

【論文】

The Absolute Interpretation of *Mary Barton*¹

大野 龍 浩

Tatsuhiko OHNO

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to surmise the absolute interpretation of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* through the statistical analysis of the structure of the text, the best objective means. The theoretical backbone of the argument is intentionalist hermeneutics' distinction of the author construct (the creator of a text which emerges out of careful reading of the text) from the historical author (the actual agent who produces a text), and of the textual meaning (immutable once a text is produced) from the textual significance (changeable even after its production, thus allows a plurality of readings). The absolute interpretation, accordingly, is the interpretation intended by the author construct, which is best attainable through the objective understanding of the textual meaning.

This paper casts doubt on the classical reading of *Mary Barton* as an industrial novel. Statistical analysis of the narrative structure reveals the intriguing fact that industrial factors are not a constant concern of the Gaskell construct, in contradiction to Gaskell-in-person's protestation to the opposite effect. For instance, the appearance rate of John Barton, the leading trade unionist (52.7%), is lower than his daughter Mary's (85.5%) and her lover Jem's (64.4%). This implies less focus is placed on his fight for masters' sympathy for workers than on his daughter's romance. The traditional classification of the novel into the Condition-of-England fiction might be in conflict with Gaskell construct's meaning, as it actually lies in describing a love story intermixed with an industrial story.

Key words : Absolute Interpretation, Intentionalist, Anti-Intentionalist, Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*

1. Intentionalist Absolutism

This paper is an attempt to detect the absolute interpretation of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* through the statistical analysis of the structure of a text, the best objective means for achieving this purpose.

Is there any absolute interpretation for fiction? Many people believe that there is no correct interpretation in literature, which intrinsically demands a variety of readings. If our reading represents just one of various possibilities of interpretation, however, are not our time, energy, and effort to seek it out spent in vain? Would not one like to produce "one and only one correct interpretation" (Juhl, *Interpretation* 238) if possible?

Such a view is shared by some hermeneuticists, such as E. D. Hirsch, Jr, P. D. Juhl, and William Irwin, so called "Intentionalist." They insist literature requires standard interpretation, without which it invites critical confusion. They point out two constituents of a text: "significance," which may change once it is produced, and "meaning," which does not (Hirsch 8). Textual significance allows a plurality of readings; textual meaning

represents what the author intends to communicate. In addition, intentionalists draw our attention to two types of authors: “an actual historical agent who produces a text” and “a figure we construct in interpreting that text” (Irwin, *Intentionalist Interpretation* 28). Irwin insists, “it is not the author as person with whom we are concerned but the author as a particular mental construct, the urauthor, and it is through our conception of the urauthor that we seek meaning” (*Intentionalist Interpretation* 112). Some factors unconsciously incorporated into a text by “the historical author as a person” are, in fact, of conscious insertion by “the author construct.” Accordingly, standard interpretation is the interpretation intended by the author construct, and its target is the “meaning” of his/her text.

Irwin emphasizes the possibility of absolute interpretation by observing,

The correct interpretation is, of course, the one that reproduces the meaning of the text, i.e., the author’s intended communication. [. . .] Any interpretation that exactly and completely captures the author’s intended communication would be a definitive interpretation. (*Intentionalist Interpretation* 62)

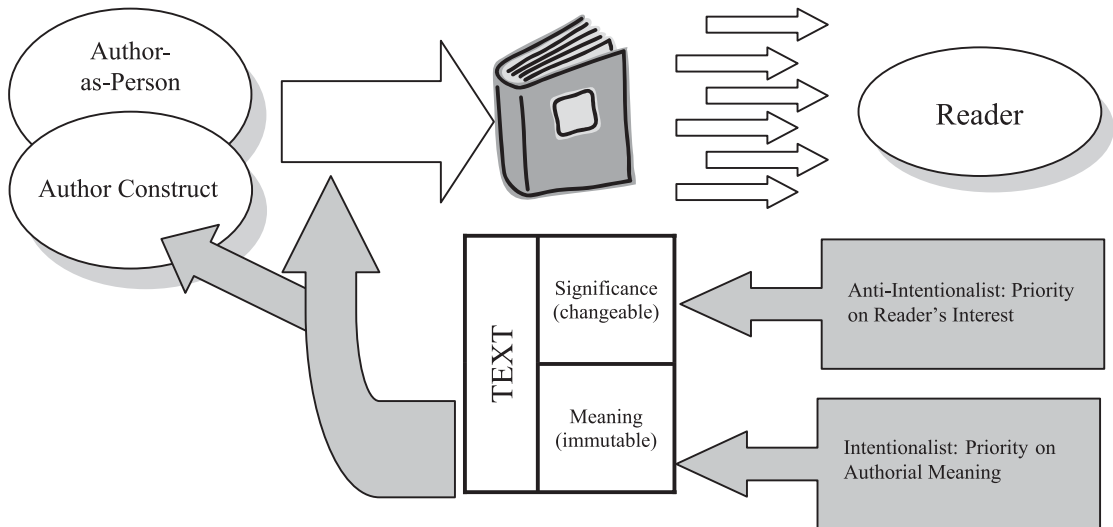


Fig.1 Intentionalist vs Anti-Intentionalist

If there is one definitive, or absolute, interpretation, then the next question is how it can be searched for. The process must be carried out by as objective a method as possible; otherwise, the interpretation discovered falls into one of many possible readings. “Criticism” can be subjective since its primary concern is to read a text out of critics’ interest. “Whereas interpretation is rigorously objective and can be judged by objective standards,” Irwin states, “criticism is less rigorously objective and can, to some extent, be judged by subjective standards” (*Intentionalist Interpretation* 118).

The most objective method for the detection of authorial meaning is probably statistical investigation into the key structural elements of fiction along with chronological inspection of the plot. The meaning of an author construct is fundamentally conveyed through structural devices within a text, as Irwin observes, “Texts act as indicators of meanings” (*Intentionalist Interpretation* 64), and “the meaning of a text is the author’s intended

communication” (*Intentionalist Interpretation* 112). Therefore, if the values of such essential formal elements as frequency of characters’ appearance, passage of time, and shift of places could be clarified through statistical quantification, the outcome should offer one of the most objective hints for identifying an author construct’s design for creation. If its validity could be proved by careful examination of the text, the authorial meaning should be detected at the highest level of accuracy.²

2. Defence of Statistical Measurement

All critical methodologies can be divided into two categories depending on critics’ stance towards authorial intention – namely whether priority is given to the readers’ strategy for understanding a text or to the authors’ for conveying their themes. Critics of the former position, or anti-intentionalists, regard a text as “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash,” and not as “a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God)” (Barthes 146). Inevitably, their criticism invites innumerable readings of a text, or “critical anarchy” (Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 60) in which diversity is welcomed as evidence of textual richness. By contrast, for critics of the latter position, sometimes called

