hale’s home; he spends time sketching with Margaret and stays for dinner. Margaret arouses the interest of Mr. Lennox,

‘let me help you’, and he gathered for her some velvety cramoisy roses that were above her reach, and then dividing the spoil he placed two in his button-hole, and sent her in, pleased and happy to arrange her flowers (Gaskell 27).

Mr. Lennox immediately proposes marriage, and Margaret does not accept, having no desire for anything more than friendship with him.

Margaret’s father is the vicar of Helstone until he resigns from the church, and the family is forced to move to Milton, in Manchester, where he becomes a tutor.

‘Where are we to go to?’ said she at last, struck with a fresh wonder as to their future plans, if plans indeed her father had.

‘To Milton-Northern’, he answered, with a dull indifference; for he had perceived that, although his daughter’s love had made her cling to him, and for a moment strive to soothe him with her love, yet the keenness of the pain was as fresh as ever in her mind (Gaskell 39).

Margaret is not happy for leaving her home, Helstone; and then Mrs. Hale (Margaret’s mother) soon becomes ill; and the responsibility of the move’s arrangements is left to Margaret. The family is deeply affected, because of their

leaving Helstone. In such city as Milton, the family can only afford to rent a small house; and finally they find one, Margaret works hard to arrange it, to be satisfactory when her mother moves in. Also, they meet John Thornton, the wealthy manager of a cotton mill and the man who will help Mr. Hale in his tutoring work.

Between the smoke of Milton, and the letters of Edith that are about the fun she is living with her husband in Corfu, Margaret does not feel well, she misses the freedom and beauty of the green Helstone.

It was all the darker from contrast with the pale grey-blue of the wintry sky; for in Heston 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 a loss of the fragrance of grass and herbage than any positive taste or smell (Gaskell 66).

Meanwhile, a good friendship is formed between Mr. Hale and Thornton. Margaret needs to find a suitable servant for the household, this is why, she turns many times around the city, and over time, she begins to befriend a middle-aged man, who is her neighbor, called Nicholas Higgins and his daughter Bessy.

One day, Mr. Hale tells his family that John Thornton will come for tea that evening. John's mother is not happy with this relation between her son and such useless gentleman as Mr. Hale and at the same time is afraid that Margaret is angling for her wealthy son. John arrives at the Hale home, and the conversation goes well between the two men, and even Margaret shares their conversation, but always the conflict arises between her and Mr. John; especially when she starts

praising the life of the country and Thornton starts speaking about the value of city life.

I [Thornton] would rather be a man toiling, suffering-nay, failing and successless-here, than lead a dull prosperous life in the old worn grooves of what you call more aristocratic society down in the South, with their slow days of careless ease...[...] ‘you are mistaken’, said Margaret, roused by the aspersion on her beloved South to a fond vehemence of defence, that brought the colour into her cheeks and the angry tears into her eyes. You do not know anything about the South (Gaskell 93).

After many clashes between John and Margaret, John leaves the dinner party, and after his leaving, Mr. Hale tells Margaret more about John’s life, how his father committed suicide because of huge debts; and how John worked hard as a boy in a shop to make up the money they lost to pay the debts of his father.

Sixteen years ago, my father died under very miserable circumstances. I was taken from school, and had to become a man (as well as I could) in a few days...[...]. We went into a small country town, where living was cheaper than in Milton, and where I got employment in a draper’s shop (Gaskell 97).

Besides, between Margaret and Thornton’s mother and sister, there is no such good relationship since they do not belong to the same upper class.

Margaret is still looking for a suitable servant to the household, and one day while she is out, she suddenly meets Bessy Higgins, the poor neighbor, and immediately Margaret remembers that she had completely forgotten the visit she promised Higgins family, because of the preparation for Thornton's coming to tea. Bessy tells Margaret how Mr. Higgins was response toward her, thinking that she is just like the rest of the gentlefolk. Unfortunately, as a negative result of working in the Cotton mill, Bessy is seriously ill with tuberculosis, and does not expect to live out the year. Nicholas (Bessy's father) is struggling with his sorrow, while Margaret spends most of the time, taking care of Bessy gently. "Margaret flew upstairs as soon as their visitors were gone, and put on her bonnet and shawl, to run and inquire how Bessy Higgins was, and sit with her as long as she could before dinner" (Gaskell 115).

The next day, Mrs. Thornton with her daughter Fanny pay a visit to Mrs. Hale and Margaret, and during conversation, when Mrs. Thornton starts to talk about Milton's factories, Margaret shows no interest; and after the Thorntons leave, Margaret goes fastly to see Bessy who becomes worse and worse. When she returns home, she finds her mother worse as well, and her father is in bad situation. "From that day forwards Mrs. Hale became more and more of a suffering invalid" (Gaskell 120).

