Beteckning: _____

HÖGSKOLAN I GÄVLE

Institutionen för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap

The Importance of Time in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*

Andreas Jönsson

20 January, 2009

C-essay, 15hp
English literature

Kultur- och kommunikationsprogrammet
Examinator: Helena Wahlström
Handledare: Marko Modiano

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **2**

BACKGROUND **3**
Hard Times- the novel **3**
The storyline ***4***
The characters ***5***
The Concept and Spirit of Time **6**
The terms 'mechanical' and 'natural' **9**

THE STUDY **11**
The Setting **11**
Mr Bounderby **14**
Mr Gradgrind **18**
Cecilia Jupe **22**

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION **24**

LIST OF WORKS CITED **28**

INTRODUCTION

In the novel *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens has constructed an almost entirely mechanized world of people, ideals and environments. This suggests that the natural and corresponding counterpart always needs to fight for its self-preservation among characters' perceptions and within settings. The hypothesis of this essay is that Dickens applies mechanical and natural time perceptions and descriptions in the novel in order to express his opinions and disapproval for the industrial society. The aim is to study how the novel contrasts mechanical and natural time and, by doing so, how this contrast calls attention to the dangers of industrialization.

The dominating values and beliefs present in the novel are meant to imply an understanding of the appalling consequences, in some way or another, of industrialisation. A critic has expressed his understanding of the literary achievement in question as follows: "*Hard Times* […] is Dickens' attack upon the System by which the claims of individual human beings are trampled in a general mêlée." (Hobsbaum, 187). This system is the social and environmental setting which the characters live in; it is created by a philosophy that adds fuel to sustain the advancement of industrialization. The philosophy mirrors the mechanical characteristics of industrialisation and hence expresses the great importance of mechanical perceptions such as objective utilitarianism and factual statistics.

This essay will look at what time means to the characters in the novel and how their perception of time shines through and expresses itself in their behaviour and reasoning. The mechanization of life in general is a threatening and somewhat evil crime which is always present in *Hard Times* (HT), and, as often as not, is repeatedly elucidated by the moral authority of the intrusive narrator. But it has also been observed that:

> […] it is not only the narrator [Dickens] who mechanizes his characters; there are also a number of characters in his novels who treat other characters like objects or animals, thereby depriving them of their human dignity. (Meier, 88)

Accordingly, already in the beginning of the novel, the character of Thomas Gradgrind instructs a class in school how they should think and reason. He tells them that facts alone are wanted in life and, together with the schoolmaster and a third person present, he "[…] swept with [his] eyes the inclined plane of little vessels, then and there arranged in order […]" (HT, 9). When thinking of the children as vessels Mr Gradgrind objectifies them as small

gearwheels in a greater machinery. In other words, he does not see the children as human other than in their biology and simply as empty containers ready to have "facts poured into them until they were full to the brim" (HT, 9). The mechanical perception of life is, as will be argued, also shared with our appreciation of time, since they are intimately connected.

Further on the terms mechanical and natural will be explained more thoroughly in the section "The terms 'mechanical' and 'natural'". However, presently it is adequate to be aware of the fact that natural time is an understanding of time-measurement which may influence our life-perception in a different manner than would a more mechanical understanding of time.

This essay will introduce the concept of time and its importance to human beings. The ensuing text will investigate how our conception of the world may be shaped and then continues with a closer look at how the characters' comprehension of time actually differs in the novel. Finally, a conclusion will follow with contemplation and analysis upon the different ways of understanding what has been discussed in this essay.

BACKGROUND

The first half of the background will provide an insight into the novel of *Hard Times*, its characters and the setting. The other half of this section will include, as mentioned in the introduction, definitions of terms and why we may comprehend time in a certain way.

Hard Times- the novel

Dickens started a periodical publication he called *Household Words* in 1850 and was urged by its printers to begin writing a new weekly serial when the sales had been falling for some time. One reason among many for writing the story that would be known as *Hard Times for These Times* (which is the full title) was therefore an attempt to increase the sales of *Household Words*, an endeavour that succeeded very well (Hobsbaum, 127,173).

The novel "[…] has been recognized as Dicken's distinctive attempt to come to grips with the phenomenon of the industrial city" (Johnson, 128) which represents what he feels is terribly wrong; the self-interest among people taking over, that the gap between rich and poor widens and the employed labourer's loose their individualization in the eyes of factory owners and are exploited at the expense of profit. *Hard Times* has also been described as a novel which "[…] asks most clearly to be read not as a mere fictional world but as a commentary on

a contemporary crisis. It is, after all, *Hard Times for These Times*, and it is dedicated to Thomas Carlyle, the social thinker whose vision of a society of human connections […] influenced Dickens so profoundly in the 1840s and 1850s" (Schor, 67). The novel is therefore not only supposed to be a pleasant and entertaining read. It is a work of fiction which contains a serious depth and has an underlying gravity which is important to be aware of. It is both criticism of industrialism and an attempt to raise awareness among people about how they actually think. *Hard Times* has the affect of tempting the reader to reflect upon his or her own situation and how they believe they live their lives, as well as how they imagine their relationships to others are.

The storyline

The novel takes place somewhere in England during the mid-19th century and involves many different and sometimes profoundly distinct characters - especially concerning their conduct towards others, and in particular, those of a different class or disposition. To begin with we are introduced to the Gradgrind family and the two oldest children (Cecilia and Thomas Jr. a.k.a. Tom). Their father, Mr Gradgrind, also happens to be the founder of the school they attend; an arena in which he greatly enjoys sharing his philosophy about rationality and facts. He believes strongly in practical and logical notions and does not approve of imaginative and illogical thinking and reasoning - neither by his own children nor by Cecilia Jupe. Jupe is the daughter of a circus entertainer who disappeared and left her to be taken in by Mr Gradgrind. Mr Gradgrind, despite his friend Mr Bounderby's objection for doing so, believes he may have a chance of putting her straight. Jupe is specifically very different from the Gradgrind children, that is to say, their complete opposite, and that is something Mr Gradgrind wishes to amend.

Time passes and the Gradgrind children become older, they mature into adulthood according to their father's efforts and wishes and all the while their experience of their own lives seem to them as if there is something missing, something vital. Tom shows an increasingly self-interested side: he inconsiderately gambles too much and starts to owe people a lot of money - his everyday goal is mainly to enjoy himself as much as possible. Louisa on the other hand is married to the factory owner Mr Bounderby who is much older than her. She finds herself trapped in this marriage at the same time as her brother becomes an apprentice at her husband's bank. During all of this Cecilia Jupe stays at the Gradgrind home and takes care of the younger children and the household.