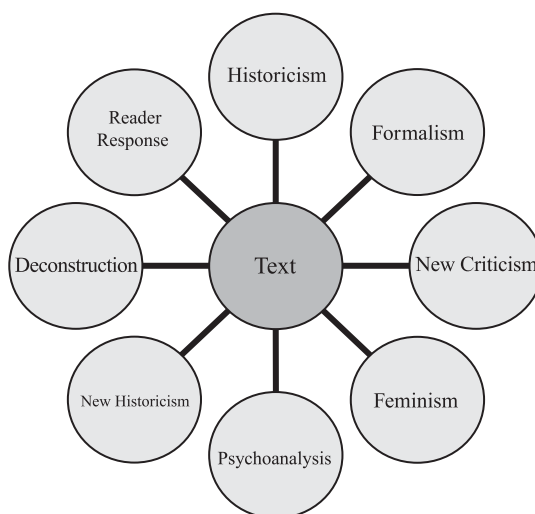


Fig.2. Critical Anarchy

intentionalists, “a text means what its author meant” (Hirsch 1), and the chaotic state of critical heterogeneity is just the outcome of moral and ethical impertinence towards authors: “If we are to be compelled to recover authorial intent it must be on ethical grounds” (Irwin, *Intentionalist Interpretation* 69). These critics stress two aspects of a text: its significance and meaning. Textual significance to the reader may vary according to time and place, and therefore could be the target of anti-intentionalists’ criticism. Textual meaning, on the other hand, remains constant once a text is produced, and this is the object of intentionalists’ interpretation. Taking intentionalist hermeneutics as its theoretical backbone, my argument proposes that chronologies and statistics are probably the most effective means for the objective identification of authorial meaning.³

Reservations will probably be expressed by anti-intentionalists and liberal humanists as to the effectiveness of my methodology. The following are summaries of some of their contentions, and my responses.

a. **“The structural elements that you are measuring are not ‘consciously’ registered by the author – indeed, the more detailed the objective measurements that you undertake become, the less likely an author is to be aware of such factors”;** **“Statistical results do not necessarily reflect authorial meaning.”** The object of my analysis is the meaning of the Gaskell construct, not of the historical Gaskell as a person. Historical authors “often misunderstand their own work and are [. . .] confused about it”; they

“truly exists outside their texts” and “have no interpretive authority over them” (Nehamas 686). Author constructs, in contrast, stay inside their texts because they “are not individuals but characters manifested or exemplified, though not depicted or described, in texts” (Nehamas 686). In other words, “an intentionalist needs an author construct because we can never even hope to ‘have’ the real historical author. All we ever have is a more or less accurate version of him as related to his text, an author construct” (Irwin, *Intentionalist Interpretation* 29). Characters’ appearance rates discovered through the statistical analysis are probably unnoticed by the real Gaskell, but fabricated by the Gaskell construct with the intention of conveying her meaning as effectively as possible.

- b. **“It is normally not particularly difficult to work out who is the protagonist of a novel. If it is, this difficulty is itself part of the structure of the novel and part of the experience of reading”;** **“Careful readers can detect who among characters appears most, without quantifying it.”** Which assertion is more convincing, the one based on critics’ insight only or the one supported by structural evidence?
- c. **“An ‘objective’ measure of the character that appears most often misses the point of the novel: when critics disagree, it is often not because one is wrong and the other right, but because the text itself offers – indeed demands – more than one interpretation.”** My measurement of characters’ appearance rates does not necessarily afford the conclusion of a dispute concerning the chief protagonist, but just offers a hint for its solution. The result of measurement must be scrutinized and supported by some other pieces of evidence. If the text demands multiple interpretations, the author construct’s meaning for the tactics should be reflected on the text’s structure (Bronson qtd. in Irwin, *Death and Resurrection* 213-14).
- d. **Mechanical categorisation of a character’s appearance as “active” or “referred” neglects the quality of his/her action, and accordingly overlooks the values of characters and actions of rare appearance.** Emphasis on the quality of an action often leads us to a subjective reading of a text. This type of reading is contributive especially to “criticism” whose object of dissection is textual “significance,” but not necessarily to “interpretation” whose principal concern is textual “meaning” (Hirsch 8, 210-11). For instance, the scene of John Barton’s reconciliation with his long-time enemy John Carson and the labourer’s ensuing death in the capitalist’s arms (*MB* 435-39) has long attracted readers’ compassion for its intensity of tension since the publication of the novel (Matus 29-30; Sharps 57-58; Wright, “Introduction” xvi). Accordingly, the industrial worker’s predicament is likely to be viewed as central, regardless of the result of the statistical survey of the novel’s design to the opposite effect. This subjectivity, according to intentionalist hermeneutics, is a characteristic of “criticism” (Irwin, *Intentionalist Interpretation* 118). The objective reading, on the other hand, makes little distinction in the quality of an action, considering every action reflects some meaning of the author construct. Statistics, in addition, divulge that some formal elements which look seemingly minor are actually not. The appearance rate of God in *Wives and Daughters*, for instance, is lowest among Gaskell’s five novels (*In Quest of Authorial Meaning* 186-87). Scrutiny of the protagonist Molly Gibson’s dialogues with other four major characters, nonetheless, reveals that 64.5% of their topics relate to Christian morality (*Elizabeth Gaskell and the Tradition of British Literature* 57). Gaskell’s emphasis on Christian ethics even in her last work would hardly be brought to light if statistical inquiry were limited only to the appearance rate of God. Thus, if research into the three fundamental formal factors – time, place, and characters – gives

no substantial hint for the author construct's meaning or the absolute interpretation, investigation into the fourth structural element (and the fifth, if necessary) shall be launched to achieve our ultimate goal. These two examples manifest that the quantification of formal elements helps readers pinpoint pivotal points of a text through an objective, bird-eye-view of it, and thus contributes to the understanding of the quality of an action in its unique way.

e. **“There are serious problems with your claims about ‘objectivity’: in particular, it is not clear that what you are doing is, in your sense, itself objective – since in fact ‘subjective’ decisions have to be made on, for example, what to focus on, the kinds of questions that one asks about a novel, how one discerns a character to be present in a scene, how one divides a novel into scenes, questions of narratorial ‘focalization,’ and so on. All these are questions of reading, which is precisely what you want to eliminate. In other words, the objectivity that you are seeking is something of an illusion, pervaded as it inevitably is by your own ‘subjective’ judgements.”** Subjective judgement is unavoidable in any scientific method of any discipline. It is rather natural that researchers choose the most effective means to achieve their goals. I choose, as the main target of my statistical analysis, characters' frequency of appearance, time sequence within the story, and shift of places, because they are fundamental structural elements without which almost all realist fiction is impossible to exist. If the investigation into the three elements gives few hints for authorial meaning, then the method will be tried on some other formal devices which I think should best reflect authorial meaning. The point is whether the result is reproducible or not. I must confess there may be some small counting errors in quantifying the elements, and that there are several scenes in which it is difficult to judge whether a character is active or not.⁴ Notwithstanding, such a case is so rare as to hardly affect the result of statistical inquiry. As long as my calculation standards are applied, almost the same results will certainly be reproduced. Therefore, statistics is probably one of the best tools to spotlight authorial intention as objectively as possible.⁵ Since the validity of the result is carefully examined through analysis of other internal and external elements, reading is not eliminated. Finally, it is highly probable in Gaskell's fiction that characters' frequency of appearance goes up in proportion to the degree of importance of their roles, as demonstrated in the subsequent discussion. This principle would hardly be discovered without statistical measurement of structural devices.

f. **Why is the quantification of structural elements effective for the discovery of author construct?** Statistics is the most objective device to comprehend the structure of a novel. Structure, including words and phrases, is the only means for the author construct to communicate its meaning. Therefore, statistical analysis of fictional form is the most effective method for detecting the meaning of the author construct.

3. *Mary Barton*: Who Is the Protagonist?

