



Why is there a wider audience and interest in costume drama, and does the answer to that help explain why there is such renewed interest by contemporary novelists in writing *historical fiction*? Industrial Britain is being replaced by the production of culture, and no doubt there's a regional agenda being satisfied with the production of such drama, but is there also a common theme of wanting to find a common language across social divisions? In

North and South

, the concern to bridge the social divisions is expressed in the symbolism of the heroine's clergyman father and an industrial worker praying together, and in the factory owner introducing a shared canteen where the factory managers and workers meet and eat together. Is this a theme that resonates strongly with today's political elite trying to find ways to relate to a population beyond the towns in the south-east?



Some background readings

[North and South, by Elizabeth Gaskell](#) , by Jessica Anderson, The Bluestocking Society 5 April 2010

[Like an Adored Elderly Relative You Visit: 'The Story of the Costume Drama'](#) , by J.M. Suarez,
PopMatters 12 August 2012

[David on slogging through the classics](#) , by David Bowden, IdeasTap 4 June 2014

Discussion Partners



Northern Soul is a celebration of all things Northern, from theatre, music, authors and art to

heritage, small businesses, food and leading figures. It was borne out of a desire to read some proper good writing about where we live. Northern Soul talks to the people who work, rest and play in the North of England and scour the region for interesting stories and events. Want to read a carefully crafted article about an oddball museum or go behind the scenes of a leading institution? Fancy a day out or the inside track on a new initiative? Look no further. Like looking at lovely pictures of Northern goodness? They have them.

The Northern Soul webzine is a collection of really good stuff to do, reflect on and ponder North of the Watford Gap. Although the contributors are based in Manchester – and love waxing lyrical about it – you could just as easily find them musing on the attractions of York, the appeal of Keswick or the darn right wonderfulness of Newcastle. If it's Northern and it's good then it's here.



The [Manchester Literature Festival](#) (MLF) began trading in 2006 and was built on the legacy of its successful predecessor, Manchester Poetry Festival. MLF provides unique and imaginative opportunities for audiences to experience high quality live literature via an annual festival format and associated project activities. The MLF aims to showcase the very best in contemporary writing from across the world; commission innovative literature from established and emerging writers; provide opportunities for writers to experiment with new media in the production and

presentation of their work, and to promote Manchester as a hub for international culture.

This year's Manchester Literature Festival offers a bigger and more eclectic programme than ever before, with 80 events to choose from. This discussion is badged under the ***Literary Reputations*** category.