Hard Times as a Battlefield at the Information Age Opening[*]

Tomoko Kanda

The weekly magazine, *Household Words* ran *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens in 1854. The 1850s in England was a time when industrial strife was continuing to intensify. Both Labour and Capital understood the importance of propaganda through the press to some degree. The stamp duty on newspapers was raised during the Napoleonic Wars for the purpose of restricting the circulation of radical papers for workers.[1] Although it was reduced in 1836, this event shows that the early nineteenth century had already seen propaganda battles between Labour and Capital.

Capitalists of the North propagated various social myths which supported their supremacy over employees. Workers also encouraged social counter-myths to strengthen their solidarity against capitalists. The purpose of this essay is to show that *Hard Times* severely satires capitalists' fabrication of social myths, and successfully shows us the tricks of the manipulation, but that the text itself is trapped within such fabrications of both Capital and Labour. As space is limited, I concentrate mainly on the masters' social myths rather than the workers'.

Firstly, I deal with two "fictions of Coketown" concerned with industrial strife (90),[2] which capitalists successfully propagate in Coketown. Secondly, I consider what I call a

Coketown half-fiction, which capitalists propagate but fail to spread thoroughly. Thirdly, I examine the Coketown facts, that is, internal-facts of the text, about industrial strife.[3] By comparing these Coketown fictions, half-fiction and facts, this paper will reach its conclusions. The term "capitalists" is used to refer to merchants, financiers and manufacturers whose interests directly depend on manufacturing industry. This definition does not include their families who are not engaged in business. I intend by the terms "middle-classes" the classes of those people and their families, who work for incomes, but do not belong to the working classes.[4]

(1) The Double Faces of Coketown Fictions

The first Coketown fiction is “What I did you can do. Why don't you go and do it?”

> Any capitalist there, who had made sixty thousand pounds out of sixpence, 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. Why don't you go and do it? (90)

The narrator flatly calls this argument one of Coketown fictions (90). This fiction is composed of two fabrications. One fabrication lies in "you can do." What Bounderby wishes to

impress with this fiction is that he is "a commercial wonder more admirable than Venus" (181). Coketown capitalists do not believe that workers could accomplish such a miracle. The other fabrication rests on 'what I did.' It is an outright lie that Bounderby has built up a fortune from scratch completely by himself. This lie implies that Coketown has no real self-made man.[5]

The direct aim of this fabrication is to make a good excuse for not improving workers' wages: workers' poverty comes from their laziness, never from low wages. Another "prevalent fiction" of Coketown (85) is that every Coketown worker expects "to be fed on turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon" (57):[6] workers are well-paid but they live above their means. The apparent aim of this fiction is again to excuse not improving workers' wages.

The gold spoon is a metaphor for workers' exorbitant demands for higher wages in a narrow sense. At the same time, it is a metaphor for "anything about imaginative qualities" (179) in a broad sense. Any petition is "venison", every request for any improvement is "a gold spoon," as these ask for something different from *facts*, that is, "imaginative." Here is a capitalist's unlimited demand for workers' "thankful" affirmation of *facts* (23). If workers are starving to death, they should be grateful for it, as the starvation is a *fact*. Dickens testifies, "My friend Mr. Bounderby could never see any difference between leaving the Coketown 'hands' *exactly as they were*" (my Italics), in short, a

fact, “and requiring them to be fed with turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon", that is giving them too generous a benefaction.[7]

Now, it is a clear fact that workers cannot afford even necessities.[8] Then, how could Bounderby and Gradgrind "furnish more tabular statements" that workers enjoy "fresh butter," "Mocha coffee" and "prime parts of meat"(23-24)? There is no direct explanation given. But the text offers Bitzer who insists that workers should remain unmarried so as to "have only one to feed" (90-91). Suppose that there were no dependants, no little children, no invalids, and no aged people among workers. Suppose that every worker was a chief breadwinner. Workers should certainly obtain enough wages to "[live] upon the best" (23). They call this *imaginative* "tabular [statement]" a *fact*. This exposes the truth that Coketown *facts* are not facts, but what Coketown capitalists are willing to accept.[9] This is the way of Coketown; "[by] means of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, settle everything somehow" to be in favour of capitalists, "and never wonder" (41).

