

Elizabeth Gaskell and the Short Story



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Abstract: Elizabeth Gaskell was the author of over forty short stories. Despite the resurgence in Gaskell criticism over the past three decades, these stories have only recently begun to receive the attention they deserve. Following an account of how the Victorian short story has been re-evaluated by literary critics, this introductory survey illuminates Gaskell's key contributions to the development of the genre. Our discussion is structured around several areas of critical investigation that have been at the forefront of Gaskell studies over the past few years. These include: the position of Victorian short fiction in relation to predominant accounts of the form's development; Gaskell's engagement with the periodical press and the Victorian literary marketplace; her response to the connection between short stories and the Christmas season; and her deployment of supernatural and sensational tropes. The image that emerges is that of a professional woman of letters who used shorter fiction as a space to experiment with new narrative methods, unusual characterisation and contentious themes. Concluding with some reflections on the two-part review in *All the Year Round*, newly attributed to Gaskell in July 2015, we suggest how Gaskell's engagement with the 'ungodly spinnings' of French ballad and narrative tradition might have helped shape her own practice as a master of the form.

The Short Story, Modernists, Victorians

It is a commonplace in short story criticism that the short story in Britain reached its heyday through the literary movement of Modernism. It is only in recent years that literary critics have begun to give serious attention to Victorian short fiction, and Elizabeth Gaskell's writings have played a central role in this revisionary project. Roger Luckhurst records 1884 as the first time the term 'short story' is used as a noun phrase, while the OED gave it formal admittance into the vocabulary of English as late as 1933.¹ Most surveys of the short story regard 1880-1920 as its heyday, when practitioners theorised it as a form particularly suited to a modern sensibility in reaction against verbose Victorian novels, 'loose baggy monsters' in Henry James's famous phrase.² Modernists distrusted the kind of realism that the Victorian novel attempted, a panoramic representation of reality interpreted by an omniscient (or sympathetic first-person) narrator. They preferred 'the rigour of brevity' and suggestive ellipsis over extensive plotting and fulsome exposition, centring the story on the single moment of crisis or 'epiphany'.³ They valued psychological subtlety over moralistic sentiment and a narrative viewpoint which displayed its own subjective limitations: the form was embraced as the perfect

embodiment of an individual's experience of modernity – alienated, fragmentary, elusive. Surveying turn-of-the-century literary culture in 1906, G.K. Chesterton summed this up when he claimed: 'Our modern attraction to short stories is not an accident of form; it is the sign of a real sense of fleetingness and fragility; it means that existence is only an impression, and, perhaps, only an illusion.'⁴ To Elizabeth Bowen, surveying the form in 1937, the short story had no earlier tradition: it was 'a young art', a 'child' of the twentieth century.⁵

This definition of the short story – based on a binary opposition of artful, self-conscious brevity versus the panoramic, expository Victorian novel – has been sustained by a number of critics in a bid to elevate the status of the short story form from its long marginalisation in the literary canon. For example, Clare Hanson argues that 'the short story provides or makes for a kind of experience for the reader which is quite different from that which she or he gains from the novel'; it is a difference in quality, not just quantity.⁶ The story relies more on suggestion, ambiguity and ellipsis, demanding more interpretive work from the reader, its effects being sometimes compared to poetry, drama or paintings.⁷ In this definition, plotlessness virtually becomes the marker of literariness. Its best practitioners included Henry James, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Elizabeth Bowen; fin de siècle writers of more action-focused narratives, such as Rudyard Kipling and Robert Louis Stevenson, are admitted to the tradition because they deployed the traditional adventure tale and ghost story in experimental ways (the meaning of the epiphany is ambiguous), although there is often the sense that these are transitional forms en route to the full achievement of the modernist short story.⁸

Such definitions do few favours for short fiction of the mid-Victorian era, although it proliferated in periodical literature during the 1850s and 60s. These earlier narratives are generally more plot-focused, eschewing the single 'moment of crisis' for multiple incidents spanning sometimes many years. They could not always be read at one sitting, being often spread over a few instalments of a periodical: multi-part fictions were common, and indeed Dickens's definition of a short story was one which was fewer than four instalments.⁹ Length was not consistent: Gaskell produced one-part tales (e.g. 'The Heart of John Middleton' and 'Curious if True'), two-part (e.g. 'The Well of Pen Morfa' and 'My French Master'), three-part (e.g. 'Lizzie Leigh' and 'Half a Life-Time Ago') and four-part (e.g. *Cousin Phillis*). 'A Dark Night's Work' filled nine parts. It is worth remembering that, at fourteen parts, 'My Lady Ludlow' was not so obviously a 'short' fiction when compared with the twenty-part serialisation, also in *Household Words*, of Gaskell's novel *North and South*. The qualitative, as well as the quantitative, contrast between long and short fiction was certainly not as hard and fast as it was for Modernists, leading some to describe these earlier productions rather pejoratively as 'unused chapters of longer works'¹⁰ or 'little more than a highly condensed novel, not governed by

any aesthetic principles of its own.¹¹ The mid-Victorian short story, measured by Modernist criteria, thus acquired the image of being a markedly inferior form, just populist filling for periodical columns with little artistic merit. Even though many of these were penned by major novelists (including Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Wilkie Collins, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Thomas Hardy), a common view has been that this was done substantially for commercial purposes, to provide authors with a living while they worked on longer, but less remunerative, works into which they invested their full artistic efforts.¹²

However, the view that Victorian short stories are without literary value has been challenged in recent years. The agenda set by Modernism has been expanded to recognise the short story as a broad church, allowing for texts that have continuities with earlier forms of short fiction such as the folktale or parable. Hanson's observation, that the short story occupies the literary space between the novel and the brief lyric poem but can be anywhere between these two points, is usefully elastic and has set the tone for much subsequent criticism.¹³ Scholarship is emerging which is happy to see the development of Victorian into modernist short fiction in terms of continuity rather than stark contrast, such as Kate Krueger's work (reviewed later in this issue of the *Gaskell Journal*), which takes in the period 1850-1930.¹⁴

The elasticity and huge generic range of Gaskell's shorter fiction prevents easy assumptions. As Patsy Stoneman explains, 'much critical dissatisfaction results simply from applying ready-made labels [...] or looking for familiar patterns of coherence, and finding the writing does not match the assumed model.'¹⁵ Gaskell's avoidance of 'labels' and 'models' meant that her shorter fiction suffered from critical neglect through the early twentieth century. While Elizabeth Haldane perpetuated a common perception when she wrote that periodical writing placed a 'tax' on Gaskell's talents and regretted that it was a 'terrible pity' she consented to it, A.B. Hopkins found in Gaskell's periodical pieces 'characteristic marks of haste: poor construction, lack of accent or too much accent, melodrama and sentimentality'.¹⁶ But from 1987, the year of Stoneman's *Elizabeth Gaskell* and the inaugural issue of this journal, the image of Gaskell as a reluctant short story writer has been systematically challenged.

