



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

**The Theme of Facts and Fancy in
Hard Times by Charles Dickens**

B.A. Essay

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Abstract

This B.A. essay is a thesis on the theme of facts and fancy in the novel *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens (1812-1870). The 19th century Industrial Revolution drastically changed the lives of the peasants of England. Many of them had to abandon their country lives due to them becoming tenants of their previous properties as more prosperous people took over their land. The peasants then moved to the cities, most notably to middle and northern England, where they began to work in mill factories under poor conditions. Dickens' lifetime saw the beginning of the end of the old cottage industry.

The theme of facts and fancy features prominently within *Hard Times*. Dickens feared that the facts of Utilitarianism could be destructive without the help of fancy. The novel reveals that these concepts can lead to the delusion of people. The main characters of the novel realize that their education of facts only deepens their misery and dejection; some of them become emotionally starved, and the conclusion is that they meet a different fate because of their futile efforts to acquire the education of Utilitarianism. When the characters of the novel are represented in this way it is obvious that Dickens is emphasizing the destruction of this theory of teaching. Dickens represents the philosophy of facts and fancy in his novel, and it is the main theme of *Hard Times*.

Hard Times by Charles Dickens

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I. Introduction

Charles Dickens was very interested in politics and social affairs and his novels cover the middle and lower middle classes. *Hard Times* was aimed at calling attention to the social and economic pressures of poverty in the urban industrial world of England. *Hard Times* is the novel that asks most clearly to be read not as a mere fiction but as a commentary on a contemporary crisis. “It is, after all, *Hard Times for These Times*, and it is dedicated to Thomas Carlyle, the social thinker whose vision of a society of human connection influenced Dickens so profoundly in the 1840s and 1850s” (Jordan, 67).

Charles Dickens began writing the novel *Hard Times* in January 1854, and published it in July the same year in his weekly periodical *Household Words*. Sales increased despite the mixed response from many critics, such as F.R. Leavis, who “celebrated *Hard Times* as a moral fable, and this view of the novel has dominated critical response ever since” (Schlicke, xxi).

Many politicians and some critics did not like how Dickens wrote about the trade unions, and his general pessimism regarding the Industrial Revolution, which he based on 19th century English history. However, “Dickens’s main intention, as Leavis says, was to comment on certain key characteristics of Victorian civilization. He was concerned about the difference ... between Fact and Fancy. The purpose of the novel was to emphasize ... that ... any method of ruling conduct or affairs that lacks sympathy, love, and understanding between human beings – is, in the end ... bitterly destructive” (Fielding, 132).

The realism literature writers in the Victorian era took their subject from commonplaces, they found it to be of interest and importance to describe the lifestyles and settings of middle and lower class citizens, and “to tell the truth ... discuss truthfulness, or representativeness, its contribution to, and consistency with, the sum of human wisdom” (Spector, 366-367). Detailed settings became important as means of establishing the realistic nature of characters and locations.

Dickens describes the life of former peasants, how they coped in the cities, and how poverty influenced their life. Their children attended school where they were educated on facts and nothing else. Their imagination was dulled down, and they became like the machines of the mill factories. Dickens also writes about the prosperous people, and how they used their wealth to control the poor. The novel also

features work dispute, and how it is handled by the authority. *Hard Times* is realistic and factual about the life of the people that lived during the 19th century when industrialism started in England. The novel is first and foremost about how one can distinguish between facts and fancy, by assimilating both into one's own living. The thesis of this novel is that Dickens maintains that fancy is a positive alternative to the philosophy of facts, and it is a value that people must have in mind so they can prosper and be happy.

II. The Theme of Facts and Fancy in *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens

In *Hard Times* Dickens introduces a way to resist the humiliating effects of the Industrial Revolution by writing the novel for and about ordinary people. He also realizes that people need fantasy and fancy by reading books, and by going to theaters and circuses. The novel is about the idea that there is more in life than pure facts to rely on.

Hard Times is about the division between the capitalistic mill owners and undervalued workers during the Victorian era. It is divided into three sections: Book the First. Sowing; Book the Second. Reaping; and Book the Third. Garnering. These names allude to the Bible. What you sow, you reap and then you harvest. *Hard Times* is about what you harvest when using only facts. Facts are a symbol of something that is unchangeable and fancy is something that is changeable in people's imagination and mind. Dickens maintains in his novel that fact and fancy must work together, so the individual can succeed in life, and become a healthy human being.

Hard Times is filled with contrasts, and features a diverse cast of characters. The novel describes people mostly from the rural districts, but also bankers and teachers. They have different characteristics: Rich or poor, honest or dishonest, and they speak either standard English or in dialect. The novel contrasts these different types of people and illustrates how their relationships are different and how there is unequal distribution of power within each relationship.