I mentioned that the turtle soup argument is the capitalist's unlimited demand for workers' "thankful" affirmation of *fact*, which now proves to be what pleases Coketown capitalists. Masters can reject any workers' claim as terribly exorbitant turtle soup. This is a denial of workers' civil rights. The self-made-man fiction justifies this denial by

showing all the difference between Labour and Capital: how superior *we* capitalists are, and how inferior *you* workers are.[10] Both of the Coketown fictions appear to be concerned with wage problems. However, this is just the mask to cover this crucial point at bottom—the denial of workers' civil rights.

The following sentence hits the point of the double-faced fictions. Coketown workers are called

> 'the Hands,'—a race who would have found more favour with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs (52).[11]

"[Some] people" are Coketown capitalists, "hands" physical labour, "stomachs" workers' demands for food or wages, "lower creatures" little brain, that is, workers' inferiority. Why is the metaphor "stomach," not "mouth," used for consumption? Because "mouth" is also the organ to express opinions. What has to be noticed is the difference between "only hands" and "only hands and stomachs." The image of workers metamorphosed into "only hands," shows the masters' selfishness in desiring labour without pay. However, the phrase "only hands and stomachs" exposes that it is not so much stomachs (wages), but rather brains (potential ability) and mouths (freedom to express opinions), that capitalists really wish workers not to have.

Coketown capitalists have special targets for their fictions: "the voting and interesting notabilities" (99). Most of "the voting

and interesting notabilities" in the manufacturing town must be capitalists. Coketown capitalists such as Bounderby invite them and advertise the fictions. It is not surprising that the fictions fabricated in favour of capitalists are welcomed (37).[12]

In addition, these fictions are certainly addressed to the gentry of London as well. "Gradgrind's party," the promoters of Coketown *fact* education, seem to "[want] assistance" especially of "fine gentlemen" such as members of "the House of Commons" (95). Bounderby and Gradgrind, the two representatives of Coketown capitalists, "[are] to be heard of in the House of Commons every session", with other organisations of Coketown (23). Immediately after introducing himself to James Harthouse, the brother of an MP, Bounderby announces the set of the two Coketown fictions. "[It] suits [his] disposition to have a full understanding with a man, particularly with a public man" through this announcement (97). However, the gentry do "not regularly [belong] to the Gradgrind school" (95). They seem to listen to Coketown fictions dubiously, just as Harthouse does. "If anything could have exalted [Harthouse's] interest in Mr. Bounderby" or any Coketown capitalist, "it would have been [the] very circumstance [of his low birth]. Or, so [Harthouse] told [Bounderby]" (97). The subjective mood of the sentence shows that Harthouse is not so impressed, though tactfully agreeing with Bounderby.

Thus, the double faces of the Coketown fictions emerge

more clearly. Coketown capitalists appear to intend the Coketown fictions to justify scanty wages for their workers. However, the true aim of the fictions is to prevent the pubic opinion of the qualified voters and the gentry of the City from supporting workers' civil rights.

(2) The Coketown Half-Fiction

Louisa recognises workers as "something" "in crowds passing to and from their nests, like ants or beetles." She is a product of Coketown *fact* education. She "knew," that is, Coketown *fact* education teaches, workers as

> something to be infallibly settled by laws of supply and demand; something that blundered against those laws, and floundered into difficulty; something that was a little pinched when wheat was dear, and over-ate itself when wheat was cheap; . . . something that occasionally rose like a sea, and did some harm and waste (chiefly to itself), and fell again (119).

This collection of information is designed to be combined into a Coketown argument that workers are so helpless (as to be at the mercy of economic fluctuations), so improvident (as not to save money for a rainy day) and so incapable (as to make combinations in vain) like "lower creatures," that their combination is nothing to capitalists.

Capitalists invented this argument of "helpless workers'

trivial combination" but fail to spread it thoroughly in Coketown. They cannot root out the opposite public opinion, even from their own heads. Coketown middle-class people insist that workers' combinations "must be conquered" (88).[13] Bounderby insists on exiling trade union leaders to settle labour disputes (113). If a trade union is nothing to middle-class people, why don't they leave it alone? In addition, Bitzer asserts that workers are always "uniting, and leaguing". How can combinations transient like a stormy "sea"(119) be "the old way"(88)?