Since then, a number of articles in this journal have considered the variety of genres that Gaskell's short fiction engages with, revises and critiques. Notable examples include Barbara Hardy's discussion of Gaskell's inventive deployment of the novella and its 'doubling of story', Peter Skrine's analysis of her use of the characteristics of the German *Novelle*, and Anna Koustinoudi's discussion of how the narrator of 'Six Weeks at Heppenheim' deploys his illness as a strategy and pretext for his narrative.¹⁷ The 2007 *Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell* includes a chapter on the shorter fiction by Shirley Foster, reflecting this new critical

interest.¹⁸ However, the only collection to treat the subject of Gaskell's shorter fiction to date is *Elizabeth Gaskell and the Art of the Short Story* (2010), edited by Francesco Marroni, Renzo D'Agnillo and Massimo Verzella. While the chapters in the opening section of the book attend to Gaskell's deployment of 'a new language for a new society', those in the second part, 'In the darkest labyrinths of Gaskell's Imagination', uncover the possibilities for further research in Gaskell's experiments with the detective sub-genre.¹⁹ In the third part, Francesco Marroni engages with the narrativisation of dress codes and, in their investigation of 'intertextual territories', the chapters in the fourth and final part of the volume offer some helpful methodological frameworks for exploring questions of influence and re-appropriation.²⁰ This 2015 special issue of the *Gaskell Journal* is intended to continue and extend this burgeoning critical interest.

The sections in the remainder of this introduction survey several areas of investigation. These include Gaskell's engagement with the periodical press and the Victorian literary marketplace, her response to the connection between short stories and the Christmas season, and her deployment of the supernatural and sensational. We conclude this piece with some reflections on the two-part review in *All the Year Round*, newly attributed to Gaskell in July 2015, and its connections to her fictional writing.

The Periodical Press and the Victorian Literary Marketplace

Analysis of Gaskell's serialised fiction has been greatly enhanced by the increasing critical appreciation of the material qualities of the periodical within the Victorian literary marketplace: her stories can be read alongside contemporary cultural debates that had erupted in magazines, journals and newspapers of the day. This appreciation has been greatly facilitated by the new availability of open access on-line archives, such as *Dickens Journals Online* and *Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition*. In his seminal article, 'Time, Periodicals, and Literary Studies', Mark Turner considers the implications of this new availability for how we study and teach the Victorian novel and suggests how awareness of periodical context makes the Victorian novel 'a less monolithic genre of study'.²¹ Linda K. Hughes continues the project of dismantling the perception of the novel as a 'monolithic genre' in her argument that the most productive way to 'explore, identify, and assess the convergences in printed texts' is to think and move 'sideways' across genres and across texts that open 'out onto each other dialogically in and out of periodicals'.²² The articles in the 2012 issue of *Victorian Periodicals Review*, on 'Teaching and Learning in the Digital Humanities Classroom', offer some helpful suggestions for those who teach Victorian studies of ways to encourage students to engage with Victorian print culture and thereby to re-evaluate genre boundaries and crossings.²³

Giving more space to Victorian writers than many previous surveys of the form, *The British Short Story* (2011) by Emma Liggins, Andrew Maunder and Ruth

Robbins discusses 'The Victorian and Edwardian Short Story' as a continuous, if evolving and varied, tradition. In the first chapter, which interrogates the formal elements of the short story, the authors draw attention to the conditions that gave rise to its popularity in the mid-Victorian literary marketplace. Their discussion of a letter that William Makepeace Thackeray sent to Anthony Trollope illuminates how authors helped foster the perception that the short story was inferior to the novel and explains the role of the short story in enticing readers to purchase the longer works of popular writers. In his plea for a short piece from Trollope for *The Cornhill Magazine*, Thackeray likens writing a short story to baking tarts: 'Don't understand me to disparage our craft, especially *your* wares. I often say that I am like the pastrycook, and don't care for tarts, but prefer bread and cheese; but the public love the tarts [...] and we must bake and sell them.' What Thackeray recognises is that part of the appeal of short stories lies in the fact that they could 'be read – or "eaten" – quickly' and that they offered 'instant gratification'.²⁴ As Gaskell's letters testify, part of the appeal for writers is that short fiction could be written – or 'baked' – quickly and could therefore produce quick financial reimbursement.²⁵

Gaskell's unashamed determination to receive the best possible financial reward for her short stories fed into the longstanding image of her as a *Novelist and Biographer* who wrote 'minor' short fiction simply for money.²⁶ Fran Baker's celebration of Gaskell as a writer who, by the late 1850s, 'had become an astute negotiator who was well aware of her market value' is indicative of the recent critical turn from embarrassment to celebration of Gaskell's professionalism.²⁷ This celebration comes as a result of the critical turn to historicism, a turn that fosters a more detailed awareness of how Gaskell's fiction can be contextualised within the literary marketplace.

Among the first to contextualise Gaskell's shorter fiction in its material conditions of publication were Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund in their book, *Victorian Publishing and Mrs Gaskell's Work* (1999). In a discussion of 'Lizzie Leigh' and *Cranford*, they reveal how Gaskell adopts the form of serialised fiction in a particularly gendered way.²⁸ Whereas Dickens wanted serial parts to be self-contained – 'with a clear climax and resolution' – they suggest how Gaskell wanted a 'more leisurely pace for the development of the plot and the entanglement of her audience'.²⁹ Adding to Hughes's and Lund's recognition of how readers of different sexes responded to the rhythms of serial fiction, Joanne Shattock suggests how Gaskell remained responsive to the diverse class differences of her audience and sought to expand her readership at both ends of the class spectrum 'by sanctioning cheap reprints in the form of pamphlets' and by authorising collections in more expensively produced volumes.³⁰

In a book review that she wrote for *Household Words*, 'Company Manners', Gaskell comments that a good hostess is one who promotes the process whereby 'opponents' learn to 'understand each other's point of view'.³¹ Through the other

shorter non-fiction pieces that she contributed to Dickens's journals, she adopts the poise of the 'good hostess' in order to foster a sense of commonality among readers of different sexes and class backgrounds. Playing on the tropes of curiosity and gossip, these articles repeatedly foster a sense of intimacy between readers and narrators. For example, 'Traits of Stories of the Huguenots' begins with the words, 'I have always been interested in the conversation of anyone who could tell me anything about the Huguenots; and, little by little, I have picked up many fragments of information respecting them.'³² Similarly, the introductory paragraphs of 'The Schah's English Gardener' purport to offer information that comes from conversation and 'questioning', and the narrator of 'Modern Greek Songs' proposes to reveal things that are 'not extensively known.'³³ We can also identify this characteristic in the newly attributed articles that Gaskell contributed to *All the Year Round* in 1862.³⁴ Shattock has recently drawn attention to the scarcity of criticism on Gaskell's non-fiction contributions to Dickens's journals and suggested that they provide 'good examples of the way in which [the journals bridge] the gap between the middle-class family readers [...] and the less well educated artisan and lower-middle-class readers in whose price range [*Household Words*] positioned itself'³⁵ Using her gently educative pieces to unite her disparate audience in a community of learning, Gaskell promotes a cyclical rather than linear view of history: one that privileges gossip and tenacious connections over hard facts and polemic.

