

*To the Panacea of all my malaises,*

*my Mother*

1871



Shahid Beheshti University  
Faculty of Letters and Humanities  
English Department

**Interpellation and Textual Paradoxes  
in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton***

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
English Literature*

*By: Farhad Jafari*

*Advisor: Dr. Ahmadzadeh*

*Reader: Dr. Ilkhani*

Tehran, Iran

March, 2010

۱۴۲۸۹۷

کتابخانه  
فصلنامه علمی  
پژوهش‌های  
ادبیات  
فارسی

۱۳۸۹ / ۷ / ۲۴

## ***Abstract***

This thesis reads the first novel of Elizabeth Gaskell in the light of Althusser and Macherey's ideas. Althusser and Macherey's definition of ideology revolutionized modern understanding of ideology. For any mode of production to reproduce its relations, there is a need for certain institutions to practice ideology. In Althusserian problematic, the ISAs are the ideological state apparatuses whose function is to reproduce ideology. They enact it through inculcating certain codes of manner. In *Mary Barton*, the family and religious ISAs indoctrinate certain codes of manner. What sustains the unity of the family, in this novel, is the potency of the characters. Potency is inculcated in individual members while, dialectically, it is the unifying force in the novel. Religious ISA, manifested in Unitarianism, fed the subjects with optimism. Interpellation, or hailing individuals into subjectivity, is another Althusserian thesis. In the novel, Mary is interpellated through three stages, Mary the daughter, Mary the would-be wife to Jem, and Mary the real wife. Mary Barton's final bliss is the fruit of her proper interpellation. Macherey's notion of 'ideological gaps and silences' also yields unique insights of *Mary Barton*. The ideological project of reconciliation between classes and maintaining social unity is achieved through the politics of pathetic commonality and religious agency. Both classes suffer and the amelioration of antipathy between them is only feasible through religion. However, this unity is only a myth. The ideological project of preserving social unity is only feasible through expelling Jem and Mary, the proletariats, from England to Canada. Preservation, in the novel, is only feasible through expulsion. The final integrity of Mary and Jem is in Canada, and not in England where the initial ideological project should have realized.

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> -----	4
A. General Background-----	5
B. The Argument-----	9
C. Literature Review-----	13
D. Thesis Outline-----	16
E. Approach and Methodology -----	18
F. Definition of Terms-----	24
<b>Chapter Two: Ideology, Text and Gaps</b> -----	27
A. Ideology in Althusserian Problematic -----	31
B. Textual Gaps and Ideology-----	39
<b>Chapter Three: ISAs, Character and Interpellation</b> -----	50
A. Potency: Feeding Battery of Victorian Family ISA in <i>Mary Barton</i> -----	52
B. Self-reliance and Optimism- the Codes of Religious ISA in <i>Mary Barton</i> -----	59
C. Interpellation in the Process of Maturation-----	65
<b>Chapter Four: Roaring Silences of <i>Mary Barton</i></b> -----	73
A. The Ideological Project-----	75
1. Figuration of Signs: Politics of Pathetic Commonality-----	81
2. Figuration of Signs: Religious Agency-----	90
B. The Circumscribed-Pluralized Work-----	93
<b>Chapter Five: Conclusion</b> -----	101
A. Summing Up -----	102
B. Findings-----	106
C. Suggestions for Further Readings-----	109
<b>Bibliography</b> -----	111

### *Acknowledgements*

I should express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Ahmadzadeh, my advisor, whose invaluable contribution to the edification of this thesis will always gleam golden in my life path. Her benevolently iterated commentary and her perpetual reminders extended some of my views while her good-hearted censures justly castigated my academic perversities. I should also thank the symbol of kindness, Dr. Ilkhani, who happened to be my reader. Her comments, as well as her clement sympathies, were a great help in the frustrating process of thesis writing. I should also thank dear Dr. Jafari whose vigilant reading of my thesis lay bare my own academic deficiencies. At last, but not least, my special thanks go to my dearest and nearest friend, Majid Soufiani, the healer of my mental twinges and a cure-all for all tortures of mind.