It is obvious that this "lower creature" argument is a bluff: to show how powerless workers are in the face of capitalist supremacy. In order to see what this Coketown bluff reflects of Victorian society, let us leave the text for a while and turn to the industrial strife of those days.

Roughly speaking, Victorian textile workers' strategy of 1853 to 1854 was pinpointing each mill in turn with a strike for higher wages; strikers of one mill were supported, especially financially, by workers of the other mills. Then, masters took a countermeasure by closing their mills all at once and declaring this a "strike," not a "lock-out."[14] This was because the word "lock-out" disclosed the fact that the masters were compelled to close the mills and that the masters were responsible if the workers suffered as a result. Victorian capitalists of the North seem to have tried to stress workers' loss but to hide their own, caused by strikes/lock-outs. Winters, the Corresponding

Secretary of the National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Industry, presented a detailed estimate of workers' loss caused by the Preston Strike, but said that "[they] had no means of knowing [the masters']".[15] The select committee did not show any amount for masters' loss in their report of 1856 to the House of Commons. Similarly, *The Annual Register* of May 1854 estimated the workers' losses caused by the Preston strike, but never the masters'.[16]

These two manipulations of information—using the term "strike" and stressing only the workers' loss—worked to impress the capitalist myth on middle-class people: their combinations were nothing to the capitalists, but did harm to the workers themselves. Many contemporaries appear to have accepted this capitalist myth. James Lowe was a rare middle-class person who regarded the so-called "Preston Strike" as a "Lock Out." However, even he suggested workers' ignorance caused their own suffering from the situation.[17]

What is interesting is that middle-class people who used the term "strike" tended to reproduce and exaggerate the capitalists' myth, even though they were sympathetic to workers. *The Illustrated London News* commented that "[ignorant] or unthinking men [railed] against [capital]," though capital was as absolute as "the law of gravitation".[18] The political economist J. R. McCulloch insisted how "advantageous" workers' combinations were to capitalists; their strikes stimulated "the

improvement of machinery" and cut down excessive competition among masters.[19] *The Times* commented that workers "always" chose the time for strikes "so convenient to their employer" and gave a pretext to cut down output when business was rather dull.[20] If strikes were so advantageous to capitalists, why did they not welcome them? These arguments are a bluff whether made on purpose or unconsciously. Now, it is clear that the Coketown half-fiction of helpless workers' trivial combination certainly has a correspondence in actual Victorian discussions.

Moreover, the Victorian capitalists failed to establish this bluff as a firm social belief among middle-class people, for the very reason the Coketown capitalists fail: the bluff clashed with the middle-class public opinion that disputes were life-and-death struggles between Labour and Capital. Mrs Gaskell observed this public opinion prevailing. In her *North and South*, when Mrs Hale asks, "They are wanting higher wages, I suppose?", Mrs Thornton, the mill-owner's mother, declares, "That is the face of the things. But the truth is, they want to be masters, and make the masters slaves on their own grounds".[21] As Fielding argues about the Preston strike, though "[in] its simplest form it was a straightforward dispute about wages," "those which were openly debated were less important than the fundamental struggle for power".[22] This is exactly what the double faces of Coketown fictions mean.

Thus, it is clear that Victorian capitalists tried to

propagate the argument of helpless workers' trivial combination, but failed to establish it as a firm social belief among middle-class people because it clashed with middle-class public opinion. *Hard Times* clearly reflects their attempt and failure in the Coketown half-fiction. However, Dickens never consciously caricatured the failure. Dickens himself seems to have believed in the bluff to some extent. He said, "I have heard of strikes . . . which were not so disagreeable to some masters when they wanted a pretext for raising prices".[23] As the result, the text frequently suggests that the argument of lower creatures' trivial combination is true. But it just suggests, never declares. Ambiguity is maintained throughout.

First of all, Coketown capitalists believe that workers are so stupid, like "lower creatures" that they need a "mischievous stranger" (61, 111, 114) as a trade union leader. Slackbridge is certainly a stranger. This coincidence implies the internal-fact of the text that workers are surely like "lower creatures." But, then, why does Bitzer say that workers "stand by one another" in their combination (88), rather than saying that "workers stand by the stranger"?