Mary Barton has long been regarded as industrial fiction.⁶ The categorization sounds reasonable, as it does touch upon the Condition-of-England problem – conflicts between masters and workers, and their reconciliation. However, the analysis of the structure of the novel must force us to question whether this reading is an accurate reflection of the intricacies of the plot of the novel and of Gaskell construct's meaning. The

statistical quantification of some key structural elements discloses the intricate interweaving of the social-problem plot with the love plot. The existence of two plots in the novel has already been pointed out by many critics (more or less arbitrarily),⁷ but it will be proven here by a more objective means. The purpose of this section is to describe the patterns of Gaskell's novel as carefully, as minutely, and as objectively as possible. Statistics, which has been used as an efficient tool for stylometric approaches,⁸ is employed as one of the most effective methods for perceiving the patterns and emphases of plot construction, and so helping the reader take a bird's-eye-view of the text, as it were, and divulging the author construct's intentional or unintentional scheme for carrying her story.

The source of statistical data is the Comprehensive Chronology (See Table 1).⁹ To obtain objective information about the three pivotal elements of the structure of realist fiction – time, place, and characters –, I first divided the story into scenes by time indicators or places for action; then, examined scene by scene if a certain character was active or not, or only referred to by other characters including the narrator, simultaneously specifying the scene length in page number of the half-page unit, so that we could know its percentage in the entire text.¹⁰ The setting for action or description was investigated for the analysis of topographical shifts. The quest for authorial meaning pursued in this paper is principally based on this device. Examination of the chronology reveals that *Mary Barton* covers eight and a half years from May 1834 to the late autumn of 1842 or 43.

		active	referred	non-appearance	dead
A: Alice's house	B: Barton's house	C: Carsons' house on Dunham Street	D: Davenport's cellar on Berry Street	GHF: Green Heys Fields	L: Legh's house
Lv: Liverpool	S: on the street	W: Wilson's house at Ancoats	J: narrator's comment on John	M: narrator's comment on Mary	N: narrator's neutral comment

Part	Chapter	Time Inferred			Scene				Place	Main Characters																				
		Year	Month (page)	Day (page)	Number.	Range	Length	Percent		God	Mary Barton	Mrs Barton	Esther	George Wilson	Jane Wilson	Jem	Alice	Will	Margaret	Job Legh	Mrs Davenport	Sally Leadbitter								
I	1	1834	5	one day(2)	1	1-3	2.5	0.54	GHF																					
					2	4-5	1.5	0.32																						
					3	5-9	4.5	0.96																						
					4	9-11	1.5	0.32																						
					5	11-12	1.5	0.32																						
	2				6	12-15	2.5	0.54	B																					
					7	15-16	2.0	0.43																						
					8	16-18	1.5	0.32																						
	3				9	18	0.5	0.11	B																					
					10	18-19	0.5	0.11																						
					11	19	0.5	0.11																						
					12	19-22	3.0	0.64																						
						13	22-26	3.5	0.75																					
						14	26-28	2.5	0.54																					
		1837	(26)																											

Table 1. The Comprehensive Chronology for *Mary Barton*

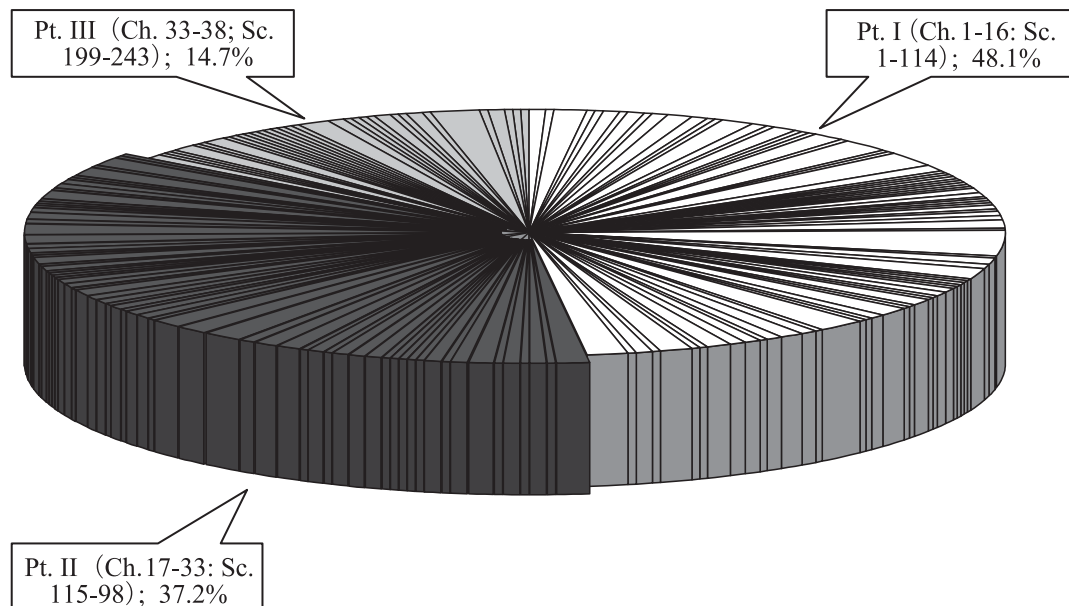


Fig. 3. Scene Percentage in *Mary Barton*

3. 1. Ternary Structure

The Comprehensive Chronology for *Mary Barton* reveals a considerable number of pages is given to Mary's six-day adventure. Accordingly, the narrative has been divided into three Parts with Mary's escapade set in the centre. "Fig. 3. Scene Percentage in *Mary Barton*" is a device composed for the visualization of this ternary structure. Part I describes rich people's lack of sympathy for the poor, artisan Jem Wilson's love for Mary, her association with Harry Carson, the rich mill owner, and her recognition of love for Jem. Part II portrays John Barton's murder of Harry Carson, Mary's frantic efforts to prove Jem's innocence, his trial, and her collapse.¹¹ Part III depicts Barton's confession of his crime, John Carson's mercy for his son's assassin, Barton's death in his arms, and Mary's marriage to Jem. The 3-D pie chart throws light on the novel's two features. First, more than one third of the story is given to the narration of Mary's six days from the 18th to the 23rd of March 1840, although the book as it stands covers eight and a half years in total; this feature is curious enough to make the reader wonder if it conceals an important key to understanding of the fundamental shape of the novel.¹² Second, the novel has two peaks – John's assassination of Harry Carson and the confirmation of Jem's innocence – where the plot displays crucial shifts from Part I to Part II and from Part II to Part III.

3. 2. Characters' Appearance Rate

The greatest problem in search of the authorial meaning for *Mary Barton* is, as will be argued in Section 3.4, the discrepancy between the historical author's notion of her protagonist and the structural implication of the chief protagonist.

