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DICKENS ON THE INDUSTRIAL
REVOLUTION.

HARD TIMES AND HOUSEHOLD WORDS

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on Dickens's ideas about the Industrial Revolution and their reflection in his novel *Hard Times* and his contemporary journalistic articles published in his periodical *Household Words* on similar subjects. A comparative analysis of the two extant versions of the novel and the journalistic articles are carried out. The genre of *Hard Times* in relation to its debated status as an industrial novel is also analysed. From this analysis, it can be concluded, firstly, that there is an intertextuality between the articles and the novel that can even blur at times the limits between fact and fiction and, secondly, that Dickens's opinions on the Industrial Revolution are expressed with the same strength in both of them.

Keywords: Dickens, *Hard Times*, *Household Words*, Industrial Revolution.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo se centra en las ideas de Dickens acerca de la Revolución Industrial y su reflejo en *Hard Times* y en los artículos periodísticos cuyo contenido es similar al reflejado en la novela, publicada en *Household Words*. Se centra también en el análisis comparativo de las dos versiones existentes de la novela y de los artículos. También se analiza el género de la novela considerada como una novela industrial. De este estudio se puede concluir, primero que hay intertextualidad entre los artículos y la novela que en ocasiones puede nublar los límites entre realidad y ficción, y segundo, que las opiniones de Dickens sobre la Revolución Industrial se expresan con la misma fuerza tanto en los artículos como en la novela.

Palabras clave: Dickens, *Hard Times*, *Household Words*, Revolución Industrial.

OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE CONDITION OF <i>HARD TIMES</i>	7
2.1.THE EDITORIAL HISTORY OF <i>HARD TIMES</i>	7
2.2.THE GENRE OF <i>HARD TIMES</i>	9
3. <i>HARD TIMES</i> IN CONTRAST WITH THE ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN <i>HOUSEHOLD WORDS</i>	15
4. FICTION AND FACTS	21
5. CONCLUSION	30
6. APPENDIX	32
7. REFERENCES	33

1. INTRODUCTION

“Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man;
but for one man who can stand prosperity,
there are a hundred that will stand adversity.”
(Carlyle, Qtd in “On Strike” 555)

The design of *Hard Times* (1853 – 1854) and the fictional setting in which the novel takes place reflect Dickens’s experience of the Industrial Revolution and his opinions on events that the author had witnessed on his journalistic duties, such as the strike that took place in the cotton town of Preston between 1853 and 1854. The articles covering these events include Dickens’s opinions on the workers’ strike and on the relations between worker and master.

Dickens’s opinions in *Hard Times* in contrast with the affirmations made by the author in the journal he led, and to which he was an editor, *Household Words* (1850 – 1859), have been subject to little analysis and study. The further interest towards other authors, like Benjamin Disraeli, whose opinions on the changing society were stated in a clearer manner, has somehow left aside Dickens’s considerations on his contemporary reality in *Hard Times*.

The absence of consensus regarding the genre within which *Hard Times* should be placed in order to be properly analysed and contrasted has had a major repercussion on the study of Dickens’s novel. Elizabeth Gaskell’s novels, like *Mary Barton*, or *North and South* have been considered the major representatives of the industrial novel by many critics.

Many authors locate *Hard Times* within the condition-of-England novels, however, the variation in the generic designation of *Hard Times* is partly responsible for the higher interest of the critics towards the industrial novels by both Mrs. Gaskell and Disraeli.

The Industrial Revolution did not only imply economic changes but also social ones. Among its economic effects was the increase in the production of the factories with a lower cost for the manufacturers, but it also implied the lengthening of the gap

between the richer and the poorer social classes, the former ones being the owners of the industrialized factories and the latter, the so called “hands” in *Hard Times*. The economic situation, although more fluid thanks to the greater production, was not stable, and by 1847 trade in the area of Lancashire was not productive, as can be seen in Dickens’s words:

In 1847, when trade was very bad, the masters told their workpeople that they could no longer afford to pay them the wages they had been paying, and that they must take off ten per cent; upon the understanding, as the workpeople allege, that when times got better they would give them the ten per cent back again. Whether such a promise was, or was not, actually given, we cannot presume to determine, for the masters emphatically deny it. (“Locked Out” 347)

This ten percent reduction in the wages, and the refusal of the employers to pay back when the economy was better, caused the strike of the cotton town of Preston, a strike that Dickens witnessed as a correspondent, and a strike that influenced the writing of *Hard Times*, whose trade union orator, Slackbridge, the union leader whose words cause Stephen’s discrimination, is based on Dickens’s attendance to a meeting in which he could witness a speech made by a man he calls ‘Gruffshaw’¹. Dickens’s opinion of the delegate was not good at any moment, as will be discussed. Two other important characters in *Hard Times* representing an entire group that are influenced by Dickens’s experiences in Preston, are Stephen Blackpool, who represents the workpeople, and Mr. Josiah Bounderby, representative of the manufacturers, that Dickens ironically depicts as a fragile group: “surely there was never such fragile china-ware as that of which the millers of Coketown were made handle them never so lightly, and they fell to pieces with such ease that you might suspect them of having been flawed before” (*Hard Times* 111).

The strike started in 1853, after a period of industrial unrest, for there had been movements claiming for the rise of wages since Spring of 1853 in near towns, as from the end of 1852 the economic prosperity had allowed the construction of new mills in Preston (Teachout 27). At the employers’ disagreement on the payment of the ten percent, the workers decided on a strike but, knowing that they would need to support

¹ “A reader accustomed to modern ‘objective’ journalism is less prepared to accept Dickens’s identification of an obnoxious potential demagogue as ‘Gruffshaw’ when other, reliable reports reveal only a ‘Grimshaw’ among the leaders of the strike” (Butwin 176). The author could have changed the name of the union speaker for the article due to his dislike of the man, or to make ‘Grimshaw’ a character that he could manipulate as a personage of his novel.

themselves, they intended to strike only in a few mills. This method would allow the workers to support the strikers, however, the masters enforced a general lock-out (Carnall 32), that started officially on Friday 15 October 1853.

At a time when legislation and its application were both in the manufacturer's hands and their contacts' rather than in the workmen's, not only strikes could be suppressed quickly and quietly, but claims for higher salaries were ignored. Thus, the strikers in the case of the Preston Strike put an end to their claim, being defeated without any winnings.

It is important to note that Dickens belonged to a group of authors that although they did not approve of strikes, they unanimously agreed that buying cheap and selling dear was pernicious (Carnall 41). All these authors considered the unfairness of the cheap production and the cheap workforce that produced great benefits for the manufacturers.

Upon the first travel of Dickens to Preston, Mrs. Gaskell contacted the author in order to ask him whether his novel was to develop industrial issues, for she was at the time writing *North and South* to be published in *Household Words* and both novels could be confused if both engaged the industrial matter (Schilcke 261). Dickens replied to this letter remarking his lack of interest in the matter. The themes in both novels were soon contrasted, since Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South* focused less on the difficulties of the workers than on the ones faced by the mill-owners (Schilcke 293).

The depiction of the industrial characters is also better achieved by Mrs. Gaskell, whose mill owners are more authentic than Dickens's (Carnall 44) whereas Dickens's master, Mr. Bounderby, is caricaturized, and in certain moments of the novel, even mocked. This caricature to which most of the characters in Dickens's work are subject distinguishes them from Mrs. Gaskell's. Mrs. Gaskell was more interested than Dickens in the interactions of her characters (Carnall 45). Dickens had less interest in the way people interacted than in the intention of this interaction, and the cause and effect of these interactions on the fictional society he created.