*Chapter 1*

**Introduction**

### ***General Background***

In a letter exchanged between Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) and Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) on the writing process, Brontë inquired of Gaskell:

Do you who have so many friends, - so large a circle of acquaintance, - find it easy, when you sit down to write, to isolate yourself from all those ties, and their own sweet associations, so as to be your own woman, uninfluenced or swayed by the consciousness of how your work may affect other minds; what blame or what sympathy it may call forth?  
*(The Life of Charlotte Brontë 409)*

As Deirdre D'Albertis argues, Gaskell was quite different from Brontë in that she did not consider writing a sequestering process. In other words, "Gaskell never felt it necessary to isolate herself from all those ties" (D'Albertis 15). The interrogative tone of Brontë, in this letter, is revelatory of her obsession with isolation in the process of writing so as to be her own woman. The sheer difference between Gaskell and her female contemporaries "emerges out of the rich

and ever-changing context of her encounter with 'other minds'" (16). She did not need sequester herself from the other 'mes' of herself in the process of writing. She is both a socialist and a true Christian, while also maintaining her taste for beauty:

One of my mes is, I do believe, a true Christian- (only people call her socialist and communist), another of my mes is a wife and a mother, and highly delighted at the delight of everyone else in the house ... Now that is my social self I suppose. Then again I have another self with a full taste for beauty and convenience which is pleased on its own account. How am I to reconcile all these members? (*The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* 108)

The awareness on the part of Gaskell of the 'warring members'<sup>1</sup> of her identity is, in fact, what makes her distinct from her contemporary woman writers. She reconciles her 'socialist self' with the conventional self of motherhood, the mixture which is also outstanding in her fictional world. She is not only the socialist in *Mary Barton* (1848), but also one with high appreciation of nature and its beauty in *Ruth* (1853). Gaskell and her fiction, in other words, occupy the middle ground between romantic radicalism of Emile Brontë and socialist extremism of male writers including Benjamin Disraeli.

Elizabeth Gleghorn Gaskell was born in September 1810 in Chelsea. She was the daughter of a Unitarian minister, William Stevenson. A year after her birth her mother died, and at the age of 13 months, Elizabeth was sent to live her childhood with her aunt in Knutsford, Cheshire. This town was always the inspiration behind her novels. At the age of four, her father remarried, and she was sent to live with her father and her stepmother. In one of her letters, she described the scene of her life with them:

Long ago I lived in Chelsea occasionally with my father and stepmother, and *very, very* unhappy I used to be; and if it had not been for the beautiful, grand river, which was an inexplicable comfort to me, and a family of the name of Kennett, I think my child's heart would have broken. (qtd. in Foster<sup>7</sup>)

---

<sup>1</sup> . The single quotes are used all through this thesis when a short quoted passage is repeated for emphasis. For instance, 'warring members' is single quoted since it is repeated.



Later, though, this unhappiness was largely offset by her marriage to William Gaskell, the assistant minister at Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, in 1832. They moved to Manchester where Gaskell helped her husband by distributing food and clothes at the chapel. In 1850, they moved to a bigger house far from the manufacturing district in open fields, the setting which was the inspirational source for the opening lines of *Mary Barton* (1848).

Gaskell was a devoted wife and mother. She was also beautiful and had many friends as Charlotte Brontë, Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), John Ruskin (1819-1900) and Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). Alongside her familial commitment, she also felt herself responsible for the hardships of the miserable working class. During her life in Manchester, she observed social, cultural and political tensions which are mirrored in her industrial novels. *Mary Barton*, her first novel, delineates the political and cultural turbulence of Manchester society, and the reflection of this turbulence in the psychological turmoil of the lower-class society. In 1844, Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), after witnessing the living conditions of the workers, observed that the workers' dwellings of Manchester were dirty, miserable and totally lacked comfort. In those houses, according to him, only degraded and unhealthy creatures would live (Engels 52). Gaskell, moved by such abject poverty as Engels depicted, resolved to write *Mary Barton*. In the Preface, she writes of the way she was affected by the miserable conditions of workers' lives: "I had always felt a deep sympathy with the careworn men, who looked as if doomed to struggle through their lives in strange alternations between work and want" (Preface to *Mary Barton* 3).

The novel is the depiction of the social and psychological plights of the workers in the industrialized city of Manchester. The book explores, at its heart, the injustice, abuse, and iniquity of the early industrialized Manchester society. A. W. Criak compares Elizabeth Gaskell to other social reformer novelists to the advantage of the former. For him, Gaskell depicted

industrial and poor workers and their plights as Disraeli and Kingsley did, accurate in factual account and passionately caring about the conditions they revealed. However, "Elizabeth Gaskell has the advantage over them of the personal experience and personal contact, of having not only observed, but known, visited and helped men like John Barton and the other mill-workers, or households like that of the Wilsons" (Criak 2). Gaskell's advantage, according to Craik, is the fruit of her regularly personal visits to the houses in which men like Barton and Davenport lived.