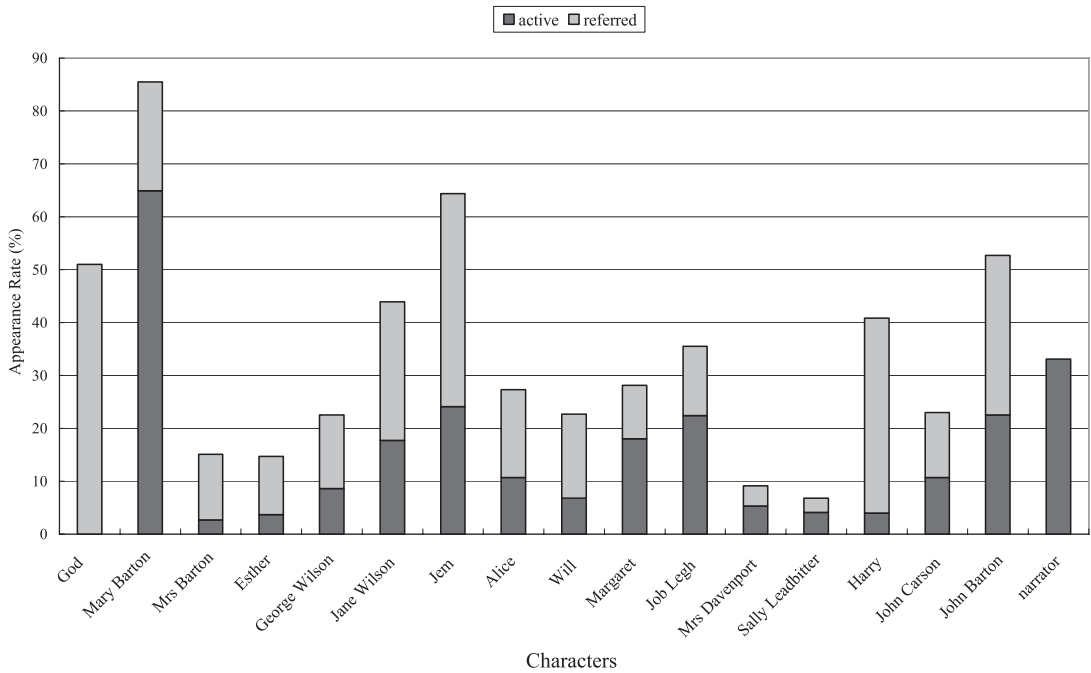


Fig. 4. Characters' Frequency of Appearance in *Mary Barton*

Among some intriguing features demonstrated by Fig. 4, we shall focus on the following three. First, it is not *John Barton* but *Mary Barton* who appears most often in the novel.¹³ Second, *Jem Wilson's* appearance rate is higher than *John Barton's*.¹⁴ Third, the narrator appears in *Mary Barton* considerably more frequently than in Gaskell's other novels.

3. 2. 1. Mary's Constant Appearance

Why is Mary, not her father, the most frequent appearer? Because Mary is active constantly throughout the narrative, while John suddenly disappears in Part II.

Table 2 indicates the appearance rates of *Mary Barton*, *Jem Wilson*, and *John Barton*, the top three characters in the appearance-rate ranking. As the "subtotal" box of Part I shows, Mary is involved in the story (88 scenes or 39.6%) as constantly as her father (70 scenes or 30.6%) in Part I; furthermore, the "active" box of Part I reveals that she is more active (61 scenes or 28.6%) than he (38 scenes or 18.4%). These facts remind us that, however ardently critics may underline the graphic representation of *John Barton's* increasing indignation against the industrial masters in Part I, Mary's love for two young men is also depicted as one of its two main streams – *Jem* appears in 51 scenes (23.3%); *Harry* 40 (19.9%). Critics are divided over the existence of the third part and its length.¹⁵ As Fig. 3 and Table 2 nonetheless display, there is a definite distinction between the contents of Part II and Part III. Mary's six-day ordeal ends when Part III begins, as her father reappears to complete his own plot.

Table 2 demonstrates John Barton’s virtual disappearance from the drama and his daughter’s monopolization of the narrative in Part II: as represented in the “active” box, he is active only in four scenes (1.0%) while Mary in 57 (28.0%). This is why Mary, “a decidedly minor figure, a rather negligible personality” (Hopkins 77) in the first part, appears to emerge suddenly from the book “with increased stature” (Lane viii) in the second.¹⁶

Part	Appearance	Mary Barton	Jem Wilson	John Barton
I	active	28.6	8.5	18.4
	referred	11.0	14.8	12.2
	subtotal	39.6	23.3	30.6
II	active	28.0	4.7	1.0
	referred	4.9	23.1	10.1
	subtotal	32.8	27.8	11.1
III	active	8.4	10.9	3.1
	referred	4.7	2.4	7.9
	subtotal	13.1	13.3	11.0
Total	active	65.0	24.1	22.5
	referred	20.6	40.3	30.2
	Grand Total	85.5	64.4	52.7

Table 2. Appearance Rate of Three Main Characters in *Mary Barton*

To visualize the interweaving of John Barton’s industrial plot and Mary’s love plot, “Fig. 5. Image of Plot Flow in *Mary Barton*” has been created from data in the Comprehensive Chronology: two points are given to a character if he/she is active, one if referred to, and none if the character makes no appearance. In Part I, the two plots are introduced in parallel. In Part II, Mary’s efforts to save Jem become the focus of the narrative; hence, John’s industrial plot sinks under the surface. In Part III, the love between Mary and Jem ripens into marriage, whereas John Barton’s confession and death bring about John Carson’s understanding of the workers’ plight; thus end both plots.¹⁷

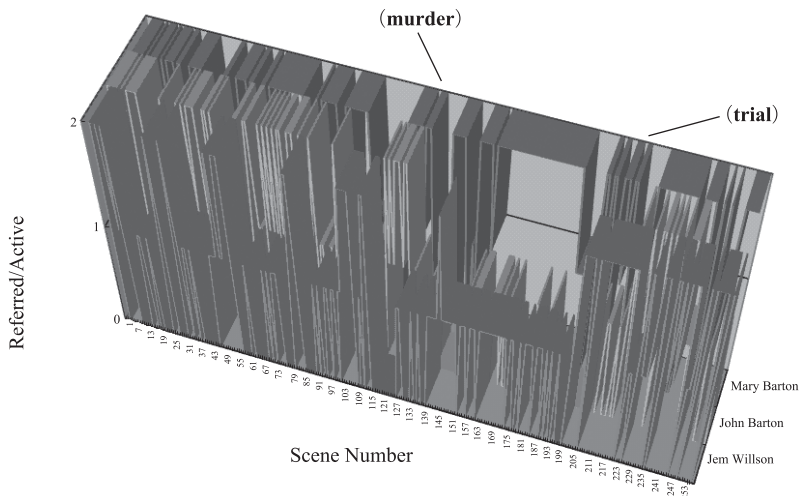


Fig. 5. Image of Plot Flow in *Mary Barton*

Mary's sudden ascendancy in Part II (in other words, John's disappearance, or the change of emphasis from father to daughter) has been pointed out by some critics.¹⁸ Our scrutiny of the movement of the two storylines, however, reveals that Mary is present throughout the novel, and that, even if the focus appears to shift in the middle from John's conflict to Mary's romance, it is because he temporarily hides himself from the reader's eyes, not because she makes a sudden appearance in the limelight.

3. 2. 2. Jem Wilson's Role

Why does Jem appear more often than John? Because Jem involves himself both in Barton's industrial plot and Mary's love plot. In Part I, Jem is described as the rival for Mary's heart to Harry Carson. Harry is assassinated by Barton because of his merciless behaviours to workers, but believed by people to be killed by jealous Jem.¹⁹ In Part II, the truthfulness of his "deep love" (46) towards Mary is intensified because of his determination to be hanged to save her father, the true assassin. In Part III, Jem, now in mutual love with Mary, is asked by Barton to witness his confession of guilt to John Carson, Harry's father, and summoned by Carson to explain Barton's motive for murder. Jem is the pivot on which the two plots revolve.