The main objective of this paper is to analyse Dickens's ideas on the Industrial Revolution and on the changes it implied for his contemporary society as reflected both in his novel *Hard Times* and in his short articles in *Household Words*.

For this objective several articles and the novel *Hard Times*, published by Dickens in the journal during 1854 as a serial, have been used. The first article used is "Preliminary Word", including the principles of the paper and its target audience. It was published in the first issue of *Household Words* (March 1850). Another one is "Frauds on the Fairies", which was published in October 1853. This article deals with the lack of imagination of the utilitarian philosophy, and criticises some important political figures of the time.

Dickens published two articles regarding his trips to Preston, "Locked Out", published in December 1853, which consisted of six pages where he reviewed the state of the town and its inhabitants. During his visit, Dickens witnessed how most of the companies had joined the "lock out" to counteract the strike. He also provides some background for the strike and its causes. A short period later, Dickens wrote "On Strike", published in February 1854, including a brief report on the trade unions and their leaders. The article consisted of five pages, where Dickens relates his meeting with a man he calls Mr. Snapper, as he is never told his real name, and describes the town with more details than in his previous article. Dickens wanted to see with his own eyes how the strikers acted and what qualities they showed ("On Strike" 555). At the time of this visit, people had been on strike for twenty-three weeks ("On Strike" 554).

"Smoke or no smoke", published in July 1854, pointed to the factories and domestic chimneys as the causes for the pollution over London, and offered solutions in order to reduce pollution. This article, in opposition to the previous ones, did not appear in the front page. It was published at the same time than the fourteenth issue of *Hard Times*.

Articles by other authors that appeared in *Household Words* have also been used, such as Henry Morley's article "Ground in the Mill". It was published on 22 April 1854, and referred to the numerous deaths of workers, and the bad working conditions.

Although Dickens wrote mordacious criticism against the industrial society both in *Hard Times* and in his weekly magazine, he did not consider himself a practical reformer, responsible for advocating specific measures that were to eliminate the evils he deplored, but rather a moralist whose mission was to point out their origins (Johnson 45). In fact, Dickens did not take sides neither with the anti-industrialists nor with the anti-workers, and wrote both in favour of free trade and of industry as routes to prosperity (Schilcke 294) but it is important to acknowledge Dickens's concern about social issues from his earliest novels (Schor 65).

Hard Times was first published in Dickens's journal, *Household Words*, a two pence weekly magazine of original short fiction and journalism of social denounce (Drew 292) created in 1850 by the author in association with the firms Bradbury and Evans, and Forster and Wills. The journal contained twenty-four pages, with two columns of small typed articles, and a heading claiming its periodicity and leadership: "*Familiar in their Mouths as HOUSEHOLD WORDS. – SHAKESPEARE. A weekly journal. Conducted by Charles Dickens.*" Dickens's own articles and periodical novels, such as *Hard Times*, and *A Child's History of England* before it (published between 1851 and 1853), were the only signed parts of the magazine, conferring the author, the complete responsibility over the numerous contributions to the magazine by other renowned authors. This anonymity was made in order to give coherence and unity to the magazine, providing the articles with an appearance of authorship by Dickens himself (Drew 293).

The *Household Words* manifesto, claims for the description of the industrial landscape for the readers, and for teaching "the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination" (qtd. in Starr 321). The journal was destined to all the population who was able to read it, with no distinction of gender or age according to the first number of the magazine:

We hope to be the comrade and friend of many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions, on whose faces we may never look. We seek to bring into innumerable homes, from the stirring world around us, the knowledge of many social wonders, good and evil, that are not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of

one another, less faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in this summer-dawn of time. (“Preliminary Word” 1)

These essays and articles were finally consumed by the middle class (Starr 321), but, as Berman points out, the middle classes were not the only readers of Dickens’s articles, listing among them daughters of hardware traders, working men, and fine ladies and the Queen herself (561). To this audience Dickens refers directly at the end of the novel simply as “Dear Reader!” (*Hard Times* 288).

For the appearance of *Hard Times* in a one volume book, in the same year of the publication of its last issue in *Household Words*, some passages of the novel were modified. This contrasts with Mrs. Gaskell’s novel *North and South*, in which, as the author states in the author’s preface to the first edition, “short passages have been inserted, and several new chapters added” (Gaskell 31), but in Dickens’s case, some passages were suppressed.

The differences between the first edition and the volume edition, and the opinions on the Industrial Revolution which appeared in *Household Words* at the time of the publication of *Hard Times* (1853 – 1854) will be analysed in this paper.

2. THE CONDITION OF *HARD TIMES*

2. 1. EDITORIAL HISTORY OF *HARD TIMES*

The publication of *Hard Times* in *Household Words* was only made, in spite of the outward appearance of control by Dickens, after a suggestion to the author by the publishers. Dickens had been on a hiatus from the magazine for two months, so that he could work on the final chapters of his novel *Bleak House*, published between 1852 and 1853 (Starr 320). The plan of the publishers for Dickens's new serial was to enlarge the sales and circulation of the journal. Possibly this imposition to write is one of the reasons why *Hard Times* includes many of the principles of the magazine (Butwin 171).

According to Dickens's correspondence, it took him nearly six months to finish the novel. He started writing the story on 23 January 1854, and finished writing it on 17 July 1854 (Flint xxxviii-ix).

The first issue of *Hard Times* was published in *Household Words* on 1 April 1854, just two months after the publication of the last article about the strike in Preston, and the same month that it was over. The novel was published in twenty weekly instalments. The last two chapters of the novel were published on 12 August 1854.

By the end of 1854, Dickens had fully published all the issues of *Hard Times* and published it in its entirety twice, first in the bound half-yearly issue of *Household Words*, and later on in a one volume edition.

For the appearance of *Hard Times* in a one volume book, a passage of the novel was modified, and the three book division structure was effected, at the same time that "For These Times" was added to the title, underlining the continuing topicality of the social concerns he addresses in its pages (Stanford University)². The dedication – "Inscribed to Thomas Carlyle" – was also added.

For the complete understanding of *Hard Times*, background is needed. The original readers of the novel found in the weekly publication of *Household Words* different articles. These articles from *Household Worlds* to which the readers were

² Besides the textual variation, there were some structure variations. During the writing process, Dickens made working notes that divide the novel into five numbers that do not correspond to the twenty weekly instalments in *Household Words*, nor to the three-book division of the first publication in volume form (Flint 289).

sometimes addressed, allowed them to keep reading about similar issues to those in the novel. With the third number of *Hard Times* appeared in *Household Words* an article called “The Quiet Poor”. This article appeared on 15 April 1854, and discusses a poor neighbourhood in London. The article describes the privations of the poor and the unsanitary and difficult conditions in which they are forced to live (Stanford). It is important to consider that at that point, the living conditions of the workers had not yet been discussed in the novel. It is not until chapter 10, that a worker is introduced in the novel, and his conditions described, but it is significant that this chapter appeared only two weeks after the article.