While Gaskell's non-fiction may have appealed to lower-middle-class readers when it first appeared in the two-penny weekly issue of *Household Words*, when it was republished in later collections it attracted a higher class of readers. Extending Margaret Beetham's comment that the move 'from periodical to volume always involve[s] a redefinition of the text, even if [...] every word is the same in the two versions', the move from volume to short story collection can be understood to involve further redefinition.³⁶ This redefinition is particularly notable when pieces of different genres are printed alongside one another. For instance, Gaskell includes her ostensibly non-fiction pieces 'Disappearances' and 'Traits and Stories of the Huguenots' in a collection that purports to consist solely of fiction: *Lizzie Leigh and Other Tales* (Chapman and Hall, 1855), thereby inviting the reader to assess them as 'tales' within a collection rather than as individual essays.

Recognition of how Gaskell took advantage of the conventions of the Victorian literary marketplace helps account for the resurgence of critical work on *Cranford*. Appearing over nine irregularly spaced instalments from 13 December 1851 to 21 May 1853, *Cranford* has been notoriously difficult to categorise.³⁷ The short story series developed organically, with Gaskell expressing her regret that she had killed off her main characters in the first episode (*Letters*, p.748). Rather than dismissing the series for the 'structural flaws' that arose from this circumstance, scholarship over the past two decades has interrogated its anomalous features.³⁸ For instance, Andrew Miller has drawn attention to the significance of the series' 'cyclical'

and 'fragmented' features, Lorna Huett has considered the intersection between *Cranford's* materiality and its critique of the commodity culture created by the Great Exhibition of 1851 and Thomas Recchio has analysed how the sketches that constitute *Cranford* took on the 'amplitude and coherence of a novel' when they were collected together in an illustrated volume.³⁹ More recently, Kate Krueger has demonstrated how Gaskell took advantage of the conventions of periodical publication to forge a new kind of narrative and to delineate a new kind of household where the unmarried or poor could occupy central roles, and Catherine Delafield has suggested how the narrative itself interacted with the 'recurring topics of journalism' alongside which it first appeared, thereby blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction.⁴⁰

The resurgence of interest in *Cranford* over the past five years is evident by the fact that three of the nine articles included in the 2010 issue of this journal were on *Cranford*. 2010 also saw Elizabeth Langland's Broadview edition and Sue Birtwistle and Susie Conklin's *The Cranford Companion*.⁴¹ Other recent notable work on *Cranford* includes Jill Rappaport's chapter on the 'sympathetic energy' that the gift culture of the text generates, Alan Shelston's article on 'Gaskell and the Secret Society of the Camorra', and Anna Fenton-Hathaway's article on *Cranford's* redefinition of 'redundancy'.⁴² Looking beyond academia, the increased profile of *Cranford* has benefited from the successful BBC adaptation written by Heidi Thomas and shown in 2007. This adaptation, which also combines elements from 'My Lady Ludlow' and 'Mr Harrison's Confessions' (a choice which itself elevated the significance of Gaskell's shorter fiction in relation to her better-known novels), has received critical attention in this journal and elsewhere.⁴³

Writing for the Christmas Market

One preoccupation of recent criticism has been the Christmas special issues in Dickens's journals and has demonstrated how and why Christmas proved a particularly lucrative time for the short story. At the forefront of this criticism, Tara Moore's *Victorian Christmas in Print* shows how Christmas readers saw literature as the appropriate means 'to help them reach the necessary elation expected of the season'.⁴⁴ Connecting the narrative content of Christmas books to wider social currents, Jude Piesse considers how Christmas narratives of the 1850s and 1860s 'played a key role in registering and imagining the historical experience of Victorian emigration'.⁴⁵

In some of Gaskell's earliest short stories, the 'elation' that readers connected with the Christmas season is repeatedly invoked, as are issues of community and nation-building. 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine', which she contributed to *Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress* in 1848, is seasonal in its focus on sympathy and benevolent action. In the earliest pieces that she contributed to *Household Words*, she reinforces the connection between Christmas and

benevolence. While the action of 'Lizzie Leigh' begins with the tableau of a grieving family on Christmas Day, the parable of the Good Samaritan is re-appropriated into the Christmas scene in 'The Heart of John Middleton' when a group of poachers share food with the destitute protagonist.⁴⁶ Between the publication of 'Lizzie Leigh' in March 1850 and 'The Heart of John Middleton' the following December, Gaskell published *The Moorland Cottage* as a 'Christmas tale' for Edward Chapman.⁴⁷ The story intervenes in the development of the Christmas book tradition through its negotiation of the relationship between domestic spaces (of home and nation) and the exterior locations of marketplace and colony. After exploring how the arguments of the tale's heroine crystallise 'the nationalistic hearth-love so prevalent in Christmas books', Moore suggests how Gaskell then provides an alternative to the traditional tale of the reunion of a colonial after many years away 'by narrating a leave-taking, including the reasons for departing from the homeland and the hopes bound up in the periphery.'⁴⁸ She subsequently demonstrates how, by participating in and revising popular narrative tropes, *The Moorland Cottage* exemplifies how 'emigration discourse' began to be 'marketed as the essence of Christmas reading.'⁴⁹

Charles Dickens played a central role in popularising the image of familial and national reading at Christmastime. He envisaged the Christmas numbers of his journals as mediums through which to share a belief in the restorative powers of storytelling. These Christmas numbers consisted of a number of linked narratives written by a group of authors, many of which are concerned with the theme of emigration and migration.⁵⁰ Gaskell contributed to five of these productions with: 'The Old Nurse's Story' (1852), 'The Squire's Tale' (1853), 'The Manchester Marriage' (1858), 'The Ghost in the Garden Room' (1859) and 'How the First Floor Went to Crowley Castle' (1863). While the efforts at collaborate production often proved frustrating for Dickens because his contributors rarely understood his vision, the dynamics of storytelling that the Christmas numbers express, and their success with the public, formed the nucleus of other short story collections, including Gaskell's own *Round the Sofa* (1859).⁵¹ This collection is the only one in which Gaskell provides a frame narrative of the sort that Dickens uses for the Christmas issues of his journals.⁵² The prologue that she includes links together the series of six pieces that had been previously published elsewhere. It opens with a young Miss Greatorax being taken to Edinburgh and welcomed into a group who gather around the sofa of an invalid lady to listen to stories. This lady, Mrs Dawson, turns out to be the narrator of 'My Lady Ludlow'. Articles by J.R. Watson and Larry K. Uffelman have argued how Gaskell's inclusion of the frame narrative alters the dynamic of the stories in the collection and illuminates how, as a storyteller, Gaskell teases and plays games with her readers.⁵³ The deployment of the frame also demonstrates that Gaskell took seriously the art of the new publication format, creating a unified work and not a casual reproduction of disparate pieces.

Tales of the Supernatural and Sensational

As her contributions to the Christmas marketplace indicate, Gaskell recognised and responded to the popular taste for tales of the supernatural and sensational. Such stories were, as Liggins, Maunder and Robbins commented, 'a long way from the cosy, rose-tinted image we have of the mid-Victorians as a staid, earnest and rather dull bunch'.⁵⁴ Indeed, Shirley Foster noted as a striking feature the prevalence of violence in Gaskell's shorter fiction, suggesting how theme connects to form: 'the sparser structure allows more direct insistence on [elements of violence] which often provide the central impetus around which the narration is structured and upon which it depends'.⁵⁵ Foster's analysis registers the often-observed difference between Gaskell's more troubling short stories and the optimistic social realism for which her novels made her famous.