One day Mr Bounderby's bank is robbed and no witnesses can be found except someone claiming that a 'Hand' (the low-status workers that do the dirtiest work in the city's factories) had been observing the building many nights in a row before the robbery happened. While the robbery remains a mystery, Louisa suffers from distress and feels miserable in her marriage with Mr Bounderby, who she does not love. She meets a certain Mr Hearthouse and experiences emotions her upbringing has quenched and now take her by surprise. Uncertain and confused she leaves her husband and lives at Stone Lodge once more, her childhood home. This makes Mr Bounderby furious. Mr Gradgrind and Louisa ultimately understand that Tom is the bank robber and, with a little help from Sleary and his circus performers with whom Cecilia Jupe spent her early childhood, they manage to help Tom leave the country and be spared his penalty.

The snooty character of Mrs Sparsit, who is employed as Mr Bounderby's housekeeper, wishes to be the one her employer will marry. In her attempt to help Mr Bounderby find the bank robber and win his favour she presents a certain Mrs Pegler who she believes has something to do with the bank robbery. Old Mrs Pegler is then revealed to be Mr Bounderby's mother and a woman who loves her son. She would never abandon him as he had always proclaimed she did. Mr Bounderby's rise from rags to riches has all been a lie and he looses face. He had forbidden his mother to visit him and fires Mrs Sparsit for putting him in this embarrassing position.

The story ends with a glimpse into the future where Mr Bounderby dies alone in Coketown and Mr Gradgrind abandons his fact-oriented and rational philosophy to help poor people instead. Cecilia Jupe, on the other hand, marries and lives a happy life with her own family while Louisa never will have one of her own. Still, their relationship is strong and Jupe teaches Louisa the importance of feeling sympathy for her fellow men and women. Her brother Tom also at last understands his faults but unfortunately dies without ever seeing his family again.

The characters

The characters presented above are central to the study. Throughout the novel we come to know their names, dispositions and situations and understand them to be vital for the novel and for the aspects of 'natural' and 'mechanical' time-perceptions. For that reason they are briefly described here.

Thomas Gradgrind is one of the most important characters in the novel. He is a father of five children of which the two oldest are Louisa and Tom. He regards himself as 'eminently practical' and works as a teacher at one of the Coketown schools. He is also a good friend of Mr Bounderby, a well known owner of factories in the city.

Josiah Bounderby is a boastful and self-interested man who repeatedly reminds everyone around him that he is a self-made man and someone they should listen to because of his impressive struggle from the bottom to the top on the ladder of success; he is now both a banker and owner of factories which provide him with wealth and power.

Louisa Gradgrind is another key-character in the novel and Thomas Gradgrind's daughter – and later also becomes Mr Bounderby's wife. Her upbringing and her father's way of educating his children causes her to feel detached from any emotions of happiness and joy, although she at first may not be aware of it nor the reason why.

Cecilia Jupe becomes a member in the Gradgrind family after her father, who worked at the travelling circus in Coketown, abandoned her. She does not share Louisa's and Thomas' mechanical rationality and more or less insensible and practical conduct. Instead she proves to be more imaginative and keen on sympathizing with others and thereby acts as a contrast to the other family members.

The Concept and Spirit of Time

If we ask ourselves where Time originates, or where peoples' need of counting it comes from, we may find the answer very unsatisfying, if we conclude anything at all. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* offers the following explanation:

> The irreversible and inexorability of the passage of time is borne in on human beings by the fact of death. Unlike other living creatures, they know that their lives may be cut short at any moment and that […] their growth is bound to be followed by eventual decay and, in due time, death (Encyclopaedia Britannic)

When considering this assertion it is possible to draw the inference that since time goes from birth to death it has a sort of direction with a beginning and end. Hence, we count time from the emergence of one alteration to the next and thereby establish a system of measurement

through which we then view our own lives. For that reason, time is measured by clocks, almanacs, recognized as the periods of famous peoples' lives or even periods in which a certain 'ism'[1] dominates human life and culture. Subsequently, our value of time, and how we view our time, is closely related to our understanding of life and the whole reality that surrounds us.

Our experience of time may be linear, whereas some people possess the belief that time is cyclic (e.g. the Buddhists conviction in reincarnation and the rebirth of the soul). The same article from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* also suggests that this faith in life's repetitiveness is an adoption from the repetition which can be observed in the seasons. However, it furthermore states that:

> The day-and-night cycle and the annual cycle of the seasons dominated the conduct of human life until the recent harnessing of inanimate physical forces in the Industrial Revolution made it possible for work to be carried on for 24 hours a day throughout the year […] (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Consequently, the Industrial Revolution and its technical developments had considerable impact upon human life and conduct, and therefore also people's awareness of time and comprehension of it. It seems that Dickens bears this in mind and employs the industrial 'mechanisation' of time in *Hard Times* when he writes about The Gradgrinds, Mr Bounderby and the other characters. In the section entitled "The Study", we will look closer at how mechanisation affects them.

The human conception of the world has seemingly changed substantially since the 18th century and the general understanding of nature, as well as the human attitude towards it, has also altered. According to Bernt Gustavsson, who is a Swedish historian of ideas, a conception of the world is defined as a dominating perception of mankind, the society and nature in a certain epoch (Gustavsson, 16). He asserts that conceptions of the world contain thoughts about time and space, as well as human labour and fundamental moral principles; in other words, everything that influences our own comprehension of the world and how we put it into order so that we may understand it better.

[1] E.g. Modernism and Industrialism

There also seems to be mainly two different kinds of world conceptions. Gustavsson identifies them as either mechanical or organic (Gustavsson, 106). Before the industrial revolution brought about a more mechanized perception of the world (and with it the widespread social, economical and, above all, technological changes) the organic epoch made people experience everything as a growing wholeness to a much greater degree and where everything had its natural given place in relation to everything else. Even mankind and its societies were a link in the chain which this organic conception was composed of. However, the mechanical conception of the world had its' major breakthrough during the 19th century when an outlook arose, mainly from the philosopher Auguste Comte, which we today call positivism (Gustavsson, 107, 110).

With the modern natural sciences man could now through precise observations and experimentation make predictions about natural phenomena and convert theoretical thinking into practical techniques. The thought is therefore to have man settle his reasoning and doings according to scientific certainty and useful knowledge. Through this, a new moral was believed to emerge as well as a new society (Gustavsson, 110). Three main ideas are possible to make out from this world conception according to Gustavsson: the methods by the natural sciences are models to other sciences and the pattern for all other knowledge, true knowledge is based on experience and constitute facts, and lastly, nature and society are regulated by law - when man understands these laws, mankind can control nature's resources and the society's development (Gustavsson, 111).