*Mary Barton* is, in effect, the combination of two stories, the tragic and the love story. What lies at the heart of the tragic novel, though, is the trials and tribulations of the workers, namely John Barton whose acrimonious irritation augments daily. He suffers not for himself alone, but for his fellow workers too. He is, in other words, an uneducated Marx whose ireful language fails him. He aspires to give utterance to the plights of his fellow men but is unable to do so, and his consequent silence is the smoldering ashes beneath the surface of gloom. The repressed voice is, ultimately, expressed in his violent act of murder and his consequent spasmodic fits. The second story, alternatively, concerns Mary and her love affairs. She is still in her adolescence when she loses her mother and is left to the care of her father. Her love affairs go along with the tragic story of her father's morosity. Oscillating between two lovers, Harry Carson and Jem Wilson, she chooses the latter. In order to reach her lover, however, she has to save him from the gallows. She exerts a lot of efforts and is, ultimately, rewarded by the writer. The novel ends with Jem and Mary and their conjugal bliss in Canada.

Apart from *Mary Barton*, Gaskell also published *Ruth* (1853), *Cranford* (1853), *Wives and Daughters* (1866), *North and South* (1855), *Cousin Phillis* (1863) and *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863). Of these, *Wives and Daughters* was left unfinished when she suddenly died in 1865. She was also wrote short stories.

Conventionally, she has been estimated as a matronly woman and one who conformed to the norms of Victorian England. Her critique of Victorian attitudes and her progressive style marked her, though, in the recent re-assessment of her works, as one who challenged traditional roles of women in society. The unconventionality is crystal-clear in her biography of her close friend Charlotte Brontë. Although the publication of her biography reinforced Gaskell's fame, "it also caused a furor, as it upset contemporary ideas of what people wanted to know about a life, and was considered to contain some allegedly libelous statements which had to be withdrawn" ([www.Gaskell Society.com](http://www.Gaskell Society.com)).

### *The Argument*

Nineteenth-century English literature is a mélange of critical reactions to the social turmoil of hunger, poverty and industrial progress. The attitudes varied greatly. On one hand, Jane Austen, whose novels were the expression of her concern with the calmness of country affairs at the heart of which lay the trivial love affairs of a young and prejudiced Elizabeth or a proud Darcy, retreated to the quiet of the country. On the other hand, social problem novels, whose writers' concern was to mirror the political and social turbulence of early industrialized England, were the testament to their writers' political and social engagement. Amongst these writers, whose early novels reflected social problems of the country, was Elizabeth Gaskell. Her two novels *Mary Barton* and *North and South* have been designated as social problem novels. Both novels explore the problems of industrialization and progress, and the effects of this industrialization on the life of workers. In *Mary Barton*, for instance, it is the excess of poverty which results in John Barton's ire and gloom, and which leads to his murder of Harry Carson. In both novels, it is not only the social and political turbulence which the writer probes, but there lies, at the heart of both

novels, the romantic, and in some parts sheer sentimental, emotions of the main characters. In fact, *Mary Barton* is the combination of the two plots of romantic love and social upheaval which, respectively, concern Mary and John Barton. Since the work has the problems of the proletariat at its heart, and since it claims to find solutions for the social problems it poses, Marxist-critical discourse can test how concerned the writer is about the industrialization and its impacts on workers.

*Mary Barton* is the first novel, and of course the first literary experience of Elizabeth Gaskell. It has been categorized by critics such as Raymond Williams and Josephine Guy as a “social problem” novel (Guy 164). The reflection of social problems, particularly those of industrialization, lies at the heart of the work. Social inequity and the crippling effects of industrialization abound in the fictional scenes. In the novel, religion and family, and their effects in maintaining social unity in the novel are conspicuous. Thus, the predominance of these institutions renders this novel suitable for an Althusserian analysis. The ISAs are the ideological state apparatuses that function to reproduce the relations of production. The family and religion institutions, in this literary work, play a significant role in maintaining the unity and, thus, the relations of production. They inculcate codes of manner in the characters, and these codes are seminal in reproducing that unity. What is, furthermore, significant is the writer’s systemic distribution of reward and punishment on the very touchstone of these ideological apparatuses. The main character’s progress also fits the notion of “interpellation” (*Lenin and Philosophy* 179). Mary’s progressive advance, dissected from the viewpoint of ideology, can give a uniquely fresh understanding of her character. The other novels of Gaskell cannot be explicitly dissected by the tools provided by Althusserian theories since they are not ideologically engaged. Except for *North and South* which is, along with *Mary Barton*, categorized as the ‘social problem’ novels,