As is signalled by Laura Kranzler's seminal re-publication in 2000 of some of Gaskell's writings under the title *Gothic Tales*, the improved status of Gaskell's short fiction owes much to the burgeoning of Gothic studies, since many of her stories deploy features associated with the 'literature of terror' as David Punter formulates it.⁵⁶ Like many other Victorian short stories, Gaskell's contain supernatural visitations such as ghosts, curses and monstrous doubles, along with sensational violence, suicide, uncontrolled passions and extreme power abuse. Early attention to her short fiction showed a very different side of the author known for her optimistic social realism, underpinned by faith in human progress and conciliation: the Gaskell of the short fiction especially in the late 1850s and 60s had a far darker imagination and more pessimistic view of the possibilities of human nature. While early Gothic studies in the 1980s and 90s tended to read its generic tropes as symbols of unconscious fear and desire, studies of Victorian Gothic such as Robert Mighall's argued for a historicist reading of them as emblems of cultural anxieties: Gothic offered a coded way to articulate profound concerns about society, modernity and the Victorian home, which might be difficult or controversial to express directly through realism.⁵⁷

In this light, Gaskell's 'The Old Nurse's Story', 'The Grey Woman', 'The Doom of the Griffiths', 'The Crooked Branch', 'The Poor Clare' and 'Lois the Witch' take their place in a tradition of Victorian Gothic, which relocated the terrors once identified with remote, exotic settings into the realm of the familiar in order to comment on 'normality'.⁵⁸ Above all, Gaskell focuses on oppression within the purportedly safe, even sacred haven of the home in tales which criticise the abuse of power by parents and husbands, who make victims of daughters, sons and wives. For Gaskell the home is never isolated from wider society, whose prejudices buttress the abuses that occur within the home.⁵⁹

More specifically, as Julia McCord Chavez's article in this issue reminds us, Gaskell has taken her place within the sub-tradition of 'female Gothic', a line of women writers stretching from Ann Radcliffe and Mary Wollstonecraft in the

1790s to Angela Carter and Sarah Waters in contemporary times who deploy the Gothic genre to explore issues of women's disempowerment within patriarchal power structures.⁶⁰ This feminist approach has energised much of the criticism that has appeared over the last twenty years on Gaskell's tales, which are shown to present more forcefully than most of her longer texts female victims deprived of all agency or monstrous females who are always at least partly exonerated by their experience of powerlessness.⁶¹ The form of the short story is not accidental to these Gothic themes, since it could evade the pressure towards resolution that novels were bound by to please the popular taste pandered to by circulating libraries (it is well known that Dickens was obliged to alter his original bleak ending of *Great Expectations* when the novel appeared in three-volume form). As Clare Hanson notes, the short story's disruption of dominant realist conventions allows the form to embody interpretations of experience that are 'in some way at odds with the "story" of dominant culture'; this tendency Diana Wallace applies especially to the ghost story, whose supernatural features themselves embody a disruption of 'normal' rational discourse.⁶²

Furthermore, the short story has been more generally identified with the experience of the social outsider, 'the lonely voice' as Frank O'Connor famously designated it in his 1963 book, whose isolation is symptomatic of fragmentations within society. Without space to present a panoramic view, briefer narratives often present individual experience as deeply dissociated from the collective and are thus suited to express themes of eccentricity or alienation.⁶³ So the short story has often been used to articulate the experience of those who feel opposed to mainstream versions of reality, a feature that has been applied to women's experience and disenfranchisement by writers through the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Ellen Burton Harrington even goes as far as claiming the short story as 'a feminist form, one that is particularly hospitable to women writers' for articulating their sense of marginalisation.⁶⁴ This has been demonstrated in relation to 'New Woman' writers of short fiction in the 1880s and 90s, in the context of first-wave feminism, but Gaskell can be placed in the same extended tradition of women writers who deployed the formal features of the short story to feminist ends, a project she achieves above all in her Gothic tales.⁶⁵

Conclusion

As well as recognising the greater variety of Gaskell's literary achievements than a sole focus on her novels would allow, in terms of form, genre and theme, it is worth reflecting on how an appreciation of Gaskell's short fiction might invite us to revisit our views of her longer works. We might pay more attention to format, for example reading *Cranford* not as a novel but as a short story cycle or sequence, which like more modern examples of the form (particularly by women writers) constructs a 'narrative of community' that negotiates tensions between individual and group

identity.⁶⁶ We might pay fuller attention to the publication context of her serialised novels, considering how readers might have experienced an episode of *North and South* or *Cousin Phillis* when read alongside the other stories and articles that made up the month's instalment of the journal. We might challenge the image of Gaskell as primarily a writer of *realist* novels, extending the perspective of Gothic to her longer works: a case could be made for *Sylvia's Lovers* as a Gothic fiction, with its themes of persecution, unleashed passion and power abuse, its sense of the haunting legacies of the past and of the ultimate mysteries of Providence, and its tormented female protagonist harrowed by experience in a world whose rules she did not write.

We can also consider the ways in which short fiction features within Gaskell's longer works. One of the earliest examples is the scene in *Mary Barton* where Mr Carson is moved to extend forgiveness to John Barton after watching a little girl forgive the rude errand boy who knocks her over: 'He did not know what he was doing', she tells her nurse.⁶⁷ Her echo of Christ's words send Carson to his Bible where he is convicted of his error and then to the dying John Barton's bedside where he reaches a recognition of himself as a sinner in need of God's forgiveness (*MB*, p.359). The inclusion of the scene, coming as a short episode set alongside the larger narrative of the novel, acts as an extra-biblical parable in the way that it upturns ordinary expectation and calls for the kind of self-scrutiny that Gaskell believed would lead to benevolent action.⁶⁸

Another use Gaskell makes of short fiction within her novels is when short cautionary tales are used to frame the situation of the characters, as is evident in her final two longer works. As Hilary Schor comments, stories abound in *Sylvia's Lovers* and become the 'cultural truths' and 'personal history' that shape the heroine's movement.⁶⁹ While the maritime stories that Charley Kinraid tells Sylvia foster her love for him, she receives a warning in the tale that her mother Bell tells her of the previously 'bonny lass' Nancy Hartley who went mad waiting for a lover who was never to return to her.⁷⁰ Sylvia's association of herself with Nancy sets up a sense of foreboding of the tragedy that is to come when she marries Philip in ignorance of his secret knowledge that Charley had been taken up by the press gang. The final reconciliation between husband and wife is shaped by the inclusion of another story, that of Guy, Earl of Warwick, who returns from fighting and wins a reconciliation with his wife Phillis on his deathbed. Philip interpolates himself into this story when he realises that 'Guy and Phillis might have been as real flesh and blood, long, long ago, as he and Sylvia had even been' (*SL*, p.466). His realisation is indicative of how the novel's resolution does not stand alone but is shaped by the narratives of others' lives. A similar pattern is evident through *Wives and Daughters*. As Carrie Wasinger suggests, while fairy-tale motifs recur through the novel to 'bring Molly in line with adult desires', other stories are introduced to give shape to the narratives of desire, marriage and familial relationships.⁷¹ For

instance, when Roger tells Molly the story of Harriet, a girl who learnt to be happy when her father remarried, he sets up the expectation for Molly to do likewise, however much she might struggle.⁷² While Roger might successfully use the tool of storytelling to shape and mould the child Molly, the adult Molly resists the trajectory of the typical 'heroine' and instead carves out her own story of self-assertion. The intertextual relations between Gaskell's authored works and the stories and tales they reference are among the many areas which are ripe for further investigation as dimensions of Gaskell's literary technique. The place of short fiction in Gaskell's literary reputation is now well established, but analysis of its significance is by no means yet exhausted.