These ideas changed the way we regard nature and understand it. Mankind was from now on more obviously distinguished from nature by the conviction that nature needed to be controlled; an understanding which thereby came to mechanize nature itself (Gustavsson, 124-125). As stated above, previous to the dominance of the mechanical conception of the world mankind's overall understanding was more organic or "natural" and was signified by the belief that everything somehow was connected and that existence was a living wholeness. Gustavsson writes that:

> In the conception of the world which existed before the birth of the natural sciences everything was highly governed by a purpose. The world is very much to the purpose, everything has a purpose and *a meaning*. […] The new natural sciences do not have room for explanations about such things as purpose and meaning. The

> explanations about purpose disappeared with the new natural science. It is only supposed to *describe* the laws with which nature functions. These laws are mechanical in the sense that they always follow a prescribed course, they always apply and are applicable everywhere, they are universal (Gustavsson, 126) (my translation)

Thus, the world has not changed after having been natural and now is mechanical whereas the way in which mankind regards it has. When we disassemble everything (and categorize it in various ways) to find out how it works we understand its construction and therefore also obtain true knowledge. By taking the world apart in order to see the function of each part we leave the perspective of wholeness behind and do not regard our world as a connected pattern. Instead we explain each happening or reaction with another, all according to strict natural laws. In the same spirit *Hard Times* begins its story. At the beginning of the novel (which is mentioned in "The Study"-section) we are immediately confronted by the importance of exactness and definable approaches which then continues as a connecting thought throughout the story.

The terms 'mechanical' and 'natural'

The definitions given in this essay to the terms 'mechanical' and 'natural' time are constructed based on the previous chapter *The Concept and Spirit of Time*. However, we may quite easily explain to others what the words actually denote and what we mean when using them. 'Mechanical' is often synonymous with monotone, repetitive and unchangeable whereas the term 'natural' conveys the complete opposite; circumstances already present and not artificially constructed by mankind.

The signification of the term 'mechanical' does not seem to include nor connote an understanding of a purpose, because when an object or activity is referred to as 'mechanical' it is rather described and explained than given a purpose for being the way it happens to be. On the other hand, when the term 'natural' is used, it seems to, on the contrary and apart from being descriptive, grant its own significance with a purpose which is self-explanatory. As long as something is 'natural' it has not been understood solely as a function which can be described in terms of science (by a reasoning mind) but still has a nature of its own i.e. a purposeful importance.

In *Hard Times* mechanical time is contrasted by natural time and these two opposites together makes it possible for us to experience the mood of time through two levels. The environmental mechanization of time is the first level of mechanization and is mainly due to the heavily industrialized setting which Coketown provides. Since industrialization is a man-made revolution it contrasts with the more 'natural' and ever-changing seasons of the year and the fact that the sun is rising and setting every day. The travelling circus which visits Coketown e.g., though being a man-made company, also acts as a counterweight to the dominating industries in the city.

The second level of mechanization in the novel is visible in the characters. Their natural human characteristics of sympathy, compassion and helpfulness, merely for the sake of helping others, indicate a different way of conceiving time and fellow-beings, and understanding life as well, from the characters that possess a more mechanical mind. One critic expresses the two kinds of characters ('mechanical' and 'natural') figuring in Dickens' novels in the following way: […] Dickens' characters belong to two classes – people who have feelings and emotions, and people who have none. He contrasts the souls which nature creates with those which society deforms (Taine, 355). The characters possessing a 'mechanical' mentality are restrained in their 'natural' disposition and do not hold the previously mentioned qualities.

Since the characters experience time differently, which will be illustrated in "The Study", they also regard life in different ways; a mechanical appreciation of time leads to 'mechanical' values whereas a natural appreciation of time leads to 'natural' values. It is through our concept of time we view our lives, since it is through time (from birth to death) we live it.

Then, to render an understanding possible of how mechanical and natural perceptions and descriptions represent time in *Hard Times* we must look at the characters' mechanisation in the novel. The mechanical aspects of some characters show their value of time and constitute both the mechanical time perception in the novel as well as contrasts with the more 'natural' values and attitudes towards life by other characters. The natural qualities are subordinate and surrounded by a repressing world created by Dickens; a world named Coketown and in a time of hardness.

THE STUDY

The author may not only decide how time will be used in a story and how it will be structured, but it is also possible for him or her to convey a relationship towards time itself depending on how it is valued, represented or described in the parts of the text that bring attention to the passing of time. This is exactly what Dickens has taken advantage of in constructing his imagined Coketown; the arena in which the story *Hard Times* takes place. The parts that bring attention to how the relation to time is figuring in the narration of the novel are among other things the setting and the characters.

The following section will bring up the character Mr Bounderby who, as will be shown shortly, represents the principles of the mechanisation of the mind. Cecilia Jupe, in turn, represents the natural and human features, while Mr Gradgrind signifies the process of changing attitude towards life from his mechanical to a more natural perception. Louisa is however a symbolizing example of a dysfunctional "product" (i.e. person) made by an insensible and manufacturing upbringing (i.e. her family life). However, previous to the character analysis the setting of the novel will be considered and looked into, to see how Dickens use different locations in the novel in order to contrast mechanical and natural time conceptions.

The Setting

As stated earlier in the section 'The Concept and Spirit of Time' we view time that passes in a certain way depending on our own view of life. The beliefs and thoughts expressed by the characters in the novel are therefore also integrated with their notion of time which in turn is partially due to the environmental qualities that will be discussed here, namely the setting. The settings may intimate how time and characters should be perceived in different scenes and in various settings.

There are several different settings described in the novel and they all contribute to our understanding of time in one way or another. The town of Coketown is where the main part of the story is set and bears a name that implies the many factories therein driven by coke. Because of this large-scale industry the intense pollution turns the town into a very filthy place: "It was a town of red brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it […]." (HT, 28). And "[i]n the hardest part of Coketown; in the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, […] Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and

gases were bricked in […]" (HT, 68). The town is seemingly the worst place to live; it is ugly, unhealthy and a prison which nature cannot enter.

The environment is thus heavily industrialized and is moreover described in the novel as a place where "Time went on like its own machinery" (HT, 93). The monotony is clearly ruling its everyday life and we are repeatedly reminded that smoke pillars constantly rise from the high chimneys of the factories. The air is dense with pollution as well as the river, which is purple with ill-stinking dye. The pollution and one-sidedness of life and work portrayed in Coketown together convey gloomy monotony:

> It [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, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next (HT, 28).

