

Gaskell Project 2015: Place, Progress, and Personhood

An Edited Collection

(Abstract Deadline: 31 October 2012)

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In anticipation of the 150th anniversary of Gaskell's death, we are seeking abstracts for an edited volume on the subject of Place, Progress, and Personhood in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell. The nineteenth century saw dramatic changes in the landscape of Britain as industry and technology reshaped the geographical space. The advent of the railway and the increasing predominance of manufactory machinery reoriented the nation's physical and social countenance. But alongside the excitement of progress and industry, there was also a sense of fear and loss manifested through an idealisation of the country home, the pastoral retreat, and the agricultural South. This collection of interdisciplinary essays will present a variety of geographical, industrial, archeological, psychological, and spatial perspectives not only on Gaskell's work, but also on Gaskell's place within the narrative of British letters and national identity.

Gaskell's importance, both as a literary figure and as a cultural touchstone, continues to rise. In the popular imagination, new BBC adaptations of her novels have perhaps given her the greatest celebrity she has had since her own lifetime. In addition, the recent Heritage Lottery Fund award of £1.85 million for the restoration and preservation of the Gaskells' house in Manchester, Plymouth Grove, indicates her renewed national influence.

This collection is very consciously an international and egalitarian collaboration, and we invite scholars of any level or discipline to submit an abstract.

Topics might include (but are not limited to):

- § Geography / materiality of place
- § Digital transformations of texts/mapping
- § Concepts of home and not home

- § Foreign places, travel, and national identity
- § Rural vs. urban landscapes
- § Ecology / environmentalism
- § Imagined places
- § Place and gender, the gendering of spaces
- § Space theory and Victorian spaces
- § Correspondence
- § Landmarks of progress, modernity, and personal identity
- § Gaskell's place in the popular imagination/literary tourism
- § Architectural spaces and everyday life
- § Ideas of belonging

Please submit an abstract of 300-500 words and a brief CV to gaskellproject2015@gmail.com by 31 October 2012. Authors will be notified by 5 January 2013 whether or not their abstract has been accepted. The deadline for the full-length article, if accepted, is 15 April 2013. Articles should be between 4,000 and 6,000 words in length, accompanied by an abstract of around 200 words.

Preliminary inquiries are welcome: kindly address them to gaskellproject2015@gmail.com.

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