Gaskell's New Attributions

Shortly before this journal issue went to production, a discovery was made which undoubtedly has implications for future Gaskell studies. Jeremy Parrott, an academic and antiquarian book dealer, uncovered Charles Dickens's personal bound collection of *All the Year Round* in which he recorded all the contributors he commissioned over a ten-year period. Parrott made the first public announcement of his discovery at the annual conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals at Ghent University, which was held on 10-11 July 2015. Within twenty-four hours, the announcement made it to the national news.⁷³ Among the key discoveries that the find has unearthed is the new attribution of two review articles to Elizabeth Gaskell's authorship. Entitled 'Select Committee on French Songs', the paired articles appeared in the journal on 1 February and 8 March 1862. They can be viewed publicly on the *Dickens Journals Online* website.⁷⁴

The pieces form a two-part review of a privately printed pamphlet in French (1853) by Jean-Jacques Ampère, entitled 'Bulletin du Comité de la Langue, de l'Histoire, et des Arts de la France'. As is characteristic of many reviews of the mid-Victorian era, the two-part commentary is hardly evaluative but rather offers a translated and digested version of Ampère's material.⁷⁵ His subject is one close to Gaskell's heart – the sympathetic understanding, and preservation, of local customs and folklore, before these oral traditions are lost to modernity.

Calling for information to be forwarded to his Commission to supplement his own knowledge, Ampère's declared aim was to muster 'a collection of the popular tradition and poetry of France, before the generation had passed away which had learnt much traditional knowledge in their youth' (part I, p.448). The review consists largely of poems (many are ballads) reproduced in French, followed by a prose translation, with some commentary added on the contexts in which the pieces originated or were performed. It also publicises Ampère's comprehensive call for submissions of narrative ballads, 'complaints' and political songs, didactic verses, canticles to saints, Christmas carols and even 'burlesque or drinking songs, provided they do not outrage decency'. This comprehensiveness is justified by

Romantic criteria: all popular ballads and rhymes are worthy of inclusion 'provided they have found a place in the heart of the people' (I, p.448).

In *Dickens, Journalism, Music*, Robert Terrell Bledsoe describes the first of the review articles as 'a selective anthology of poems and ballads with relatively little commentary'.⁷⁶ With the new attribution of Gaskell as author, this assessment can be nuanced. Throughout her non-fiction articles, Gaskell foregrounds the kind of commentary there is in the art of harmonising different voices. In 'Company Manners', an article that she had written for *Household Words*, she considers why, in his biographies of seventeenth century French women, Victor Cousin choose to promote *femmes d'esprit* over authoresses. Addressing the 'matter-of-fact English people' among whom she counts herself, she suggests that a survey of the art of 'Sableing' (after Madame de Sablé's Parisian salon) is something that 'we [...] English' would undoubtedly benefit from. Recounting a conversation with a French lady, she commends the opinion that the best hostess is one who listens rather than speaks out and 'collect[s] and harmonis[es]' opinions, 'saying a kind thing here, and a gentle thing there [...] till people the most oppressed learnt to understand each other's point of view, which it is a great thing for opponents to do'.⁷⁷ By subtitled her 'Select Committee' review articles 'Sitting the First' and 'Sitting the Second', Gaskell evokes the idea of a companionate face-to-face conversation. The variety of popular songs, stories and anecdotes she includes in both 'sittings' is indicative of her assumption of the role of the literary hostess whose task it is to harmonise and collect voices from the past and present and from regions as diverse as Savoy, Brittany, Corsica, Roussillon and the Pyrenees.

Gaskell's interest in contemporary and past French culture is amply demonstrated in other works, having been good friends with Mary Mohl since 1853 (whose Parisian salon inspired 'Company Manners') and an admirer of Madame Sevigné whose biography she hoped one day to write (towards which her piece 'French Life' was a preparatory gesture).⁷⁸ It is likely that Gaskell met Ampère at one of Mme Mohl's gatherings. It was here that she also became acquainted with M. de Tocqueville, who provides the first anecdote she includes in 'Select Committee'.⁷⁹ His story of how 'the children in the Basque country are taught to count in a kind of rhyme', which probably dates from the battle of Roncevaux Pass in 778, confirms her recognition of the deep-rootedness of folklore that is passed from generation to generation and is not constrained by spatial boundaries (I, p.448).

Gaskell's engagement with the committee's determination to collect pieces like the counting rhyme, which have endured and 'found a place in the heart of the people', is indicative of her own recognition that a reflective and personal history is just as important as a national and linear history (I, p.448). Indeed, she specifies that her concern is with how the popular songs of a nation are not 'merely historical when they recapitulate or refer to the facts of history; they deserve the name when they reproduce the manners of an age' (II, p.563). It is this impulse to

reproduce manners rather than facts that characterises Gaskell's fiction of the late 1850s and early 1860s and underlies her concern with providing alternatives to the chronological linear narrative; alternatives that, in the words of the narrator of 'My Lady Ludlow', have 'neither beginning, middle, nor end'.⁸⁰ As Josie Billington writes in her contribution to this 2015 journal, what Gaskell learned during this time, or had confirmed in her reading of George Eliot's fiction, is that "'big" could powerfully reside in "little". In the 'Select Committee', it is the 'little' French songs that are narrated by children, paupers and oppressed wives and daughters that give shape to a larger impression of a past age. Enmeshed in a world of gossip and anecdote, such impressions challenge the type of historical polemic that Dickens had offered in his serialisation of *A Child's History of England* in *Household Words* nine years earlier (19 November 1853-10 December 1853).

A 'Select Committee' offers the same affectionate interest in the details of folklore that is the focus of many of Gaskell's other non-fictional pieces, such as 'Cheshire Customs' and 'Cumberland Sheep-Shearers'. Her pieces 'Traits and Stories of the Huguenots' and 'An Accursed Race' showed Gaskell's understanding of the oppressive possibilities of collective traditions at work in French social history. The latter piece was itself a review of a longer work she had read in French, as was 'Modern Greek Songs', which focused on verse associated with agrarian festivals that were common to many cultures. All of these pieces were published in the 1850s, several of them in *Household Words*.⁸¹ Reviewing French works of literature was therefore something Gaskell was familiar with, and France, it seems, was Gaskell's closest cultural comparator to England: studying its culture offered her a route to a kind of informal comparative anthropology, evidencing the 'poetical beliefs' that crossed national boundaries and demonstrated the Romantic truth Gaskell clung to that 'we have all of us a human heart'.⁸² As she describes, in 'Select Committee', the traditions recorded in the French songs, or those which surrounded the performance of the songs, Gaskell often notes similarities with customs in British local cultures, mentioning Scotland, Yorkshire, Cornwall and the north of England, affirming their shared 'mythological' roots (II, p.567). Christian and pagan elements combine merrily in the ballads, and Marian piety is recorded with Gaskell's characteristic tolerance and affection for the 'poetry' of popular associations. As well as illustrating her favourite theme, and partaking in the Romantic project of preserving and valorising traditional oral culture, the review places Gaskell alongside other undervalued women translators of the mid-Victorian period such as Mary Howitt and Catherine Winkworth, who also brought European literatures into the homes of English speakers.⁸³

