

- 2) скудное количество примеров функционирования лексем в устном и письменном дискурсе;
- 3) недостаточно систематизированное обозначение грамматических помет.

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ELIZABETH GASKELL AND THE POLITICAL 'ME' OF HER PERSONALITY (exploring Elizabeth Gaskell as a political fiction writer)

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В современном литературоведении наблюдается интерес к рассмотрению и переоценке романа Викторианской эпохи. Работы Элизабет Гаскелл, достойного представителя этого времени, претерпели критический подход с точки зрения исследования разнообразия литературной личности писательницы в социальном ракурсе. Тем не менее, ответ на вопрос об отнесении определенных романов Элизабет Гаскелл к разряду политических остается до конца не раскрытым. В данной статье мы проводим общий критический анализ литературоведческих и биографических работ по Элизабет Гаскелл и обозначаем ее как писательницу в жанре политического романа. В конце статьи мы приводим дальнейшие перспективы исследования политической позиции Элизабет Гаскелл.

Ключевые слова: политический роман, критическая переоценка, жанр, художественная литература, политическая экономика, литературная критика, консервативно-либеральная концепция.

Victorian literature has been given considerable re-evaluation in modern literary criticism. Namely, the works of its renowned representative Elizabeth Gaskell have undergone assessment that tends to explore the author's versatile personality under a social focus. At the same time, the issue of addressing Elizabeth Gaskell to political fiction domain remains ambiguous. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of literary critical and biographical essays on Elizabeth Gaskell to define her as a political fiction writer, and dwells upon the prospects of further research of her political philosophies.

Key words: political fiction, re-evaluation, genre, novel, political economy, literary criticism, conservative-liberal attitude.

Elizabeth Gaskell (nee Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson) clearly stands out “in the double guise of a dove and an eagle” [18;7] in the history of Victorian prose, attracting attention of critics and scholars who consider and analyze her works from different perspectives – social, political, economic, domestic, sensational. The conflict of identity is an important element of her fiction [4], the demands of her characters coming from inner debates or moral dilemmas. She was born in 1810 to Unitarian “politically progressive and theologically liberal” [10] parents and her religion definitely emphasized her perception of what obligations in family or society should be. In 1832 Elizabeth married William Gaskell, the Unitarian minister, and they moved to Manchester – a “city of contrasts” and centre for Chartist representations, as well as scientific and literary activity.

The Gaskells' first literary work was a jointly composed poem ‘Sketches among the Poor’, published in Blackwood’s Magazine in 1837 [10]. By the early 1960 Gaskell was “... a well-established, well-regarded author”, and developed strong connections with other women writers (Mary Howitt, Anna Jameson and others, literary friendship with Charlotte Bronte), the trait of friendship and importance of good relations being hold throughout her fiction: “Gaskell’s communicative model for successful human relations involves dialogue; the sharing of perspectives. To this end, her own fictional prose is marked, like her letters, with relaxed, conversational intimacy” [4; 6–7]. Mrs. Gaskell died suddenly at 55, with her short stories and novels attracting attention as “social problem” works, and those of a woman writer. At the same time, Gaskell’s writings leave much food for thought and interpretation, analysis and research, demanding the reader to bring further conclusions and revelations on her literary technique and personality. As Kate Flint has noticed: “The ultimate authority, in Gaskell’s work, is that which readers are invited to develop for themselves” [4; 10].

Critical re-evaluation of Gaskell’s fiction “with a new eye” is important to answer the questions that appear when her works are considered under a new and rather ambivalent socio-political angle: are they (Gaskell’s novels) primarily about “social problems, or do they focus more upon the situations of their heroines [19; 7]”?

My purpose in this article is to characterize Elizabeth Gaskell as a political fiction writer based on the literary criticism, studies and research on her biography and literary heritage. I proceed to regard “Mary Barton” as an example of Gaskell’s political fiction novels. I also note towards the end to the importance and prospects of exploration of Elizabeth Gaskell’s social and political attitude, namely her conservative or(and) liberal position that can be explored through the analysis of her language and conceptual phenomena.