3. 2. 3. Narratorial Intervention

Narrator	<i>Mary Barton</i>	<i>Ruth</i>	<i>North and South</i>	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i>	<i>Wives and Daughters</i>
Appearance Rate (%)	25.9	12.9	0.7	3.0	3.2
Scenes of Appearance (times)	63	31	3	13	15
Total Scenes (times)	243	241	451	434	463

Table 3. Appearance Rate of Narrator in Gaskell's Novels

As another means for the objective detection of authorial meaning, the narrator's remarks are surveyed, by categorizing them into three groups, depending on which they relate to, the industrial plot, the romance plot, or neither of them. The narrator's appearance rate in *Mary Barton* is conspicuously higher than that in Gaskell's other novels (See Table 3), and it is highly probable the narrator is the author's double.

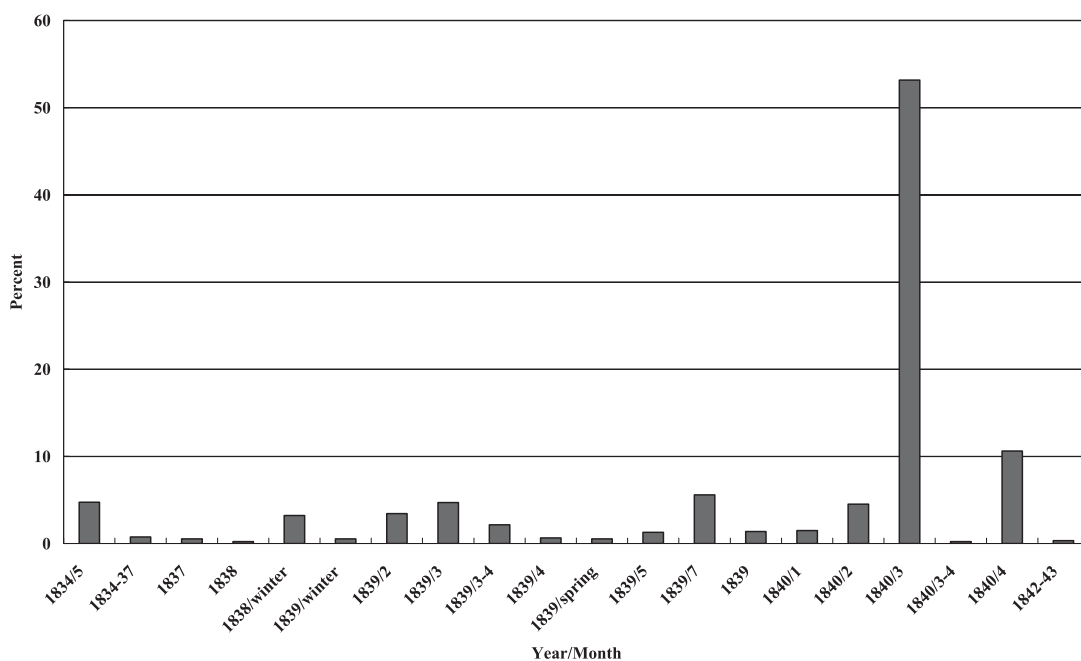
For example, after describing too great a contrast in life style "between the employers and the employed" (23), the sympathizer of the latter clarifies her position by stating "I know that this is not really the case [. . .] but what I wish to impress is what the workman feels and thinks" (24; emphasis added). This remark is counted as an industrial one. On the other hand, the narrator praises Mary for awakening to her mistaken vanity, i.e. for her conviction that the man she truly loves is Jem Wilson, not Harry Carson: "That was some comfort: I mean her clear perception of what she ought not to do; of what no luring temptation should ever again induce her to hearken to" (153; emphasis added). This quotation is classified into the remarks concerning the love plot.

Narrator's Direct Remarks on	Times (Scenes)	Percent
John Barton's industrial plot	16	25.4
Mary Barton's love plot	14	22.2
Others	33	52.4
Total	63	100.0

Table 4. Narrator's Direct Remarks on John and Mary

The result of categorization of all narratorial interventions shown in Table 4 elucidates that there is no substantial difference in number and percentage between the storyteller's references to Barton's plot (16 scenes or 25.4%) and those to Mary's (14 scenes or 22.2%). Therefore, it is probably reasonable to suppose that the narrator is intended to develop both plots almost on an equal basis.

3.3. Time Sequence

Fig. 6. Monthly Sequence in *Mary Barton*

The investigation into the time sequence of the story also indicates Mary's prominence. "Fig. 6. Monthly Sequence in *Mary Barton*," where scene percentages are arranged in accordance with the monthly unit, displays the narrative of March 1840 occupies 53.2% of the total page numbers.

Order	Date	Scene Percentage according to Length
1	20/3/1840	9.11
2	22/3/1840	8.15
3	18/3/1840	5.9
4	19/3/1840	5.58
5	23/3/1840	5.03

Table 5. Top Five Dates Treated in *Mary Barton*

The examination of the events of this month shows that the day to which the largest number of pages is allocated is 20 March (9.1%), when Mary, having realized from her aunt Esther's information that the true assassin of Harry Carson is her father, starts to act for rescuing her lover Jem Wilson, who has been arrested as the murder suspect. The second largest space is given to 22 March (8.2%) when Mary's adventure of catching Will Wilson in Liverpool is delineated. The third to 18 March (5.9%), the day recording Will's farewell to Mary, John Barton's departure from Manchester, Alice Rose's fatal stroke of paralysis, and the Carsons' agony for the death of Harry. 19 March (5.6%), when Mary realizes Jem has been arrested as the suspected murder of Harry, comes fourth, followed by 23 March, the day of Jem's trial (5.0%). In short, the main subject of six days from 18 March is Mary's efforts to save Jem. Accordingly, the structural analysis of the time sequence suggests that the central protagonist is Mary Barton.

3. 4. Historical Author's Confession

The scrutiny of the novel's key structures evidently champions Mary Barton's centrality. A distinct disadvantage of this reading, notwithstanding, would be authorial avowals to the opposite effect.

Gaskell insists repeatedly in her letters that her central character is John Barton. A typical example would be her letter to Mrs Greg dated early 1849: " 'John Barton' was the original title of the book. Round the character of John Barton all the others formed themselves; he was my hero, *the* person with whom all my sympathies went, with whom I tried to identify myself at the time [of writing]" (*Letters* 74).²⁰ In her Preface to *Mary Barton*, moreover, Gaskell declares that her compassion towards Manchester labourers motivated her writing the fiction: "The more I reflected on this unhappy state of things between those so bound to each other by common interests, as the employers and the employed must ever be, the more anxious I became to give some utterance to the agony which, from time to time, convulses this dumb people; the agony of suffering without the sympathy of the happy, or of erroneously believing that such is the case" (xxxv-xxxvi).

The possible solutions to this contradiction between the statistical outcome and the authorial avowal concerning the central protagonist of the novel would be the following three. First, to ignore the result of statistical investigation as nonsense. Second, to ignore Gaskell's protestation as misleading. Third, to seek an appropriate explanation of the inconsistency. Which stance is to be taken entirely depends upon each critic's discretion.

