

28. Female Mediation and Law in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*: A New Perspective¹

Yasemen ÖZFINDIK KOTİK²

Gökşen ARAS³

APA: Özfındık Kotik, Y. & Aras, G. (2025). Female Mediation and Law in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South: A New Perspective. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (44), 476-486.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14844962>

Abstract

This study focuses on the mediation styles of Margaret Hale, the main female character in *North and South*, one of the examples of industrial novels in nineteenth century English literature. Our aim is to show that Margaret Hale skillfully uses three basic styles of modern mediation: transformative, evaluative and facilitative. By making her character use these styles, the author conveys the message to the reader that interclass reconciliation and peace between the middle class, *the captains of industry* in Carlyle's words, and the working class, *the hands* is possible. When the socio-cultural background of nineteenth century England is considered, the fact that a female character mediates and provides interclass reconciliation also makes the reader rethink the concepts of women and law in nineteenth century English novels. The fact that Elizabeth Gaskell, a female writer, introduces a female character coming to the forefront in a male-dominated field such as law, playing a key role with her skillful legal maneuvers, is contrary to the expectations and conventions of society. Ironically, the writer gives Margaret Hale a more functional role than the lawyer Henry Lennox, who prides himself on real and important legal work, and this reveals how ahead of its time the novel is in terms of gender roles. This study examines the relationship between law and literature in nineteenth century England and the place of women in law in nineteenth century England from an interdisciplinary and unusual perspective. Furthermore, we argue that the novel *North and South*, published in 1855, should be examined within the historical and legal framework of the Factory Act, passed by the British Parliament in 1844, the Ten Hours Act, passed in 1847, and the Coal Mines Inspection Act, passed in 1850.

Keywords: 19th century, novel, law, literature, Gaskell, three styles of modern mediation

¹ **Statement (Thesis / Paper):** It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were followed during the preparation process of this study and all the studies utilised are indicated in the bibliography.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest is declared.

Funding: No external funding was used to support this research.

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Source: It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were followed during the preparation of this study and all the studies used are stated in the bibliography.

Similarity Report: Received –Ithenticate, Rate: %4

Ethics Complaint: editor@rumelide.com

Article Type: Research article, **Article Registration Date:** 30.10.2024 -**Acceptance Date:** 10.02.2025-

Publication Date: 21.02.2025; **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14844962>

Peer Review: Two External Referees / Double Blind

² Öğr. Gör., Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu / Lect., Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, School of Foreign Languages (Ankara, Türkiye) **eposta:** yasemenozfindik@gmail.com, **ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2658-3139> **ROR ID:** <https://ror.org/0272rjm42>, **ISNI:** 0000 0001 0842 3532

³ Doç. Dr., Atılım Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı / Assoc. Prof., Atılım University, Faculty of Arts-Sciences, Department of English Language and Literature (İstanbul, Türkiye) **eposta:** goksenaras@yahoo.com, **ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2523-4976> **ROR ID:** <https://ror.org/04pd3v454>, **ISNI:** 0000 0004 0595 4604, **Crossref Funder ID:** 501100005183

Elizabeth Gaskell'in Kuzey ve Güney adlı Eserinde Kadın Ara Buluculuęu ve Hukuk: Yeni Bir Bakıř Açıřı⁴