Gaskell, in the novels published much later, retreats to the solace of country life. She does not, anymore, probe the problems of working class and social inequity, but, rather, is interested in the nineteenth century woman of rural setting. It is, moreover, her 'social problem' novels which have entertained much critical assessment from Marxist critics. As for *North and South*, the proportion of religion and family ISAs is comparatively less and, thus, the ideological codes of manner less apparent.

This thesis aims to read Gaskell's first novel, *Mary Barton*, in the light of Louis Althusser (1918-1990) and Pierre Macherey's (born 1938) theories. Althusser is a Marxist postmodern thinker whose concepts of ideology in social formations have been deeply influential in the domain of cultural studies. In fact, the definition which Althusser gives for ideology is more materialist than that of Marx himself. His definition of ideology and the materialization of the ideology in what he calls ISAs are, in particular, significant for this study. The process of transforming individuals into subjects in what he designates as 'interpellation' is also crucial for this research. 'Interpellation' clearly demonstrates how all men are, unconsciously, under ideology's dominance. 'Interpellation' gives a novel understanding of man's existence. It enlightens the reader as to man's ever-fettered status in the face of ideology. In this study, the main ISAs are detected and explored and their functions in maintaining the relations of production are dissected. It is shown how this function correlates with the ideology of the writer in a systemic permeation of reward and punishment. Macherey's notion of a text's silences and gaps is also entailed in the body of this research. Macherey, rising from the Reading *Capital* Circle, is an important figure in post-structuralist Marxism. His *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966) demonstrates how ideology always misrepresents reality. His expansion of Althusser's notions to literary texts is particularly significant for this study since it is he, rather than

Althusser, who shows that a literary text is not unified, but rife with gaps. What renders this novel particularly suitable for Macherey's notion of 'ideological silences and gaps' is the theme of social unity. The maintenance of social unity is conspicuous in the reconciliation scene between the classes in which John Barton is forgiven by Carson. Moreover, the writer's explicit assertion as to maintain social unity and equity cloaks the real state of affairs while it also reinforces the false belief that the unity is the representation of the real unity in the society. The study of the gaps of this ideology, in the novel, would certainly open a new vista in the history of the novel's critical appreciation. The perseverance in finding ideological gaps in this particular novel is very significant. *Mary Barton*, rather than other Gaskell's novels, is a novel about the proletariat and their vicissitudes in early industrial England. The ideological project of the writer, so long as analyzed through Macherey's notion of ideological gaps and silences, would break up and yield new results.

In this research, it is demonstrated how the text, despite the initial ideological project of the writer, is overturned and reversed. The following questions will be considered in the thesis:

- What are the main ISAs in the body of the novel?
- What ideological codes of manner do these ideological apparatuses inculcate in the literary characters?
- What sustains the unity of family as an ideological apparatus in the world of novel?
- What is the correlation between these ISAs and the ideology of the writer?
- How is the main character Mary Barton interpellated, that is, called into the process of subjection-subjectivity?
- What are the first and second stages in her 'interpellation'?

- How is the fully interpellated character represented in the novel?
- What is the Absolute Subject in each process of interpellation?
- What is the initial ideological project of the writer?
- What are the signs through which the ideological project of the writer is maintained?
- How does the 'politics of pathetic commonality' contribute to the unity of the theme?
- How does the agency of religion corroborate the thematic unity?
- What are the gaps of the novel?
- How do these gaps overturn the initial ideological project of the writer?