The research of Elizabeth Gaskell’s identity is a topical issue, whereas her discovery and re-discovery means dealing with a series of “selves” throughout her development as a novelist. Gaskell herself was “haunted” by her “many mes”, trying desperately to reconcile and harmonize them throughout her life: “I have a great number of [mes] and that’s a plague. One of my *mes*, is, I believe, a true Christian – (only people call her socialist and communist), another one of my *mes* is a wife and a mother ... Now that’s my “social” *self* I suppose.

Then again I've another self with a full taste for beauty and convenience whh [which] is pleased on its own account. How am I to reconcile all these warring members?" [8].

But where does Gaskell's political "me" stand in the realm of her personality? Here the question of Gaskell's political conservative-liberal mindset, as we see it, remains open due to the complexity of modern versus her epoch perception of what such philosophies as conservatism and liberalism can signify. On the one hand, Mrs. Gaskell was placed alongside Dickens and Disraeli (Sybil) in the conservative row, mainly because she, as Koustinoudi states: "... did embody in her work many of the conservative (by to-day's Western standards) cultural values of her era, which conferred upon her the nomination of "Mrs. Gaskell", the one that Linda Hughes and Michael Lund claim typified her "as a voice of Victorian convention" [15; 12].

Alternatively, a mode for a new 1977 approach to Gaskell's literary heritage allowed John Lucas in "The Literature of Change" to discover a "marvelously anarchic force at work in [her] fiction" [15; 13], thus placing Gaskell among revolutionary and progressive authors. Susan Johnston regarded Gaskell's political fiction as a display of the foundation of the liberal state, the domestic sphere being the basis of the liberal polity [14; 10].

Still, the ambitious and ambiguous ideological dimension of Gaskell's political novels puts forward the issue of their deeper analysis. For example, in the introduction to "Mary Barton" Macdonald Daly points to the duality of its political impact: "Present-day liberalism seeks to persuade us that capitalism is the ultimate stage of economic development; much contemporary conservatism relies on Christianity as an ideological buttress. The durability of Gaskell's novel may be a sign that it is still considered a potential means of fostering liberal/conservative consciousness" [7; XXVII-XXVIII].

We believe it will not be entirely wrong to place Elizabeth Gaskell in the realm of liberal writers, but the issue of her 'conservative' mindset, its scope and place deserves to be explored.

Elizabeth Gaskell as a political fiction writer

Elizabeth Gaskell is often referred to as a 'social explorer', her writings being labeled as "industrial" (Williams), "social problem" (Guy, Cazamian), "domestic" (Armstrong), "condition of England novels" (Carlyle), "political novel" (Yeazell), "provincial novel" (Craik), "regional novel" (Duncan) "sensational novel" (Radford), and classified as "political fiction" (Johnston), "social fiction" (Bodenheimer), and even "ghostly fiction" (Dalby) and "motherly fiction" (Showalter) – the terms generally used to refer to British fiction written in 1840-1850 and describing social, economic and political problems in society.

Josephine M. Guy in her work "The Victorian Social-Problem Novel. The Market, the Individual and Communal Life" (1996) expands on social-problem or industrial novels by subdividing them into three categories ("political", "contextualist" and "new historicist" novels), which are united in an "attempt to explain social-problem novels in terms of the historical circumstances which produce them" [11; 5–7]. Here we are interested to consider the first category that is exemplified, among others, by Gaskell's "Mary Barton". Guy goes on arguing that the notion of "political" is influenced by a Marxist view of history where all historical events "are seen to be shaped by a particular story of economic alienation and class struggle". According to the scholar, political processes can underlie fictional representations, which places individual fiction works "in terms of their use or anticipation of the political categories of Marxism" [11; 6].

While applying some of the ready-made labels to Gaskell's novels, we shall regard her as a *political fiction writer*, assuming *political fiction* as a *subgenre of fiction that deals with socio-political (parliament, government, administration, social arrangements) plot and characters, and finds a social and political response with the readers* (Speare 1966, Harvie 1991, Johnston 2001, Fielding 2012).