The main characters of the novel are Thomas Gradgrind and Josiah Bounderby. The roles of these individuals are very different, but they are forced to communicate with each other and that is both the main theme and conflict of the novel. The philosophy of facts is what they both believe in but in different ways: "For Mr Gradgrind the Philosophy of Fact is a matter of principle, but for his friend Mr Bounderby it is a source of slogans" (Schlicke, xiii). They also differ in their opinion of education. Gradgrind is a supporter of teaching facts and reason, but Bounderby says that education is "To be tumbled out of doors, neck and crop, and put upon the shortest allowance of everything except blows" (320). This is Bounderby's opinion when Gradgrind tells him that: "I doubt whether I have understood Louisa. I doubt whether I have been quite right in the manner of her education" (320). As Craig points out:

The stress on schooling is certainly no evasion. This linking of classroom and mill turns out to be one of Dickens's most telling ways of composing his sense of English civilization into a coherent, many-sided image. Both school and town were owned, or at least controlled, by the same men, the masters, some of whom were fanatically eager to try out on the populace the theoretical social systems which they had drawn up on strict Utilitarian principles. (Craig, 20)

Hard Times takes place in Coketown, which is a fictional town of 19th century England. The word coke refers to the treated coal that was used to power the factories, Coketown is a town of industrial pollution, and is described as follows in Book the First: "It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage" (28). In England the dehumanizing industrial factories were mostly in the middle and northern part of England, where the poor suffered nearly unbelievable conditions. The factory workers were treated like animals, they got just enough wages so they could keep themselves alive, and their working hours were stretched to the extremes. This fact is described in *Hard Times*: "The measured motion of their shadows on the walls, was the substitute Coketown had to show for the shadows of rustling woods; while, for summer hum of insects, it could offer, all the year round, from the dawn of Monday to the night of Saturday, the whirr of shafts and wheels" (148).

Coketown is like a jail: "It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next" (28). This is a description of the devastating life of the Coketowners, which certainly lacks diversity and fancy. The key statement of *Hard Times* that the workers are "equally like one another" is generated by the same reportorial assumption.

The novel contains metaphors that describe Coketown. The people, Dickens assumes, must be alike because they live in streets that are alike. Here metonymy functions with the linguistic invisibility of dead metaphor; "in fact, it might be called dead metonymy" (Spector, 373). By observing their appearance and environment, the characters in the novel have similar resemblance to the inside and to the outside of

their background, and it finds embodiment in their dialect. It is called metonymic character creation, which can be described as when Gradgrind is “A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. ... It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic” (3). Gradgrind emphasises it with his “square finger, moving here and there” (5); Stephen Blackpool, a factory worker in Coketown, speaks in Lancashire dialect, which is presented in the novel; Bounderby owns a bank and a factory, is arrogant and windy, he has a metallic laugh, his hair is in disorder and his stubbornness in all things is dominating. This reveals that this is a fact of the resemblance of the inside and the outside.

Thomas Gradgrind is the first character we are introduced to in the novel *Hard Times*. The emphasis is on his main features: “square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base ... The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s voice, which was inflexible, dry and dictorial” (1). In the beginning of the novel Mr. Gradgrind talks to the pupils, and there he embodies the hard facts with which he intends to fill their heads. Gradgrind is commanding when addressing the teacher Mr. M’Choakumchild:

Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir. (1)

Gradgrind is a Utilitarian theorist and his philosophy as such is that human nature can be governed by rules. He had been in the hardware trade before he became a member of Parliament, and now he is a schoolmaster at his private school in Coketown. His philosophy of facts and fancy, however, changes significantly during the course of the novel. Utilitarianism was a method to govern society - life should be lived according to logic and facts, not intuition or feelings. Utilitarianism is a theory on actions that are clear cut, and which dictates that people decide on what is of the greatest utility for them but in *Hard Times* “Dickens gives the lie to the Utilitarian principle that pursuit of individual fortune benefits society as a whole” (Schlicke, xiii).

In the chapter “Murdering the innocents” (3), the pupils are addressed by numbers, and Gradgrind asks Sissy Jupe, who is pupil number twenty, to define a horse factually. Sissy is the daughter of a clown at Sleary’s circus and to her wonder and dismay she is not able to do that, but when Bitzer, a dedicated pupil of the philosophy of facts at Mr. Gradgrind’s model school, is asked to define a horse factually he provides an accurate description of a horse: “Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive ... Age known by marks in the mouth” (6). This is an example of Utilitarian logic and education. Gradgrind is altogether a Utilitarian who believes in facts, and that the individual needs them to prosper. This episode demonstrates that Gradgrind has succeeded in teaching what facts actually are.