When presenting Coketown in this manner the author makes any reader's assumption that healthy creativity and variation exist in this place completely impossible; the town already runs like clockwork. The environment is in other words mechanised, almost as if in passing, and expresses something close to sadness and hopelessness. Throughout the novel similar descriptions are attributed to Coketown, and various houses and locations as well. Stone Lodge for instance, where the family Gradgrind resides, is given the portrayal: "[…] life at Stone Lodge went monotonously round like a piece of machinery which discouraged human interference […]" (HT, 61). Even the very name Stone Lodge denotes the place not to be much different from a stone-cave or stone-hut with damp mortar and a cold and sombre ambience. Everything about the Gradgrind home is highly functional and ordered, and around the house there is a "Lawn and garden and an infant avenue, all ruled straight like a botanical account-book" (HT, 17).

When considering the novel *Hard Times* and its setting it mainly presents a mood through the description of Coketown. However, when Cecilia and a character called Rachael (who is one of the many factory workers often referred to as 'the Hands') go outside the city, the novel offers the first view of an environment very different from the filthy and noisy setting which has been dominating the novel up to that point. When they leave the town behind with its many smoke pillars and monotonous and lifeless work it is almost as if another world has

opened its doors to them. Louisa and Rachel have wandered straight into a country of fresh green grass, with birds singing in the air, and at the horizon the glittering light of a far away sea is visible. The atmosphere has completely changed and the mechanical features in the novel seem not to be present anymore.

However, the almost blissful and idyllic green landscape Rachael and Louisa have entered into is still underscored by the presence of contrasting mechanical features in the shape of old coal-pits and abandoned mining equipment scattered all over: "Engines and pits' mouths, and lean old horses that had worn the circle of their daily labour into the ground, were alike quiet; wheels had ceased for a short space to turn; and the great wheel of earth seemed to revolve without the shocks and noises of another time" (HT, 266). For a brief moment the novel shows how different life in Cokewtown is from the rest of the world outside its boundaries. Here, time is not collared with any mechanical tools or surrounded and driven by unreflecting repetitiveness (at least to a lesser degree) but has changed into something free and natural. The words "without the shocks and noises of another time" emphasizes the presence of nature and the existence of its own system for measuring time, or rather, that outside Coketown's noisy atmosphere time in a sense is smoother and is experienced the way time should be according to the message of the novel. Here time is more alive than in the poisonous town where monotony rules and independent diversities of any kind are disliked.

The mechanical atmosphere of the Coketown setting is also embodied in the clocks among the identical sooty red-bricked buildings and monotonous work of the 'Hands' at the factories. Clocks symbolise the mechanical understanding of time most clearly in the novel by measuring it with complete dull monotony and without any reflection or life other than what they are given by the manufacturers. In the novel we find such a clock in the possession of Mr Gradgrind and situated in his apartment where he does his work: "[…] a stern room, with a deadly-statistical clock in it, which measured every second with a beat like a rap upon a coffin-lid […]" (HT, 99). The clock seems to count the time that will never come again and the time that remains with equal effort, as if it was counting down to zero, until there is no more. Mr Gradgrinds' clock stresses the fact that we have only a certain amount of time before passing away and gives emphasis to the thought that this time-length is already measured, and now simply needs to be deducted.

Apart from the walking-tour Louisa and Rachael do when going outside Coketown, the travelling-circus called Sleary's horsemanship also provide a somewhat clear contrast to the rest of the city's mechanical and lifeless outline. Sleary's circus has a different atmosphere both because of the more natural aspects of the workers' profession and the social exchange

between them compared to the Coketowners. The circus-entertainers perform by riding horses, juggling and doing acrobatic tricks which means that they are dependant on one another to a higher degree to carry out their work, than a 'Hand' who does his work all by himself. The atmosphere among the circus-people is more humane and described in the following way:

> […] there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practise, and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another, deserving, often as much respect, and always of as much generous construction, as the everyday virtues of any class of people in the world. (HT, 41)

The circus entertainers are depicted to be more inclined to human emotions and respect the feelings of their fellow workers. The setting of Slearys' horsemanship in a way also constitutes an island of what is missing in the rest of the city; there is music and colourful flags, and entertainment without any practical goals other than to entertain the interest and excitement of the onlookers. Although the circus is an organisation as any other company with its economy depending on the costumers or in this case the visitors, Sleary's Horsemanship seem to have other interests than a solely economical one when performing. Instead the performers seem to radiate a passion for their work: they actually enjoy their work and are proud of their feats.

When these shifting settings are compared to one another it is possible to understand how it affects the mood in which the novel is read. Everything from the clocks mentioned now and then in the novel to the contrasts in the places the characters live and work affect the time perception in the text. It becomes clear that Coketown represents the mechanical perspective, whereas the outskirts along with the travelling circus represent the natural perspective. Within these different settings we also find different characters that are connected to the mechanical and/or natural environments they are in.

Mr Bounderby

When we first meet the character of Mr Josiah Bounderby he talks to Mrs Gradgrind and boasts about his tough upbringing and proudly lets her know that he […] was first able to tell the time upon a dial-plate, from studying the steeple clock of St Gile's Church, London" (HT,

23). Mr Bounderby could be interpreted to be similar to the clocks figuring in the novel; a man detached from the world and who experiences time and understands his own life as external to the world he lives in. Mr Bounderby believes himself not to be dependant on the goodwill of others, nor their help. He considers self-interest the only engine anyone would ever need to reach success, just as he did. Accordingly, it is understandable that he is described as 'the bully of humility' (HT, 21) and a man who is boastful, self-centred, completely devoid of affectionate feelings and understanding for others, and overall a very unpleasant person to be around for most Coketowners.

Mr Bounderby clearly represents an insensible and mechanical way of thinking in the novel and exemplifies it frequently. One occasion when it is evident that his self-interest restrains him from feeling empathy for other people in their hardships comes about when he receives Stephen Blackpool (one of the many 'Hands' employed in Mr Bounderby's factories) and is asked for advice concerning an unhappy marriage. Mr Blackpool is married to a woman who is an alcoholic, who does not work and who steals and sells his possessions. Therefore Mr Blackpool inquires about how he may be free of this woman and end the marriage. However, Mr Bounderby never shows any care for Blackpools' distress and unfortunate situation and tells him that: […] the only thing you have got to do, is, to mind your piece-work. You didn't take your wife for fast and loose; but for better and worse. If she has turned out worse – why, all we have got to say is, she might have turned out better (HT, 80). Irrespective of the fact that it was an expensive and complicated undertaking to enable a divorce at the time, and that Blackpool, who is only a poor worker with no prospect of ever saving up the amount of money required, Mr Bounderby has no interest in helping him. Mr Bounderby sees nothing to gain from helping Blackpool who therefore only receives uncaring talk from his employer.