Political fiction does not appear from nowhere, and the author should be influenced by a certain political, socio-economic and literary context. Gaskell started her career as a novelist in 1840-s, her genre being popular, as Ian Watt has noticed in "The rise of the novel" (1957) due to "... a number of socio-political and cultural factors, such as the gradual increase of literary rates among the population, the establishment of the middle classes, the

rise of capitalism and individualism, but also an increase in female authorship, and, particularly, female readership" [15;15].

Writing is determined by history [21; 7], and literature appears "... not by magic, but by a real labour of production ... in determinate conditions" [17;67-68]. The genre of a novel that Elizabeth Gaskell adhered to is inclusive in its character – it can incorporate poetry and philosophy [16;64], and is able to encompass thought and politics without depriving them of sense and influence, the distinctive feature of Gaskell's political writings.

Actually, how far could Elizabeth Gaskell go in the domain of politics? And could she be criticized (if we support her publisher Edward Chapman), for the naivety of her novels and ignorance of 'large' political issues? First of all, in whatever way Mrs. Gaskell's education, background (her father William Stevenson wrote articles on political economy and education which "must have influenced his daughter" [21; 16], contacts with feminist authors (e.g. Anna Jameson, Caroline Norton) and such political writers and social campaigners as Thomas Carlyle, Edwin Chadwick and Thomas Southwood Smith [11;143] couldn't help predetermining the political orientation of her novels (where, as we shall argue later, her pictures of family life conceptualize political relations).

Although not a prominent public figure of her time, Elizabeth Gaskell is part and parcel of politics – political issues are discussed in her "Round the sofa", where the women argue about social life and politics [21; 27], highlighted in "Mary Barton", "North and South", and finalized in "Wife and Daughters", the novel that showed her as a classic Realist [21].

In the introduction to "Mary Barton" Gaskell wrote a curious statement that perplexed some of her analysts and biographers: that she "know(s) nothing of Political Economy", or the theories of trade" [7; xxxvi], the sentence that Josephine M. Guy calls "one of the best-known confessions of ignorance in literary history". The consequence was such that some readers challenged her knowledge of political issues and therefore advocated to shift the focus of her novel from political and economic to domestic and sensational. Gaskell was subject to critique for reverting from the political plot to "cosy romance", or as John Lucas defines it in his essay "Mrs. Gaskell and Brotherhood" (1966) – for "the melodramatic devices" that push realism aside.

Gaskell's seemingly naïve 'message' not only provoked arguments, but demanded a deeper look into her ambiguous political 'me'. In her book "The Victorian Social Problem Novel: The Market, the Individual and Communal Life" Guy completely challenges the writer's departure from politics, calling Gaskell's 'confession' of political insufficient awareness (together with "the modern reader") a disingenuous attempt to "distance herself from political economy" [11; 73], and goes on defending Gaskell's political knowledge with two main arguments: that Gaskell might have felt unequal to the task of arguing about political economic theory (which is 'perfectly understandable'), and secondly, that Gaskell might have been making a creative decision: "She may simply have judged that this kind of intellectual seriousness was out of place in a novel which drew heavily on elements of melodrama and romance" [11; 73]. This idea of deliberate ambiguity is supported by Jenny Uglow, who states that Gaskell's confessions of intellectual modesty are to be distrusted as the writer's disclaimer was 'deliberately' targeted at distancing "herself from Harriet Martineau and other professional experts" on political economy. Gaskell thus tried to distinguish herself from thinking about certain economic issues in a particular way, rather than from political economy on the whole. Her emphasis on morality was "... a way of engaging with it" [11; 140], and connecting morality to politics.