Dickens mocks Utilitarianism when he is describing the education of a government officer at Mr. M’Choakumchild’s school: “a professed pugilist ... ready to fight all England. ... He was certain to knock the wind out of common sense, and render that unlucky adversary deaf to the call of time. And he had it in charge from high authority to bring about the great public-office Millennium, when Commissioners should reign upon earth” (6-7). Dickens is opposing the education of the Utilitarian philosophy of facts in England with these words, and he makes it a point in *Hard Times*. Dickens' purpose is to expose the negative side of this education system, because he felt that facts were not proper unless fancy were involved. Gradgrind's command not to teach the boys and girls anything but facts results in nothing but negative consequences. As Schlicke points out:

The Utilitarians considered universal education an essential prerequisite for achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number ... Under the guidance of James Kay-Shuttleworth, the monumentally important Minute of 1846 had set up a teacher-training programme devised to improve educational standards by rapidly producing a large number of qualified instructors. (Schlicke, xii)

Dickens is describing the education system of England in *Hard Times* and there Mr. M’Choakumchild is its representative. Education was the major concern of Dickens and he introduces the failure of it in the novel.

Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is married and his children are Louisa, Tom, Malthus, Adam Smith and Jane, “and they were models every one. They had been lectured at, from their tenderest years; coursed, like little hares. Almost as soon as they could run

alone, they had been made to run to the lecture-room” (11). Gradgrind brought up his children in the purpose that they would succeed in life, and to do so he believed that the Utilitarian education of facts was the best method. Gradgrind began this teaching when their souls were like empty vessels that needed to be filled with knowledge of facts. But Louisa feels that something is missing when she says to her father “What do I know, father, ... of tastes and fancies; of aspirations and affections; of all that part of my nature in which such light things might have been nourished?” (134).

Dickens satirizes Victorian education, and he often uses irony and sarcasm in the novel in order to attack or uncover what he thinks is immoral or stupid. In the classroom the pupils are taught under a strict order, and the goal of education is to learn facts. The children are not allowed to use their imagination, or "fancy" (8) as their teachers call it, and Gradgrind presents a Utilitarian vision of education that is meant to censor anything that conflicts with the principle of teaching solely facts. Later he acknowledges that this was a failure on his behalf, because Louisa and Tom both become unhappy and fail to succeed in life.

Once when Louisa is in school she converses with her brother, Tom, and begins her conversation by saying to him that she wonders. She is overheard by her father whose aim in education is that children should not be affected by imagination or feelings. Mr. Gradgrind declares: “By means of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, settle everything somehow, and never wonder” (64). Mr. M’Choakumchild, the teacher of Gradgrind’s school, is convinced by this theory, and teaches according to this. Dickens uses his name satirically by reflecting on the teacher’s character and actions. He insinuates that he is choking the children to death by his teaching.

Mrs. Gradgrind does not like when her daughter, Louisa, wonders. She hears Louisa saying to her brother Tom: “I have such unmanageable thoughts, that they will wonder” (70). Her mother gets angry and says: “Thomas, it is really shameful ... that a boy brought up as you have been, ... should be found encouraging his sister to wonder, when he knows his father has expressly said that she is not to do it” (70). Mrs. Gradgrind is not in good spirits and says, “I really do wish that I had never had a family, and then you would have known what it was to do without me!” (71). Her husband is frequently away on parliamentary duties, and the upbringing of the children is mainly in her hands, but she does not all the time fulfill her duties because she is a sickly woman.

Mrs. Gradgrind has always believed in her husband's philosophy but the marriage with him appears to consist of emptiness. She never manages to understand or communicate with him, because he seems so absent in his philosophy of facts and reason. She is in agony and tells Louisa, that she feels something is missing, and says: "You learnt a great deal, Louisa, and so did your brother. Ologies of all kinds from morning to night. ... But there is something – not an Ology at all – that your father has missed, or forgotten, Louisa. I don't know what it is. ... I want to write to him ... Give me a pen, give me a pen" (266). Mrs. Gradgrind is trying to remember the love she once had from her husband when Louisa visits her for the last time before she dies. Her husband seems to have been sincere in his Utilitarian philosophy in terms of his attitude towards his wife and she is like her children, emotionally starved. She is aware that she is neglected by him, and says with repressed longings, "You know your father is almost always away now, and therefore I must write to him about it ... She fancied, however, that her request had been complied with, and that the pen she could not have held was in her hand" (265-266). Her attitude emphasizes Dickens's criticism that the Utilitarian philosophy of facts will not make people happy and fulfilled.