### ***Review of Literature***

When Gaskell, in 1865, died from heart failure, *Saturday Review* in an obituary established her fame in ambivalent terms:

Without being unique, or in any sense extraordinarily original in her range of subjects or in her method of treatment, sometimes not rising above a level which has been reached by many other English story tellers ... sometimes one-sided in social views, sometimes indiscreet in following her personal impulses too blindly, ... has yet achieved a success which will live long after her. (qtd. in Hamilton 179)

Contemporaneous with such writers as Charles Dickens (1812-1870), Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), and Jane Austen (1775-1817), Elizabeth Gaskell was always, during her lifetime, overshadowed by the literary giants of Victorian epoch. Less attention to her, as a result, was given after her death. Her novels have often been dismissed as either being sentimental, melodramatic or ideologically confused. The first assessment of her, in the twentieth century, appears with *Early Victorian Novelists* (1934) by David Cecil. Cecil dismisses her as being a

"minor novelist" with "slight talent" (Cecil 197). He, even, commented that in the literary world of Victorian England crammed with eagles, Gaskell was only a dove "beneath her charming veil" (Cecil 197-198). Gaskell's criticism reemerged in the 1950s with the Marxist critics such as Raymond Williams and their readings of her industrial novel *Mary Barton*. Gaskell was not, though, totally commended by this class of critics. Although "Gaskell garnered praise for focusing on the condition of the working classes, she drew criticism for offering personal rather than systemic solutions to class conflict" (Matus 2). Williams commended Gaskell for her shrewd observation and deeply sympathetic description of working class conditions. For him, Gaskell was aware of the "crushing experience of industrialism" (Williams 88). For Williams, Gaskell's *Mary Barton* is the first novel that vividly demonstrates the effects of industrialization. She posed splendid (splendid in the Marxist sense) questions. However, he criticized Gaskell as he believed that the work relapsed into sentimentality, and she did not offer solutions for the problems she raised. Williams is, in particular, critical of the last scene of the novel with Mary and Jem in Canada. For him, it is rather a running away from the posed questions of the novel.

After 1970, her novels have been re-read and re-interpreted in the light of new theories. Patsy Stoneman, for instance, has revived Gaskell in literary studies by approaching her novels from a feminist point of view and paying much attention to her "critique of power relations and traditional family structures" (Matus 2). The praise, occasionally though, is offset by pungent criticism when it comes to *Mary Barton*. Critics such as Carolyn Heilbrun have reproached Gaskell for having a motherly vision, "writing conventions, sometimes playing with them but never radically challenging the structures a patriarchal society has made up and called true" (Morgan 85). Susan Morgan's gender study of Gaskell's works, including *Mary Barton*, appreciates her works for offering "a complex definition of the real, one that insists on the



profound interdependence of the private and public realms, one that also envisions for everyone a feminine future better than the masculine present and past" (Morgan 85). Apart from gender and woman questions, *Mary Barton* has also been studied from the viewpoint of ethnography, voice and storytelling. Borislav Knezevic, for instance, eulogizes *Mary Barton* for recognizing an ethnographic imagination, at least partially: "a novel like *Mary Barton* does seem to be predicated on the idea that there is such a thing as a distinct culture of the Manchester working-class, and that this thing can be isolated for the attention of a concerned middle class" (Knezevic 98). Ivan Kreilkamp compares *Mary Barton* to *Sybil* from the vista of voice and storytelling. The industrial novel, for him, is an attempt to "redefine and thus to control, both at the ideological and formal level the uses of writing and speech introduced by Chartism" (Kreilkamp 48). Kreilkamp sees the central problem of polarized nation as much of a linguistic one as political. Patricia Ingham, analyzing the work on the ground of class, disapproves of the final reconciliation between a capitalist father and his son's trade unionist assassin. She argues that this reconciliation "left questions of social justice exposed and unanswered" (Ingham 56). Roxanne Eberle in *Chastity and Transgression in Women's Writing* (2002) traces the differences between Gaskell's heroines and her victimized women. The sexualized and politicized transgressors, including Esther in *Mary Barton*, are endowed with power to tell their own stories. For Eberle, Gaskell counters the "conventional image of prostitute as victim by empowering Esther with the key to the novel's plot" (Eberle 148). *Mary Barton* has also been analyzed on the basis of writer's life. Shirley Foster considers *Mary Barton* as much a documentary novel as an imaginative one, and traces the real events which triggered the inspiration to *Mary Barton*. The most contemporary critic, who has assayed Gaskell's work, eclectically utilizing critical stances, is Jill Matus. She focuses on "the psychological interiority-the nature of emotions and the

destabilizing effect on the self of overpowering emotional experience" (Matus 3). She explores how the social upheaval results in turbulent feelings in *Mary Barton*. For her, the way Gaskell represents consciousness "is not an inward turn away from social representation, but an insistence on the interrelationships between inner and outer worlds" (Matus 3). Some critics go so far as to retrace these critically diverse attitudes towards Gaskell in the complex issue of mothering. Deanna L. Davis, for instance, reads Gaskell's dismissal by some feminist writers and her appraisals by others in the complex issue of mothering: "Both responses unconsciously gesture towards the most troubling issue surrounding mothering, issue that touch the individual psyches of feminist women as much as they affect feminist political and social agendas" (Davis 507).