It is not only the narrator who mechanizes the characters in *Hard Times* by description and choice of words or presentation of their person. Some characters mechanize other characters as well. Bounderby is such a character who regards people around him as either resources he may make use of or opportunities he cannot make use of himself, and therefore dismisses. An example of this mechanization of characters by characters is when Mr Bounderby says to Stephen Blackpool: "You're a steady Hand, and I was not mistaken" (HT, 75). By this declaration it is evident that he is regarding Blackpool as merely a 'Hand' and therefore addresses and treats him as one. Mr Bounderby reduces him into a tool and not a person with feelings and other attributes of a human being, and does so simply by speaking to Blackpool and all his other workers in this manner. They are only numbers in his economical situation.

To illustrate this mechanical and hence non-emotional characteristic of Mr Bounderby further we might consider the underlying meaning in his declaration that: "I'm not going to take him [Thomas Gradgrind Jr.] at once; he is to finish his educational cramming before then" (HT, 50). Thus, Mr Bounderby does not intend to employ young Thomas Gradgrind until he is crammed with facts. Since he understands education to be 'cramming facts' he also judges people's value to himself as a resource according to how much they know. As when he is watching Mrs. Sparsit contemplatively; "Mr Bounderby was obliged to get up from table, and stand with his back to the fire, looking at her; she was such an enhancement of his position" (HT, 51). Similar to the example of Thomas Gradgrind Jr's' 'educational cramming', Bounderby's only interest in Mrs. Sparsit is her connections with other people and what those connections may provide himself with concerning social status and financial advantages. Therefore it should be asserted that Mr Bounderby does not only consider the amount of money someone has or earns, but also how extensive his or her knowledge is, as a sufficient criteria to grade the value of a person, and in the prolongation, his own life as well, i.e. the time he spends while alive. In short, his conception of life is thoroughly mechanised and seemingly also purely capitalistic; he reasons in ways that allow him to justify his own selfishness.

As mentioned before our concept of the world is dependant on the dominating perception of man and the society we live in. Our world-conception also contains our apprehension of space and time, moral principles, work etc. and provides us with an understanding of the world we live in. To human beings the awareness of time may differ in their experiences of it and therefore they may not share the same understanding or value of it either. In the novel Mr. Bounderby illustrates this difference when he visits Sleary's Horsemanship and addresses Mr. Childers (one of the circus-performers) when saying; "You see, my friend,' Mr Bounderby put in, 'we are the kind of people who know the value of time, and you are the kind of people who don't know the value of time'" (HT, 36). Mr Childers then replies that if Mr Bounderby means that he can make more money out of his time than himself, judging from the way he is dressed, then he must be right. Here the author directs attention to the fact that 'Josiah Bounderby of Coketown' values his time by the money he earns and believes the time spent earning it is more valuable than time spent in idleness, and with performing circus-entertainment, which of course these people enjoy and have as their livelihood.

It is not hard to see the contrasting representation of the mechanical and the more natural conception of time in the above quotation. The mechanical perception by Mr Bounderby seems to signify the attitude that we *use* our time to do what we need to do or gain, whereas

the natural perception Mr Childers represents means that time is something we are part of and live *in*, instead of alongside, in the sense that it is not in any way external to our own lives. We are all part of the same tale, so to speak.

The character of Mr Bounderby is plainly the personification of the mechanical system upon which Coketown is built and also, later on in the novel, the living proof of its failure as well; he speaks of himself as Mr Bounderby of Coketown, boasts to every one of the unfairness and struggles he went through in his childhood and youth, and throughout the novel we understand him to cherish his conviction that everyone could be a self-made man as himself, if they would only put their mind to it. However, towards the end of the novel he is discovered to be a fraud and liar when it is revealed that during his childhood he was very much loved, taken care of and never beaten and bullied about as he had always proclaimed. Mrs Pegler, who is brought to confront Mr Bounderby for suspicion of having something to do with the bank robbery, tells the gathered listeners that she is in fact Mr Bounderby's mother and that "My dear boy knows, and will give *you* to know, that though he come of humble parents, he come of parents that loved him as dear as the best could […]" (HT, 262). When Mr Bounderby is deprived of his pride in having a childhood of struggle against all odds through which he became who he is today, Dickens insinuates that mechanical self-interest and an exclusive striving for economical profit, which Mr Bounderby is clearly professing, is not the sole prerequisite to become successful and a 'self-made man'. Josiah Bounderby's success and philosophy do not agree with his true upbringing and therefore puts his preaching in question.

To sum up, it is apparent that Mr Bounderby does not regard people in his vicinity as individuals; rather they become a means of enhancing his own social and economical power and influence. When a mechanical point of view is applied to a degree such as in Mr Bounderby it dehumanizes other people and he does not see the 'hands' as human, but workers or expendable assets that can be easily replaced. Economics and practicality in logical and unfeeling behaviour favours an effective and successful enterprise which in Mr Bounderby's case disguises his selfishness. It has also been demonstrated that he believes time is money and always has a price which can be measured depending on how efficiently he uses it to draw profit from other people's skills and knowledge in order to provide him with wealth.

Mr Gradgrind

"'In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!'" (HT, 9) is Mr Gradgrind's catchphrase and demonstrates the core of his inmost thoughts concerning how we should perceive the world. The very word itself, 'Fact', diligently repeated throughout the novel, seems to be what the author tries to turn into something hard and unkind; already on the first page of the novel Mr Gradgrind hammers it into the minds of the schoolchildren which he teaches at school. The word 'Fact' is in this paragraph clearly expressing how insignificant personal feelings and imaginative creativity anyone might have really is, according to Mr Gradgrind, compared to the supremacy of the rational, practical and observing mind.

The author describes Mr Gradgrind very expressively by letting us know that "Time hustled him into a little noisy and rather dirty machinery […] and made him Member of Parliament for Coketown: one of the respected members of ounce weights and measures, one of the representatives of the multiplication table […]" (HT, 96). He perceives the world through facts and the future through statistics and does not realize the importance of being able to consult anything else in life. Mr Gradgrind is portrayed in the following exemplifying way while working in his apartment, which Dickens metaphorically calls an observatory:

> As if an astronomical observatory should be made without any windows, and the astronomer within should arrange the starry universe solely by pen, ink and paper, so Mr Gradgrind, in *his* Observatory […] had no need to cast an eye upon the teeming myriads of human beings around him, but could settle all their destinies on a slate, and wipe out all their tears with one dirty little bit of sponge. (HT, 99)

To Mr Gradgrind life is thus all about numbers, facts and calculations to find the most exact answers according to reality's factual qualities and circumstances. He believes strongly in his purely mechanical system and is an example of the conviction in Coketown that everything worth knowing about can be found in books and other sources of gathered information and less from the experiencing encounters with life.