Öz

On dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiliz edebiyatının sanayi romanı örneklerinden biri olan Kuzey ve Güney adlı eserdeki ana kadın karakter Margaret Hale'in ara buluculuk vasıflarını ele alan bu çalıřma, Margaret Hale'in modern ara buluculuęun üç temel stilini de ortaya koyduęunu göstermektedir. Dönüřtürücü, deęerlendirici ve kolaylařtırıcı olarak gruplandırılan bu stillerin tamamını ustalıkla kullanan Margaret Hale, Carlyle'in tabiri ile sanayi devriminin kaptanları olan ve burjuvayı temsil eden orta sınıf ile, makineleri kullanan eller olarak tanımlanan iřçi sınıfını, kullandıęı bu stiller aracılıęı ile uzlařtırmıř; karakterin bu başarısıyla, dönemin okuyucusuna sınıflar arası uzlařmanın ve barıřın mümkün olduęu mesajı verilmek istenmiřtir. On dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiltere'sinin sosyo-kültürel arka planı düşünöldüęünde, bir kadın karakterin ara buluculuk yaparak sınıflar arası uzlařmayı saęlaması ve usta hukuk manevraları ile bir kilit rol oynayarak ön plana çıkması on dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiliz romanında kadın ve hukuk kavramlarını da yeniden gözden geçirmemize neden olmaktadır. Bir kadın yazar olan Elizabeth Gaskell'in, bir kadın karakteri toplumun beklentisi ve alışlagelenin dıřında hukuk gibi erkek egemen bir alana vakıf kılması ve bu kadın karaktere ironik bir biçimde gerçek ve önemli hukuk iřleri ile övünen avukat Henry Lennox'tan daha fonksiyonel bir rol atfetmesi eserin toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri açıřından da ne kadar çağının ötesinde olduęunu gözler önüne sermektedir. 1855 yılında yayımlanan Kuzey ve Güney adlı eseri İngiliz parlamentosundan 1844 yılında geçen Fabrika Yasası, 1847 yılında geçen On Saat Yasası ve 1850 yılında geçen Kömür Madenleri Teftiři Yasası çerçevesinde tarihsel ve yasal arka plan ile de ele almak gerektięini savunan bu çalıřma, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiltere'sinde hukuk ve edebiyat arasındaki iliřkiyi ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiltere'sinde hukukta kadının yerini disiplinler arası ve sıra dıřı bir bakıř açıřı ile irdelemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: 19 yüzyıl, roman, hukuk, edebiyat, Gaskell, modern ara buluculuęun üç stili

⁴ **Beyan (Tez/ Bildiri):** Bu çalıřmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduęu ve yararlanılan tüm çalıřmaların kaynakçada belirtildięi beyan olunur.

Çıkar Çatıřması: Çıkar çatıřması beyan edilmemiřtir.

Finansman: Bu arařtırmayı desteklemek için dıř fon kullanılmamıřtır.

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Benzerlik Raporu: Alındı – Ithenticate, Oran: %4

Etik Şikayeti: editor@rumelide.com

Makale Türü: Arařtırma makalesi, **Makale Kayıt Tarihi:** 30.10.2024-**Kabul Tarihi:** 10.02.2025-**Yayın Tarihi:** 21.02.2025; **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14844962>

Hakem Deęerlendirmesi: İki Dıř Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme

Introduction

Elizabeth Gaskell is one of the most eminent English novelists, short story writers and biographers of the Victorian Period, in which the novel genre was an important means to provide the reader with the representation of economic, socio-cultural issues of the period such as industrial revolution, labour, class antagonism, and “woman question,” based on the inferiority of women in not only socio-cultural terms, state laws and policies but also in individual and married life. In this respect, it is significant to refer to the fact that Elizabeth Gaskell, “was receptive to the atmosphere of her age as well as to the varied happenings...” and “... the conditions in which the Manchester workers lived” (Duthie, 1980: pp.1,4). While representing such concerns mentioned above, a very distinct attitude towards the representation of women especially in the field of law is detected in Gaskell's novel *North and South*. Acting as a female mediator between different classes throughout the novel and reconciling them at the end, Margaret Hale is an extraordinary character establishing a web of relations that represents the interdependence of the industrial North, the fuel of the capitalist economy and the traditional South, where economic power is based on title and land.