Recurring in a number of the review's selections (particularly in the second 'sitting'), and resonating with one of Gaskell's favourite fictional themes, is the figure of the vindicated transgressive female. Gaskell introduces 'La Chanson du Pétard' by telling the legend it commemorates: the story of 'Brave Judith' who

protected her town Castellane from Protestant assailants in 1586, by throwing a tub plastered in burning pitch upon their heads as they attacked the town walls. The event was ritually celebrated, Gaskell notes, with a touch of regret for its passing, until as recently as 1825 (II, pp.561-62). More telling, given Gaskell's own Gothic tales, is her choice of the lengthy Auvergne ballad in which a king's daughter feigns death to escape her father's power – he has imprisoned her for seven years because of her stubborn, forbidden love for 'a felon knight, a beggar knight, who hath not horse to ride' (II, p.565). Escaping from the grave, the young woman has her will and marries the handsome Dion, who quickly transpires to be a Bluebeard character, revealing that he has drowned fifteen wives already. Cunningly, the young woman gains control and survives in an action which matches anything imagined in 'female Gothic', in which female protagonists escape victimhood by journeying 'towards the assumption of some kind of agency and power in the patriarchal world':⁸⁴ pretending modesty, she asks Dion to turn his back while she undresses before entering the pool where he intends to drown her; once his back is turned, she pushes him in, drowns him and seizes all his lands. The song closes with her words that hover between self-vindication and vengeance: 'what he would have done to me I did to him' (II, p.565). It is a revision of the Bluebeard narrative worthy of Angela Carter and wittily subverts the terrible logic of Gaskell's own version of the legend in 'The Grey Woman', whose protagonist suffers but barely escapes conjugal brutality.⁸⁵ In terms of being a defiant cautionary tale asserting the rights of the powerless and turning the tables on prevailing power structures, the story is not unlike Wordsworth's 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' with its righteous curse enacted on the oppressor. But the French ballad's celebration of a woman who refuses to be a helpless victim, and who troubles the categories of heroine and transgressor (because to be one, as a female in a patriarchal context, entailed inevitably being the other), matches the taste of a writer who created so Gothically ambivalent a figure as Bridget in 'The Poor Clare'.

Resonating with links that are forged in 'The Poor Clare' between the spaniel and Bridget's daughter Mary, several of the songs that Gaskell includes in 'Select Committee' probe the boundaries between women and animals. In the 'First Sitting', she recounts two stories whereby a girl takes the form of an animal. In the first, a Breton piece called 'La Cane de Monfort', 'the girl of Maine' finds herself in danger of being captured by a fierce captain and prays 'to God and Our Lady that to a wild duck she might be changed'. Her prayer is answered and, upon seeing her fly away from her imprisonment, the captain 'turned a monk' out of remorse (I, p.451). The tale of female escape through metamorphic transformation is juxtaposed with a tale of capture. In this, 'The Holy Margaret' is, against her will, transformed into a 'white doe' each night. Eventually, she is hunted down, killed by her own brother and cut up and served at a grand dinner: 'My liver and my lungs are in the large caldron; my blood streams over the kitchen floor' (I, p.453). While the

association between violence against animals and violence against women finds echoes in Gaskell's female Gothic, the song's narrative account of the 'Druidical doctrine of the metempsychosis, or successive existence in different forms' (I, p.453) also recalls Gaskell's engagement with the theme of 'transmigration' in her Christmas novella of 1850, *The Moorland Cottage*.

One of the Breton ballads that Gaskell includes in the 'Second Sitting' further interrogates the nature of subjectivity as it blurs the boundaries of both animal and human and living and dead. In it, the speaker recounts how a nightingale's song reveals the fate of his love Jeanie – who finds herself 'burning in hell-fire' – and offers a warning against ending up the same place. We learn that Jeanie's fate can be accounted for by her participation in 'ungodly spinnings'. These are, Gaskell explains, gatherings 'very common to this day in Brittany' where women meet to spin and a professional story-teller comes to provide the entertainment. While many, including the clergy, might object to such practices, Gaskell finds much to celebrate and even finds a link between the 'spinnings' and '[t]he terrible Knitters o' Dent' (II, p.564), the inhabitants of the Yorkshire Dales whom Robert Southey describes in *The Doctor* (1837).

While we cannot easily align Gaskell's own shorter fiction with the 'ungodly spinnings' she describes in 'Select Committee', the discussion we provide here suggests some of the ways in which her writings may have been influenced and shaped by an engagement in the popular fragments of songs of French history. We anticipate that the recent attribution of the review articles will further Gaskell scholarship by illuminating the breadth of Gaskell's literary network and revealing her continued engagement with the personal and reflective history of manners. Moreover, we hope that the attention given to the find in the national press will foster more public interest in Gaskell as a storyteller and as an astute observer of human life and culture.

Notes

1. See Emma Liggins, Andrew Maunder and Ruth Robbins, *The British Short Story* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), p.6; and Ian Reid, *The Short Story* (London: Methuen, 1977), p.1.
2. For this periodisation, see for example Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman, 1983); Walter Allen, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); John Bayley, *The Short Story: Henry James to Elizabeth Bowen* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1988). The North American and Russian tradition is dated to earlier in the nineteenth century, with the productions and theories of Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Nicolai Gogol and Anton Chekov. See for example Reid, pp.28-9, and H.E. Bates, *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey* (London: Michael Joseph, 1972).
3. Reid discusses the 'moment of crisis' as structural focus of the short story, including James Joyce's term 'epiphany': the crisis might be internal as much as external, a moment of revelation or recognition, or mis-recognition (Reid, pp.55-9).
4. Quoted in Adrian Hunter, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.8.
5. 'Introduction' to the *Faber Book of Modern Stories* (London: Faber & Faber, 1937). Quoted in Bates, p.14.
6. Clare Hanson, 'Things out of Words: Towards a Poetics of Short Fiction', in *Re-Reading the Short Story*, ed. by Clare Hanson, pp.22-33 (p.23).
7. Poe's phrase is discussed in Reid, pp.54-5. Comparisons with these other art forms can be found in e.g. Shaw, pp.5-7.
8. For differentiation between these two traditions, see Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.5-7. Writers of exotic adventure stories like Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson and H.G. Wells are sometimes presented as precursors to the high modernist tradition, e.g. *The English Short Story 1880-1945: A Critical History*, ed. by Joseph M. Flora (Boston: Twayne, 1985); see also Shaw. Allen presents Dickens et al as precursors, while Henry Siedel Canby, writing a modernist retrospect, insists that Dickens, Gaskell et al belong to a 'tale' tradition markedly different from what he defines as the short story: see *A Study of the Short Story* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1913), pp.45-7. Within the history of short story scholarship, there are some works that attempt to make a case for taking short fiction seriously before 1880, notably Deborah A. Thomas, *Dickens and the Short Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) – see especially chapter 1; and Harold Orel, *The Victorian Short Story: Development and Triumph of a Literary Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) – see especially the Introduction and Epilogue.
9. Liggins et al, p.25. Orel suggests that the length of the short story became normalised in the late 1870s, with the prevalence of magazines as their publication context (p.2).
10. Quoted in Shaw, p.5.
11. Hunter, p.7.
12. Liggins et al detail writers' earnings from short fiction (pp.25-6).
13. Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p.9.
14. Kate Krueger, *British Women Writers and the Short Story, 1850-1930: Reclaiming Social Space* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
15. Patsy Stoneman, *Elizabeth Gaskell*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.6.
16. Elizabeth Haldane, *Mrs Gaskell and Her Friends* (London: Hodder and Stoughton,

