

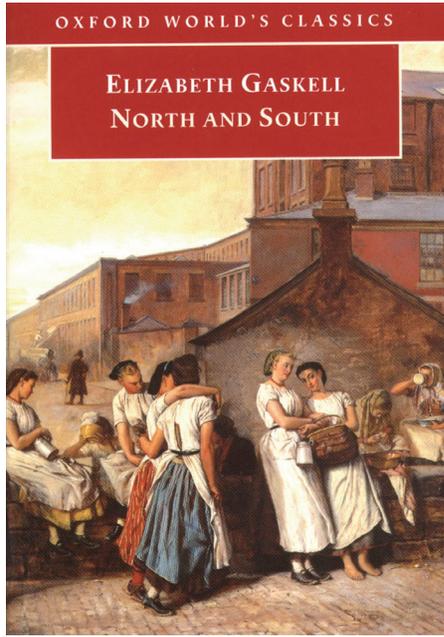


## Kitap Tanıtımı / Book Review

### North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell, Dorlion Yayınları, Ankara, 2018

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Elizabeth Gaskell, the author of *North and South*, is one of the most prominent writers of the Victorian period in British Literature. The social changes, harsh realities, sufferings and class distinction are the subjects of Gaskell's works such as *Mary Barton* (1848), *Cranford* (1853), *Ruth* (1853), *North and South* (1854), *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), *Wives and Daughters* (1865). It can be inferred that she reflects and exemplifies the real situations, and also she does not shut her ears to those changes experienced by the whole people living in the society.

The reason for the most dramatic changes faced during those times was the Industrial Revolution. The industrial revolution took place in the second half of the 18th century and

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the early 19th century, and transformed England so drastically. It was the transition from agriculture to industry. It was, however, an unwilling event for the landowners who did not have enough money to buy brand new machines. Thus, some of them stayed in their villages instead of moving to the industrialized cities. But, the rest immigrated to urban areas from the countryside in order to survive.

Within those historical and sociological transitions, it is no surprise for an author to deal with the issues of the society in their literary works. *North and South* by Gaskell is a very voluminous novel including 55 chapters, very long explanatory paragraphs, long conversations between the characters (sometimes nearly half page). Even minor characters regardless of their education, social class, or profession in the novel are voiced to express themselves. Also, it includes many themes such as class struggle/distinction, effects of industrialism, sexuality, gender issues, marriage etc. This study, however, will try to analyze the opposing worlds represented even in the title. When having first sight of the book, it gives the impression of duality and comparison, needless to say that there is no clear cut diversion, but as a reader it may be felt deeply, and when going into the heart of the novel, the implications for the representation of two sides are gained. Those sides represent the cities as a topography, and Moretti's statements on geography and literature are highly interconnected in this respect:

[...] geography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history 'happens', but an active force, that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth. Making the connection between geography and literature explicit, then- mapping it: because a map is precisely that, a connection made visible- will allow us to see some significant relationships that have so far escaped us (Moretti, 1999: 3).

The author also helps to see and compare/contrast different worlds while putting the geography in the center of the novel. The Victorian period before and after the industrial revolution is displayed, and some social customs are overviewed. On the other hand, class and gender roles are well-defined; in the Victorian Period, for instance a lady is aware of the fact that she should be decent and submissive and have the control of her behaviours, and in contrast to the idealized woman, a man has all the possessions regarding freedom. Kagawa states that those are defined according to the space, and supports this point of view via following lines:

Class and gender roles in city and country spaces, as well as national and continental boundaries, are succinctly established through her articulation of space[...] [so that] reading Gaskell through her spaces becomes a coherent organizing system for both her novel's narrative novel and thematic content (Kagawa, 2002: 134).

NORTH	SOUTH
London, Milton	Helstone
Industry	Agriculture

Bourgeois society, middle class	Rural community
Masters	Workers
Soulless, and hard	Quiet, pastoral, aristocratic, and idyllic
Filled with men suffering from injustice and interminable work	No strikes, no class distinctions

As seen in the chart given above, North is represented by London/ Milton to which Margaret Hale and her family move after her father's resignation from the church. London/ Milton is the heart of the county in the scope of industry. Production is done via machines and every person working in the factories work in really hard conditions. The wages are so low to get by. Also, the air is polluted by the gas and smoke. Knezevic expresses his opinion on that city as "This is a classic representation of the mid-Victorian industrial city: industrial pollution, uniform, depressing residential buildings, interspersed randomly with industrial facilities, and the bustle of activity" (Knezevic, 2011: 95). It can be inferred from the lines that there is not too much green area, and the life is so monotonous and regular because of the working conditions. The areas reserved for the industry and settlement is not divided clearly, so both the atmosphere and air gloomy and joyless.

Industrialism generally has positive connotations in the minds of people, and it is a precursor of a new era, but it indicates the end of a period of longing for old days as well. Felski emphasizes the effect of modernity on individuals' perception of time:

If the experience of modernity brought with it an overwhelming sense of innovation, ephemerality, and chaotic change, it simultaneously endangered multiple expressions of desire for stability and continuity. Nostalgia, understood as a mourning for idealised past, thus emerges as a formative theme of the modern: the age of progress was also the age of yearning for an imaginary edenic condition that had been lost (Felski, 1995: 40).

Coming back again to the chart, South is represented by Helstone where Margaret and her family have lived during their lives till the sudden decision of her father. Helstone is the rural part of the country; therefore, it is far from industry, but it has much cleaner air and people still enjoy the green land. The relationship between the people is more ordinary, but there is still aristocratic rules to obey. Margaret, the protagonist of the novel, and her mother always miss the old days in Helstone when they move to Milton, and they have also prejudice against the upper class, but towards the end of the novel she begins to see the point from them.

Yearning for the past is also given through a comparison between North and South in the dialogue between Margaret and Mr. Thornton. She insistently says that the South is a better and preferable place in terms of working conditions:

You do not know anything about the South. If there is less adventure or less progress, I suppose I must not say less excitement from the gambling spirit of trade, which seems requisite to force out these wonderful inventions, there is less suffering also. I see men

here going about in the streets who look ground down by some pinching sorrow or carewho are not only sufferers but haters. Now, in the South we have our poor, but there is not that expression in their countenances of a sullen sense of injustice which I see here. You do not know the South Mr. Thornton (Gaskell, 2018: 88).

It can be deduced that a literary figure may reflect social and cultural events into his/her works as he cannot be thought apart from the society. The historical changes witnessed by the people have contained the duality in their own nature, in that, industrial changes have occurred via technological developments, but when those new things begin to appear in the society, the old and new one will show itself. This duality may be given in literature to represent the conditions through space. As those spaces are distinctly opposite to each other, characters and events may be categorized by these notions.

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