Gaskell's novels, as we see it, are political in character, even in seemingly isolated from politics scenes of family life, since by showing relationships between the family members, family delights and challenges, she represented family as an important integrated cell of a complex political system, – "family as a political force" (Lansbury, 1975; Stoneman, 2006). Politics is integrated and interwoven in her writings, hidden beneath the seemingly 'apolitical' issues – a trait understandable and proper to a political fiction woman writer, if we consider the social limits for women writers of her time. Another example is

“Wives and Daughters” (1864), where under the reference to natural history Gaskell guides individuals to rational choices.

Susan Johnston in “Women and Domestic Experience in Victorian Political Fiction” (2001) regards such scholars as Locke and Wollstonecraft and concludes that “private” is inseparable from “political”, where, coming from the household, the liberal “self” develops the ability to consent to contracts and consequently make a transition from despotism to a liberal state. Household, according to Johnston, “does not exist separately from or in opposition to the public, political and economic domains, but rather is the foundation on which liberalism conceives them” [14; 4]. Johnston goes on saying that the foregrounding of emotion in Victorian novels “is a profoundly political gesture” [14; 86].

Gaskell’s political fiction assumes the role of political academic writings, the effect of her novels and their socio-political content satisfying the requirements of proper political prose – i.e. identify the problems and suggest the solutions. Here, the problems set by Victorian writers in general (and Gaskell in particular) were seen to have “individual causes”, where solutions demanded “changes in the actions and beliefs of individuals” [11; 73].

Elizabeth Gaskell breaks down barriers between classes, genders, individuals and intellectual disciplines [4], she saturates her plot with pictures of strikes, depicts unemployment and trade cycles [11]. Gaskell’s characters intervene in riots, demand rights and power, challenge ideologies, overall, do everything possible to achieve “... the sense of self-worth which is the prerequisite for political action; they express and take responsibility for judgment” [9; 507; 21; 135]. What is specific about her political novels, Gaskell considers financial transaction, and regards the notion of subsistence which is not only an economic issue (according to political economists) but is instead “a moral and political one” [11; 160]. With Gaskell social and domestic are intertwined with political, which mirrors Susan Johnston’s argument that “... the political domain is the domain of social arrangements, from which groups of selves draw their rights and privileges” [14; 14]. Politics encompasses laws, regulations and conventions that start from the individual, enter the communal, get to the stance of distribution and consequently to the access to power. Thus “the intimate space of the household” (Johnston) depicted in the novels of Gaskell exists in a close union with the political spheres of life. Gaskell’s “political naivety” and the amalgam of domestic life and politics are not of female ignorance, but a true display of “male-stream tradition of pre-Marxist revolt” [21; 56].

“Mary Barton”

“Mary Barton” is often called the primary example novel of the genre [10], with the subject matter of class relations, and the proper political and economic orientation [21; 45].

The novel was written in 1848, and starts with the reaction of John Barton to the social and economic conditions of his country. Thus Gaskell establishes the context on which the desperate working man might turn to Chartism. Gaskell’s reference to this issue is subject to critique, since the writer, as Kate Flint has noticed, characterizes Chartists as “wild and visionary” and does not spell out the main points of Chartism [4; 13–14]. Flint argues that the novel rather aims to awaken compassion and sympathy in the heart of the reader, than raises direct political solutions. However, following P. Stoneman (2006), S. Johnston (2001), B.L. Harman (1998), J.M. Guy (1996), and C. Gallagher (1995) we argue for the political focus of “Mary Barton”, and primarily because it is developed round two important institutions – of a working class and the middle class, highlighting such topical issues as working women, class relations, legislation, ideology. The second part of the novel deals more with romance and domestic events, but the two parts of the plot are interconnected as democratic and domestic sources of power [4], giving voice to those denied in Victorian society.

Christopher Harvie in his fundamental study “The Centre of Things. Political Fiction in Britain from Disraeli to the Present” (1991) primarily argues for the presence of a parliament in the novel to fall in the category of political fiction; later in his work however he allows for the plot to contain elements of parliamentarianism. “Mary Barton” fits into political fiction even under this demanding criterion, with Chartist parliamentarianism embodied into the main plot. In “Mary Barton” we see the so-called “performative politics” – “a politics [which] though it never occupies the center of the stage, acts upon this discourse [3; 263].