Margaret Hale is the daughter of a parish priest, Richard Hale and Maria Hale who comes from the wealthy Beresford family. Although the Hales live in a parish house in Helstone, a hamlet in Cornwall, the reader is informed that Margaret spends most of her time in her aunt's house together with her cousin Edith in Harley Street, London. In fact, from the very beginning, it is hinted that Margaret is given the role of a mediator since she is exposed to both the country life in her father's modest parish house and the city life in her rich aunt's drawing room with full of guests. At the age of nine, Margaret was brought to London by her family “all untamed from the forest, to share the home, the play, the lessons of her cousin Edith” (Gaskell, 1994: p. 5) and nine years later, just before the wedding ceremony of her cousin, she is expected to turn back to the parish house in Helstone as an educated, young lady with proper manners and qualifications. Despite those nine years she spends in the comfort and the luxury of her aunt's London house, Margaret's heart still yearns for the modest parish life in Helstone and soon after she returns to Helston, she devotes herself to the people as a friend, a teacher and a fellow citizen:

She took a pride in her forest. Its people were her people, she made hearty friends with them; learned and delighted in using their peculiar words; took up her freedom amongst them; nursed their babies, talked and read with slow distinctness to their old people, carried dainty messes to the their sick; resolved before long to teach at the school, where her father went to everyday as to an appointed task. But, she was continually tempted off to go and see some individual friend – man, woman and child in some cottage in the green shade of the forest. (Gaskell, 1994: p. 16)

As can be seen in the quotation, Margaret is with the ordinary people of Helston though she is brought up in London. She doesn't hesitate to help the sick or any other people in need in that hamlet because she thinks it is her forest and they are her people despite their lack of education or socio-economic status. Margaret is aware of her superior position as the daughter of the parish priest, and similar to her father she is educating and guiding the small population of Helstone. She establishes an emotional connection with these people but at the same time keeps her position as a distinguished young lady. In a conversation with her mother, Margaret says that she enjoys the company of “cottagers and labourers and people without pretense” (Gaskell, 1994: p. 18). To make her point clear, she adds that “I like all people whose occupations have to do with land; I like soldiers and sailors, and the three learned professions, as they call them. I'm sure you don't want me to admire butchers and bakers, and candle-stick makers” (18). So, except for tradesmen or “shoppy people” (18) in Margaret's words, she doesn't have any prejudice against people from different classes and ironically that prejudice is disarmed when

she meets and falls in love with Mr. Thornton, a tradesman⁵.

One can assert that in addition to her wish and ability to mingle with people from different classes and backgrounds, the first clear occasion that the reader sees Margaret as a mediator is when she volunteers to break off the news to her mother, after she learns her father's decision to move the whole family to Milton and work there as a private tutor:

"Poor Maria! replied Mr. Hale tenderly. "Poor, poor Maria! Oh, if I were not married-if I were but myself in the world, how easy it would be! As it is –Margaret, I dare not tell her!

"No," said Margaret sadly, "I will do it. Give me till tomorrow evening to choose my time. (Gaskell, 1994: p. 43)

Mrs Hale, when compared to her daughter can be described as a more fragile woman who was brought up in a London household and since her mind is busy with the troubles of her son, Frederick, Margaret intends to tell her the breaking news without hurting her. At the same time, she is trying to save her father from a very difficult situation and therefore she is taking up a mediator position to reconcile her parents. Although she is shocked by the news at first, she is quick at realizing how serious her father is in his decision to move to Milton and more than her mother, who gets ill due to the traumatic effects of the news on her, she deals with all the arrangements of their move to Milton.

After the Hales move to Milton, Margaret's role as a mediator between the industrial North and the agricultural South becomes evident. In fact, from her first encounter with the Higgins family in the street, it is apparent that Margaret will be the uniting force between the North and the South, between the working class and the middle class as can be seen in the dialogue below between the factory worker Nicholas Higgins and her:

"Thank yo, miss.Bessy'll think a great deal o'them flowers; that hoo will; and I shall think a deal o'yor kindness. Yo're not of this country, I reckon?"

"No!" said Margaret, half sighing. "I come from the South –from Hampshire," she continued, a little afraid of wounding his consciousness of ignorance, if she used a name which he did not understand.

