



# **Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford: A Publishing History (Ashgate Studies in Publishing History: Manuscript, Print, Di)**

*Thomas Recchio*

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Tracing the publishing history of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* from its initial 1851-53 serialization in Dickens's *Household Words* through its numerous editions and adaptations, Thomas Recchio focuses especially on how the text has been deployed to support ideas related to nation and national identity. Recchio maps *Cranford*'s nineteenth-century reception in Britain and the United States through illustrated editions in England dating from 1864 and their subsequent re-publication in the United States, US school editions in the first two decades of the twentieth century, dramatic adaptations from 1899 to 2007, and Anglo-American literary criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century. Making extensive use of primary materials, Recchio considers *Cranford* within the context of the Victorian periodical press, contemporary reviews, theories of text and word relationships in illustrated books, community theater, and digital media. In addition to being a detailed publishing history that emphasizes the material forms of the book and its adaptations, Recchio's book is a narrative of *Cranford*'s evolution from an auto-ethnography of a receding mid-Victorian English way of life to a novel that was deployed as a maternal model to define an American sensibility for early twentieth-century Mediterranean and Eastern European immigrants. While focusing on one novel, Recchio offers a convincing micro-history of the way English literature was positioned in England and the United States to support an Anglo-centric cultural project, to resist the emergence of multicultural societies, and to ensure an unchanging notion of a stable English culture on both sides of the Atlantic.

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