In addition, there are brackets in the phrase that the workers' combination "did some harm and waste (chiefly to itself)" (119). Stephen Blackpool tells his fellow-workers that their combination is likely to "do yo hurt" rather than "doin' yo onny good" (107). Stephen is the idealised hero of *Hard Times*,

and his words always represent an internal-fact of the text. Why are there the brackets around this internal-fact of the text?

Moreover, when Bounderby asks Stephen how he would settle the social "muddle" in which workers are struggling, Stephen answers, " 'Tis not me as should be looken to for that, Sir. 'Tis them as is put ower me, and ower aw the rest of us. What do they tak upon themseln, Sir, if not to do 't?" (113). This answer affirms that workers need someone to patronise them, because they lack autonomy, like lower creatures. Moreover, these words of Stephen's obviously derive from Carlyle, to whom *Hard Times* was dedicated. This critic heard the "inarticulate prayers" in Chartism: "Guide me, govern me! I am mad and miserable and cannot guide myself!".[24] Therefore, the idea that workers should be ruled must be an internal-fact. Then, again, why does Stephen also say, "some working men o' this town could" "tell . . . what will better aw this" actual situation in muddle (114), just after declaring that the people "over" workers should be looked to for the settlement?

These inconsistencies reveal that Dickens fails to establish the argument of lower creatures' trivial combination as a firm internal-fact of the text, just as Victorian capitalists failed, and as Coketown capitalists fail. Both Victorian and Coketown capitalists failed, because their bluff could not overcome the middle-class public opinion based on fear of workers. Dickens failed as well. Scudder argues that Dickens did not understand

workers' potentiality,[25] but he certainly considered it, though negatively with fear.[26] The inconsistencies reflect that the Victorian middle classes, including Dickens, flounder between bluff and fear.[27]

(3) The Coketown Facts

There is an unsigned letter to the editor of *The Times*, dated 8 October 1853, which was published two days later under the title " 'Strikes' and Their Consequence. To the editor of *The Times*".[28] There is a strong likeness between the worker's story in this letter and *Hard Times*.

The story of the letter is the following. Three months earlier, "trade meetings were convened," and they decided to "[demand] an advance of 10 percent" of wages. At other meetings, "some half-dozen 'speakers' and 'grand movers' used all their eloquence to prove employers tyrants and workmen slaves. The result was a 'turn-out'." Workers could not but join this strike. For "[they] were afraid to be marked men" ostracised by their fellow workers.

In *Hard Times*, Slackbridge, the speaker and grand mover uses all his eloquence to prove employers "oppressors" and workmen "slaves of an iron-handed and a grinding despotism" (104-05). He instigates workers to ostracise Stephen who does not join the trade union (109).

The contributor of the letter continues that the strike was

successful and the master accepted their demand. However, many workers including this contributor, were discharged soon afterwards. "To keep himself from starving, [the contributor] offered to work . . . at the old rate of wages." This honest workman believed that it was "a fair remuneration," and regarded it as an "injustice" to demand the advanced rate. Then he was ostracised and "literally hunted out" of the mill, by his fellow workers. However, no master would employ a new worker at the advanced rate.

Stephen is ostracised by his fellow workers, and discharged by Bounderby because he tries to explain the "muddle" in which workers are struggling. Louisa says, "Then, by the prejudices of his own class, and by the prejudices of the other, [Stephen] is sacrificed alike? . . . there is no place whatever for an honest workman between them?" (120).

In those days, it was not unusual to fabricate a fictitious worker as the author of a letter or a pamphlet, to support the creator's opinion. George Eliot noticed such manipulation of public opinion and presented the middle-class character Amos Barton in "The Sad Fortune of the Reverend Amos Barton," as believing in such imaginary workers.[29] Dickens also seems to have noticed such manipulation to some extent. He had the middle-class character of a chaplain of Coketown jail in *Hard Times*. This chaplain announces in the House of Commons that one of the prisoners confessed with perfect confidence that "he

would have been a tip-top moral specimen" without the "low haunts" of amusement quarters (23). This sounds like a transparent fabrication.