Even the very name 'Gradgrind' denotes the qualities of grading or measuring reality in an insensible manner and emphasizes the effect of grinding something to pieces. The most distinct example of Mr Gradgrind holding these attributes is during a class at school when he

asks Cecilia Jupe to define a horse. Unfortunately she cannot do it because she does not know how; to her a horse is simply a horse. Then Gradgrind turns to a student named Bitzer and asks if he can define a horse, whereupon he answers that it is: "'Quadruped. Graminivorous. […] Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth′" (HT, 12). Satisfied with Bitzer's definition he then tells Cecilia that now she knows what a horse is. The aspects of measuring and grinding both signify mechanical attributes since measurement is an exact fact and the process of grinding is to start out with something which is originally whole and then taking it apart so it can be analysed, just like the definition of a horse.

Mr Gradgrind's way of viewing life, and thereby time as well, is also under the spell of his mechanical grinding when he observes it without including human characteristic such as emotions, imagination and hope:

> The Concept of knowledge as a mere accumulation of depersonalized facts or data is of course absurd, if we by "knowledge" mean an understanding of life, of the human condition. Gradgrind's notion of knowledge leaves out man, since it centres around a dehumanized observation of reality, a careful and minute study that is removed from the individual's quest for self-realization and human fulfilment. (Fawkner, 57)

Hence, his comprehension of time causes misunderstandings: when Gradgrind is looking at the facts at hand, the way things seem to be, that is the way things are as well, and no other. For example, at the beginning of the novel when he and his friend Mr Bounderby visit the travelling circus known as Sleary's Horsemanship, Cecilia Jupe is given the task of finding her father to discuss her future. Before leaving to carry out her charge she turns to the visitors to let them know that she will bring him 'in a minute'. Mr Gradgrind is utterly bewildered by this predication and asks astonished: "'What does she mean! […] 'Back in a minute? It's more than a mile off'" (HT, 35). He does not understand Cecilia Jupe when she says 'in a minute'; he only considers the assurance wrong since it will take more than a minute for her to go to the wooden circus-lodges where the performers reside and come back again. Mr Gradgrind is so mechanized in his thoughts that he can not interpret a figure of speech for what it is. He simply understands the words' immediate meaning and does not use his

imagination to grasp their underlying connotation, which of course refers to a time-span longer than a minute. Mr Gradgrind relies too much on immediate facts to enable himself the same view of time as Cecilia Jupe; he values time by the more exact and factual measuring of "a deadly-statistical clock" (HT, 99).

Mr Gradgrind's comprehension of time is not his only disadvantage; his comprehension of life also makes it difficult for him to understand others. When his daughter Louisa receives a marriage proposal from Mr Bounderby, which her father mediates to her, she asks him if he believes her to love Mr Bounderby. Mr Gradgrind admits that he can not tell, whereupon she instead asks him if he wants her to love Mr Bounderby. Her father then replies, with the process of marriage in mind:

> I would advise you […] to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible Fact. The ignorant and the giddy may embarrass such subjects with irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence, properly viewed – really no existence […] (HT, 101)

Mr Gradgrind understands the situation to be very simple: Bounderby asks Louisa to marry him, she then asks herself if she should marry him according to their 'position and means', and then there is nothing more to it. The fact that Mr Bounderby is twenty years older than Louisa is likewise of little importance, according to Mr Gradgrind, when considering the factual statistics that show marriages in England and Wales with unequal ages to be very common. In a sense, Mr Gradgrind is here laying a jig-saw puzzle with human pieces and does not take anything else into account when matching them together than their social status, knowledge, their mentality and all the known facts concerning the subject. His notion of life leaves out non-factual phenomena such as love and sentiment and only considers the factual and shallow qualities of a person.

Contrarily, Louisa does not reason in the same way, although her father believes her to do so, since she on a later occasion tells him of the despair she feels about ever marrying her present husband. One evening she visits her father at Stone Lodge and asks:

> […] if you had known that there lingered in my breast, sensibilities, affections, weaknesses capable of being

> cherished into strength, defying all the calculations ever made by man, and no more known to his arithmetic than his Creator is, - would you have given me to the husband whom I am sure that I hate? (HT, 216)

Gradgrind never saw any need for love between his daughter and Mr Bounderby. The most important thing was that logic and facts corresponded to, and warranted, a marriage between them. Even the solemn marriage ceremony itself takes on a mechanical aspect when the emotions that should be present, intense and flowing, are substituted with material valuables such as bracelets, jewellery and other expensive gifts (HT, 109). The marriage was nothing more than a signing of a contract: "The business was all Fact, from first to last. The Hours did not go through any of those rosy performances, which foolish poets have ascribed to them at such times; neither did the clocks go any faster, or any slower, than at other seasons" (HT, 110).

However, to represent the character of Mr Gradgrind justly, it should furthermore be acknowledge that he is not cruel or cold, and not deprived of good intentions. Throughout the novel he is concerned for his children and wants to be proud of them. In fact, he always tries to do the right thing in everything he does:

> Mr Gradgrind, though hard enough, was by no means so rough a man as Mr Bounderby. His character was not unkind, all things considered; it might have been a very kind one indeed, if he had only made some round mistake in the arithmetic that balanced it, years ago (HT, 33)

However, Mr Gradgrind's transformation from a strong believer in the mechanical system, which he has pursued his whole life, into a father who is uncertain and falters in his conviction, comes about when his love for his daughter forces him to understand a different perception of life. He realizes her sorrowfulness when she eventually lets him know how she feels and tells him plainly that "´your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means!´" (HT, 218). Louisa had always been ´the pride of his heart and triumph of his system´. Disbelievingly, Mr Gradgrind begins to understand that the intense rational upbringing has made her very unhappy and almost completely destroyed her emotional life. Louisa has never been able to acquire any

kind of emotional bonds as daughter, sister nor wife. She has been living for so long in her own void, where sentiments should have nourished and made her stronger, that she collapses, to her father's surprise, on the floor in front of him. When Mr Gradgrind sees with his own eyes what his philosophy has brought Louisa the sad truth finally makes it possible for him to admit to himself that he has been wrong all along. A critic claims that "[…] Gradgrind has to learn the lesson that life cannot be understood by a scientific positivism that merely analyses the present order of things as a fixed predetermined given with invariable, eternal laws like those discovered in the natural sciences" (Fawkner, 58). Accordingly, from that moment on, the mechanical perception, which the character of Mr Gradgrind has carried with him from the beginning of the novel, begins to change.

