



## **FEMALE AUTARCHY IN ELIZABETH GASKELL'S NORTH and SOUTH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Elizabeth Gaskell was a feminist writer whose fame was clouded by an eminent fiction tragedian Thomas Hardy, even though she was darkened, her writings made her bright. The major reason was her thematic ideas based on social implications and difficulties faced by the people of British especially who were worked in Manchester town. In the mean while she didn't failed to reveal her identity that is feminist prospective which was properly established in her novel North and South. North and South is the novel which portrays the opposition and segregation of the society into two North and South lines, especially in the eighty years between the American Revolution and the Civil War. These are economically, politically and culturally different in two places. While the North become an industrial and manufacturing powerhouse deeply affected by social reform movements. The South people are going to work in North. This novel explores Elizabeth Gaskell's treatment of female autarchy through the character of Margaret Hale. It also exemplifies the dichotomy of people's class especially the way of life standard.*

**Key words:** *Implications segregation dichotomy autarchy*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The term 'autarchy' means quality of self-determined which was initially denied to women of all nations while they have no power to decide their life path but today this situation was totally changed but even today it is hard to find the self determination among the women in the most backward society in many countries. Here this novel exemplarily picturises the importance of women empowerment and also the dichotomy of people's class. As author's impact also revealed in her writings due to her historical background, she gave the life made characters which they blended with more courage, feelings and emotions.



*North and South* reflects female autarchy though the character of Margaret Hale. Even though she is a young lady, she takes the decision lonely with courage and how to solve all the problems in an easy manner. She is pride but the decision taken by her will be correct. Gaskell manipulated the universal theme differently in her novel *North and South*. Generally people are displaced and will be struggled with that place. But Margaret Hale moves from South to North. She tackles all the problems in new place with courage.

The female autarchy exposed in many places though reflection of the character Margaret Hale. In North people lead a machine life and lose the nature and aesthetic sense. The first meet between Margaret and Mrs. Thornton was a clash where their dispute was between the displacements from their native to non-native Margaret supports her hometown. Normally, when female meet male at the first time they struggle to speak with them. But in the first encounter itself she proved herself more determined and deserved because of her argument. Gaskell again took her powerful weapon feminism to exemplify female autarchy by two female characters named Margaret Hale in South and Mrs. Thornton in North where both of them never lose their autarchy in any situation.

Elizabeth Gaskell entitled this novel *North and South* as she not only portrays the female experiences but also she emerges with self-determined character especially female protagonist named Margaret Hale. Mr. Henry Lennox kept a proposal before Margaret who was the sibling of Captain Lennox. His great love on Margaret and the way he opens the heart towards Margaret made her shocked and said that she has no desire for anything more than friendship and refused him. Margaret did not accept his proposal. In that time, she exposed her determination and also her decision is clear which didn't hurt him. She is a woman exposed her kind hearted. Even though, she is a younger girl who supposed to underneath his proposal, but she had overthrown the proposal and shows her maturity.

Mr. Hale is a father of Margaret. He resigned his profession in parish and move to Milton in the Industrial North. Mr. Hale did not have that much of courage to say to his wife Mrs. Hale about departure. Margaret proved her determination in their situation. Women are basically a hard character who they won't forget anything and remains all the things what was happened in their lives which honestly revealed their self-determination of the character. Mrs. Hale and her daughter attached to their native place. Women would always be kind hearted to all living and non-living things. They cannot adopt their situation but they are easily changed their attitude. Margaret is a stronger woman even though she has a woman's quality. She was nineteen years old but her maturity was beyond the knowledge and experienced girl. Teenage girls normally having some innocence but here Margaret deals all the matter analysis before thinks all the sides. She had more self-confidence and self-realization.

Margaret and Mr. Hale want to meet John Thornton who was wealthy manager of a cotton mill and this man through whom. Mr. Hale started to earn money and lead life privacy as a tutor. John Thornton in a first sight impressed with Margaret's beauty. Even though he likes Margaret but did not give up his value of city. Mr. Thornton stated value of city life and also feels proud where he belonged to a town. In that city so many people lead their life as



workers because with the help of industrial works they had an opportunity to save their family as How the honey bee search a flower to suck honey likewise the people move to city for survived their life.

Mr. Thornton again explained about the city life towards Margaret. He said that his stand on circumstances and situation recovered only with the help of his mother. She was like a mentor to his son. Women handle the all the situation easily. They can lead the family with more money 5000 rupees or even with 500 rupees they can handles and manage all critical situations. Mr. Thornton week by week earned fifteen shillings and his mother managed this amount regularly. His mother taught him the self-confidence. Now, he is a mill owner no one says merits at the time. In that time he up righted him as a wealthy and good man in the society but the only reason was his hard work and back bone on his mother.

At the last Mr. Thornton falls in love with Margaret. She coldly refused his proposal. First he hated her and criticized her character but she had saved the life at the time only admire her. Loves didn't come from the pathetic condition. It had some feelings each one can understand that feelings. John said his love at the time she had taken some time. In those days women decided things only with the help of man but she decided herself. Mrs. Thornton consoled her son difference between the loves. Mother's love given by God and the girls' love are like a smoke. This love only gives some pleasure and immediately goes to the place. "Mother's love is given by God, John. It holds fast forever and ever. A girl's love is like a puff of smoke – it changes with every wind". (NS 253)

As women, Margaret managed and supported both roles. She had more responsibilities in the society as well as she talked with care of their mother in home. Margaret played two roles in a correct path. This is special character for women they have this character so they can do many roles in their life. Suddenly her mother became dead where she consoled of her father and brother away their sadness. She planned the funeral of Mrs. Hale. She is a female but she has followed the practical way. Margaret proved female console and solve the men's problem. Gaskell highly point out this scene those days that means nineteenth century women are live in restriction for men. In this novel of Margaret walks in mid night she is brave girl and also has self-determination. First her father does not accept company with her brother. She explains her brevity and her freedom. At the story ends Mr. Thornton and Margaret open their heart and share their loves.

Margaret character compare to the precious object which means diamond. The diamond comes from the coal. It is a black colour in the coal hide in the earth waiting for a long time after that we get a diamond. Diamond has gnarled in outside but it is a precious and most valuable things. Likewise, Margaret has rasping in an outside of the character but inside of the mind. She is a kind- hearted and helps to others. Her decisions go in a correct path. At last the people know about her character.

## CONCLUSION

According to Gaskell she describes the female autarchy in nineteenth century which changed their life style. The ideal view of the place, women being at home and not in the



factories one that created by the social and economic demands of the period. In those days woman has a duty to be perfect house wife and though this she would be able to achieve true happiness. But it is changed by the nineteenth century. Gaskell may have purposefully played down the role of the female worker to fit in more especially what was expected by her middle class readers' feelings that the novel would have appealed more and more been successful. Women take their rights from expose the female autarchy. Margaret's self – discovery of her place may have been explored the female autarchy. In this novel the important factors which have a power to decide female autarchy by two characters. Gaskell shows the real fact of the female situation and moreover how to decide in their important decision with female autarchy. The real success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which they have overcome.

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