"That's beyond London, I reckon? And I come fro' Burnley-ways, and forty miles to th' North. And yet, yo see, North and South has both met and made kind o' friends in this big smoky place". (Gaskell, 1994: pp. 82-83)

Bessy Higgins, the sick daughter of Nicholas Higgins is attracted by the flowers that Margaret carries in her hand, and when Margaret offers her these flowers, her father thanks Margaret for her kindness. Looking at the word choice of the author, one can argue that Gaskell emphasizes the difference between the educated Southerner, Margaret and uneducated Northerner Nicholas Higgins. From the first moment of their encounter, it is emphasized that Margaret and Nicholas are people from the different worlds and backgrounds. However, it is Margaret's good intention and her sensitivity which establish an emotional bridge between the North and the South. So, the moment Higgins and Margaret meet in the streets of Milton, a hope for the union of the Northerners and Southerners, the union of different socio-economic classes in a sense, is also born. One can comment that it is Margaret and her role as a mediator between these classes is the source of this hope for a friendship because she is the one taking the first step and communicating with Bessy Higgins. Margaret doesn't choose to ignore her and her feelings but she gives importance to her and through her kindness and care she steps into Higgins

⁵ Margaret is not the only character with her prejudices against Thornton. As Gold argues "This novel is very much about perceptions. Thornton, for example, is perceived as a 'shopman' by Margaret's brother (chap. 31); a 'manufacturer' by Mr. Hale (chap. 7); and 'a hard, cruel master' (chap. 39) by Higgins" (134).

family's world of North which is still unknown to Margaret.

Through her frequent visits to the Higgins, Margaret is faced with the harsh living conditions of the working class in Milton. Bessy's illness stems from the poor working conditions of the factories and not being able to afford good quality food as well as proper medical care. Bessy seeks refuge in religion and Margaret also tries to console her by referring to the Bible as well but Higgins' response to this reflects the despair of a working class father who has lost hopes about the future of his sick daughter:

"Now, I'll not have my wench preached to. She's bad enough, as it is, with her dreams and her Methodee fancies and her vision of cities with golden gates and precious stones. But if it amuses her I let it abe; but I 'm none going to have more stuff poured into her."

"But surely," said Margaret, facing round. "you believe in what I said, that God gave her life, and ordered what kind of life it was to be?"

"I believe what I see, and no more. That's what I believe, young woman. I don't believe all I hear-no! not by a big deal. I did hear a young lass make an ado about knowing where we lived, and coming to see us. And my wench here thought a deal about it, and flushed up many a time, when hoo little knew as I was looking at her, at the sound of a strange step. But hoo's come at last – and hoo's welcome, as long as hoo'll keep from preaching on what hoo knows nought about." (Gaskell, 1994: p. 105)

Higgins thinks that Margaret shouldn't preach about God in his working class home because she has no idea about what kind of life they have and she has never experienced living in these conditions. In the first chapter, Margaret is depicted in the comfortable house of her aunt Mrs Shaw trying expensive shawls from India. Then, she moves to her family's parish home in Helstone, a more modest place compared to Harley Street but Margaret accepts these people in Helstone as her people and embraces the idyllic life it offers. However, Milton and the life in the North is a new experience for Margaret. She is not familiar with the struggles of the working class of the North, but when she witnesses and understands how they live and what they need she will be the mediator between them and their upper-middle class employers, the tradesmen of the North.

Soon after the Hales move to Milton, the hands of the mills in the town are getting ready for a new strike for a pay rise and Margaret has the chance to see both the employees' and the employers' opinions about the strike, having connections to both sides. From the mill owner Thornton's perspective, workers are trying to control the capital of the owners and he thinks they can't see clearly the forthcoming economic difficulties that the employers have to deal with. However, more important than this, he is comparing his workers in the mill with the servants in a household which shows that he is not really aware of their economic interdependence to each other:

"Do you give your servants reasons for your expenditure, or your economy in the use of your own money? We, the owners of the capital, have a right to choose what we will do with it"

"A human right," said Margaret, very low.