When he visits Mr Bounderby the next time Mr Gradgrind tells him that he doubts himself to ever have understood Louisa's character well enough and suggests that she should stay at Stone Lodge and be left 'to her better nature' for some time. Although Mr Bounderby becomes very angry and indignant Mr Gradgrind's only concern is what is best for his daughter. Through his awakening from the mechanical fact and rational perspective he used to lean on he now realizes that there is also wisdom to be found in one's heart as well as in one's mind.

Cecilia Jupe

Cecilia Jupe could be viewed as the complete opposite of Mr Bounderby because of her humane and emotional disposition. She strongly possesses very common, naturally human qualities such as love, hope and a palpable ability to feel sympathy for others. Mr Bounderby contrarily shows none of Cecilia's virtues in his doings and, just as Mr Gradgrind, do not see any importance in having hope. Hope is not a calculation, but a true, natural human attribute which occurs when someone strongly needs to believe that something will happen in the future. To have hope is to defy practical and rational probabilities, which Cecilia does, when hoping that her father will one day return to her. She is however immediately discouraged when we are introduced to a fundamental difference in perceiving time between her and Mr Gradgrind and his friend Mr Bounderby. This takes place when Bounderby and Gradgrind one evening visit the travelling circus where Cecilia lives. Her father is to be consulted whether Cecilia is going to live with the Gradgrinds or not, but cannot be found anywhere. While there, the two gentlemen understand that she believes that her father left her behind for her own good and hope that they will one day see one another again. Her hope for the future

is contrasted by Mr Bounderby's logical and reasoning assertion that her father will never come back:

> 'Now, good people all,' said he, 'this is wanton waste of time. Let the girl understand the fact. Let her take it from me, if you like, who have been run away from, myself. Here, what's your name! Your father has absconded – deserted you – and you mustn't expect to see him again as long as you live.' (HT, 43)

At present Mr Bounderby understands the father's abandonment of his daughter to be permanent; no uncertain possibilities or hopes for the future have any room in his mind. He is very closely tied to the present it seems and not the future, but above all he does not see why Cecilia has hope at all, because time is not really a part of his own life, as observed earlier. When a person is understood to be a certain way he or she stays that way to Mr Bounderby, as when what someone has done is a fact, and therefore hope can not make possible that others will ever be different, or grow in their virtues and realize their faults etc. The present is the only fact to him. Mr Bounderby's perception of time does not include the future and has no understanding at all of the emotional bonds Cecilia and her father share. He needs solid facts to afford him a conclusive truth that does not change.

Mr Gradgrind as well believes that Cecilia does herself wrong by entertaining a meaningless hope of reunion with her father when it is never going to happen. His wife, Mrs Gradgrind, has a similar attitude concerning the knowledge we at present posses, when complaining about Cecilia Jupe's continual asking about letters from her father while living at Stone Lodge. Mrs Gradgrind is overcome with the thought that perhaps she is destined "[…] to live in the midst of things that I am never to hear the last of" (HT, 67). It proves her to be, as many other people in Coketown, in need of final and definite answers to questions without relying on something as uncertain as hope, which Jupe does.

There is also a great gap between Cecilia and the mechanical design of the lessons she attends at school. It becomes evident that her humane and natural perspective of life and of other human beings does not agree with the expected answers to the questions she is supposed to answer in class. She despairingly tells Louisa one day that she was asked if a town of a million people is prosperous when only 25 inhabitants die of starvation within a year. She answered that it must be as hard upon the 25 starving inhabitants whether the

population of the whole town was a million or many more. Of course it was the wrong answer since according to the mechanical and utilitarian perspective the fact is that it would be better if the town had two million inhabitants since the total greater good would then be even larger and the percentage of starving people in comparison less. Cecilia's inability to understand and acquire these facts and perspectives is to us proof of her superior humanity and human brotherliness. She tells Louisa that she would want to be as her, to be able to think and understand these facts as she does. Louisa then replies that she might not be the better for it, whereupon Cecilia says that she should not be the worse either. To that Louisa honestly and doubtfully answers that she can not know for sure. In the end it actually turns out that Cecilia's way is the healthiest.

Cecilia has grown up with the travelling circus and has always been surrounded by their values which are very different from those which the Gradgrind children are brought up under. However, in the end Cecilia is the one who actually is the better for being who she is. When older she lives happily and shares her life with a husband and children whereas Louisa never will have a family and will never be as happy as she could have been.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Many themes can be argued to constitute or be found in the novel *Hard Times*, but one is fundamentally more important for the others to exist. The theme which makes it possible to find other themes to be appalling in the novel, such as e.g. capitalism, industrialism, upbringing etc. (because of the way in which the subjects are carried out and understood by the characters) is the understanding of the concept of time. The underlying theme is the understanding of how we want to appreciate and understand time and life. The time theme is, as has been shown in this essay, operating on two levels in *Hard Times*: the descriptive setting and the portrayal of characters. These levels of time set the mood in which we understand the other subjects that can be identified in the novel, and the mood is either mechanical or natural. The hypothesis of this essay, as stated in the introduction, is that Dickens applies mechanical and natural time perceptions and descriptions in the novel in order to express his disapproval for the industrial society, and does so by contrasting natural and mechanical time through characters and settings. By keeping the natural view of time/understanding of it repressed and thereby forcing the humane and natural tendencies to struggle for their existence, the more evidently they will be acknowledged and worth greater force. The struggle between nature and mechanics is shown to be present within the setting by always being dominated by the

industrial outline whereas the green nature is almost non-existent. Even when nature occasionally shines through the smoke and industrial surroundings it is littered with industrial undertones and influences. The setting of the travelling circus is the only one which could be argued not to be repressed in any way, merely surrounded by the mechanical system of Coketown, and a true safe haven for nature. Although the circus is looked down on by Mr Gradgrind and Mr Bounderby it becomes a hiding-place for young Tom when he tries to avoid his penalty for robbing the bank. Therefore, in the end, the circus entertainers could be argued to "triumph" when Mr Gradgrind needs them to hide his son, although he never before wanted to have anything to do with them. The circus-entertainers on the other hand never needed anything from the Coketown-system whereas Mr Gradgrind is grateful for their compassionate help.