As far as I am able to find, no one has claimed so, but it is possible that the ostracised worker's letter in *The Times* is also a fake. Firstly, could an unemployed worker buy such an expensive paper as *The Times*?[30] People also had to pay to use a circulation library or penny reading rooms, though the latter was relatively cheap.[31] Secondly, the author was unusually highly educated for a mere worker, apart from a leader. He read and understood such a highbrow paper as *The Times*, the readers of which were mostly of the upper classes and the intellectual middle classes.[32] Thirdly and conclusively, this worker thanked *The Times* for the "able article on 'strikes'" of the previous day. This is most implausible because it was a very biased article, even complaining of workers' ignorance. According to the article, the workers were so ignorant as not to understand that the employers could not afford higher wages after spending money on luxuries. Thus, it is proper to suppose that this letter was fabricated to trick the eyes of the readership of the upper classes and educated middle classes.

Butt and Tillotson argue that "Dickens habitually read *The Times*." They demonstrate how "both the policy of the newspaper and its interpretation of facts are represented without much distortion" in *Bleak House*.[33] Anne Smith shows this is the case

with *Hard Times*. She scrutinises Dickens' reliance on *The Times* for many details especially about industrial disputes.[34] It seems very likely that Dickens took inspiration from the fabricated letter, but there is no external evidence to confirm this.[35] There is also the great possibility that Dickens came across similar stories about workers' combinations in other places, as they had taken such deep root among the middle classes as to become a social myth.[36] The point is that both the fake letter and the internal-facts of *Hard Times* give readers images of simple and gullible workers easily controlled by agitating trade union leaders, and the portrait of a man who is ostracised for not being obedient to the leaders' principles. Here is the reproduction of capitalists' fabrication in *Hard Times*.

(4) Conclusion

Let us briefly summarise the main points made so far. Firstly, the two Coketown fictions are addressed to the qualified voters and the MPs, so as to prevent them from supporting workers' civil rights. Secondly, the Coketown capitalists fail to spread the argument of helpless workers' trivial combinations thoroughly in Coketown, while Dickens also fails to establish it as a firm internal-fact of the text. Thirdly, Coketown facts, that is, internal-facts of the text, have a strong similarities with a fake letter probably fabricated to trick the eyes of the readership of *The Times*.

In comparing the Coketown fictions and the fake letter, the correspondence between them is obvious. The former are fabricated to prevent the qualified voters and especially MPs from supporting workers' demand for civil rights: the latter to prevent the readership of *The Times* from supporting it—the readership which consisted of the upper and the educated middle classes producing most qualified voters and the MPs. Moreover, the fake letter was a form of journalism, which played a great role in manipulating public opinion, as journalism was supposed to show realities. And I have mentioned that Coketown capitalists propagate their fictions as *facts*. The slogan of Coketown *fact* education is "Never wonder." To have such a respectable paper as *The Times* publish the fake letter was crafty, in order to inhibit the readers from "wondering" if it was truthful.

This correspondence shows the irony that *Hard Times* reproduces the Victorian capitalists' myth of incapable workers in the Coketown facts, while it grotesquely caricatures Victorian capitalists' fabrication of social myths, and successfully shows us the tricks of the manipulation, in the Coketown fictions. In other words, *Hard Times*, both severely satires capitalists' fabrication of social myths and is itself trapped within such a fabrication. This inconsistency lies in a continuity from the Coketown fictions to the Coketown facts. *Hard Times* criticises the myth at one end of the continuity, reproduces the myth at the

other end, and flounders through it in the middle. However, the whole continuity reflects the same Victorian myth of incapable workers—the creatures who should be patronised.

Actually there are gaps in the Coketown facts themselves especially about the trade union. Its leader Slackbridge is portrayed negatively as a "complacent" demagogue, while the union members are described rather favourably as "honest," "manly," "good-humoured" (105), and with a strong "sense of honour" (106). The gap between them is so large that it is, as the narrator says, "particularly strange . . . to see [the] crowd . . . so agitated by such a leader" (105).