"I beg your pardon, I did not hear what you said"

"I would rather not repeat it," said she; it is related to a feeling which I don't think you would share". (Gaskell, 1994: p. 137)

A factory worker in the North is different from a traditional household servant because they form unions; they are in constant contact with each other in their shifts and they are not only initiating a new way of life but also a new culture. However, Thornton is in need of an eye-opener and it is Margaret Hale who will close the gap between Thornton and his workers functioning as a mediator. Margaret constantly emphasizes the invisible connection between the workers and the employers and in her discussions with

Thornton, and she tries to convince him that ignoring this connection and hostility will not lead the two classes anywhere:

I see two classes dependent on each other in every possible way, yet each evidently regarding the interests of the other as opposed to their own; I never lived in a place before where there were two sets of people always running each other down. (Gaskell, 1994: p. 138)

One can argue that Margaret's mediation skills are at its peak in Chapter 22: A Blow and Its Consequences where the strikers rush to the gates of Marlborough Mill and Margaret is stuck there with the Thornton family. Being familiar with the two classes and knowing the arguments and motives of both parties Margaret takes the initiative to mediate between the two parties: "Go! said she, once more (and now her voice was like a cry). "The soldiers are sent for – are coming. Go peaceably. Go away. You shall have relief from your complaints, whatever they are" (Gaskell, 1994: p. 211). It is unusual for a woman of nineteenth century Britain to stand up and speak to a group of strikers in this tone, adopting the role of a mediator, but Margaret performs this role bravely. When the strikers inquire about the Irish workers brought by Thornton as a cheap replacement of the work force and the dispute heats up between Thornton and strikers, Margaret comprehends the vehemence of the situation better than Thornton. She also realizes that the strikers are armed with their clogs and with an attempt to protect Thornton, she hugs him and gets wounded by a sharp pebble thrown by the strikers. Performing her role of a mediator, Margaret risks her life and her reputation, using her body as a shield against the attacks of the fierce strikers to protect a man with whom she has no familial or official relation. However, the outcome is successful and the strikers retreat.

Analysis: Three Modern Styles of Mediation and North and South

In this part of the article, the three styles of modern mediation employed by Margaret Hale will be analyzed. According to Zena D. Zumeta, there are three different styles of mediation which are facilitative, evaluative and transformative. In facilitative style, through asking questions and normalizing the points of each party the mediator helps them reach a solution. In this style, the mediator is responsible for the process and the result is the responsibility of both parties. In evaluative style, the mediator directs a shuttle diplomacy between the parties in separate meetings and helps the parties come to a solution by showing the weak points in their arguments. In transformative style, the mediator recognizes what both parties need and opinions they have about their case. The aim of the mediator is to transform the relationship between the two parties and the mediator talks in the presence of both parties ("Styles of Mediation: Facilitative, Evaluative, and Transformative Mediation", 2018).

As can be seen in Table 1 below, "Mediation Styles of Margaret Hale in North and South" one can assert that Margaret uses all three styles of mediation effectively in the novel. It is observed that Margaret is adopting the facilitative style in her conversation with Nicholas Higgins, specifically on page 155 and 158, and her methods are asking question(s) to have a better understanding of the core matter (155) and normalizing Thornton's opinion so that Higgins can see his motives as well. On page 143 in her discussion with Thornton, she points out the weak points of Thornton's argument to underline the interdependence of Thornton and his employees, which can be shown as an example to evaluative style of mediation. Lastly, during the strike, Margaret adopts a transformative style this time; meeting both parties at the same time and her methods are recognizing the case of the strikers in an attempt to prevent a bigger dispute, and through addressing the physical imbalance of power between the strikers and Thornton, she tries to defuse the crisis. Margaret's efforts to reconcile Higgins and Thornton, or the working class and the middle class become fruitful and the two parties begin to understand the reasons

behind each other's actions. Thornton faces with the living conditions of the working class and observing the situation of the Bouchers family, he initiates certain steps to improve both the working and living conditions of his workers. To give an example, he not only provides food in the Marlborough Mill for his workers but also eats with them. Again through Margaret's mediation, Higgins starts to work as an employee in Thornton's mill and he even works extra hours and convinces other workers to work more too when he understands the financial crisis of Thornton.