Bitzer is a well-crammed pupil at Gradgrind's school, and when he has got his Utilitarian education, he becomes an employee as a light porter and a spy at Bounderby's bank. He is only inspired by his own concerns, his complexion and character is pale, and he is an unrelenting fanatic of the discipline of facts. Bitzer is the person who almost prevents Tom from fleeing abroad after it is discovered that he is the bank robber, but not Stephen Blackpool, the poor weaver at the mill-factory who has been suspected of the crime. He bullies Sissy at Gradgrind's school and when chasing her, Bitzer is asked by Gradgrind why he is running after Sissy: "I asked her if she would know how to define a horse to-morrow, and offered to tell her again, and she ran away, and I ran after her, Sir" (33). Gradgrind does not like his answer and says: "Bitzer, turn you about and take yourself home" (34). This scene shows that Gradgrind is rescuing her from the fancy and evil thoughts of Bitzer, and this reveals that he has sympathy towards Sissy. Later Gradgrind asks Sissy to move to his home, Stone Lodge, to take care of his feeble wife. Sissy accepts this offer because she has not seen her father for a long time, and becomes desperate, not knowing where he is. She fancies, however, that he will return to the circus again in process of time.

When Dickens begins the novel by describing the classroom at Gradgrind's school, stating that "the scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom" (1), he satirizes the schoolroom by calling it a vault, which is an allusion to a catacomb or a grave. As stated above, this classroom has been intentionally created as a factory with the purpose to produce future industrial workers. The education at the school is ruled by the idea of Utilitarian theories, which Gradgrind believes in as a method of teaching children:

These ideas can be broadly labelled as Utilitarianism and Political Economy. Strictly speaking, the two concepts are not synonymous, but they are closely related and for Dickens they came to the same thing in the end. Utilitarianism was the brainchild of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), a personally eccentric philosopher and social reformer who held that virtue was a matter of utility: an action was good if it helped to bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest number. (Schlicke, x)

This education robbed the children of their innocence and their souls of imagination. Dickens depicts mass education and how it suppresses those the school should help be creative and imaginative.

Dickens depicts the classroom as an inhuman world that also exists outside the school. The classroom is arranged like a factory with the purpose of producing future workers. "For, the boys and the girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval" (5). The children are not allowed to stimulate their fancy, and in this chapter Mr. Gradgrind is sarcastic and mean towards Sissy, who embodies Victorian femininity, composed of kindness and sensibility. He says to her: "You are never to fancy" (8), when she says she is fond of flowers on carpets, admitting that: "They would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy –" (8). The teacher at the school says: "You do not walk upon flowers in fact; ... You must use, for all these purposes, combinations and modifications ... of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste" (9). Education that emphasizes facts and tries to eliminate fancy, is a justification to get rid of fancy and imagination in children, and is like the heading of the chapter indicates, an attempt to kill the imagination and fancy of children.

Dickens draws attention to another mode of fancy that brings pleasure to others;

the reading of literature. There he mentions a library in Coketown, “to which general access was easy” (65). The workers wonder in their misery how other people live, and they read about “human nature, human passions, human hopes and fears, the struggles, triumphs and defeats, the cares and joys and sorrows, the lives and deaths of common men and women!” (65). They read novels, and that fulfills their imaginative side. The life in the factories in Coketown is a life of struggle both at home and at their working place, which is without any fancy to awaken their imagination and perception. The novels provide escape from their dull life. The Coketowners read about the lives of common people. “They sometimes after fifteen hours’ work, sat down to read mere fables about men and women, more or less like themselves, and about children, more or less like their own” (65). This was their simple way to be able to come to terms with their situation by reading about other people they could compare themselves with, and to imagine another life, which was unlike theirs. Fiction gives them relaxation and braces them for their daily routine.

Dickens valued spontaneity, freedom, release, enjoyment, fellow-feeling, and contentment with one's lot – “these were the values which Dickens associated with fancy, and these were the values which he held up as positive alternatives to the leaden Philosophy of Fact” (Schlicke, xviii). The circus provided to the factory workers the fantasy and fancy they lacked in their lives. There were many circuses operating in England by the mid-19th century. Trick-riding was the main attraction, and travelling circuses were big business during this time. These circuses included an equestrian clown, a tightrope walker, elephants and two or three horses, which pulled the wagons when the circus was on the move. Some would have small tents whilst other circuses performed in the open air with no more than a ring of rope and staves:

This provided pleasures which were decidedly non-Utilitarian; instead, they offered an escape from the hardships and cares of daily life, and an escape into a fantasy world of glamour, excitement, and novelty. It offered shared pleasures by performing to an audience, with no pretence of instruction or utility, but with the simple and humble purpose of providing amusement. (Schlicke, xviii)

Hard Times has a series of contrasts between facts and fancy, and the circus plays a significant role in building an imaginative world that relates to the fancy that the circus people demonstrate, and it gives the factory workers an opportunity to visualize another world than the one they are used to. The circus is a family affair, and

it illustrates the unity of many people acting together, and depending on each other in circus activities. “The father of one of the families was in the habit of balancing the father of another of the families on the top of a great pole; the father of a third family often made a pyramid of both those fathers” (45). These people are working together and have respect for one another. “Yet there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people ... and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another” (46). This describes the fact that they enjoy the ability to create a dream world for the spectators.