The Marxist-Althusserian reading of this novel offers an insightful reading of ideology in *Mary Barton*. Using Althusser and Macherey as its framework, this research examines the extant ISAs in the novel, while probing the codes of manner that these ISAs inculcate in the characters. These ISAs bulwark the relations of production and help reproduce them. The research also offers an ideological reading of Mary Barton's maturation. This reading of her character justifies, logically, why she is finally the blessed in the novel. Macherey's notion of ideology and its incompleteness is also utilized in the body of this thesis. The unity of the novel, which is only an ideology, is broken up and its unconscious is brought to the surface. Whether consciously or not, Gaskell represents an ideology which is not complete, and does only misrepresent reality.

### ***Thesis Outline***

This study aims to read *Mary Barton* in the light of Althusser and Macherey's ideas. What constitutes the body of this thesis is the focus on the Althusserian definition of ideology and his

material rendition of the word, and his student's tracing of ideology in the literary world. A short summary of the chapters will be helpful in showing the general direction of this study.

In the second chapter, Althusser's definition of ideology is explored in depth. Focusing on the definition of ideology, one can observe how his definition of ideology varies from that of his classically Marxist predecessors, namely Marx and Engels. His notion of ideology is closely related to the notion of interpellation of the individuals, which follows in the next part. The second part of this chapter deals with Macherey's notion of a literary work's silences and gaps. For him, as for other postmodern critical thinkers, the work is not an evenly organic whole whose parts are in absolute congruity. The meaning of the work lies as much in what it does not say as in what it says.

The third chapter, initially, deals with the presence of ideological practice in the literary world of *Mary Barton*. The material existence of ideology is probed in the novel and it is shown how the ISAs, namely the religious and family, are closely related to the ideology of the writer in a systemic distribution of reward and retribution. Sequential to the first project is the exploration of the process of interpellation of the main character in the novel. Mary Barton as the main character in the novel is interpellated in three stages which are discussed and probed in depth. The interpellation is coincidental with the process of maturation, and it is through the maturing stages that the individual Mary is finally transformed into a proper subject.

The fourth chapter of the thesis has the subject matter of ideology and its uneven reflection of reality. Macherey, to demonstrate the unevenness of ideology in literary forms, sets out to read certain literary works, the most detailed of which is Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island*. He manages to show that the initial ideological project of the writer is always circumscribed in its very diversity, and the oneness of the work is only a myth or rather an

ideology. In this chapter the researcher has persevered to show how the ideological project of the writer in *Mary Barton* is only an ideology and the work, rather than being an even whole, is plural in its very structure. The ideological project is figured through an index of symbology. It is through literary signs that this ideological project is realized. Later, it is shown that there are also contradictory signs which help reveal the depth of ideology and its uneven structure.

### ***Approach and Methodology***

Althusser and his former student Macherey's theories have revolutionized Marxism and Marxist literary-critical assessment. The Althusserian notions of ideology and subjectivity as well as Macherey's notions of ideological gaps and silences are very enlightening. These theories' application to the nineteenth-century novel *Mary Barton*, published in the milieu of industrialism and its aftermath, yield a remarkably distinct reassessment of the work. Bourgeoisie ideology, as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century, inculcated certain codes of manner in the individuals, which resulted in the reproduction of social relations. Family and religion were amongst those institutions. Althusser's theoretical framework provides the reader with the analysis of the institutions which ideologically transform the individuals into subjects. This transformation, itself, results in the reproduction of dominant ideology. Moreover, Macherey's theoretical framework provides a unique understanding of the work hitherto unvoiced by other critics. His notion of ideology's gaps and contradictions, so long as applied to the novel, reveals insightful vistas before the reader.

The much-contested concept and the definition of ideology, from Hegel on, has been a philosophical-cultural issue preoccupying the minds of Western philosophers and has been a heatedly debated issue in literary circles. Its usage and definition have varied from age to age.