- 1931), pp.5, 208. Quoted in Joanne Shattock, 'General Introduction', *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, Vol 1. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005), ix-xix (p.xvii); A.B. Hopkins, *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work* (London: John Lehman, 1952), p.322. Quoted in Stephen Severn's article in this journal issue (p.42).
17. See Barbara Hardy, "'Cousin Phillis": The Art of the Novella', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 19 (2005), 25-33 (p.29); Peter Skrine, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and her German Stories', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 12 (1998), 1-13 (p.5); Anna Koustinoudi, 'The Febrile "I"/Eye: Illness as Narrative Technique in Elizabeth Gaskell's "Six Weeks at Heppenheim"', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 25 (2011), 88-96 (p.88).
 18. Shirley Foster, 'Elizabeth Gaskell's Shorter Pieces', in *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.108-30.
 19. For instance, see Mariaconcetta Constantini, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and the Crime Short Story', in *Elizabeth Gaskell and the Art of the Short Story*, ed. by Francesco Marroni, Renzo D'Agnillo and Massimo Verzella (Bern; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp.51-71; Renzo d'Agnillo, 'Elizabeth Gaskell's "Disappearances": Narratives of Absence between Mystery and Empirical Detection', in *Elizabeth Gaskell and Art of the Short Story*, pp.71-80.
 20. Francesco Marroni, 'Narrating Nineteenth-Century Dress Codes: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Desire for a Turban', in *Elizabeth Gaskell and Art of the Short Story*, pp.124-43.
 21. Mark W. Turner, 'Time, Periodicals, and Literary Studies', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 39.4 (2006), 309-16 (p.311).
 22. Linda K. Hughes, 'SIDEWAYS!: Navigating the Material(ity) of Print Culture', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 47.1 (2014), 1-30, pp.21-2.
 23. 'Forum: Teaching and Learning in the Digital Humanities Classroom', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 45.2 (2012), 200-09.
 24. Liggins et al, *The British Short Story*, p.26.
 25. For instance, see Gaskell's negotiations about the publication of 'A Dark Night's Work' in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, ed. by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp.517, 518, 524.
 26. Arthur Pollard, *Mrs Gaskell: Novelist and Biographer* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965).
 27. Fran Baker, 'The Double Life of "The Ghost in the Garden Room": Charles Dickens Edits Elizabeth Gaskell', in *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive*, ed. by Carrie Smith and Lisa Stead (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), pp.75-90 (p.84).
 28. Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, *Victorian Publishing and Mrs Gaskell's Work* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.98.
 29. Hughes and Lund, p.97.
 30. Joanne Shattock, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and her Readers: From *Howitt's Journal* to the *Cornhill*', *The Gaskell Journal*, 25 (2011), 77- 87 (p.87).
 31. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'Company Manners', *Household Words*, 217 (20 May 1854), 323-31 (p.324). This is discussed later in our article in relation to 'Gaskell's New Attributions'.
 32. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'Traits and Stories of the Huguenots', *Household Words*, 194 (10 Sep 1853), 348-54 (p.348).
 33. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'The Schah's English Gardener', *Household Words*, 117 (19 June 1852), 317-21 (p.317); Elizabeth Gaskell, 'Modern Greek Songs', *Household Words*, 205 (25 June 1852), 25-32 (p.25).
 34. 'Select Committee on French Songs', 2 parts, *All the Year Round*, 145 (1 Feb 1862), 448-54; 150 (8 March 1862), 561-68.
 35. Joanne Shattock, 'Household Words and the "Community of Print" in the 1850s', in

- Charles Dickens and the Mid-Victorian Press 1850-1870*, ed. by Hazel Mackenzie and Ben Winyard (Buckingham: University of Buckingham Press, 2013), pp.52-75 (p.67).
36. Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1990), pp.19-32 (p.25).
 37. George V. Griffith argues that *Cranford* should be read as a 'short fiction series' rather than as a serial novel, based on the fact that the text was published at irregular intervals over 18 months between Dec 1851 and May 1853. See: 'What kind of book is *Cranford*?', *A Review of International English Literature*, 14.2 (1983), 53-65 (p.57).
 38. Coral Lansbury, *Elizabeth Gaskell and the Novel of Social Crisis* (London: Elek, 1975), p.93.
 39. Andrew H. Miller, *Novels Behind Glass: Commodity Culture and Victorian Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.93, 96; Lorna Huett, 'Commodity and Collectivity: *Cranford* in the Context of Household Words', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 17 (2003), 39-49 (p.39); Thomas Recchio, *Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford: A Publishing History* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.76.
 40. Krueger, p.20; Catherine Delafield, *Serialization and the Novel in Mid-Victorian Magazines* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), p.94.
 41. Sue Birtwistle and Susie Conklin, *The Cranford Companion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*, ed. by Elizabeth Langland (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2010).
 42. Jill Rappaport, *Giving Women: Alliance and Exchange in Victorian Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.96; Alan Shelston, 'From *Cranford* to the Conspirators of Naples: Gaskell and the Secret Society of the Camorra', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 25 (2011), 104-11; Anna Fenton-Hathaway, 'Gaskell's Detours: How *Mary Barton*, *Ruth*, and *Cranford* Redefined "Redundancy"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 42 (2014), 235-50.
 43. Rebecca White, "'A joke spoken in a rather sad tone": *Cranford*, Humour and Heidi Thomas's Television Adaptation', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 22 (2008), 145-60; Chris Louttit, 'Cranford, Popular Culture, and the Politics of Adapting the Victorian Novel for Television', *Adaptation*, 2 (2009), 34-48; Raffeaela Antinucci, 'Filming Gaskell's Shorter Fiction', in *Elizabeth Gaskell and the Art of the Short Story*, pp.155-68. For more recent work on Gaskell and adaptation see *Adapting Gaskell: Screen and Stage Versions of Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction*, ed. by Loredana Salis (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013).
 44. Tara Moore, *Victorian Christmas in Print* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.6.
 45. Jude Piesse, 'Dreaming across Oceans: Emigration and Nation in the Mid-Victorian Christmas Issue', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 46.1 (2013), 37-50 (p.38).
 46. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'Lizzie Leigh', *Household Words*, 1-3. (30 March, 7 April, 13 April 1850), 1-6; 32-5; 60-5; 'The Heart of John Middleton', *Household Words*, 40 (28 Dec 1850), 325-34.
 47. In a letter to Lady Kay Shuttleworth, Gaskell writes of her regret at promising to write *The Moorland Cottage*: 'Mr Chapman asked me to write a Xmas Story, "recommending benevolence, charity, etc," to which I agreed, why I cannot think now, for it was very foolish indeed. However I could not write about virtues to order, so it is simply a little country love-story called Rosemary, which will I suppose be published somewhere in November, and not be worth reading then; it is bad to make a bargain beforehand as to time or subject though the latter I have rejected'. *Letters*, p.81. *The Moorland Cottage* is discussed further by Josie Billington in this special issue.

