AN ACCOUNT OF JANE AUSTEN'S earliest literary legacy—one that would track the influence she exerted upon writers nearest to her own time—might productively consider the Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell. Mrs. Gaskell's North and South (1854-55) has all the makings of a deftly refashioned Pride and Prejudice. Here the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy is replayed when Margaret Hale's prejudice against the North and so-called "shoppy people" prompts her hasty misjudgment of John Thornton, the Milton manufacturer (19). Like all clever adaptations, Gaskell's has a twist, as it inverts our gendered expectations of the main protagonists: it is the "queenly" Margaret, not Thornton, who intimidates with a proud bearing and a "straight, fearless, dignified presence habitual to her" (57). In Gaskell, Margaret plays the proud Darcy, as it were. Originally published as a serial in Household Words in 1854 with Charles Dickens's editorial assistance, North and South may be the first full-length reworking of Pride and Prejudice. If this novel proves the Victorian ancestor of the cornucopia of modern adaptations that have deliciously reset Austen's original in contemporary environs, Gaskell's Milton (a thinly disguised Manchester) may have paved the way for Cohen's Boca Raton. (1) In sharp contrast, however, to those adaptations that proudly flaunt their Janeite lineage, North and South masked any debt to Austen. That is to say, Gaskell never acknowledged an influence outright, and, as a result, historians of the novel have never observed more than a vague family resemblance between her fictions and Austen's. In an argument such as this, authorial intention must remain speculative, but perhaps Gaskell's close relationship to Charlotte Bronte, who is known to have disapproved of Austen, explains this peculiar omission.

By 1854, Gaskell could not have been ignorant of Austen's work and its increasing hold over popular taste. True, after the posthumous double publication of Northanger Abbey with Persuasion in December of 1817, no English reissue of her novels took place until Richard Bentley included them in his series of Standard Novels in 1883 (Gilson 211). Judging by the book market's apparent lack of interest, fifteen years of "relative obscurity followed Austen upon her death, as her legacy lay dormant. But in the wake of Bentley's republication of Austen's six novels in his relatively inexpensive series, her work saw a sudden surge of popularity. Many further reprintings, by Bentley as well as others, followed in the late 1830s, the 40s and early '50s--before Gaskell composed her adaptation. Pride and Prejudice alone--quick to become the darling of Austen's oeuvre--continued to be reprinted by Bentley in 1886, 1846, 1853, and 1854. Further printings of this same novel by other publishing houses occurred in 1838, 1844, 1845, 1848, 1849, and 1851 (Gilson 211-45). In October 1845, the high-profile reviewer George Henry Lewes mentioned Austen in the same breath with Shakespeare, Cervantes, Moliere, Goethe, Fielding, and Scott. In an unsigned review in Fraser's Magazine in December of 1847, Lewes praised Austen's "marvellous dramatic power" and her "truth in the delineation of life and character,"...
Elizabeth Gaskell serialized North and South between September 1854 and January 1855 in Charles Dickens's magazine Household Words. Upon its publication, Gaskell established herself as a novelist capable of serious discourse on social responsibility and advocacy for change in defiance of established authority. (Summary by Dani) (18 hr 39 min). Chapters. Title: North and South. Author: Elizabeth Gaskell. Release Date: October 19, 2019 [EBook #4276]. Language: English. Character set encoding: UTF-8 **. Start of this project gutenberg ebook north and south **. Produced by Chuck Greif and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images available at The Internet Archive). North and south. Mrs. Shaw enjoyed the romance of the present engagement rather more than her daughter. Not but that Edith was very thoroughly and properly in love; still she would certainly have preferred a good house in Belgravia, to all the picturesqueness of the life which Captain Lennox described at Corfu. North and South. ELIZABETH GASKELL. Level 6 Retold by Mary Tomalin Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter. North and South, the story takes place in a northern city among working-class people. The book was violently attacked by newspapers but was also much admired. Ruth was another novel about the working class, centring on a 15-year-old orphan who has a child outside marriage. In North and South Margaret is a very kind and loving person and has been brought up to visit the poor and sick, but her upbringing has also taught her to despise commerce, which to some extent explains her dislike of Mr Thornton. Part of Margaret's journey in the novel is to learn to respect people who are involved in trade, and to become less proud. AN ACCOUNT OF JANE AUSTEN'S earliest literary legacy--one that would track the influence she exerted upon writers nearest to her own time--might productively consider the Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell. Mrs. Gaskell's North and South (1854-55) has all the makings of a deftly refashioned Pride and Prejudice. Here the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy is replayed when Margaret Hale's prejudice against the North and so-called "shoppy people" prompts her hasty misjudgment of John Thornton, the Milton manufacturer (19). Like all clever