In concluding the discussion of *Mary Barton*'s structure, let me remind the first-stance supporters that, in Gaskell's other novels, the chief protagonist is always the one who appears most frequently in the text (See Table 6). In *Ruth*, Ruth Hilton's appearance occupies the highest rate (active=66.4%, referred=19.1%, total=85.5%), followed by Thurstan Benson's and Leonard's. In *North and South*, Margaret Hale ranks first (active=80.3%, referred=14.8%, total=95.1%), her father Richard Hale second, and John Thornton third.²¹ In *Sylvia's Lovers* comes Sylvia Robson first (active=61.6%, referred=19.2%, total=80.8%), her cousin Philip Hepburn second, and Sylvia's mother Bell Robson; in *Wives and Daughters* Molly Gibson is ranked first (active=61.9%, referred=22.8%, total=84.7%), followed by her father Bob Gibson and her step-mother Clare. Consequently, it is highly probable that, in Gaskell's fiction, the chief protagonist is equivalent to the character

of the most frequent appearance, or the epitome of authorial meaning. If the central character is John Barton, *Mary Barton* will turn out to be an exception.

	<i>Mary Barton</i>	<i>Ruth</i>	<i>North and South</i>	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i>	<i>Wives and Daughters</i>
1	Mary Barton 85.5 (65.0+20.6)	Ruth Hilton 85.5 (66.4+19.1)	Margaret Hale 95.1 (80.3+14.8)	Sylvia Robson 80.8 (61.6+19.2)	Molly Gibson 84.7 (61.9+22.8)
2	Jem Wilson 64.4 (24.1+40.3)	Thurstan Benson 54.4 (41.9+12.4)	Richard Hale 55.5 (32.1+23.4)	Philip Hepburn 73.5 (49.8+23.7)	Bob Gibson 66.1 (25.4+40.7)
3	John Barton 52.7 (22.5+30.2)	Leonard 44.4 (22.0+22.4)	John Thornton 49.6 (22.5+27.1)	Bell Robson 50.5 (25.3+25.2)	Clare Kirkpatrick 59.4 (33.4+26.0)

Figures: Total (active + referred) %

Table 6. Appearance Rates of Top Three Characters in Gaskell's Novels

“Whatever Gaskell’s later feelings about the centrality of John Barton,” Easson writes, “she did accept the title *Mary Barton* and Mary’s is the dominant consciousness, through which much of the action is mediated” (*Elizabeth Gaskell* 78).²² Our structural analysis endorses his assertion.

4. Absolute Interpretation

The ultimate aim of identifying the authorial intention through the statistical analysis of the structure of a novel is to detect the meaning of the author construct, not of the historical author. The author construct is the creator of a text which emerges out of our careful reading of the text, or a figure the reader constructs in interpreting the text, while the historical author is the actual agent who produces a text. In discovering the authorial meaning, historical authors’ comments on the theme of their fiction are sometimes untrustworthy because it often happens that their plot develops regardless of their intention, and that they themselves are unclear about it. To determine the authorial meaning, therefore, the reader cannot but depend upon the author construct.²³

Mary Barton has long been classified as an industrial novel owing to its treatment of the social conflict in 1830s and 1840s. The objective analysis of the structure, notwithstanding, implies such a reading might be at variance with Gaskell construct’s intention. In *Mary Barton*, it reveals the central protagonist is the eponymous heroine, not her father, in contradiction to the author-in-person’s protestation to the opposite effect; thus it suggests the main subject might be Mary’s love rather than John Barton’s fight for justice.²⁴ If the standard interpretation were defined as the interpretation the author construct aimed at, as E. D. Hirsch, Jr., one of the leading hermeneuticists, insists,²⁵ then, it would be doubtful whether the conventional reading could be considered as absolute. The classification of the novel into the Condition-of-England fiction might be misleading. Gaskell construct’s meaning lies in describing a love story intermixed with an industrial story.

Notes

- 1 This is an expanded version of the paper read at the International Gaskell Conference held at Manchester Metropolitan University during 19-21 July 2005. Section 3 is a condensed summary of the substantially revised and updated edition of my articles “Is *Mary Barton* an Industrial Novel?”, “*Mary Barton* as a Tale of Manchester Life, Not of John Barton,” and Section 4 of “Chronology and Statistics: Objective Understanding of Authorial Meaning.” “Is *Mary Barton* an Industrial Novel?”, my first statistical analysis of the structure of the novel, casts doubts on the traditional reading of the text as a social-problem novel on the ground that formal investigation into time sequence and characters’ appearance rate suggests the spotlight is placed rather on the eponymous heroine than on her father, the assassin of a mill owner. Later, more careful examination of the novel’s structure is conducted to refine the data on time and characters, which were displayed on separate tables in the first analysis, and its result is combined into one table together with the data on scene shifts. This Comprehensive Chronology is the basis for the argument in Section 4 of “Chronology and Statistics: Objective Understanding of Authorial Meaning.” This second statistical analysis is attempted to prove the effectiveness of a chronological and quantitative study of the text for the objective understanding of authorial meaning, using E. D. Hirsch Jr.’s intentionalist hermeneutics as its theoretical grounds, and the structuralist investigations into fiction by C. P. Sanger and Karl Kroeber as its methodological models. “*Mary Barton* as a Tale of Manchester Life, Not of John Barton” is a Japanese edition of this second attempt. Furthermore, in order to prove the validity of the quantification of key structural elements as the most effective means for the detection of author construct’s meaning, another thorough reading of the text was conducted, so that the data on the three fundamental formal factors – time, place, and characters – are recollected for the latest version of the Comprehensive Chronology; in addition, some essential concepts of intentionalist hermeneuticists, including William Irwin, are surveyed, since intentionalism, or the pursuit of absolute interpretation of a text, is the ultimate aim of this statistical analysis of fictional structure. The outcome of these researches is reflected in the present article. The purpose of these revisions and expansions is exclusively to defend my methodology against persistent, virulent, and merciless attacks on its efficacy.
- 2 The theoretical grounds explained in Section 1&2 of this paper is my own summary of the key concepts of intentional hermeneuticists. E. D. Hirsch Jr.’s distinction of “meaning” from “significance,” and of “interpretation” from “criticism,” as the targets for textual analysis is combined here with William Irwin’s distinction of “author construct” from “historical author” as the object of research into authorial intention. Hence, intentionalist hermeneuticists’ absolute “interpretation” of a text, or the quest for so-called “authorial intention,” is made only through exploring the “meaning” of a text whose functional composer is the “author construct.” This explanation is also my own summary of Irwin’s assertion. It is intended to defend my methodology from repeated, harsh censure on its quantitative analysis of fictional structure.
- 3 For details, see my paper “Chronology and Statistics: Objective Understanding of Authorial Meaning.” It surveys the assertions of Terry Eagleton and E. D. Hirsch, Jr., perhaps the most formidable advocates of anti-intentionalism and intentionalism respectively, and proposes, taking Hirsch’s hermeneutics as its theoretical backbone, that chronologies and statistics, as have been demonstrated by C. P. Sanger and Karl Kroeber in their structural analyses, are probably the most effective means for the objective identification of authorial meaning.
- 4 For example, in the case of the character who is in the scene but is silent. After careful consideration, he/she is counted as “active.” And also in the case of narrators. After all, the narrator is counted as “active” when her