Shaw calls Slackbridge "a mere figment of the middle-class imagination".[37] I call the idealised workers "a figment of the working-class social myth": fabricated to strengthen their own solidarity. For example, Thomas Martin Wheeler, the Secretary to the National Charter Association, published the propaganda novel *Sunshine and Shadow* serially in *The Northern Star*, which presents portraits of working characters very similar to those of *Hard Times*.[38]

I would not claim that Dickens read this novel. Dickens probably obtained the favourable images of workers mainly when he travelled to see the Preston Strike. The portraits of workers in his journalistic article "On Strike," show a strong likeness to those of *Hard Times*. However, it is very likely that the Preston workers behaved themselves more respectably in front of Dickens,

and that he accepted this as typical. As Dickens himself inferred, they knew that "[he] was there to carry what [he] heard and saw to the opposite side; indeed one speaker seemed to intimate as such". Even without such intimation, this would have been obvious to them as "[Dickens] and [his] companion were the only persons present, not of their own order".[39]

Brantlinger, moreover, infers that only the owners of model factories opened their doors for Dickens, and that he took them as typical. He says that this is why *Hard Times* hardly shows any scene of the workers suffering from poverty and masters' ill-treatment.[40] Thus Dickens seems to have been tossed to-and-fro by the social myths of both Labour and Capital.

There has been a long dispute about the accuracy of *Hard Times*. It seems me that this has confused two different standards. Sometimes the portraits are regarded as false in relation to what the critic believes the realities of the North were.[41] Sometimes they are considered true when compared with the images held by some particular party of Victorian times such as the manufacturing workers, the middle-classes, or the readers of *The Times*.[42] This confusion is mainly caused as the myths of both sides between Labour and Capital are intermingled into *Hard Times*.

The Chartist leader Ernest Jones came from a middle-class background, but the working classes had produced their own excellent leaders, such as Wheeler and the leader of the Preston

Strike George Cowell. They did not need "strangers" for their leaders. They had begun to fabricate their own social myths by themselves. Martin Wheeler announced in the preface of *Sunshine and Shadow,* that he wrote the novel "to wield the power of imagination over the youth of [the workers'] party" against the fictions of "the opponents of [their] principles".[43] On the other hand, the capitalists of the North came to control public opinion tactically in the late-nineteenth century so as to secure new foreign markets. They encouraged diplomats, the navy and army, missionaries, explorers and also the working classes, whose power they could no longer ignore, to support colonialism.[44] Both Labour and Capital recognised the importance of the press more and more. Fader calls the nineteenth century the “age of periodicals”.[45] Most major political, social or religious groups had established their own periodicals as organs to express their opinions by the time of the abolition of the stamp duty, the so-called “tax on knowledge” in 1855,[46] the year after *Hard Times* was published. It was the opening of the information age with the mass reading public developing.[47] *Hard Times* reflects and incarnates the propaganda battlefield of the coming age.

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[*] I wish to express my gratitude to the Cambridge Overseas Trust for their generous financial assistance.

[1] John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (London: Routledge, 1988) 164.

[2] Dickens, *Hard Times*, ed. George Ford and Sylvère Monod, 2nd ed., (New York: Norton, 1990). All further references to *Hard Times* are to this edition.
[3] In order to distinguish these facts, I use italics to mention what Coketown capitalists call *facts*, which are actually fiction.
[4] Therefore, Mrs Sparsit is categorised as a member of the middle classes in this essay, as she earns money from Bounderby. For precise definitions of "middle-classes" and that of "middling sorts," see Barry and Stearns.
[5] Coketown is a town of monotony "inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours . . . to do the same work" (22). This monotony among the employees means monotony among their employers: paying the same wages, setting up the same working conditions, and holding the same opinions about workers. This monotony enables the text to represent Bounderby as a perfect sample of all Coketown capitalists.
[6] This comparison of 'turtle spoon' is repeated (61,96,115).
[7] Charles Dickens, postscript, *Our Mutual Friend*, by Dickens, ed. Salter Davies (London: Oxford UP, 1959) 822.
[8] This fact is shown with the moral of the old fable (24).
[9] Katherine Kearns says, in "A Topology of Realism in *Hard Times*," *Journal of English Literary History* 59 (1992), that Dickens instinctively knew that " 'realism' is, in every case, an epistemological suspect, politically driven notion," and that "*Hard Times* consistently brings the reader to share in the deconstruction of its stated 'realism' " (859).
[10] On the way Coketown capitalists dominate others through manipulation and abuse of language, see Janet Karsten Larson, "Identity's Fiction: Naming and Renaming in *Hard Times*," *Dickens Studies Newsletter* 10 (1979): 14-19, Stephen R. Rounds "Naming People: Dickens's Technique in *Hard Times*," *Dickens Studies Newsletter* 8 (1977): 36-40, and J. Stephen Spector, "Monsters of Metonymy: *Hard Times* and Knowing the Working Class," *Journal of English Literary History* 51 (1984): 365-84.
[11] Graham Smith says in the notes of *Hard Times. For These Times*, by Charles Dickens, ed. Smith, (London: Everyman, 1994)