The publication of the novel in instalments must have allowed the author to learn what the readers thought of his writing, and the elimination of a passage contained in the first version of *Hard Times* may have been made either for a lack of interest or for a negative response rather than on moral grounds. The eliminated passage included the violent death of Rachael’s sister, and in it, Dickens directed the readers to an article by Morley. Morley’s article, “Ground in the Mill” appeared following the issue of *Hard Times* containing episodes 7 and 8³. It dealt with numerous descriptions of the deaths of workers and children because of the machines in the factories. Some critics believe that Dickens erased this part to avoid being thought of supporting radical behaviours by the workers or being considered as troublesome, having in Rachael’s words, “the masters against him on one hand, the men against him on the other” (*Hard Times* 244).

Hard Times was one of the shortest novels Dickens composed. This length difference in contrast with the rest of his works did not have any relation with its publication in the magazine, where longer novels had been published. The main reason for *Hard Times* to be shorter is perhaps Dickens’s lack of interest in writing at the moment. Despite its limited length, the novel did not succeed at the time, as it was considered propagandistic for being dedicated to Thomas Carlyle (Allingham). Dickens addressed the novel to the essayist because he had had a great influence on him, and he considered him an idol (Schilcke 67).

2.2. THE GENRE OF *HARD TIMES*.

³ For more information regarding the editorial details of these chapters, consult the appendix.

The novelistic subgenre to which *Hard Times* belongs has become a vexed issue. It has been suggested that Dickens's novels as a whole are characterized by a mixture of realism, comedy, tragedy and drama, being in themselves pieces of social history, chronicles of the real life conditions of urban populations (Anon.). Lodge (qtd in Clausson 159) has pointed out the generic instability of the novel, which changes its status several times from a condition-of-England novel to a pantomime, or an ironic fairy tale. Schilcke points out the little appearance of industrial life in Dickens's fiction, what would distance not only *Hard Times* but all his novels from the genre, as the focus of the novel is on the satire of utilitarianism rather than on the industrial world (294). The criticism against the utilitarian mentality of fact over fancy is contradictory for many scholars, given the author's willingness for practical reform elsewhere but in *Hard Times* (Starr 330). The mixture of genres is present in all of Dickens's novels making it harder to identify and establish a specific subgenre to which they might belong.

Therefore the type of novel *Hard Times* is has not been established in a satisfactory manner, although for Clausson (158), the consideration of the novel as a condition-of-England novel has masked the failure of this lack of consensus. It is important to note, however, its generic instability, to which Clausson refers pointing to the consideration of the novel either as a dystopian work, or as a melodrama (158). The novels dealing with the condition-of-England as a theme are expected to depict contemporary reality in an attempt to reflect the situation of the country at a time of dramatic changes. Dickens reflects the society in a fictional industrial town, describing the differences between the workers (represented in the novel by Stephen Blackpool and Rachael, for they are the only workers Dickens allows to take part in the novel) and the owners of the factories, naming the characters differently from the real persons that influenced the author for their creation.

The consideration of *Hard Times* as belonging to the group of the so called industrial novels, a plausible genre taking into account the setting, and the characters—has been debated by different authors. Its fully belonging to this group of novels, which are expected to provide invaluable depictions of a society in the process of unprecedented alteration (David, qtd in Carnall 158), would imply that the main theme

of *Hard Times* should be the relationship between master and worker, or the economic and social changes that the industrialization had as a consequence. From this perspective, although the relation between Stephen Blackpool and Mr. Josiah Bounderby is that of workman and factory owner, it does not have any effect upon the development of the action in the novel, for Stephen's problems are never taken into account, or solved. However, Dickens's detailed information of the strikers' behaviour and attitude towards the mill-owners reflected in the novel, and his characterization of Stephen with a marked working-class form of speech in contrast with Mr. Bounderby's, which intends to be correct and educated, together with the criticism of the Industrialization, point to the belonging of the work to this group.

Nevertheless, it is true that Dickens's descriptions and the circumstances of the publication of *Hard Times*, in the midst of the textile strike in Preston, created in the readers a rising awareness of the situation of the industrial towns. Butwin considers that at the time of the publication of *Hard Times*, in 1854, the public was prepared to consider the conditions of workers in the factories (181). The relation between masters and workers had hardly been considered in literature, and Dickens apparently selected the right moment for the publication of a novel based on the worker - master relation and the reality in factories, which were thus revealed to the general public.

The novels with these intentions or whose consequences was the creation of a social movement are considered "novels of social reform". For the complete fulfilling of this subgenre features by the novel, readers were expected to join societies and write checks (Butwin 167). This type of novels was intended to help change society through literature. If *Hard Times* is considered to belong to this group, the facts included within it are to be considered true, and hence move the readers into taking action, not only by noticing different social issues and problems, but also by their intention to solve them. However, the consideration of *Hard Times* as belonging to this genre is not entirely accurate, due to the lack of intention by Dickens to pour neither his real opinions nor fully created opinions in his characters (Butwin 175).

Dickens's awareness of the social condition of England, and the problems of male and female workers arose and made him more sympathetic to such topics due to the personal crisis he was also living, both in his business life and in his marriage

(Anon.). The situation of the magazine was bad, with a decrease of the sales, and his marital situation was pending on a divorce from his wife that he would finally get in 1858.

Dickens does not take sides with either patrons or workers, as he points out in the conversation with the personage he names Mr. Snapper in his account of his travel to Preston in “On Strike”:

-‘But a friend to the Strike, I believe?’

-‘Not at all,’ said I.

-‘A friend to the Lock Out?’ pursued Mr. Snapper.

-‘Not in the least,’ said I.

-Mr. Snapper’s rising opinion of me fell again, and he gave me to understand that a man *must* either be a friend to the Masters or friend to the Hands.

-‘He may be a friend to both,’ said I. (“On Strike” 549)

Dickens travelled to the town of Preston to gather information about the situation of the workers during the strike and the lock out imposed by the factory owners, not only for the sake of writing the novel, but also as a journalist. He could witness meetings between the strikers and their representatives in the Union Trades⁴, and later used some of the real characters he had the chance to meet to satirize an entire group of people in his novel.

Butwin considers *Hard Times* as a journalistic novel, considering that Dickens intended to enlist public opinion on social issues following the lead of journalism (168). The publication of novels in journals gave them more authority than their publication as novels, where all the characters and situations would be understood as fictional. Not only Dickens, but many authors considered that setting their works on social issues they were representing the journalistic genre, serving their writings as news articles. In some cases they even thought that their literary practice was going to improve the journalistic genre. This is the case of *Hard Times*, for which Dickens sought a public used to reading and responding to journalism, so that they would verify how much of truth was in the novel (Butwin 173 -174) because *Hard Times* needed to be contrasted with reality

⁴ The conception of the novel Dickens had, was that of a Carlylean novel, and almost every aspect of its satire has a counterpart somewhere in Carlyle’s writings, according to Teachout (43), whose opinions are corroborated by López Ortega (8), who considers the novel to look like a poor dramatization of Carlyle’s social thinking.

unlike other novels including historical or contemporary life. The publication of a novel within the journal, with no separation between the beginning of the article and the end of the issue other than the title appearing in a smaller font, calls for a continuation of the reading, where real facts and news seem to pass on to the novel itself (Butwin 174).

