

# *The Book and the movie*



# Books and films

- Watching adaptations of books is often disappointing.
- Cuts and additions are necessary in order to make a story which dates centuries ago more enjoyable and understandable to modern viewers.
- Despite the many cuts and additions , in my opinion , this is not the case of North and South.
- Let's discover together the differences between the book and the adaptation.





# The first meeting between John and Margaret

- The meeting between Margaret and Mr Thorton happens in the sitting room of a hotel.
- Their exchange of words is calm and polite.
- Gaskell's Thorton is a man of great self-control and self-discipline.
- The violent introduction of Mr Thorton is the greatest alteration the screenwriter makes from the original source.
- The film needed something more drastic to make Margaret's disdain for Thornton more understandable for the modern audience.
- Margaret's Victorian prejudice against a workingman like Thornton is too subtle for film.





# Missing history of Margaret's life in Helstone

- In order to get the story rolling in Milton, the mini-series largely skips over the first 6 chapters of the book
- The very same day Henry proposes her father drops the bombshell of his decision to leave his position and move to Milton, which shatters her comfort zone.
- The emotional anguish Margaret endures and the responsibility she shoulders during her remaining days in Helstone is only hinted at in the film.





# Henry and the Great Exhibition showdown

- There are no lethal glares or sparring words between Henry and John at the Great Exhibition .
- The scene is a brilliant invention by the screenwriter, allowing the viewer to see the vivid contrast between Southern arrogance and sophistication and the Northern practical, earnest pride.
- It is a great device for showing us Margaret's growing admiration for John and her new home — Milton.





# Dinner party argument

- Margaret argues with Thornton several times in the privacy of the Hales' home.
- She isn't so brazen as to chew out the host of an elegant dinner party in front of his own guests.
- Furthermore, women were not used in mingling in men's matters at those times.





## Ann Latimer, the silent contender

- There is no Ann Latimer in Gaskell's book. Maybe this is why she doesn't speak a word in the film.
- The mute but comely Ann serves her purpose well. She's living proof that Hannah isn't kidding when she boasts that her son is the catch of the town.
- Whenever Ann appears, we see Margaret's uncomfortable reaction.
- And the viewer is also expected to notice that John has no real interest Ann Latimer, even though she seems perfect and mother-approved.





# Hannah in the mill

- Hannah's going to the mill is never mentioned in the book. She wasn't a "dragon" overseer of the business at all.
- Margaret never steps foot in the mill either. As a matter of fact, there aren't really *any* scenes in the book that take place in the clanking, noisy cotton factory.
- Adding mill scenes was essential in the film adaptation, so the viewer could see the vivid reality of the world John lived in day in and day out.
- The moment Margaret slides that door open to enter his realm is unforgettable filmmaking magic.





## The sly and sprightly Mr Bell

- Mr. Bell doesn't suggest matrimony to Margaret in the book.
- He does mention, however, that he would love to have Margaret as his caretaker or his charge.
- Mr. Bell's character is used much the same in the book as in the film, he is perceptive of both Margaret's value as a unique and strong woman and the mutual "something" going on between John and Margaret.
- The wealthy godfather doesn't sail off to sunny Argentina in the book, but he dies of gout.





# The bond between Mr Hale and Thornton

- The relationship between John and Mr Hale is especially endearing as described in the book.
- The film only hints at this special friendship that developed between teacher and pupil.
- We don't see anything of how John is a rock of spiritual strength to Mr. Hale in his grief after Mrs. Hale dies.
- In a way, Mr Hale replaces Thornton's missing father figure, while Thornton is the son he cannot have by his side.





# Bessy and religion

- Gaskell was a Unitarian (*theological movement that believes that the God is one singular entity rather than a Trinity*), married to a Unitarian minister. She put Christian morality into all her books.
- Bessy speaks a lot about God and looks forward to a happier afterlife. Margaret reads from the Bible to Bessy.
- Mr. Hale and Higgins talk of God in their exchange. Margaret is a devout follower of the Church of England who worries about her father's breach with the church, and her brother's marriage to a Catholic.
- The Thorntons do not attend the Church of England.
- The harmonizing undertones of bringing characters of varying Christian faith together is mostly lost in the film.





# The train station ending

- The ending of the BBC's *North and South* is legendary,

**BUT**

- Margaret and John don't meet at the train station in the book, and they certainly don't seal their final understanding of each other's feelings by a kiss in public – scandalous behavior!
- Gaskell's ending has Thornton come to London, and the final pages place the lovers in a back drawing room – without Henry's disapproving eyes on them!





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