Mediation styles of Margaret Hales in <i>North and South</i>	
Style & interaction	Example from the novel and the method used
<p style="text-align: center;">Facilitative style (Margaret-Higgins interaction)</p>	<p>“Why do you strike?” (pp. 155).</p> <p>Method: asking questions</p> <p>“Don't ask me. Ask some of your masters. Surely they will give you a reason for it. It is not merely an arbitrary decision of theirs, come to without reason” (pp. 158).</p> <p>Method: normalizing the other party's opinion</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluative Style (Margaret-Thornton Interaction)</p>	<p>“God has made us so that we must be mutually dependent. We may ignore our own dependence, or refuse to acknowledge that others depend upon us in more respects than the payment of weekly wages; but the things must be, nevertheless. Neither you nor any other master can help yourselves” (pp. 143).</p> <p>Method: showing the weak points</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Transformative Style</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p>To Thornton: “Speak to your workmen as if they were human beings. Speak to them kindly (pp. 209).</p> <p>Method: recognition of the case of the strikers, preventing a bigger dispute</p> <p>To the strikers: “Oh, don't use violence! He is one man and you are many (pp. 211).</p> <p>Method: Addressing the imbalance between the parties with an aim to prevent a crisis for both</p> <p>To the strikers: “For God's sake! Don't damage your cause by this violence” (pp. 212).</p> <p>Method: Recognition of the case of the strikers, preventing a bigger dispute</p>

Table 1: Mediation styles of Margaret Hale in *North and South*⁶

In addition to the quotations given in the chart above, there are other examples in the novel demonstrating Margaret Hale's apt use of facilitative, evaluative and transformative styles. To illustrate, no matter how much Bessy loves her and appreciates that Margaret is kind to visit her as a member of working class, Bessy claims that Margaret cannot comprehend what a strike means to the working class as a woman who comes from the South. But the way Margaret responds to that claim is not merely defending herself but employing the facilitative style of mediation as she warns Bessy that she should not only look at the matter from a limited perspective. Margaret doesn't assert that she has enough knowledge on what a strike means but as the facilitative mediator she leads Bessy to take the other party's perspective into consideration as can be seen in the quotation below:

[Bessy:] Bless yo'r sweet pitiful face! but yo'dunnot know what a strike is yet.'

'Come, Bessy,' said Margaret, 'I won't say you're exaggerating, because I don't know enough about it: but, perhaps, as you're not well, you're only looking on one side, and there is another and a brighter to be looked to.' (Gaskell, 1994: p.161)

In another conversation, this time with Thornton, Margaret repeats that she doesn't know much about strikes, wages and labour emphasizing her impartial position as a mediator. Employing the evaluative style of mediation, Margaret makes references to the Bible, the source of religious law with an aim to point out that Thornton is neglecting his role as a "steward":

'I do not think that I have any occasion to consider your special religious opinions in the affair. All I meant to say is, that there is no human law to prevent the employers from utterly wasting or throwing away all their money, if they choose; but that there are passages in the Bible which would rather imply—to me at least—that they neglected their duty as stewards if they did so. However I know so little about strikes, and rate of wages, and capital, and labour, that I had better not talk to a political economist like you.' (Gaskell, 1994: p.138)

As can be seen in the quotation above Margaret implies that not caring about his role and duty as a caring master might be the reason why Thornton and other mill owners have to deal with constant strikes. Margaret not only shows Thornton his weak point which is being an ignorant master but she also finds a lawful basis. Apart from her use of facilitative and evaluative styles of mediation aforementioned, her reconciliation of Higgins and Mr. Hale can be given as an example to her use of transformative style of mediation. Upon the death of his daughter Bessy, Margaret invites Higgins to have a soothing conversation with Mr. Hale about religion but since the two have very different opinions about religion the conversation turns into a dispute. Margaret this time takes up her position as a transformative mediator and transforms their relation pointing out how similar they are no matter how much they are different from each other.