Hard Times has not only been considered as a criticism against the consequences of the Industrial Revolution in England, but also as a fable or a drama (Anon.). It contains references to fairy tales, and imaginative similes, but they appear as a mere criticism to the lack of imagination of the main characters in the novel. The lack of imaginative worlds had already been criticised by Dickens in his article for *Household Words*, “Frauds on the Fairies” (1853):

In an utilitarian age, of all other times, it is a matter of grave importance that Fairy tales should be respected. Our English red tape is too magnificently red ever to be employed in the tying up of such trifles, but every one who has considered the subject knows full well that a nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun. (97)

This criticism is reflected in Mr. Gradgrind’s interest in erasing all trace of imagination for the sake of facts, which his daughter Louisa will pay very dearly through an unhappy marriage of convenience. Coketown would stand for the nation without romance which can never hold a great place under the sun. This lack of romance is appreciated all throughout the novel. Stephen Blackpool cannot be with Rachael but is to stay with his drunkard wife, and Mr. Bounderby’s marriage to Louisa is agreed in terms of wealth and material interest. This criticism can be seen directly in the statement Dickens makes in the novel: “readers persisted in wondering. They wondered about human nature, human passions, human hopes and fears, the struggles, triumphs and defeats ... the lives and death, of common men and women” (53). The persistence of the working classes in the novel in maintaining fanciful literature instead of following the utilitarian belief -to Mr. Grandgrind’s despair- is Dickens’s joy.

The resemblance of the factories to “fairy palaces burst into illumination, before pale morning showed the monstrous serpents of smoke trailing themselves over Coketown” (*Hard Times* 71) during the night shift, or the tremble and noise of the machinery compared to “melancholy-mad elephants” (*Hard Times* 71) seem to smooth the reality, that is later on explained in its fullest cruelty in the novel. The contrast

between the cruel and the smoothed and faerie industrial city could lead the readers into the belief of that the author's intention was to create an ironic novel to criticise the industrial landscape that can be beautiful at night, but during the day shows its cruel face, not only ugly but also deadly.

The criticism against the working conditions in the novel is diminished by the elimination of the passage linking to Morley's article, where the following criticism appears.

Why do we talk about such horrible things? Because they exist, and their existence should be clearly known. Because there have occurred during the last three years, more than a hundred such deaths, and more than ten thousand (indeed, nearly twelve thousand) such accidents in our factories, and they are all, or neary all, preventible... By the Factory act, it was enacted ... that all the parts of the mill-garing in a factory should be securely fenced. There were no buts and ifs in the Act itself; these were allowed to step in and limit its powers of preventing accidents out of a merciful respect, not for the blood of the operatives, but for the gold of the manufacturers. ("Ground in the Mill", 224-225)

The lack of this part of the novel makes Stephen's reasoning to his master of why his partners were on a strike much weaker. The background provided to the original readers has thus disappeared, causing a lack of contextualization, for the paragraph was, according to Flint (xv), "not just topical, but graphic and clearly antagonistic to the mill-owners".

The death of Rachael's sister is not explained with the vividness that Morley uses in his article, but merely referred to as the result of a "sickly air as had'n no need to be" in the novel (263), avoiding the attitude of Morley's article, where fingers were pointed towards the masters for their greed and their lack of care for the well-being of their workers. The deletion eliminates the option of knowing the real reason why Stephen would not join the union: readers would only know that he had made a promise to his beloved Rachael (Butwin 177):

Thou'st spoken o' thy little sister. There agen! Wi' her child arm tore off afore thy face" she turned her head aside, and put her hand [up]. "Where dost thou ever hear or read o' us – the like o' us – as being otherwise than onreasonable and cause o' trouble? Yet think o' that. Government gentlemen come and make's report. Fend off the dangerous machinery, box it off, save life and limb; don't rend and tear human creeturs to bits in a Chris'en country! What follers? Owners sets

up their throats, cries out 'onreasonable! Inconvenient! Trouble-some!' Gets to secretaries o' states wi' deputations, and nothing's done. When do we get there wi' our deptations, God help us! We are too much int'rested and nat'rally too far wrong t'have a right judgment. Haply we are; but what are they then? I' th' name o' th' muddle in which we are born and live and die, what are they then?" "Let such things be, Stephen. They only lead to hurt, let them be!" "I will, since thou tell'st me so. I will I pass my promise. (Qtd. in Butwin 177-178)

In Butwin's words, despite the elimination, the complaint Stephen makes to a fellow worker on the subject of preventable accidents is not entirely lost (179), although it is softened. Rachael's attitude asking Stephen to let things be, and to forget about such statements could be based on the fear most workers had of being considered problematic if they expressed the needs for change in their work conditions. Stephen's death due to an industrial preventable accident, and an inefficient fencing was to beat the conception the readers had of the industrial masters. However, Stephen was not able to perform a complex speech, and the readers are to understand by themselves what he is implying when he talks to Mr. Bounderby.

The analysis of all the possible genres *Hard Times* could belong to shows that the novel, as many critics have pointed out, may fit in different genres at the same time, depending on the way it is read. For the purpose of this research, *Hard Times* will be considered as a criticism against the society and morals of the industrialization.

3. *HARD TIMES* vs THE ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*.

At the beginning of the strike, workers considered it likely that they would get the rise in their salaries they were claiming for. Intending not to be reckless, they favoured a method consisting in having strikes only in a few mills, so that workers in other mills could support their comrades on strike with their wages. This method was prevented by the Preston masters by enforcing a general lock-out (Carnall 32). The lock-out involved, in Preston alone, a large majority of the mills, but it was by no means universal, although according to Teachout, the facilities were closed in at least eighty percent of the town, and the estimates of workers involved in the strike fluctuated from as low as 14,000 workers receiving the strike relief, to as high as 25,000 according to some press reports (35). Among the press reports of the time, there was Dickens's own for *Household Words*, "Locked out". By the time of Dickens's visit the situation of the lock-out was as follows: "forty-one firms have 'locked out' their hands, and twenty-one thousand work-people are obliged to be at play" ("Locked Out" 345).

The strike relief was a fund-distribution for the support of the workers, based on funds offered by the proper operatives, with no help from either government or the factory owners. As Dickens points out: "Since the commencement of the strike upward of twenty-four thousand pounds have been contributed by the poor for the support of the poor" ("Locked Out" 348). The help provided to the poor by the poor allowed the strike to last for more than eight months (September 1853 – April 1854), the workers, having to admit that they would not reach an agreement with the mill owners, who had outlasted them in time and in economic power, informed of their intention of not fighting any longer for the ten-percent on a circular addressed to the manufacturers of the Lancashire area (Teachout 36; 41).

The "Ten Percent – and no surrender!" motto was a clear war-cry that contained only the demand the workers were making, and that was used for the creation of catchy songs, whose content changed on a regular basis for the inclusion of newer events in the strike evolution. It was printed and sold at the price of one penny for the support of the strike ("Locked Out" 347). During the strike religious references were made constantly in the speeches of some of the union leaders, as Dickens notes in "On strike": "the *impartial* God intended that there should be a *partial* distribution of his blessings. But

we know that it is against nature to believe, that those who plant and reap all the grain, should not have enough to make a mess of porridge” (558).