One night, her mother starts to talk about the older brother who is Frederick. Margaret did not know much about Frederick's tragic story because she was living at her aunt Shaw's.

‘Mamma’, said Margaret, ‘I was at aunt Shaw’s when it all happened; and I suppose I was not old enough to be told plainly about it. But I should like to know now, if I may-if it does not give you too much pain to speak about it’ (Gaskell 123).

Frederick was an officer on a ship captained by an old enemy of his, this captain abused and treated the crew cruelly, until one day when this cruelty led to the death of one of the men; Frederick and others mutinied, putting the captain and some other officers in a small boat; after that, the crew members who were captured, were hanged while Frederick was obliged to change his name to live abroad. “And Frederick was in South America for several years, was he not? Yes. And now he is in Spain” (Gaskell 127).

The next day, Mr. Hale and Margaret decide to return Mrs. Thornton’s visit, because Mrs. Hale is too ill to do this. When they arrive at the Thornton home, Margaret feels as if she is in the factory, although the inside is well-kept, the atmosphere is smelly and dirty. Mrs. Thornton always speaks proudly about Milton value, and the virtue of her son as one from the men who bring prosperity to the city. In her conversation, she claims that a strike will occur. John comes and shares their conversation, stating that his workers are well-treated and that he runs his business with great integrity. Margaret opposes him telling that not all his workers are satisfied, and he soon understands from where Margaret brings this idea. “‘I dare say it was that man Higgins who told you all this’, said Mrs. Hale. Mr. Thornton did not appear to hear what Margaret evidently did not wish him to know. But he caught it, nevertheless” (Gaskell 139).

The next day, Dr. Donaldson comes to pay the first visit to Mrs. Hale; after examining her, he discovers that she has a dangerous illness and will soon die. Although the mother request is not to tell her family about the truth, Margaret forces the doctor to tell her exactly about the truth.

‘I am not good or patient enough to submit to the prohibition. Besides, I am sure, you are too wise-too experienced, to have promised to keep the secret’

‘Well’, said he, half-smiling, though sadly enough, there you are right. I did not promise. In fact, I fear, the secret will be known soon enough without my revealing it (Gaskell 147).

So, Margaret spends as much time with her mother as she can; trying to keep the bad news from her father as long as possible.

Mrs. Hale’s last wish is to see Frederick again, but she knows it is impossible. On the other hand, Margaret goes to see Bessy Higgins, and there she hears that the cause of the strike is that the workers are forced to take a cut in pay, and Thornton is among the masters who do this. When Margaret returns home, she finds an invitation from Mrs. Thornton to a dinner party, and of course, she and her father decide to go. John knows from the doctor about Mrs. Hale’s situation, and asks his mother and sister to be kind to Margaret. During this time, he must prepare for the coming strike, he has no intention about the workers’ demands, and he decides to bring laborers from Ireland if the strike is not ended quickly.

‘Can’t you get hands from Ireland?’ I wouldn’t keep these fellows a day. I’d teach them that I was master, and could employ what servants I liked? Yes! To be sure I can; and I will, too, if they go on long (Gaskell 171).

The Higgins’ factory is on strike already, and things become worse, a neighbor, Boucher, who is also on strike, complains about his sickly wife and starving children.

On the night of the dinner party, Mr. Thornton is amazed with Margaret who looks so beautiful in her dress. But when Margaret and her father return home, they find Mrs. Hale gravely ill and now Mr. Hale can notice the truth. When Margaret goes to the Thorntons to try to obtain a water-bed for her sick mother, she finds many poor people in the streets, gathered, all moving toward Thornton’s house. Inside, she is informed that the cause of these people’s anger is Thornton’s importation of Irish workers. These Irish workers hide in the upper rooms of the mill and the situation becomes worse and worse. John goes out trying to speak to them, but they shout him down; Margaret can see the danger that turns around him, this is why she stands between him and the mob, trying to make things better. One boy picks up a stone and throws it at John, but it hits Margaret in the head drawing blood; when the crowd sees what happened, they withdraw, and John carries Margaret inside, admitting to himself how much he loves her as he has never loved a woman before.

‘Mother-mother!’ cried he; ‘come down-they are gone, and Miss Hale is hurt!’...[...] ‘Oh, my Margaret, my Margaret! No one can tell what you are to me! Dead-cold as you lie there, you are the only woman I ever loved! Oh, Margaret-Margaret!’ (Gaskell 214).

The next morning, John comes to the Hale residence and proposes marriage to Margaret, but she coldly refuses him and she convinces herself that she has no feeling toward him. Between the struggles of what Margaret feels toward John and her mother’s status and last wish to see her son Frederick, she promises to write a letter to him asking him to come, though this will be a risk to his life.

