

[North and South: a siren call to tame industrial ambition?](#)

October 2014

[Angelica Michelis](#) , [Helen Nugent](#) , [Alan Shelston](#) and [Vanessa Pupavac](#) introduced a discussion on what North and South says about society today, chaired by [Pauline Hadaway](#)



Costume dramas of **nineteenth century Britain**, self-consciously becoming *more gritty than rosy* , have recently captured the popular imagination way beyond the more prissy offerings of the 1970's. To mark the opening of the newly refurbished **Elizabeth Gaskell House** in October, this Salon discussion is going to have a look at what insights Gaskell's novel **North and South** , first published in 1855, offers us in understanding the dynamics of Britain's industrial revolution and what if anything it can tell us about society today. There is common reference made to a **North / South divide** , but compared to the times of Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, the Bronte sisters, and even Thomas Hardy is there still such a difference, and if so how does that present itself and what characteristics prevail? How should we be reading novels from different historical periods, and are we likely to misread them when transposing their messages for today?



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.



[http://www.manchesterliteraturefestival.org](#)