The strike had many detractors, not only among the masters, but also among the workers themselves. Carnall reflects that, in one of the strike meetings, a weaver that might be compared to the character of *Hard Times* Stephen Blackpool made a highly unpopular speech against strikes, claiming them to have no use (33). Detractors of the strike were joined in their labour by Irish workers brought by the masters to work in the mills. Women did not take part in the strike becoming the bigger contributors to the ‘strike relief’, while those critical against the strike publicized the “intimidation of non-strikers and non-contributors to strike funds” (Carnall 38).

Despite Dickens’s visits to Preston, there is no real presence of the strike and its consequences in *Hard Times*. It is just represented as a meeting of the workers in which Stephen is left aside and condemned to ostracism, and a further meeting where the union leaders present the innocent Stephen as a thief who has shown his real face.

The setting of the first chapter in a school room rather than in a factory can be considered as a statement of Dickens’s intentions for the novel: if the strike and social inequality between workers and masters were to be treated in *Hard Times* the setting of the first chapter would clearly point to it, but the situation in a schoolroom points to the educational policy that Mr. Thomas Gradgrind follows and its further development in the novel.

Dickens starts his article “On Strike” with the conversation he maintained in the train (553), introducing some of his ideas and opinions on the strike matter. Dickens’s opinion about the strike was that, “in any aspect in which it may be viewed, this strike and lock-out is a deplorable calamity. In its waste of time, in its waste of great people’s energy, in its waste of wages, in its waste of wealth that seeks to be employed...”, as he expressed on his article “On Strike” (558). He considered that strikers acted under a mistaken impression (“On Strike” 555). Despite his dislike for the strike, Dickens recognizes the peaceful attitude and the courage of the workers and considers the starvation to which they are victims due to the lock-out as unnecessary (“On Strike” 558).

In *Hard Times*, Dickens reflects not only on the situation of the workers, but also on the situation of the masters, about whom he speaks with irony by referring to the claims of ruin that every law intending to help the workers supposedly caused them:

They [the masters of Coketown] were ruined, when they were required to send labouring children to school; they were ruined when inspectors were appointed to look into their works; they were ruined, when such inspectors considered it doubtful whether they were quite justified in chopping people up with their machinery; they were utterly undone, when it was hinted that perhaps they need not always make quite so much smoke. (*Hard Times* 111)

No matter whether it was the scholarization of children, the prevention of accidents or the inspection of either, the masters of Coketown – representing the entirety of the masters in England – were ruined. The fragility of the manufacturers is ironically represented by Dickens by pointing out how the loss of some of their hands for scholarization would ruin them, but they do not seem to consider losing people because of their machines, as Morley describes in graphic detail:

There are many ways of dying. Perhaps it is not good when a factory girl, who has not the whole spirit of play spun out of her for want of meadows, gambols upon bags of wool, a little too near the exposed machinery that is to work it up, and is immediately seized, and punished by the merciless machine that digs its shaft into her pinafore and hoists her up, tears out her left arm at the shoulder joint, breaks her right arm, and beats her on the head. (“Ground in the Mill” 224).

One of the laws that affected most of the masters was the Factory Act of 1844, the law that for the first time considered the case of women labourers, seeing their work load similar to the work children could endure, and reducing it below that of their male counterparts. The reduction of the hours children were to work to less than eight a day was a great change in the family legislation, allowing children to go to school. This law also required that dangerous machinery was securely fenced (Butwin 180), but inspection was either inadequate or inefficient. The fencing itself was inefficient for it was kept to a minimum of seven feet (2.13 meters), and accidents were not prevented (Morley 225). Morley considered the life of the workers more important than the money the masters could save by arranging insufficient fencings with what he denominated “kind-hearted interpreters of the law” (225):

...It remains to be settled how much cash saved to the purses of the manufacturers is a satisfactory and proper off-set to this expenditure of life and limb and this crushing of bone in the persons of their work-people. (Morley 225)

The presence of Morley's article in *Household Words* reflects that Dickens agreed on relation to this matter. Stephen's fate falling into the Old Hell Shaft points to the insufficient fencing that could take innocent lives away. Rachael and Sissy's search for Stephen in the country reflect the state in which old pits were abandoned and overtaken by nature making them even more dangerous, for they were hidden under the grass:

They walked on across the fields and down the shady lanes, sometimes getting over a fragment of a fence so rotten that it dropped at a touch of the foot, sometimes passing near a wreck of bricks overgrown with grass, marking the site of deserted works. They followed paths and tracks, however slight. Mounds where the grass was rank as high, and where brambles, dockweed, and such-like vegetation, were confusedly heaped together, they always avoided; for dismal stories were told in that country of the old pits hidden beneath such indications. (*Hard Times* 257)

Dickens's representation of industrial accidents differs from Morley's descriptions by presenting Stephen after having been rescued in terms very different from his colleague's in "Ground in the Mill", where the latter had written: "His leg was cut off, and fell into the room, his arm was broken in three or four places, his ankle was broken, his head was battered; he was not released alive" (224). After Stephen's calmed mood, Dickens describes him thus: "the pale, worn, patient face was seen looking up at the sky, with the broken right hand lying bare on the outside of the covering garments, as if waiting to be taken by another hand" (*Hard Times* 262). Dickens also points out how the masters felt that securing their factories would ruin them.

In "On Strike", Dickens reports a conversation with Mr. Snapper and defines one of the Preston masters as a man who has no consideration for his workers, as he states in the article:

'I believe,' said I, 'that into the relations between employers and employed, as into all the relations of this life, there must enter something of feeling and sentiment; something of mutual explanation, forbearance, and consideration; something which is not to be found in Mr. M'Culloch's dictionary, and is not exactly stateable [*sic*] in figures; otherwise those relations are wrong and rotten at the core and will never bear sound fruit. ("On Strike" 553)

M’Culloch’s attitude towards the workers of his mills could have influenced the attitude that Mr. Bounderby was to express toward Stephen, whose relation lacks of mutual explanation. Although the master summons Stephen upon his refusal to join the union, he does not let the worker explain himself since he considers him too much below himself. Despite Stephen’s respect for his master, Mr. Bounderby has no respect at all for him; their relation was never intended to work out.

Another illustration of the low consideration masters had for their workers can be appreciated in Bitzer’s report to Mrs. Sparsit. Bitzer, one of Mr. Gradgrind’s students, has achieved a post in the bank as a light porter, becoming frequent company to the old lady. In their dialogue the dislike they both feel for the workers is clear:

’Our people are a bad lot, ma’am; but that is no news, unfortunately’

’What are the restless wretches doing now?’ asked Mrs. Sparsit. (*Hard Times* 115).