that "[both] Carlyle and Marx comment on the reduction of human complexity to a single function implied in the phrase "factory hand" (294).

[12] “Strangers, modest enough elsewhere, started up at dinners in Coketown, and boasted, in quite a rampant way, of Bounderby” (37). This sentence implies that the strangers accept the Coketown fictions, which Bounderby is always advertising, with enthusiasm. As the strangers are invited to dinner in Coketown, they cannot be workers. Neither are they the gentry, because, the gentry, as I mention later, would never be made to dance the Coketown capitalists’ tune. It is proper to suppose that the strangers are capitalists of another manufacturing town probably of the North.

[13] Mrs Sparsit declares this opinion and Bitzer agrees with her (88). Bitzer is very much of the world and always true to Coketown common sense. Therefore, his opinion shows us the public opinion of the Coketown middle classes.

[14] K. J. Fielding, "The Battle for Preston," *Dickensian* 50 (1954): 160.

[15] *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1856 (343), XIII. 478-484

[16] "The Wage Movement," *Annual Register* 96 (1855): 80.

[17] [James Lowe], "Locked Out," *Household Words* 8 (1853): 348.

[18] "The Labour Parliament," *Illustrated London News* 10 Dec. 1853: 2.

[19] J. R. McCulloch, *A Treatise on the Circumstances which Determine the Rate of Wages and the Condition of the Labouring Classes Including an Inquiry into the Influence of Combinations*, rev. ed. (1854), rep. as *A Treatise on the Circumstances which Determine the Rate of Wages and the Condition of the Labouring Classes* (New York: Kelley, 1963) 83.

[20] *Times*, 7 Oct. 1853, 6.

[21] Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, ed. Angus Easson (London: Oxford UP, 1973) 115.

[22] K. J. Fielding, "The Battle for Preston," *Dickensian* 50 (1954): 160. P.J. Keating also says, in *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), "The real danger lay in the possibility of the workers consolidating their

position by mass adherence to any social philosophy which tended to accentuate class differences" (232).

[23] [Charles Dickens], "On Strike," *Household Words* 8 (1854): 554.

[24] Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, rep. in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, ed.H.D. Trail, vol.4 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899) 157. On the influence of this work of Carlyle on *Hard Times*, see Michael Goldberg, *Carlyle and Dickens* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1972) 36-37.

[25] Vida D. Scudder, *Social Ideals in English Letters* (Boston: Houghton, 1898), 250-51.

[26] Many critics point out his fear of workers or his ambivalence between sympathy and fear toward workers. See Keating (231-35), Patrick Brantlinger, "The Case against Trade Unions in Early Victorian Fiction," *Victorian Studies* 13 (1969): 37-52, and Geoffrey Carnell, "Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike," *Victorian Studies* 8 (1964): 31-48.

[27] Rosemarie Bodenheimer also considers *Hard Times* as regards the connection between its literary form and the historical context of Victorian class struggle, in *The Politics of Story in Victorian Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988).

[28] This letter is included in the Norton edition of *Hard Times* by Ford and Monod under the title "An Ostracized Workman" (282-83).

[29] George Eliot, "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton," rep. in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, ed. Thomas A. Noble (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 18.

[30] *The Times* was 5d. while *Household Words* was 2d.