Margaret touched his arm very softly. She had not spoken before, nor had he heard her rise. 'Nicholas, we do not want to reason; you misunderstand my father. We do not reason—we believe; and so do you. It is the one sole comfort in such times.' (Gaskell, 1994: p.270)

The common ground that Margaret found solves the problem of having different perspectives about religious matters and "Margaret the Churchwoman, her father the Dissenter, Higgins the Infidel, knelt down together. It did them no harm" (Gaskell, 1994: p.277). Margaret gains a lawful authority in the eyes of the readers when she was attributed the role of a Churchwoman and her position as a figure of

⁶ Table 1 belongs to Yasemen Özfindık Kotik (2024).

law and authority strengthens her position as a female mediator.

Apart from her reconciliation⁷ of working class and middle class Margaret's decision to support Marlborough Mill as an investor brings the northern middle class and the southern middle class together. Considering that Margaret's inheritance comes from Mr. Bell, a deceased Southern intellectual and a proprietor, one can comment that she manages to reconcile the north and the south both emotionally, because she is in love with Thornton, and financially. One can argue that the inheritance of Margaret has symbolic importance in the novel due to two reasons. The first one is it is because of this inheritance, the harmony between the working class and the middle class can be ensured and the second reason is that it gives Margaret the chance to be on equal terms with her future partner. So, the novel doesn't end with the reunion of the rich mill owner and the daughter of a clergyman but the implication is that this will be a relationship of mutual interests and financial interdependence. Margaret, from the very beginning to the end of the novel, weaves her web of relations in such a way that in the end, interdependence, both in domestic and public spheres, is inevitable as can be seen in the illustration below.

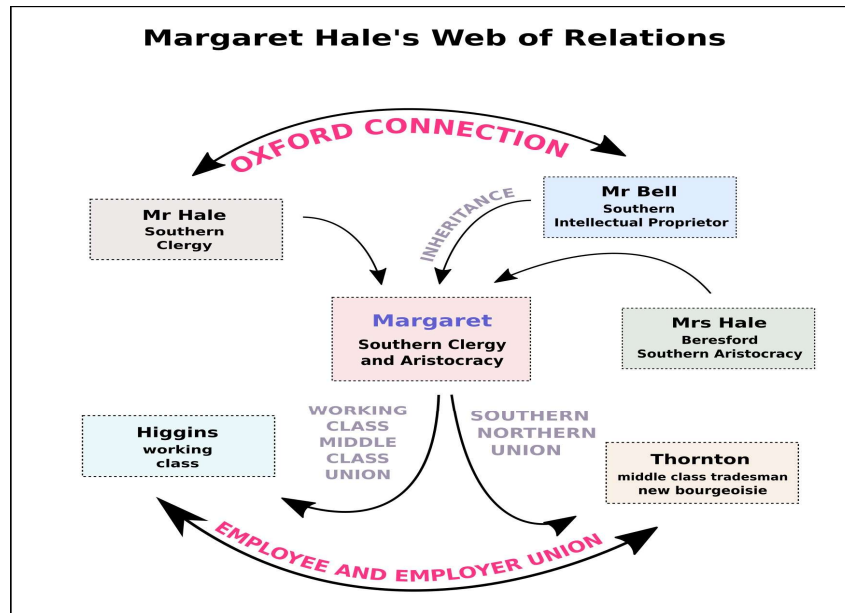


Figure 1: Margaret Hale's web of relations⁸

Mentioning the web of relations Margaret Hale has in the novel, it should be noted that her relation to Henry Lennox, Captain Lennox's brother and a lawyer, is not given in Figure 2, not because of its insignificance but because the presence of Henry Lennox at the beginning of the novel and his reappearance towards the end deserve special attention from the reader as the only character who has an education and career in law. In Chapter 1, when Margaret is assigned to present the expensive Indian shawls to the ladies by her aunt, Henry Lennox comments what Margaret does is quite different that practicing the "real true law business" while the ladies are playing with shawls and in a way boasts about