At the beginning of *Hard Time* Dickens describes when Gradgrind discovers that his children, Louisa and Tom are peeping through a hole at a circus in the neighbourhood of Coketown. He sees a flag that advertises the circus, called “Sleary’s Horse-riding” (14). Gradgrind is humiliated and asks them “what do you do here?” (15). Louisa answers boldly that she wants to see what a circus is and her face is beaming with delight. Tom responds in another way, and “gave himself up to be taken home like a machine” (15). Louisa is fifteen or sixteen and is becoming a woman but Tom is younger. This episode is the first time they see something that stirs up their fancy and imagination. Seeing the circus with the horses, elephants, clowns and acrobats for the first time, makes them wonder if life has something else to provide them than their daily routine. In their mind they previously had blurred thoughts that something else existed but did not know what it could be. Gradgrind has thwarted his children's imaginative side, and they begin to wonder if life has nothing else to offer them but facts.

The characters of Sissy Jupe and Mr. Sleary show that facts and fancy can work together. Sissy’s character and Sleary's benevolence project a beam of light in *Hard Times*. The circus plays an important role when people want to be entertained. Mr. Sleary tells Mr. Gradgrind: “People must be amuthed, Thquire, thomehow ... they can’t be alwayth a working, nor yet they can’t be alwayth a learning. Make the bethth of uth; not the wurtht” (53).

The use of dialect in *Hard Times* is mentioned in an article by Patricia Ingham: “This novel marks a treatment of dialect in literature that belongs specifically to the nineteenth century: the presentation of local speech as part of the factual accuracy for which many industrial novelists strove in other respects” (Ingham, 518).

Dickens wants to describe how poor people talk and how their dialect is written. This is an attempt to approach the gap between poor and rich people, and also an effort to understand them.

Stephen Blackpool the poor weaver at Mr. Bounderby's factory speaks in a dialect depicted in *Hard Times*. Stephen has been married to a dissolute, drunken woman for eighteen years. He wants to get a separation, and goes to Mr. Bounderby for an advice on how to divorce his wife, and says in his Lancashire dialect: "I mun be ridden o' her. I cannot bear 't nommore. I ha' lived under 't so long, for that I had'n the pity and comforting words o'th'best lass living or dead. Haply, but for her, I should ha' gone hottering mad" (97). Mr. Bounderby offers him no help and Stephen cannot afford the divorce. He is in love with Rachael who also is a Hand at the factory. He wants to marry her, but the marriage law in England bans any separation from a woman, unless the man is able to pay for it or if the woman has committed adultery. He is thus stuck with his wife because of his poverty. Bounderby is arrogant towards Stephen, and says that he must accept his miserable marriage. Bounderby tells him when Stephen asks him if he knew the law that could help him: "There is such a law ... But it's not for you at all. ... It costs a mint of money" (99).

Dickens message is to describe that divorce is not for all people, only for those that are prosperous as Bounderby who uses his influence and money to do what he thinks is the best solution for himself when he divorces Louisa.

Josiah Bounderby and Thomas Gradgrind are friends. The name Josiah has a religious allusion, but the fact is that he is not an honest man. He boasts of being a self-made man who was abandoned by his mother, Mrs. Pegler, as a young boy, and often declares that he has worked his way out of the gutter. Louisa, Gradgrind's daughter, is twenty years old, but Mr. Bounderby is fifty when he proposes to marry her. Louisa is not in love with Bounderby; she only feels emptiness in her heart. She has neither experienced tenderness nor love from her mother or father, but she agrees to accept Bounderby's proposal to please her father, because he wants her "to consider this question ... simply as one of tangible Fact" (130). She only feels love and tenderness for her brother Tom.

Louisa is rather quiet and reserved, but she is good looking, as James Harthouse notices when he sees her for the first time. "Is there nothing, he thought, glancing at

her as she sat at the head of the table, where her youthful figure, small and slight, but very graceful, looked as pretty as it look misplaced; is there nothing that will move that face” (172-173). However, her appearance has a cool composure because it seems to lack a sweet temper such as Sissy and Rachael have. Louisa was brought up by her father in accordance with his Utilitarian beliefs, which prevents her to let herself fancy about things she does not understand and that are fantastic and imaginative. She has difficulty communicating with people and her father has problems in understanding her, like when he tries to convince her that it would be utilitarian to marry Mr. Bounderby, which she had never considered. Gradgrind assures her that “Mr. Bounderby does not do you the injustice, and does not do himself the injustice, of pretending to anything fanciful, fantastic, or ... sentimental” (129-130). She has never dated a man, so she is bewildered what to say to him. When she looks out of her room with the view towards the factory chimneys she says: “There seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out, father” (132). Unable to clarify to her father what she means, she can only describe what she is used to see through her window. The smoke from the factory is the only thing she has fanciful thoughts about when she sees it take a different form. Her father does not understand her and says: “I do not see the application of the remark” (132). Gradgrind seems to unconsciously try to suffocate the feelings of his daughter but she is aware of them although she cannot define her emotions.