The corresponding struggle between nature and mechanics in the portrayal of characters is principally provided by Mr Gradgrind, Mr Bounderby, Cecilia Jupe and Louisa Gradgrind. The character of Mr Bounderby is one of the most dominant and mechanized individuals in the novel, as shown above, and plays a big role in it. He could be viewed as the focal point for all the negative and destructive influences the industrialized Coketown has on its citizens since he only wants to express mechanical attitudes when these benefit his own selfishness. The difference, then, between Mr Bounderby's and his friend Mr Gradgrind's mechanization, is that Mr Gradgrind does not embrace the mechanized values or calculative reasoning only when it suits his purposes, but is, in himself, a true product of the system (the mechanical or calculative system which is a reflection of the industrialized society). He truly believes that the truth can be found exclusively in facts. The facts are in turn made up of statistics which are based on exact measurements and calculations. Not only does Mr Gradgrind believe in the system which he advocates and brings up his own children in, but, contrarily to Mr Bounderby, he is also concerned with others than himself (e.g. his children). His conviction is not sustained by selfishness as it is in Mr Bounderby but by the belief that it is the right way to do things.

These two characters are then both mechanized in the novel but with different intentions. Mr Bounderby becomes a contemptuous example of mechanization of the mind and Mr Gradgrind a sad example of things gone wrong although his intentions were good. Mr Bounderby also, unlike his friend Mr Gradgrind, shows a strong hypocritical trait when he repetitively and boisterous declares that he is 'Josiah Bounderby of Coketown'. He uses his imagination to create a lie which in turn, when defused and revealed, proves Bounderby to do what he so often agreed with Mr Gradgrind that children should not do: spend their time with

idle imagination. His boasting may be his way of convincing himself to believe what he says himself and become something he is not. A critic has asserted that "[Mr Bounderby] has cut himself off from time. The future exists only in his will, the present is that will personified – […] and he has utterly jettisoned his past" (Hobsbaum, 179). This observation is utterly true at the very moment when we find out about Mr Bounderby's lie. It becomes clear that a natural tendency (to imagine) has helped him to distort the truth, i.e. the facts, and that he has abandoned the past time (his younger years) in his attempt to fulfil his own selfish and self-centred will/life and become an admired "self-made man". The incident mentioned seems to imply that the message of the novel is that there is more to life than only intentional productivity and success, and that being true to oneself is something very important.

While the dominating time and life views of Mr Bunderby and Gradgrind mainly compose the mechanical aspect of time and life in Coketown, the lives of Cecilia Jupe and Louisa Gradgrind represent a part of the oppression the natural time perceptions in the novel endure. The injustice Jupe suffers from not being understood when simply acting as a human being and Louisa's unfairness in not having the emotional comfort from her parents are among the stronger examples of repressed natural "behaviour". It is hard to imagine people living their lives without sympathy, love or understanding for others, or receive it from others, and at the same time believe that moral value and good, honest and autonomous people with feelings of responsibility will emerge from and thrive in such a social environment. The education and upbringing of the Gradgrind children in *Hard Times* shed light upon the destructive failure of such a mechanical perception of time and life. The Gradgrind philosophy says that

> […] everything was to be paid for. Nobody was ever on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished, and the virtues springing from it were not to be. Every inch of existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across a counter. (HT, 288)

And accordingly, the mechanical perception of time and life by Mr Gradgrind turns against him when he finally has found the wisdom of his heart and pleads to a former student (Bitzer). Bitzer wants to return Tom to Mr Bounderby for committing the bank robbery and for justice. Mr Gradgrind asks Bitzer if his heart is accessible to compassionate influence, whereupon

Bitzer reminds his former tutor that the whole social system is built upon self-interest, just as he had taught the class, and therefore cannot let Tom go.

Mr Gradgrind's fate is not as destructive as his friend's (Mr Bounderby) but involves a positive transition from his at first mechanical convictions to a more humane perspective when his love for his children (specifically Louisa) and their happiness is more important to him than mechanized values. Mr Gradgrind's transformation when doubting himself shows the failure of the system of Coketown which is mechanizing the mind of its inhabitants by denying them their natural tendency to imagine, to wonder and help. The children's mechanical and sterile upbringing evidently demonstrates how destructive it is for their moral responsibility and happiness.

What is also important is the fact that Dickens' novel *Hard Times* ends with a glimpse into the future where it is hinted at the character's future lives and what happens to them. It is no coincidence that the author has Cecilia Jupe married and happily living with her family while Louisa Gradgrind is emotionally disabled, nor that Mr Gradgrind has become wiser and more humane whilst Mr Bounderby is unwilling to change and dies alone. Dickens' purpose with this ending is in all likelihood to say that affectionate love, caring people and general helpfulness changes the coldness and rationality in the mechanical perspective of time and life into something warm (humane) and emotional (participant). The mechanical perspective divides time and space into separate things instead of seeing the world in its entirety. Mr Bounderby is not participating in time, so to speak, but takes it up, uses and values it as a resource to fulfil his own purposes, whilst Cecilia e.g. does not make the distinction and sees the world, space and time, as a living wholeness which she herself is a part of. The struggle mentioned earlier between mechanics and nature therefore ends with Cecilia keeping her natural attributes and Mr Gadgrind and Louisa learning from what they went through. If anything, the novel *Hard Times* seems to enlighten us by saying that if we were to live by the principles that are mechanical, and ethical in being dutiful, i.e. we have to be true to our moral conviction irrespective of the consequences, then it is likely that the injustices would become many not before long.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

Primary Text:

Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times: for These Times*. Ed. Kate Flint. London: Penguin Classics, 1995.

Secondary Sources:

Fawkner, Harald W. *Animation and Reification in Dickens's Vision of the Life-Denying Society*. Stockholm: Liber Tryck, 1977.

Fielding, Kenneth. J. *Charles Dickens: A Critical Introduction*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958.

Gustavsson, Bernt. *Världsbilder: synen på människa, samhälle, natur*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1988.

Hobsbaum, Philip. *A Reader's Guide to Charles Dickens*. *Reader's Guide Series*. Syracuse, N.Y. : Syracuse University Press, 1998.

Johnson, Patricia. "Hard Times and The Structure of Industrialism: The Novel as Factory.", *Hard Times: an authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. *A Norton Critical Edition Series*. Ed. Fred Kaplan and Sylvère Monod. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001. 409-418.

Meier, Stefanie. *Animation and Mechanization in the Novels of Charles Dickens*. Berne, Switz. : Francke, 1982.

Schor, Hilary. "Novels of the 1850s: Hard Times, Little Dorrit, and A Tale of Two Cities." *The Cambridge companion to Charles Dickens*. Ed. Jordan, John O. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 64-77.

Taine, Hippolyte. "The Two Classes of Characters in Hard Times." *Hard Times: an authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. *A Norton Critical Edition Series*. Ed. Fred Kaplan and Sylvére Monod. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001. 355.

Non-literary Sources:

Encyclopaedia Britannica

“time." Encyclopædia Britannica.2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.2 Sept. 2008 <http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-61003>.