48. Moore, p.26.
49. Moore, pp.28, 30.
50. Ruth Glancy describes how Dickens 'would write the linking framework and send round a circular explaining the theme of the number and his requirements for stories' in 'Dickens and Christmas: His Framed-Tale Themes', *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 35.1 (1980), 53-72 (p.58).
51. For more on the difficulties of collaborative production see Glancy, pp.58-9.
52. See, for example, Dickens's collections *The Haunted House* (1859) and *Mugby Junction* (1866) for uses of such a frame narrative.
53. J.R. Watson, "'Round the Sofa': Elizabeth Gaskell Tells Stories", *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 26 (1996), 89-99 (p.90); Larry K. Uffelman, 'From Serial to Novel: Elizabeth Gaskell assembles "Round the Sofa"', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 15 (2001), 30-7 (p.31).
54. Liggins et al, *The British Short Story*, p.28.
55. Shirley Foster, 'Violence and Disorder in Elizabeth Gaskell's Short Stories', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 19 (2005), 14-24, (p.15).
56. David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present* (2 vols), 2nd edition (London: Longman, 1996). For designations of Gaskell's work as 'Gothic', see Elizabeth Gaskell, *Gothic Tales*, ed. by Laura Kranzler (London: Penguin, 2000); and Laura Kranzler, 'Gothic Themes in Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 20 (2006), 47-59.
57. Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); see 'Introduction'.
58. On Victorian Gothic as 'homely Gothic', see Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), chapter 6; and Alexandra Warwick, 'Victorian Gothic', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic* (London: Routledge, 2007), ed. by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, pp.29-37.
59. On home as replicating societal ideologies, see Rebecca Styler, 'The Problem of "Evil" in Elizabeth Gaskell's Gothic Tales', *Gothic Studies*, 12:1 (2010), 33-50.
60. Important examples are Alison Milbank, *Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); and E.J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 2001). *Gothic Studies*, 6 (2004) is a special issue dedicated to 'Female Gothic'.
61. Examples include Maureen T. Reddy, 'Gaskell's "The Grey Woman": A Feminist Perspective', *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 15:2 (Spring 1985), 183-93; Diana Wallace, 'Uncanny Stories: The Ghost Story as Female Gothic', *Gothic Studies*, 6 (May 2004), 57-68; and Carol A. Martin, 'Gaskell's Ghosts: Truths in Disguise', *Studies in the Novel*, 21:1 (1989), 27-40. See further references in the article by Julia McCord Chavez in this volume.
62. Hanson, 'Introduction', *Re-Reading the Short Story*, ed. by Clare Hanson (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp.1-9 (p.6); Wallace, pp.57-9. For a more general discussion of the ghost as symbolic expression of the repressed, see Julia Briggs, 'The Ghost Story', in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp.122-31.
63. Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1963). See esp. p.19 on 'loneliness'.
64. Ellen Burton Harrington, 'Introduction: Scribbling Women and the Outlaw Form of the Short Story', in *Re-Reading the Short Story*, ed. by Clare Hanson (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp.1-14 (p.8).

65. On fin-de-siècle women writers' use of the short story, see Elaine Showalter's *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-Siècle* (London: Virago, 1993). Krueger (see above) considers Victorian women writers like Gaskell in continuity with these later writers.
66. The term is Sandra Zagarell's, applied by Roxanne Harde in 'Introduction', *Narratives of Community: Women's Short Story Sequences*, ed. by Roxanne Harde (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp.1-11. The collection contains an essay on the theme of community in *Cranford* by Kristen Berkey-Abbott, although formal features play little part in her discussion.
67. Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.355. Emphasis in the original.
68. For more on the interface between the biblical parable and Victorian realist fiction see Susan E. Colòn, *Victorian Parables* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012).
69. Hilary M. Schor, *Scheherezade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.62.
70. Elizabeth Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.187.
71. Carrie Wasinger, 'That "Old Rigmarole of Childhood": Fairytales and Socialization in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, *Studies in the Novel*, 40.3 (2008), 268-84 (p.270).
72. Elizabeth Gaskell, *Wives and Daughters* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.134.
73. For example see Emily Dugan, 'Charles Dickens' notes solve the mystery of unidentified Victorian authors', *The Independent*, 13 July 2015 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/charles-dickens-notes-solve-the-mystery-of-unidentified-victorian-authors-10384128.html>> [accessed 22 July 2015] and Alison Flood, 'Dickens's marginalia reveal famous contributors to his journal', *The Guardian*, 13 July 2015 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/13/dickens-marginalia-famous-contributors-journal-wilkie-collins-elizabeth-gaskell>> [accessed 22 July 2015].
74. The note on *Dickens Journals Online* states that an attribution to Henry Chorley was made in Robert Terrell Bledsoe, *Dickens, Journalism, Music: Household Words and All the Year Round* (London: Continuum, 2012), p.124. However, Bledsoe does admit hesitancy in this attribution and does not include the pieces among those on classical music and opera that he is certain that Chorley wrote (p.81).
75. For a helpful discussion of mid-Victorian reviews see Nicholas Dames, 'On Not Close Reading: The Prolonged Excerpt as Victorian Critical Protocol', in *The Feeling of Reading: Affective Experience and Victorian Literature*, ed. by Rachel Ablow (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp.11-26. Here, Dames suggests how reviewers sought to offer 'a reading experience in miniature' rather than an evaluation (p.13).
76. Bledsoe, pp.81-2.
77. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'Company Manners', p.324.
78. Gaskell outlines in a letter her intention to write the 'Life and Times of Madame de Sevigné'. *Letters*, p.712.
79. Philip Yarrow lists Ampère and Tocqueville among the scholars who called on Mme Mohl during the years that Gaskell visited. 'Mrs Gaskell and France', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 7 (1993), 16-36 (p.22).
80. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'My Lady Ludlow', in Gaskell, *My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories*, ed. by Edgar Wright (Oxford: World's Classics, 1989), p.11.
81. These pieces, with details of publication dates and outlets, can be found in *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005-6), volumes 1 and 4.

82. Gaskell includes these comments (the second a quotation from Wordsworth's poem 'The Cumberland Beggar') in her letter to Mary Howitt, from which her piece 'Cheshire Customs' was taken. See *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, ed. by J.A.V Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), pp.31, 33.
83. Howitt translated novels by the Swedish Fredrika Bremer and tales by Hans Christian Anderson; Winkworth translated entire books of German hymns; both were among Gaskell's correspondents.
84. David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p.279.
85. See Diana Wallace's article for a discussion of 'The Grey Woman' as a version of the Bluebeard legend. Angela Carter's feminist revisions of fairytales (including Bluebeard) are published in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979).