[31] This contributor probably lived in the North, as strikes to "[demand] an advance of 10 percent" of wages were mainly held in Northern towns such as Stockport, Preston, and Burnley (Lowe, 347). As Louis James points out, in *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England* (London: Oxford UP, 1963), there were not so many coffee houses in the North (7). This contributor might have read it in a pub, or listened to a public reading of the article.

[32] Alvar Ellegård, *The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Stockholm: Göteborg, 1957) 18. Richard D.Altick says, in *The English Common Reader: a History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: U of Chicago P; London: Cambridge UP; Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1957), there was a clear distinction between the readership of highbrow papers and that of lowbrow papers (337-38).

[33] John Butt, and Kathleen Tillotson, *Dickens at Work* (London: Methuen, 1957) 193.

[34] Anne Smith, "*Hard Times* and *The Times* Newspaper," *Dickensian* 69 (1973): 153-62.

[35] I mention here only the possibility that this assumption may shed a new light on the argument that Dickens was deceptive in telling Cunningham that it was not the Preston Strike that inspired him in *Hard Times*. See David Shusterman, "Peter Cunningham, Friend of Dickens," *Dickensian* 3 (1957): 20-35, and Edward Wagenknecht, *The Man Charles Dickens: A Victorian Portrait*, rev. ed. (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1966) 205-06.

[36] *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1860 (307), XXII, 79-83, 208-210, 219-222. The committee repeated the question to Edward Humphries, the Financial Secretary to the National Association of United Trades, asking if they had forced workers to join strikes. The committee seems to have suspected that they imposed some forfeit on workers who disagreed about strikes.

[37] George Barnard Shaw, introduction, *Hard Times*, by Charles Dickens, rpt. as "Introduction to *Hard Times*," *Shaw on Dickens*, ed. Dan H. Laurence and Martin Quinn (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1985) 33.

[38] *Sunshine and Shadow* admires workers for their kind hearts in supporting one another under severe poverty, in Chapter 8 published in 26 May 1849. Stephen Blackpool refers to his fellow workers, "They're true to one another, faifhfo' to one another, fectionate to one another, e'en to death." He also says that workers are sincere friends in need to one another (112). Robert M. Lovett and Helen S. Hughes point out Dickens's romantic notion that "honesty, kindness, and true worth were to be found chiefly among the poor". They attribute this to the hard

experience of his childhood in *The History of the Novel in England*. (1932; London: George G. Harper, 1993) 228.

[39] Dickens, "On Strike," 558.

[40] Patrick Brantlinger, "Dickens and the Factories," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 26 (1971): 270-85.

[41]On Dickens's failure to give truthful portraits of the trade union, see F. R. Leavis, "The Novel as Dramatic Poem (1): *Hard Times*," *Scrutiny* 14 (1947), rpt. as "*Hard Times*: An Analytic Note," *Great Tradition* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948) 245, Sheila M. Smith, "Truth and Propaganda in the Victorian Social Problem Novel," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 8 (1964): 90-91, and John Holloway, "*Hard Times*: A History and a Criticism," *Dickens and Twentieth Century*, ed. John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) 166-67.

[42] Edwin P. Whipple says, in *Atlantic Monthly* 39 (1877), "[Bounderby] seems real to thousands who observe their employers from the outside" (355). Anne Smith notes that both Bounderby and Slackbridge are close enough to the portraits of masters' and workers' leaders represented in *The Times* (153-162). In "Mrs. Gaskell and Brotherhood," *Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, ed. David Howard, Lucas, and John Goode (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), John Lucas points out "a compilation of cliché based on an external and distanced acquaintance" in *Hard Times* (176).

[43] Wheeler, 3 Mar. 1849, 3.

[44] Parker Thomas Moon calls this "the dynamic alliance of interests and ideas" in *Imperialism and World Politics* (1926; New York: Macmillan, 1930) 74.

[45] Daniel Fader, and George Bornstein, introduction, *British Periodicals of the 18th and 19th Centuries* by Fader and Bornstein (Michigan: Xerox, 1972), vii.

[46] See Charles Mitchell, *Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1856) for details.

[47] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: a History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: U of Chicago P; London: Cambridge UP; Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1957) 81.