The conversation between the lady and Bitzer moves on to the question of why the workers – considered improvident by the lady – could not make themselves a fortune, as all the manufacturers had done before:

This, again, was among the fictions of Coketown. Any capitalist there, who had made sixty thousand pounds out of six-pence, always professed to wonder why the sixty thousand nearest Hands didn’t each make sixty thousand pounds out of sixpence, and more or less reproached them every one for not accomplishing the little feat. What I did you can do. (*Hard Times* 118)

Another aspect in which the novel and the articles coincide is the pollution of industrial cities. Dickens had already manifested his surprise by discovering the town of Preston free from the thick and smoky air of industrialized areas (“Locked Out” 345). The description Dickens repeatedly makes of Coketown as a town always “shrouded in a haze of its own, which appeared impervious to the sun’s rays... a blur of soot and smoke, now confusedly tending this way, now that way, ... a dense formless jumble, with sheets of cross light in it, that showed nothing but masses of darkness” (*Hard Times* 111), can be considered as a criticism against the amount of smoke that factories produced, it being pernicious for the health not only of the workers, but of any passer-by. The criticism against the pollution factories produced was reinforced with the publication of “Smoke or no smoke” in *Household Words*. In the article, Dickens blames the factories and the houses of London for the pollution, the appearance of lung

diseases and the ruining of portraits in the National Gallery. This polluted air is characteristic of Coketown:

As Coketown cast ashes not only on its own head but on the neighbourhood's too – after the manner of those pious persons who do penance for their own sins by putting other people into sackcloth – it was customary for those who now and then thirsted for a draught of pure air, which is absolutely not the most wicked among the vanities of life, to get a few miles away by the railroad, and then begin to walk. (*Hard Times* 256)

Coketown, being surrounded by smoke, obliged those willing to breathe pure air to take a train to get it, a possibility only for the middle class people. This possibility of breathing pure air was a need for everyone, but unattainable for the workers, whose work shifts were long, tedious, and amidst the dangerous smoke. The localization of the novel in such a pernicious setting could be considered symbolic: the pernicious master belongs in the pernicious town, where the pernicious union member would pursue relentlessly the good worker, who is married to a pernicious woman.

4. FICTION AND FACTS.

Dickens based most of his characters in his novel on real people. Most of the characters are meant to represent the entirety of the groups they belong to. Nevertheless not only the characters represent a real counterpart, Coketown also represents a real element. The view of the characters in *Hard Times* as a part of the fictions Mr. Gradgrind tries to suppress, and their use instead of real facts and nouns, is characteristic in *Hard Times*. It is also relevant the inclusion of fiction within the fiction as will be seen shortly. According to Butwin, the setting of the novel – consisting of a mixture of reality and fiction – is created by Dickens to reclaim fact from the hands of the statisticians by showing them that much of what happens for what is taken for fact in Coketown is *really fiction* (175, my emphasis).

Dickens could have seen himself in Sleary, the circus owner, by playing with his characters as a showman willing to amuse his readers. In Sleary's words, "people must be amused... they can't be always a working, nor yet they can't be always a learning" (*Hard Times* 45).

COKETOWN

The smoky town can be considered as another character in the novel representing the entirety of the industrial areas, as the rest of the characters represent the entirety of the groups they belong to. The town is often described by means of personifications, that lead to a contrast of the town with the face of a savage (*Hard Times* 27). The red bricks would represent the savage's skin, and the black ashes and smoke that stain the bricks, would represent the hair.. It can also be seen as an animalization by the constant comparison of its smoke to serpents. The setting of the novel is, according to Berman, "an amalgam of the manufacturing towns found in blue books descriptions" (570).

In contrast with the smoky and darkened setting of the novel, the supposed source for the creation of Coketown, Preston (Lancashire), is described by Dickens as "a good, honest, work-a-day looking town, built upon a magnificent site, surrounded by beautiful country". He also states "for a manufacturing town, wears a very handsome and credible face ... the atmosphere, instead of being thick and smoky, is as clear here as the air in Hampstead Heath" ("Locked Out" 345). The state in which Dickens finds

Preston at the time of his visit is of great importance in the description of the town he makes, since the majority of the factories were locked out for the strike, and not working, reducing the pollution in the air and allowing the façades to be washed by the rain. Nevertheless, in his novel Dickens depicts a darkened and almost poisonous town:

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. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down. (*Hard Times* 27)

The contrast between the clean air of the streets in Preston and those in Coketown, full of smoke and ashes, which dye the town in black, together with the ill-smelling river and canal, signals the difference between a town whose machinery is working and one whose machinery is not. This also indicates a difference between the new industrial towns and the previous towns in the area.

The town is never located geographically by the author who provides thus a disguise for the real facts in the real industrial towns. Not only the setting in the English geography is fictional, but also the time in the town is not exact, only considered in terms of production: “Time went on in Coketown like its own machinery: so much material wrought up, so much fuel consumed, so many powers worn out, so much money made” (*Hard Times* 90). Dickens points out the monotony and routine of the machines, which were never abated, indifferent to whatever happened in their environment (*Hard Times* 245).

The metaphor of the face of a savage for the town and the simile of the interminable serpents for the smoke collide with the prohibition of the use of imagination that Mr. Gradgrind passes on his pupils and his own children. The use of metaphors is limited, focusing mainly on the town, and more specifically on the factories, as the streets and buildings look similar to each other:

[Coketown] 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... You saw nothing in Coketown but what was everly workful...The jail might have been the infirmary that might have

been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. (*Hard Times* 27- 28)

The consideration of the engines of the factories as “melancholy mad elephants” (*Hard Times* 71) is, according to Ketabgian, a form of supporting life over the life-denying mechanisms of Coketown (49).

STEPHEN BLACKPOOL

Stephen stands for the working class population of Coketown. He is Mr. Bounderby’s victim after the unjust accusation of the robbery of the bank to which he is decoyed. He is in Butwin’s opinion, “almost mute ... barely allowed to give specific designation to the complaint of the factory workers” (177).

Dickens describes Stephen as a man belonging to the “hands” of Coketown, procuring the reader first of all with his age. “Stephen Blackpool, forty years of age” (*Hard Times* 66). As an adult his workday would surpass the twelve hours, however, Stephen has no complaints about his work. Despite of these good qualities, Dickens places the only worker in his novel in a position of isolation from his fellow men (Flint XV) due to his refusal to join the Union to avoid problems.

In terms of his physical description, Dickens acknowledges Stephen’s hard life, and how battered he looks for his age:

Stephen looked older, but he had had a hard life... He was usually called Old Stephen, in a kind of rough homage to the fact.

A rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-grey hair lay long and thin, Old Stephen might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his conditions. Yet he was not. ... thousands of his compeers could talk much better than he, at any time. He was a good power-loom weaver, and a man of perfect integrity. (*Hard Times* 66)

The hands and their living conditions are unknown to their masters, as can be appreciated during Louisa’s visit to Stephen. At that moment she is for the first time near a hand, and Dickens reflects through her the un-awareness of the upper classes towards the workers, and their conception of them. She admits to know more about toiling insects than about toiling men and women (*Hard Times* 155). Louisa knew about

hands in terms of the results of their work, production and payment, that is, as mere figures.

Stephen's lack of oral skills is problematic for him both in his relation with his master, who keeps interrupting his declarations, and in his pleas for help in relation with his wife. Mr. Bounderby gets scandalized at Stephen's consideration of law as "a muddle" (*Hard Times* 77), and claims that workers only want to be "set up in a coach of six, and to be fed on turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon" (72). Although his language is not correct, Stephen makes powerful statements denouncing how workers are treated, and warns Bounderby about the conditions in which the hands live and work:

Look how we live, and where we live, an in what numbers, an by what chances, an wi' what sameness; and look how the mills is awlus a goin, and how they never works us no nigher to ony dis'ant object – ceptin awlus, Death. Look how you consider of us, an writes of us, an talks of us, and goes up wi' yor deputations to Secretaries o' State 'bout us, and how yo are awlus right, and ow we are awlus wrong, and never had'n no reason in us sin ever we were born. (*Hard Times* 147- 148)

Stephen finds himself intimidated by Bounderby into telling his friend Mr. Harthouse, "a parliament gentleman" (*Hard Times* 147), how he would solve the situation of the workers. Stephen, who is faithful to his fellow workers, answers his master knowing that others would speak better than himself, and defining the situation as "a muddle" (*Hard Times* 147):

Sir, I canna, wi' my little learning and my common way, tell the genelman what will better aw this – though some working men o' this town could, above my powers – but I can tell him what I know will never do't. The strong hand will never do't. Victory and triumph will never do't. (*Hard Times* 149)

Stephen's voice is, a discursive effect, having importance not so much for what he says as for how it is exhibited by his form of speaking (Berman 567).