- comment is made in the first person, and when a direct addressing to the reader is inserted in the second person or a comment with exclamation marks – “Alas! Poor Mary! bitter woe did thy weakness work thee” (*MB* 46); “Poor Jem! it is not an auspicious moment for thee!” (*MB* 149).
- 5 “Statistical data is often the key to innovative and authentic research” (Murase 110).
 - 6 *Mary Barton* and *North and South* were discussed by Louis Cazamian in his 1903 study of the English social novels, and classified into as an industrial novel by Raymond Williams in his 1958 book of *Culture and Society*.
 - 7 For instance, comments in support of John Barton’s centrality are found in Craik (35), Crick (517-18), Daly (“Essentially, the narrative is a drama of working-class radicalisation and its consequences, both personal and social” [xxiii]), Fryckstedt (98, 102), Ganz (63), Gérin (87-88), Hopkins (76-77), Lane (vii), Lerner (Gaskell wrote *Mary Barton* “to take the side of the workers, and her hero is a Chartist” [13]), Pollard (109-10), Recchio (30), Rubenius (230), Sharps (57, 59, 67-68), Tillotson (211), Unsworth (*Elizabeth Gaskell* 42-43), and Wright (*Mrs Gaskell* 31, 35, 233; Introduction, *Mary Barton* xv). Meanwhile, those in favour of Mary’s in Brodetsky (16), Colby (36, 40, 44-45), d’Albertis (50), Easson (*Elizabeth Gaskell* 73, 78; Introduction, *Mary Barton* 15-16), Lansbury (*Elizabeth Gaskell* 17), Schor (18, 38), Shelston (xxiv), Uglow (200), and Ward (Introduction, *Mary Barton*, lxxiv).
 - 8 For example, Karl Kroeber, *Styles in Fictional Structure: The Art of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971); Anthony Kenny, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002).
 - 9 This chronology was modelled after C. P. Sanger’s chronological analysis of the structure of *Wuthering Heights* and Karl Kroeber’s statistical investigation into styles in fiction. The statistical analyses by Brian Vickers, J. F. Burrows, and Franco Moretti were also helpful in its preparation. Burrows observes that “statistical analysis of the peculiarities of incidence makes it possible to approach the whole penumbra of ‘meaning’ in a new and fruitful way” (4). Fundamentally, however, their concern lies with linguistic styles rather than with authorial meaning.
 - 10 If a character appears in a certain scene, his or her cell is painted deep grey. If not, it is blank. If he or she is only referred to by others including the narrator, it is coloured light grey. In a scene where a character dies, the relevant cell is crossed. For example, Chapter 1 of the novel, which relates the afternoon excursion of the Bartons and the Wilsons to Green Heys Fields, features all members of both families, so that their cells are shaded deep grey. Esther and Alice Wilson are only spoken of in the conversation between John Barton and George Wilson (4-8, 10); thus, their cells are coloured light grey (Scenes 2-4). No mention is made of other characters in this chapter; therefore, their cells are left blank.
 - 11 That the death of Harry Carson marks the beginning of the second part is agreed by Easson (*Elizabeth Gaskell* 79; Introduction, *Mary Barton* 11), Gallagher (67), Tillotson (213), and Wright (Introduction, *Mary Barton* xvii).
 - 12 The second part’s baffling length is also noted by Colby (“This section is given a significant amount of space in the novel, spanning several chapters. It is clear that Gaskell viewed these events as a crucial expression of Mary’s identity” [41]), and by Wright (*Mrs Gaskell* 233).
 - 13 This aspect is noted by Bodenheimer: “It is surprising [. . .] to discover how rarely John Barton appears as an actor in dramatized scenes” (“Private Grief” 197), and by Craik: “the novel as it stands spends less time on him [John] than on Mary” (32).

- 14 Thus, Stone's assertion that Alice Wilson is the third significant character (149) contradicts the result of our examination. Jem is regarded by some readers as the novel's hero (Sharps 57; Uglow 163).
- 15 For instance, Bodenheimer (Barton's "story appears in only ten of the first eighteen chapters, after which he disappears from the narrative until the end" ["Private Grief" 204]), Fryckstedt ("John Barton is absent from the moment he murders Henry Carson until he returns at the end" [98]), Gallagher ("The concluding chapters of *Mary Barton* return us to the story of John" [83]), and Schor (The workers' plot is "revealed again at the novel's end" [16]).
- 16 Or in Bodenheimer's phrase, "Mary is released into an active, responsible, and independent role" ("Private Grief" 211).
- 17 Some critics evaluate Mary's plot as "less arresting, less strikingly original" (Craik 35), "[dealing] with secondary characters" (G. D. Sanders 28), and "of secondary importance" (Sharps 68). Hopkins disparages it: "Although the title directs that Mary should bear the responsibility of the central figure, she does not step forward in this role until the latter part of the story" (76). Sharing "most critics' sense of the inadequacy and tiresomeness of the murder plot and the subsequent legal melodrama," Daly concludes that Mary is "never meant to be the protagonist" (xx-xxi). In contrast, Shelston finds a positive and deeper meaning in her storyline: "Mary's story is integral from the start" (xxiv). So does Colby: "Throughout the novel Mary is portrayed as *acting*" (36); his remark is upheld by Fryckstedt (98) and Uglow (200). Nord attempts to explain Mary's centrality from her feminist perspective: "the novel concerns itself from the very first with the public role of women, especially but not exclusively Mary's role" (154).
- 18 For example, Bodenheimer ("Private Grief" 196), Gallagher (67), Nord (154), and Williams (100-01).
- 19 Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) 267. Page references hereafter in the text.
- 20 A confession of a similar intention is made in a letter to Julia Lamont, her friend: "'John Barton' was the original name, as being the central figure to my mind; indeed I had so long felt that the bewildered life of an ignorant thoughtful man of strong power of sympathy, dwelling in a town so full of striking contrasts as this is, was a tragic poem, that in writing he was [. . .] my 'hero'" (*Letters* 70). In her 29 May 1849 letter to Eliza Fox, her artist friend, Gaskell discloses the existence of a model for John Barton: "Nobody and nothing was real [. . .] in M. Barton, but the character of John Barton; the circumstances are different, but the character and some of the speeches, are exactly a poor man I know" (*Letters* 82). In the same letter, the author makes a brief reference to Mary Barton: "I am glad you like Mary, I do: but people are angry with her just because she is not perfect" (*Letters* 82). Its brevity in contrast to her extended observation of John also suggests her chief concern lies in him. In her 5 January 1849 letter to Julia Lamont, Gaskell confesses, "it was a London thought coming through the publisher that it must be called *Mary B*. So many people overlook John B or see him merely to misunderstand him, that if you were a stranger and had only said that one thing (that the book shd have been called *John B*) I should have had pleasure in feeling that my own idea was recognized" (*Letters* 70). In her April 1849 letter to Mary Greg, written six months after the publication of the book (Daly xxxi; Smith 6), the author acknowledges the whole story grew up in her mind "as imperceptibly as a seed germinates in the earth," so that she "cannot trace back now why or how such a thing was written, or such a character or circumstance introduced" except for John Barton (*Letters* 74); Furthermore, she observes "the prevailing thought in my mind at the time when the tale was silently forming itself and impressing me with the force of a reality, was *the seeming injustice of the inequalities of fortune*" (*Letters* 74; emphasis added). These confessions explicitly demonstrate the central character who had been occupying her consciousness was not