Despite Gaskell's rather ambiguous confession of ignorance at the beginning of the novel, "Mary Barton" is a valuable political fiction writing, representing the author "all too knowledgeable of political economy". Indeed, as Elizabeth Guy argues, "Mary Barton" is absorbed by economics or 'theories of trade' nearly "to the point of obsession", the economic and the moral are inseparable in the novel, and a central theme here is "the attempt to define how each can be placed in a proper relationship to the other" [11; 141]. Macdonald Daly in the introduction to "Mary Barton" edition calls Gaskell's renunciation of political economy "almost certainly a ploy", calling the novel "calculatedly political", "...a historical intervention in the cause of counter-revolution", thus referring to the European revolutions of 1848 [7; xv-xvii].

What is interesting in "Mary Barton" according to Stoneman, is that the novel "offers a critique of confrontational politics", seeing family as a mechanism that reproduces, and consequently influences, class attitudes – it is the novel that exposes how "the personal becomes the political" [21; 46].

Thus, the political plot of "Mary Barton" and the social and political disturbances contained in the novel allow us to attribute it to the class of political fiction.

Influence and response

Political fiction commonly intends to influence or change the opinions of the readers, thus playing an important role in the state political and social life. The effect to readers' socio-political thinking might be long-term or hardly predictable, as, for example, in the 1950-s Victorian social problem novels drew the attention of the reading public, emphasizing the "topicality of Victorian novels in general" [11;4-5]. By emphasizing the need to contract and share Gaskell becomes a guide to political (predominantly liberal) values coming from the household to public and political domains.

Another issue is an active perception of her writings by critics and political activists. According to Patsy Stoneman, Mrs. Gaskell's two major political novels "Mary Barton" and "North and South" were "... taken up by the Marxist critics Raymond Williams and Arnold Kettle, and in "The Industrial Novels" (Williams, 1958), and "The Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel" (Kettle, 1958), Elizabeth Gaskell is bracketed with Disraeli, Kingsley and the Dickens of "Hard Times" as a novelist who 'provide[s] some of the most vivid descriptions of life in an unsettled industrial society' [22;99]" [21;3]. An analyst Catherine Gallagher in "The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832–1867 (1985) argues that Gaskell "... intertwine[s] her social and familial themes and plots so thoroughly that the very conventional resolution of the novel's love plot appears to be a partial solution to industrial social problems" [21; 170]. Rosemarie Bodenheimer's book, "The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction" (1988) regards Gaskell's social-problem novels together with Charles Dickens's, George Elliot's and other writings, to conclude that "North and South" "... creates a heroine whose life is responsibly and directly entangled with the male world of industrial politics ...". She proceeds by arguing that Gaskell's view of social government "... took fictional shape as a challenge to the assumptions of both paternalism and laissez-faire" [1; 53–55]. Kate Flint (1995) finalizes her study of Elizabeth Gaskell by claiming that the writer has been "illuminatingly placed" ... within a tradition of women who take on board public themes" [4; 61].

The effect of Gaskell's prose is suggestive for her time, as well as for future generations. Daly and Rose refer to the contribution of "Mary Barton" to the neutralization of the conflict emerging from the separation of two social classes – the rich and the poor. The novel was not an original ideological contribution, but "the most accessible and readily consumed one", the fact that explains why a Derbyshire calico printer and later an MP for Carlisle Edmund Potter "bought copies of the book ["Mary Barton"] for his workers, much to Gaskell's delight. It may also explain why it remains a staple element of English literature syllabuses a century and a half later" [7; xix].

Gaskell encouraged women writers not only in her home state, but also abroad – she was highly influential in the USA, as her novels inspired Rebecca Harding Davies (she was one of the first to regard the industrial underclass in her "Life in the Iron Mills", 1861), and impressed Harriett Beecher Stowe, the famous author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852),

which allowed for literary scholars to drive the corresponding parallels: “Uncle Tom’s Cabin did for American slaves what Mary Barton did for English wage-slaves” [10;9].