Stephens's wife returns home just to sell whatever she can find to buy alcohol, and to make her husband miserable by being tied to her while loving Rachael. Rachael is a woman to whom he refers as an "angel" (*Hard Times* 89) and whose name does also have Biblical implications with clear resonances for contemporary readers. Rachael, just as Stephen, is presented as a simple, good and gentle worker. Stephen's wife is never

given a name, with the sole intention by the author to dehumanize the woman, whose actions were not moral at the time, and whose figure becomes that of a burden to both Stephen and Rachael.

Stephens's death is yet another criticism to the industrialization, which lets the poor die because of the lack of fencing and warning placards for holes such as the one into which he falls. He dies shortly after being rescued from the pit, with Rachael holding his hand. According to Cole (qtd. in Thomson 5), the death of Stephen was caused both by the trade unions and the political economy lead by Bounderby, a reflection of how the individual was sacrificed by both the *laissez faire* and the trade unions.

SLACKBRIDGE

Dickens depicts a man to stand for the Union leaders of the working movements, Slackbridge.

Dickens had attended different meetings of the workers in Preston. In "Locked Out" (1854) he refers to four union members he meets in Preston. He mentions that the meeting might have been illegal not long before: "A meeting is about to take place ... one of those meetings which thirty years ago would have been a criminal offence is formally open" ("Locked Out" 346). Although in his article "Locked Out" Dickens names different union members, he selects the man he names as Gruffshaw, instead of the man that the papers of the time claimed to be the real representative of the strikers, Cowell⁵ – whom Dickens names Cowler (López Ortega, 12). Cowler is recognized by Dickens as the audience's favourite, although he had been accused of fostering agitation and gaining advantage from the strike ("Locked Out" 346-347).

The concept that Dickens had of the union leaders was quite different from the one Carnall (33) expresses, considering them as English workmen engaged in a complicated and exacting enterprise. Dickens had pointed out in "On Strike" (558) to

⁵ The real name of the Union leader was George Cowell, this being another of Dickens's inaccuracies in the article, the "change of name is meaningless and a little careless" (Butwin 177). Cowell's "pre-eminence among the leaders was generally recognised" (Carnall 36), and Dickens himself points to the favouritism of the audience towards him, for he looks like an honest man, despite the favour with which he benefits Grimshaw (the Gruffshaw of his report). Cowell nevertheless is absent in the novel.

the entire strike as useless, and his depiction of the union leaders in the novel leads to a consideration of these men as mere corrupt agitators.

In *Hard Times*, the name provided by the author to Slackbridge included a clear opinion on the man. The name would define the negligent or careless connection between workers and masters, a detail that Dickens's contemporary readers would undoubtedly take notice of.

Dickens barely gives any protagonism to the syndicalist, and his presence is reduced to a minimum in the novel, appearing just twice. His description is not so clear as the description of any of the other characters of the novel. Slackbridge is described as a man not taller than the rest but for the strand upon which he was standing, a description that can be compared to Milton's description of Satan in *Paradise Lost*:

As he stood there... the comparison between the orator and the crowd of attentive faces turned towards him, was extremely to his disadvantage. Judging him by Nature's evidence, he was above the mass in very little but the stage on which he stood. In many great respects, he was essentially below them. (*Hard Times* 137)

Their dread commander: he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
Of glory obscured. (Milton 589-594)

The difference between both descriptions is that Dickens intends to diminish his character while Milton intended to make Satan look grand. Of course, in the comparison between a mortal and Satan, the union leader stood no chance, especially taking into account Dickens's interest in making him inferior to every man and woman in Coketown. Dickens wanted his readers to note his dislike of the man, or at least of the man's intentions. It is remarkable that Dickens points out the amazement it would produce upon any viewer, to see the agitation that such a leader created in honest and earnest people (*Hard Times* 137). The workers felt that their only hope was to ally with their comrades, but the union leader was imposed on them from above, Slackbridge's leadership being the only one available.

The fact that Slackbridge used Stephen's refusal to join the union to his advantage, supressing the only worker who does not support either the strike or the work conditions, proves his manipulative intention. The speech of the union leader was made to be manipulative and accusative. The representatives Dickens reflects in "On Strike" (1854) use speeches and mottos as simple as "those who will not work, shall not eat" (Dickens, "On Strike" 555). According to López Ortega (9), Slackbridge's speech was influenced by William Cobbett, creator of a tone, style and arguments that were to convince all the workers to join forces (Thomson, qtd. in López Ortega), in order to use "many words to say little" (Cobbett, Qtd. in López Ortega 9). In his first speech Slackbridge addresses his friends and fellow sufferers about the downtrodden operatives of Coketown, slaves of an ironhanded and grinding despotism (*Hard Times* 136) with the intention of agitating the workers. The real person upon which Slackbridge was based often used to contrast the luxuries of the masters' houses with the cottages where workers lived (Carnall 40). This comparison served to accuse the masters of worshipping money.

MR. JOSIAH BOUNDERBY

The representative of the last group of the inhabitants of Coketown to be discussed is Mr. **Bounderby**, the manufacturer. A man in his late forties, who has the appearance of an even older man. He is a man who lacks of any sentiment. He is described as "a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. ... A man who was the Bully of humility" (*Hard Times* 20-21). The sound of his laugh was meant to resemble the sound of the steam engines in the factories. He is presented as a man who is swollen like a balloon with pride (Anon.).

Dickens represents Mr. Bounderby as deprived of any consideration towards his workers. He dislikes them for being lazy and self-centred, and continually disregards any belief that the workers could be in monetary need, not even considering either their housing conditions or their malnutrition. From the first moment, Bounderby considers Stephen guilty of the robbery of the bank only for having asked about his right to divorce and having expressed the conditions of the workers:

They are the finest people in the world, these fellows are. They have got the gift of the gab, they have. They only want to have their rights explained to them, they do. But I tell you what. Show me a dissatisfied Hand, and I'll show you a man that's it for anything bad, I do not care what it is. (*Hard Times* 179)

The manufacturers were not inclined to consult any opinions regarding the care and payments of their workers because they considered them as inferior beings. Stephen's courage to expose Mr. Bounderby the claims his fellow workers demanded could be considered by the manufacturer as the greatest offense. The belief that workers, and especially dissatisfied workers, lacked morals and were able to do anything bad reflects the moral superiority the factory owners considered themselves to have. Mr. Bounderby, as the "respected combined body of Preston masters" ("On Strike" 554) rejected any meeting with workers or union leaders, as Dickens points out in "On Strike" (558). Bounderby only listens to the claims of the workers from Stephen, and not from any delegate, or group of workers.