- Mary Barton but always her father.
- 21 This outcome leads the reader to doubt the validity of viewing *North and South* as a social problem novel which deals with the process of the capitalist's understanding of his labourers' plight. Inquiry into the heroine's topographical movement discloses the close interrelation between the industrial and love plots, and the author construct's intention of incorporating two themes into one book. This has been discussed in my article "Statistical Analysis of the Structure of *North and South*: in the Quest for the Standard Interpretation."
 - 22 He is championed by Brodetsky: "[T]he change of title was reasonable, and it was obviously considered a more attractive one" (16).
 - 23 This functional distinction between the two types of author is detailed in Irwin (28-33). Irwin's "author construct" is another name of Wayne C. Booth's "implied author" (71) or Katherine Tillotson's "author's second self" (qtd. in Booth 71).
 - 24 It has long been highlighted that *Mary Barton* has two main plots: John Barton's murder plot and Mary Barton's romance plot, particularly by Baldick (84), Craik (5, 31), d'Albertis (50), Flint (15, 17), Gallagher (67, 75-78, 81-82, 280), Ganz (69, 73), Gill (21-22), Hopkins (76), Lansbury (*Elizabeth Gaskell* 10, 17), Recchio (20, 29), Schor (14-15, 17, 20, 33, 37-38), Shelston (xxvi), Stoneman (84), Tillotson (213-14), Uglow (206), Wheeler (*The Art of Allusion* 46, 59-60; *English Fiction* 40), Williams (100-01), and Wright (Introduction, *Mary Barton* xiv, xvii-xviii).
 - 25 "To banish the original author as the determiner of meaning was to reject the only compelling normative principle that could lend validity to an interpretation" (5).

Works Cited

- Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987. Print.
- Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. "Private Grief and Public Acts in *Mary Barton*." *Dickens Society Annual* 9 (1981) : 195-216. Print.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983. Print.
- Brodetsky, Tessa. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. Berg Women's Series. Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986. Print.
- Bronson, Eric. "The Death of Cervantes and the Life of *Don Quixote*." *Death and Resurrection* 205-15.
- Burrows, J. F. *Computation into Criticism: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels and an Experiment in Method*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987. Print.
- Cazamian, Louis. *The Social Novel in England 1830-1850: Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley*. 1903. Trans. by Martin Fido. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973. Print.
- Chapple, J. A. V. and Arthur Pollard, eds. *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1966. Print.
- Colby, Robin B. "*Some Appointed Work to Do*": *Women and Vocation in the Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995. Print.
- Craik, W. A. *Elizabeth Gaskell and the English Provincial Novel*. London: Methuen, 1975. Print.
- Crick, Brian. "The Implications of the Title Changes and Textual Revisions in Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*." *Notes and Queries* 27.6 (1980) : 514-19. Print.
- Daly, Macdonald. Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996. vii-xxx. Print.

- d'Albertis, Deirdre. *Dissembling Fictions: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Social Text*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Easson, Angus. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. Print.
- . Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* including The Rev. W. Gaskell's "Two Lectures of The Lancashire Dialect." Krumlin, Halifax: Ryburn, 1993. 7-26. Print.
- Flint, Kate. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. Writers and Their Work. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995. Print.
- Fryckstedt, Monica Correa. *Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton and Ruth: A Challenge to Christian England*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1982. Print.
- Gallagher, Catherine. *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832-1867*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985. Print.
- Ganz, Margaret. *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Artist in Conflict*. New York: Twayne, 1969. Print.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. Ed. Edgar Wright. The World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. Print.
- . *North and South*. Ed. Angus Easson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982. Print.
- . *Ruth*. Ed. Alan Shelston. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. Print.
- . *Sylvia's Lovers*. Ed. Andrew Sanders. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.
- . *Wives and Daughters*. Ed. Angus Easson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
- Gérin, Winifred. *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Biography*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980. Print.
- Gill, Stephen. Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976. 9-28. Print.
- Hirsch, E. D., Jr. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1967. Print.
- Hopkins, Annette B. *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work*. London: John Lehmann, 1952. Print.
- Irwin, William. *Intentionalist Interpretation: A Philosophical Explanation and Defense*. Westport: Greenwood, 1999. Print.
- , ed. *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?* Westport: Greenwood, 2002. Print.
- Juhl, P. D. *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986.
- Kenny, Anthony. *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986. Print.
- Kroeber, Karl. *Styles in Fictional Structure: The Art of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971. Print.
- Lane, Margaret. Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. London: Dent, 1977. v-x. Print.
- Lansbury, Coral. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. Twayne English Authors Series. 371. Boston: Twayne, 1984. Print.
- Lerner, Laurence. Introduction. *Wives and Daughters*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. Ed. Frank Glover Smith. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969. 7-27. Print.
- Matus, Jill L, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Moretti, Franco. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*. London: Verso, 2005. Print.
- Murase, Tomoko. "Jane Austen's Authorial Intention in *Persuasion*." *Kumamoto Studies in English Language and Literature* 50 (2007) : 105-27. Print.
- Nord, Deborah Epstein. *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995. Print.

- Ohno, Tatsuhiro. "Is *Mary Barton* an Industrial Novel?" *The Gaskell Society Journal* 15 (2001) : 14-20. Print.
- . "*Mary Barton* as a Tale of Manchester Life, Not of John Barton." *Gaskell Studies* 13 (2003) : 1-10. Print.
- . "Chronologies and Statistics: Objective Understanding of Authorial Meaning." *English Studies* 87 (2006) : 327-56. Print.
- . *In Quest of Authorial Meaning: The Statistical Analysis of the Structure of the Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell*. MLitt Diss. University of Bristol. 2007. 1-537. Print.
- . "Statistical Analysis of the Structure of *North and South*: In the Quest for the Standard Interpretation." *The Gaskell Journal* 20 (2008) : 116-44. Print.
- . "The Absolute Interpretation of *Wives and Daughters*: In Quest for Authorial Meaning." *Elizabeth Gaskell and the Tradition of British Literature*. Ed. The Gaskell Society of Japan. Osaka: Osaka Kyoiku Toshō, 2010. 55-65. Print.
- Pollard, Arthur. *Mrs Gaskell: Novelist and Biographer*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967. Print.
- Recchio, Thomas Edward. "The Problem of Form in Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton*: A Study of Mythic Patterning in Realistic Fiction." *Studies in English Literature: English Number* (1985) : 19-35. Print.
- Rubenius, Aina. *The Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell's Life and Works*. Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1950. Print.
- Sanders, Gerald Dewitt. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. 1929. New York: Russell & Russell, 1971. Print.
- Sanger, Charles Percy. "The Structure of *Wuthering Heights*." 1926. Rpt. in *Wuthering Heights*. By Emily Brontë. Norton Critical Edition. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1972. 286-98. Print.
- Schor, Hilary M. *Scheherezade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. Print.
- Sharps, John Geoffrey. *Mrs. Gaskell's Observation and Invention: A Study of Her Non-Biographic Works*. Frontwell, Sussex: Linden, 1970. Print.
- Shelston, Alan. Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. London: Dent, 1996. xix-xxviii. Print.
- Stone, Donald D. *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980. Print.
- Stoneman, Patsy. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester, 1987. Print.
- Tillotson, Kathleen. *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*. London: Oxford UP, 1962. Print.
- Uglow, Jenny. *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993. Print.
- Unsworth, Anna. *Elizabeth Gaskell: An Independent Woman*. London: Minerva Press, 1996. Print.
- Vickers, Brian. *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.
- Ward, A. W. Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life. The Works of Mrs. Gaskell*. Vol. 1. New York: AMS, 1972. li-lxxxii. Print.
- Wheeler, Michael. *The Art of Allusion in Victorian Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1979. Print.
- . *English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830-1890*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1994. Print.
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. 1958. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. Print.
- Wright, Edgar. *Mrs. Gaskell: The Basis for Reassessment*. London: Oxford UP, 1965. Print.
- . Introduction. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. The World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. vii-xxiii. Print.