⁷ Brooks comments in her dissertation (1985) that "the reconciliation theme, is based strongly on her Unitarian beliefs, and it is this consistent moral attitude that establishes a unifying theme throughout Mrs. Gaskell's major works" ("The Heart of Elizabeth Gaskell: The Unitarian Spirit").

⁸ Figure 1 belongs to Yasemen Özfindık Kotik (2024).

his knowledge in “drawing up settlements”:

Well, I suppose you are all in the depths of business – ladies' business, I mean. Very different to my business, which is the real true law business. Playing with shawls is very different work to drawing up settlements.

Ah, I knew how you would be amused to find us all so occupied in admiring finery. But really Indian shawls are very perfect things of their kind. (Gaskell, 1994: p. 6)

In fact, Henry Lennox's ideas reflect the common belief and practice that legal matters cannot be the concern of women because they don't have the knowledge and capacity to be involved in men's business. As Sugarman states, “the Inns of Court and the law societies were masculine sanctuaries whose rituals, rhetoric, discipline, sense of social hierarchy, and secrecy marginalized women (1993: p. 297). However, it is quite ironic that although Henry Lennox considers he is dealing with “the real true law business” it is not him but Margaret that the readers see in actual law practice. It is Margaret who speaks up, defends the rights of the under-privileged, and applies different methods of mediation to solve the conflict between Mr. Thornton and his workers. Here, one remembers Dunlop's words: “fiction does present the reader alternative visions of the world, including the legal order. The reader participates in these alternative visions during the act of reading and permits them to comment on her own world” (1991: p. 70). Gaskell's placement of Henry Lennox and Margaret Hale characters in a drawing room in London in 19th century and making them talk about law in domestic sphere makes the reader ask questions and comment on the role of women in mediation and law by dragging the readers out of the London drawing room and abruptly dropping them among mills, terrible working conditions, safety regulations, long working hours and strikes. Published in 1855, *North and South* is the outcome of a series of laws passed in the British parliament such as 1844 Factories Act introducing safety regulations in factories, 1847 Ten Hours Act limiting working hours of women and young people aged 13-18 to 10 hours, and 1850 Coal Mines Inspection Act (“Key dates-UK Parliament” 2024). It is for that reason it is not a coincidence that Thornton and Margaret argue about 10 hours of working and Thornton makes it clear that as long as the workers obey the working hours they are free to do what they want because he is not concerned with their lives, living conditions and troubles but their work as hands of industry.

Conclusion

As a consequence, through employing facilitative, evaluative and transformative styles, Margaret Hale acts as a mediator in Gaskell's *North and South*. Margaret Hale is given the role of a mediator in a way a lawyer, the readers are given the position of a literary judge analyzing the “three aspects of literary imagination which are “qualitative differences, individual separateness, and appropriately constrained emotion” (Nussbaum, 1995: pp. 1480-1481). Her physical as well as emotional journey from the South to the North is a metaphor for an industrial change that mid-19th century goes through and therefore Margaret turns out to be the spokesperson of Gaskell who outcries that there is a way to create a society in harmony and unity despite all the differences and disputes. In other words, “resolution is found not through a partisan victory to establish hierarchical order, but in an acknowledgement of mutual respect, dependence, and intertwined destiny” (Gans, 2010: p. 1). In Gaskell's world of 19th century Britain, social change cannot be ignored anymore and the solution offered by the author is creating a web of relations both socially and economically as seen in Margaret Hale and realizing that interdependence is inevitable to survive in the economy politics of 19th century Britain.

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