Katherine Kearns comments on Gradgrind’s rejection of the imaginative or fanciful side of human nature:

Gradgrind’s resolute scourging of “fancy”, his unreserved disapproval toward all carnival things, and his anxieties about acrobatics and hostelry suggest that, for him, these are a periphrasis for sexuality and thus antithetical to the realist’s (and the father’s) agenda, which is driven by a more sublimated form of desire. Gradgrindism’s repression of every available outlet for the play of fantasy – the no-real – generates within the story the extremisms of both Tom’s debauchery and Louisa’s blank depression. (Kearns, 858)

In this comment it is also declared that Gradgrind’s education of facts has utterly failed when he realizes that his son has robbed a bank, and Louisa is desperate because of her father’s bad advice that she marry Bounderby. Gradgrind learns what his philosophy of facts has done to them. He locks himself up in his room, and when

he appears again he looks aged, “and yet he looked a wiser man, and a better man, than in the days when in this life he wanted nothing but Facts” (367). Louisa is trying to keep up his spirit by saying that “you have three young children left. They will be different, I will be different yet, with Heaven's help” (367).

Mrs. Sparsit, an elderly lady, is Mr. Bounderby's housekeeper. She had been a member of the aristocratic elite, and Bounderby is very proud of having a former aristocrat as his servant, because his reputation increases through the rumour that a mean-born but now a wealthy man houses such a celebrity. Mrs. Sparsit is a manipulative and dishonest woman who is jealous of Louisa, Bounderby's wife, and constantly spies on her. In Book the Second, Bounderby discovers to his agony that he has charitable feelings, when Mrs. Sparsit and Bounderby are talking together in a warm tone. Mrs. Sparsit tells him that he should not abandon old habits, such as to take a glass of warm sherry with lemon-peel and nutmeg that she is used to prepare for him. Bounderby's wife is present, and permits her to do what she wishes. “Mr. Bounderby went to bed, with a maudlin persuasion that he had been crossed in something tender, though he could not, for his life, have mentioned what it was.” (251). This is the only time in the novel that Bounderby feels warm emotion towards anyone, but he cannot define whether it is towards Mrs. Sparsit or Louisa. He wonders, however, what this feeling might be.

Mrs. Sparsit calls his wife Miss Gradgrind, which is a malicious action that indicates that she thinks she does not exist as Bounderby's wife. She has noticed the fact that they do not share the same bedroom, and she fancies that their marriage will end in disaster and “she took an idea in the nature of an allegorical fancy, into her head. ... She erected in her mind a mighty Staircase, with a dark pit of shame and ruin at the bottom; and down those stairs, from day to day and hour to hour, she saw Louisa coming” (269). Mrs. Sparsit is not described in the novel as a supporter of the facts philosophy and Dickens insinuates here that Mrs. Sparsit has a lot of fancy and imagination, but this fancy and imagination have the consequence that Bounderby decides to discharge her from his service because of her interference in his private life.

James Harthouse, “a Parliament gentleman” (197), has only one motive when he moves to Coketown. He wants to get some fun out of life because he feels bored. He has been situated in different places before and wonders if he finds some place where

he will get some pleasure. A member of the House of Commons once told him: "Jem, there's a good opening among the hard Fact fellows, and they want men. I wonder you don't go in for statistics" (165). He wants alteration in his lifestyle, and is ready to try entering politics as a disciple of Gradgrind. He is accepted by Gradgrind and a council of political experts, and they decide to send him to Coketown, "to become known there and in the neighbourhood" (165).

Louisa is rather a reserved person. Her cool personality indicates that she has no emotion but it is not so because she returns to her father after experiencing tumultuous feelings towards James Harthouse who declared his love for her. She shows determination to change her life when she begs her father to solve her problem. She knows that something is wrong about her relationship with James Harthouse, but she cannot distinguish what it is. She has always done what her father determined for her and now she is convinced he can guide her.

The Utilitarian education of facts begins to falter when Gradgrind realizes that his daughter is in pain and that she, in her agony, has come to him. She says: "Father, you have trained me from my cradle ... I curse the hour in which I was born to such a destiny... What have you done, O father, what have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here?" (287). Her father is astonished, and says: "I never knew you were unhappy, my child" (289). This episode is a crucial turning point in Gradgrind's philosophy of Utilitarian education. He tightened his hold in time to prevent her sinking on the floor, but she cried out in a terrible voice, "I shall die if you hold me! Let me fall upon the ground! And he laid her down there, and saw the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system, lying, an insensible heap, at his feet" (292).