After Thornton is informed by Dr. Donaldson that Mrs. Hale continues to become worse and worse; he buys fresh fruit and takes it to her. After he leaves, Mary Higgins (Bessy’s sister) brings the news of her sister’s death. Mr. Thornton continues to bring more fruits for Mrs. Hale who has admired this man a lot. At the news of the mother’s illness, Frederick arrives; he is warmly received by Margaret; after a few days, the mother dies quietly. And because of the complicated status of Frederick, he must leave the country for his own safety; even before the funeral; he has to go back to Spain, but there are many problems that make his escape difficult, so he decides to wait. On one night, Thornton sees Margaret out late on the arm of her brother, Thornton knows nothing about Frederick, so he reaches to the conclusion that Margaret has a lover. Finally, with the help of Mr. Lennox, Frederick makes safely his escape.

Thornton cannot stop thinking about Margaret and her supposed lover. He tells his mother about this, and she immediately goes to Margaret and tells her that her behavior is inappropriate, but Margaret says nothing to her about Frederick.

Concerning Higgins, as he promised Margaret, he goes and speaks to Thornton about a job, and Thornton immediately rejects his request. But later, Thornton has second thoughts, then he visits Higgins to offer him the job and the latter accepts.

Soon, Mr. Bell arrives for a visit from Oxford, he is Margaret's godfather and Thornton is his tenant, so his visit is for both of them. Mr. Bell can notice that Thornton and Margaret appear to have feelings for one another, and later he tells Mr. Hale who denies it. In town, Mrs. Boucher dies and Higgins takes complete charge of her children. Mr. Thornton as well visits these children many times. Margaret as usual, occupies her time teaching the Boucher children and takes care of her father. About Frederick's situation, Henry Lennox did the impossible to clear his name. Although Mr. Hale seems to be getting worse, Margaret convinces him to pay a visit to Mr. Bell in Oxford. Mr. Hale is warmly received by those who remember him, but there, one night he quietly dies in his sleep. Bell decides to take care of Margaret during his life and leave her all his money when he dies. He goes to Milton to tell Margaret, who is shocked by the sad news.

The shock had been great. Margaret fell into a state of prostration, which did not show itself in sobs and tears, or even find the relief of

words. She lay on the sofa with her eyes shut, never speaking but when spoken to, and then replying in whispers (Gaskell 421).

So, her aunt Mrs. Shaw is determined to take her back to London to live with her, in the place where she grew up. Before her leaving, she bids farewell to the Higginsons and Thorntons. On the other hand, Thornton begins to provide meals for his workers. In addition, Mr. Bell is not aware about Frederick's coming to see his mother before her death.

When Margaret goes to London, she quickly finds that she is bored. "There was a strange unsatisfied vacuum in Margaret's heart and mode of life" (Gaskell 445). Mr. Bell pays a visit to see her and when he notices her condition, he suggests to her to make a trip with him to Helstone, Margaret immediately agrees and they go there, where she finds many changes. These changes are generally small, but the real change is in herself. Margaret tells Mr. Bell about the cause of her grief that is the false conclusion that Thornton formed when he saw her with Frederick on that night. Mr. Bell promises to correct the misunderstanding of Thornton if the opportunity arises. But unfortunately, he cannot go to Milton and see Thornton.

Lennox appears at the house more and more having the first feelings toward Margaret. One day, Margaret receives a letter that says that Bell is ill, and immediately she plans to go to Oxford to visit and care for him, but when she arrives she finds him dead. He left all his properties to her.

In Milton, things are going worse and worse. An economic downturn and the strike put Thornton's mill into serious debt, so he is obliged to close it and work as

a manager in another factory. Finally, the truth concerning Margaret's reputation appears, thanks to Higgins who tells Thornton about Frederick's truth. Margaret is now Thornton's landlady. So, Thornton arranges to go to London to deal with financial matters; he deals first with Mr. Lennox who is Margaret's lawyer, then when she discovers what is going on, she deals with him personally. She offers to use an amount of her inheritance to make the mill work again. And the story ends with breaking all the barriers between the Northern man, Thornton, and the Southern lady, Margaret.

'Do you know these roses?' he said, drawing out his pocket-book, in which were treasured up some dead flowers.

'No!' she replied, with innocent curiosity.

'Did I give them to you?'

'No! Vanity, you did not. You may have worn sister roses very probably'. She looked at them, wondering for a minute, then she smiled a little as she said—

'They are from Helstone, are they not?...[...]

'I wanted to see the place where Margaret grew to what she is, even at the worst time of all, when I had no hope of ever calling her mine' (Gaskell 520).

The novel concludes with the marriage of Margaret and Thornton.