There is a resurgence of interest to Gaskell (Chapple, Stoneman, Johnston). Notably, Stoneman carried out an extensive research of the issue, which resulted in her citing critical biographies and editions on Elizabeth Gaskell by Jenny Uglow (1993), J.A.V. Chapple and Anita C. Wilson (1996), Shirley Foster (2002), and many other. In 1991 Elizabeth Gaskell was awarded the dignity of a volume in edited by Angus Easson “Critical Heritage” series. Gaskell’s novel attract attention of linguists and psychoanalysts (Margaret Homan, 1986; Deanna L. Davies, 1992), defining Gaskell as a feminist prototype [21; 158–161]. Stoneman refers to the studies of Barbara Thaden (1997) to recognize the radical effects of the Victorian writers on the formation of new ideology, and considers Nancy Chodorow’s (1968) ideas on how women can become the “progressive force” within “historical developments”. Overall, Stoneman’s writings on Elizabeth Gaskell make her book (if we quote John Kucich, 1990) “the most thorough reading to date of the relation between class and gender in Gaskell’s works” [21; 165–168].

Conclusion

Elizabeth Gaskell definitely left a significant mark in the literary history. Conventionally accepted as a Victorian woman novelist, she comprises a well-established quality of a political fiction writer, the ‘me’ she refused to openly acclaim, but as we understand, wished her readers to reveal on their own, and get her message. Here we join Felicia Bonaparte, who in her work “The Gypsy-Bachelor of Manchester: the Life of Mrs. Gaskell’s Demon (1992) states that “Mrs. Gaskell” was a constructed identity behind which the ‘real’ Elizabeth Gaskell, consciously or unconsciously, hidden” [4; 66]. Gaskell presented family life as a role model for political relations, the political system which she wanted to see contracting and reconciling, rather than closing and deducting. By bringing the discussions of poverty to the homes of her various readers, she thus drew attention to political and social issues, its outcome to be seen and reconsidered even in modern times.

The effect of Gaskell’s writings is still to be heard, for her novels as we see it, will be in demand for any society in transformation, and for any individual who aspires for external change that starts with his own self.

Gaskell no longer needs political condescension; she has her say in political and public life, showing that the health of the polity is strongly dependent on domestic fiction (Stoneman, Johnston). Her value as a political fiction writer lies in the fact that by acknowledging the link between economic policy and social unrest, she tries to reconcile in her novels morality, politics and economics. Thus Gaskell’s political fiction predetermines the streamline for political trends in society, the health of the nation and its resistance to anomaly and despotism. Gaskell’s own socio-political attitude is not that overt, for she was brought up in a double track of conservative ideals of women’s role of a caring mother, and liberal Christian.

“Mary Barton” is a metaphor for both the impossible and possible world” [18; 10], the statement that testifies to the necessity to reveal the linguistic and conceptual features of Gaskell’s novels. Will Gaskell be able to challenge the conservative “strict father” protective image, so abided by Dickens and Disraeli, since she offered the reader to re-evaluate the concept of “paternalism” in politics, which in itself presents a novelty to formal conservative discourse? This is the question still necessary to be explored. Gaskell’s political novels are able to provide matrix for the remodeling of her political ‘me’, and give a key to the revelation of her personality.

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КАТЕГОРИЯ СТЕПЕНИ СРАВНЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВЕННЫХ ИМЕН ПРИЛАГАТЕЛЬНЫХ В ИНГУШСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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В статье представлен новый взгляд на категорию степени сравнения имен прилагательных в ингушском языке. В статье с точки зрения теории функциональной семантики автором устанавливаются четыре степени сравнения для ингушских прилагательных: позитив, компаратив, суперлатив (элатив), экватив.

Ключевые слова: степень сравнения, позитив, компаратив, элатив, суперлатив, экватив.