This illustrates that Louisa wants to escape the philosophy of facts which her father has forced upon her. This expresses restrained longing for something that was missing in her upbringing. At this moment Gradgrind sees his whole philosophy crumble down, and he realizes that it was destructive rather than constructive. This can also symbolize a self-destructive element in Louisa, which Gradgrind has fostered in her from childhood with his philosophy of facts.

Louisa is unable to understand what has happened to her. Her father nurtured neither fancy nor imagination in her, and this is apparent in her home with Bounderby. James Harthouse notices it when he visits her home for the first time, "There was no mute sign of a woman in the room. No graceful little adornment, no

fanciful little device, however trivial, anywhere expressed her influence” (169). Her home is a vacuum that lacks every detail a woman longs for in a home she is fond of.

Stephen Blackpool is not as self-centered as Mr. Bounderby, for others' welfare comes first for him. When he is in the midst of a labour dispute he does not want to increase the conflict that takes place between the Hands at Bounderby's factory, and refuses to go on strike with the workers. They have established a union in Coketown, and he does not want to participate in their action.

Stephen is cast out by the other Hands and fired by Bounderby from the factory when he refuses to spy for him. Stephen experiences the fact that he is lonely and has no friends. “By general consent, they even avoided that side of the street on which he habitually walked; and left it, of all the working men, to him only” (190). This is very hard for him although he is used to being alone without much companionship. As Rachael explains, Stephen ends up with “The masters against him on one hand, the men against him on the other, he only wantin to work hard in peace, and do what he felt right” (335). Dickens was against strikes, because he felt they only created a muddle between the employee and employers. As David Sonstroem explains:

He condemned a labor dispute for “the gulf of separation it hourly deepens between those whose interest must be understood to be identical or must be destroyed. ...Dickens reveals his belief that the exercise of Fancy could prove very useful in apprehending and encouraging true union. (Sonstroem, 521)

Dickens depicts an upcoming strike in *Hard Times*, and he hints that it is there that the workers in Coketown are misled by Slackbridge, their union leader.

Stephen Blackpool is an honest man, but is suspected of being a thief when money disappears from Mr. Bounderby's bank. Tom tricks Stephen to wait at the bank, and he says he will help him with some money. Stephen loiters near the bank for three evenings. Tom is trying to frame Stephen for theft from Bounderby's bank. He is seen at the bank by Mrs. Sparsit the third evening before he goes away to seek a job elsewhere.

Stephen suffers the destiny to die for Tom's crime of stealing money from the bank and thus becomes a victim. He falls into a mine shaft on his way back to Coketown, when he wants to clear his name. He tries to encourage himself by looking at a bright star that seems to shine on him during his suffering and misfortune. The

star is a symbol of some imagination and fancy, which enables him to escape the hard facts of his sad reality.

The beginning of Book the Third, which is called “Another Thing Needful” (293) has a parallel name to the first chapter of Book the First, that is called “The One Thing Needful” (1). The first chapter reveals Gradgrind in his school talking about what is most needful in life that is facts. But, in the first chapter of Book the Third Gradgrind reveals another tone. He has realized by the conduct of his daughter Louisa and his son Tom that facts cannot be the only source to obtain fulfillment and Louisa and her father begin the process of emotional healing. Gradgrind does not know how to make Louisa happy, and hopes that Sissy will be able to help her, because she is a good-natured girl and imaginative. Louisa has treated her with coldness, but nevertheless Sissy understands her difficulties and helps her together with Louisa's younger sister, Jane, to come to terms with her loneliness and chaotic feelings.

In an effort to help Louisa solve her marital problems and feelings towards Harthouse, Sissy goes to Harthouse to tell him that: “You may be sure, Sir, you will never see her again as long as you live” (307), and furthermore she says, “I ask you to depart from this place to-night, under an obligation never to return to it” (311). Harthouse has not expected this. He is self-centered and has manipulated Louisa's heart. She cannot stand it, and does not understand the passions she has for him, and gets desperate. This episode with Harthouse has awakened Louisa's emotions and fancy, which only makes her unhappy, for she had never realized that she could have such feelings. Harthouse is an egoist, and does not care how he influences other people and so fails to understand Louisa's plight. This episode demonstrates the moral dangers of Gradgrind's philosophy and its emphasis on valuing facts more than feelings and fancy. Harthouse had been bored before he came to Coketown and needed fancy in his life, but the fact is that now he is afraid of being ridiculed by his fellow colleagues at Coketown and states: “Besides ... It would make a man so ridiculous, after going in for these fellows, to back out in such an incomprehensible way” (311). But this declaration has no effect on Sissy, and the fact is that Harthouse has no alternative but to leave Coketown never to return.