Mr. Bounderby could be linked to different figures from the trips Dickens made to Preston. First, he could be linked to Mr. M'Culloch ("On Strike" 553) for his lack of consideration of his workers' opinions and claims. Second, he could be compared to Mr. Hollins, the only master Dickens reports to have maintained his mill open during the lock-out in Preston ("On Strike" 558), for keeping his factory open during the strike in *Hard Times*. While the workers were on strike, Stephen kept working with the women. And third, although he is the only manufacturer depicted in the novel, through Stephen's devotion towards him, he could be related to the discovery Dickens made during his trip to Preston: that all masters were not indiscriminately unpopular ("On Strike" 555).

It is important to note that the character of Mr. Bounderby is a fiction within the fiction of the novel, since he provides himself a fictional past to fulfil the capitalist fictions of Coketown of the self-made man becoming successful through effort, despite his humble origins:

I did it. I pulled through it, though nobody threw me a rope. Vagabond, errand-boy, vagabond, labourer, porter, clerk, chief manager, small partner, Josiah Bounderby of Coketown. These are the antecedents, and the culmination. (*Hard Times* 22).

As is discovered in the novel, the origins of the manufacturer were not so harsh as he intended them to be when he told about them to whomever may listen. Mr. Bounderby's imagination in the creation of fictions, however, does not only affect himself, but also Mrs. Sparsit, for whom he also creates a fictional past that she never contradicts, as Flint (XVIII) points out. Mrs. Sparsit never bothers to deny the past Mr. Bounderby creates for her as a noble person. In contraposition with his false humble origins, her false noble lineage would make Bounderby look as a more successful man, having a noble woman as a servant. This would be another of the fictions of Coketown.

5. CONCLUSION

After the analysis of Dickens's articles and *Hard Times*, it can be concluded that despite Dickens's opinion about actual strikes and his consideration of such events as a loss of resources in the articles, he blames for them both the manufacturers and trade union members. In his articles Dickens had positioned himself also against the discourses of the union leaders, pointing out nevertheless their good organization and the manners that the attendants to the meetings showed. This can be contrasted with the lack of respect of the workers during Stephen's speech. However, Dickens barely gives importance to elements like the strike in the novel, thus reducing them to a couple of meetings, giving more importance to social issues such as poverty, education and industrial hardship. Similarly, the criticism against the bad working conditions the labourers endured is considerably reduced in the book edition of the novel, in what could be considered as a lack of intention of denounce. This element is among the most important differences between the first publication in *Household Words* and any actual edition of the novel.

The biggest criticism in the novel is made against the bad relationships between masters and workers, which implied the apparition of trade unions and their leaders, who do not solve the problems, but only make them worse, as can be seen in *Hard Times*. Dickens blames both trade unions and masters of the death of workers, using Stephen Blackpool in *Hard Times* as an illustration. Although he represents the cruelty and unfairness of the deaths and the hardship of the work, Dickens never describes in *Hard Times* a situation as the one Morley does in "Ground in the Mill".

Instead of criticising the real industrial society, Dickens created a fictional village in which he set the whole story, where every character represents a group. By the behaviour and attitudes of the characters, Dickens represents and criticises his contemporary society. Stephen Blackpool represents the workers, Josiah Bounderby does so with the masters, and Slackbridge is to represent the union leaders.

It can also be seen a criticism to a society that focuses on profits and productivity, forgetting about workers, as Louisa's surprise when meeting one indicates. This criticism could be extended to Dickens's partners in *Household Words*. It was his partners' idea to make Dickens write and publish *Hard Times* to raise the benefits. The

depiction of the industrial town as a toxic landscape surrounded by smoke and noise is also a criticism to the pollution that the factories cause, and not that of a necessary evil to raise the profits of a certain manufacturer.

In previous writings related to strikes, such as “On strike” (1854) and “Locked Out” (1854), Dickens had reflected the town of Preston, living a strike at that moment, as clean, in contraposition with Coketown. Dickens creates a toxic location for the novel and describes it with multiple metaphors, from “melancholy mad elephants” (*Hard Times* 71), to “fairy palaces burst in illumination” (*Hard Times* 71), that serve as a link with the criticism against the utilitarian thought present in the novel.

All over the novel there is a dichotomy between facts and fictional elements, from the insistence of Mr. Gradgrind on teaching only facts (*Hard Times* 9), to the real facts on which the novel is based, and from the fictional landscape on which the novel is set, Coketown, to the fictional lives of some of its inhabitants. *Hard Times* presents to the reader facts and fictions, leaving up to him their distinction. This dichotomy is also present in Dickens’s articles for *Household Words*, where he provides with false names to the union leaders, including thus fiction within the reports.

Since most of the elements he criticised persisted in time, Dickens referred to them in more than one occasion. Normally Dickens referred to them first directly in his articles, and then in the novel, although this is not always the case. This is the case of the pollution, first criticised in *Hard Times* and later on in “Smoke or no Smoke”. However, elements of such importance as the master-worker relationship, the strike, or the utilitarian philosophy were discussed first in different articles published in *Household Words*.

It has been proved in this paper that there is an intertextuality between the two versions of *Hard Times* and the articles in *Household Words*. Dickens reflected his opinions about the Industrial Revolution in both of them. Moreover, the localization of the novel in a fictional setting allowed Dickens to recreate and enlarge upon the social problems he was denouncing, maintaining his opinions on contemporary social problems, which are stated in the novel as powerfully as in the articles.

6. APPENDIX

Details of the publication of *Hard Times* in *Household Words*. Contrast between the issues and pages of the original publication and the chapters and pages of the Edition used for the elaboration of this paper.

All the information corresponds to Flint (xxxix).

<i>Dates of publication</i>					
Part	Date of publication	of Issue Number	Page Numbers	Chapter Numbers	Used edition for the elaboration of this paper.
I	1 April	IX 210	141-5	1-3	B 1. Ch. 1-3
II	8 April	IX 211	165 – 70	4-5	B 1. Ch. 4-5
III	15 April	IX 212	189-94	6	B 1. Ch. 6
IV	22 April	IX 213	213-17	7-8	B 1. Ch. 7-8
V	29 April	IX 214	137-42	9-10	B 1. Ch. 9-10
VI	6 May	IX 215	261-6	11-12	B 1. Ch. 11-12
VII	13 May	IX 216	285-90	13-14	B 1. Ch. 13-14
VIII	20 May	IX 217	309-14	15-16	B 1. Ch. 15-16
IX	27 May	IX 218	333-8	17	B 2. Ch. 1
X	3 June	IX 219	357-42	18-19	B 2. Ch. 2-3
XI	10 June	IX 220	381-6	20-21	B 2. Ch. 4-5
XII	17 June	IX 221	405-9	22	B 2. Ch. 6
XIII	24 June	IX 222	429-34	23	B 2. Ch. 7
XIV	1 July	IX 223	453-8	24	B 2. Ch. 8
XV	8 July	IX 224	477-82	25-26	B 2. Ch. 9-10
XVI	15 July	IX 225	501-6	27-28	B 3. Ch. 11-12
XVII	22 July	IX 226	525-31	29-30	B 3. Ch. 1-2
XVIII	29 July	IX 227	549-56	31-32	B 3. Ch. 3-4
XIX	5 Aug.	IX 228	573-80	33-34	B 3. Ch.5-6
XX	12 Aug.	IX 229	597-606	35-37	B 3. Ch. 7-9

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