Josiah Bounderby is a self-made man as he often declares. He is not very much interested in the Utilitarian philosophy of facts, but he wants to be praised for his ability to become rich in spite of having a poor upbringing. He often declares self-importantly that, “I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown. I know the bricks of this town

... I know the Hands of this town ... I know'em all pretty well" (322). He is a proponent of the philosophy of facts and reason as a method to solve any problem. But Bounderby is fanciful and prejudiced towards the factory workers, when he thinks that they only want the best of all as "to be fed on turtle soup, and venison, with a gold spoon" (93).

Bounderby boasts that he had to make his way out of the gutter because he was abandoned as a child. However, in the novel it is revealed that this is not true, and his mother visits Coketown every year to catch a glimpse of her son. Mrs. Sparsit uncovers the truth about his origin when she introduces his mother to him. "Mr. Bounderby's visage exhibited an extraordinary combination of all possible colours and expressions of discomfiture, as old Mrs. Pegler was disclosed to his view" (346). Bounderby is detected as the "Bully of humility, who had built windy reputation upon lies" (350). Bounderby is able to use his fancy to invent a story about his past, and he has the ability to live a dream, fabricating and twisting the truth in his work as a bank and factory owner.

Gradgrind is of the opinion that Utilitarian philosophy, logical facts, is the best way to govern people's way of living. Fancy is not allowed and neither is sensibility, but in the end when he sees the result of his upbringing in Louisa and Tom, he begins to realize the failure of this education. When he discovers that his daughter is not happy in her marriage with Bounderby, whom she married in spite of not loving him, and that Tom has stolen money from Bounderby's bank, he fully realizes the failure of educating his children in facts and excluding fancy from their lives. Faced with these failures as an educationalist and a father, Gradgrind admits that he has been unsuccessful.

As has been stated, Gradgrind's children's problems "teach him to feel love and sorrow, and Gradgrind becomes wiser and humbler man" (SparkNotes), which eventually makes "his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope and Charity" (395).

III. Conclusion

The novel *Hard Times* informs the reader on the Industrial Revolution during the 19th century. It is about people that have suffered different fates in an industrial town, called Coketown. The people are both rich and poor and Dickens's approach is to investigate the lifestyle of people that live in an industrial town.

This novel describes how the Utilitarian theory is used to grind the facts and to rule out fancy and imagination in people's lives and how the results are both unsatisfactory and damaging. Gradgrind's children, Louisa and Tom, become broken and desolate, but Jane prospers because of Sissy's gentleness and good guidance at Stone Lodge. Louisa never marries again, but Tom escapes the punishment of his crime in England and dies alone in another country. However, Sissy gets married, has children, and leads a prosperous and happy life. This shows that she managed to combine facts and fancy with good results. Mrs. Sparsit ends up living with an aunt she despises but there she can use her deceit as she did when she lived with Mr. Bounderby.

Bounderby had a mother who loved him, but he did not accept her love. Louisa does not love him, and he leaves her to be a bachelor again. He fails to realize that money is not enough for happiness. "Love was made on these occasions in the form of bracelets; and, on all occasions during the period of betrothal, took a manufacturing aspect" (142). The fact is that Dickens never portrays any love between them, and their love is a bondage of gifts, which Louisa does not even appreciate. Bounderby's fate is to die of "a fit in the Coketown street" (395). Even though he is rich he does not profit from his lifestyle and money only made him lonely.

Stephen suffers the destiny to die for Tom's crime of stealing money from the bank and thus becomes a victim. Rachael never marries and continues to be a hardworking Hand at the factory in Coketown. She has always believed in Stephen's innocence and defends him towards others that believed differently.

Gradgrind's system of education about facts shatters, but he realizes that it can expand into something better with the help of fancy. In the ending he acknowledges the failure of his Utilitarian methods, when he sees the result of it on his children, Louisa and Tom.

Dickens ends the novel by saying to the reader that it is up to him if this book is relevant. He symbolizes the fire with ashes that turn grey and cold. Louisa often

looked at the fire and the smoke of the factory. The fire symbolized her life; she saw her life as the sparks from the fire that quickly turned to ashes. Although she is a dutiful daughter, her training of Utilitarian facts brings her no happiness because she lacks the ability to work out her fancy, passion and emotion. The crucial point in how her life develops is when she is prevented by her father from becoming acquainted with the circus which she wanted to see in the beginning of the novel.

Dickens is aware of how each character unfolds, and he describes how their behavior has consequences, as the headings of the three books reveal. The future of the characters in the novel is made clear at the end, and reinforces that their actions influence their fate.

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