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Charles Dickens' Hard Times and The Philosophy of Utilitarian Education

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the Utilitarian Philosophy in education that appeared in Charles Dickens' "*Hard Times*" during the industrial revolution. This paper aims to show the outcome of the Utilitarian Education Style taught by Mr. Gradgrind in his model school and to prove how this philosophy ends up with fail. Charles Dickens is trying to show that one of the dark sides of that the industrial revolution is more towards the logic of mind than the logic of heart, so in this case the greed of the people to wealth at that time is very clear. Charles Dickens assent a subject matter of utilitarianism, along with education and industry. Utilitarianism is the idea that something is morally proper if it assist a popular of people. It is a rule concern nothing but facts and leaves no area for creativity or thoughts. Dickens arrange for figurative models of this utilitarianism in *Hard Times* by using Mr. Thomas Gradgrind, one of the main characters in the book, who

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has a tough confidence in utilitarianism. This paper is a sarcasm to the philosophy of (Only Facts) by Mr. Gradgrind in his model school which is not based on the morals of the actual education organization.

Key words: Utilitarian Philosophy , Education, Industrialization , Facts, creativity , Imagination.

رواية جارلس دكنس الاوقات العصبية و فلسفة التعليم النفعي

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المستخلص

يؤكد هذا البحث على الفلسفة النفعية في التعليم التي ظهرت في رواية جارلس دكنز (الاوقات العصبية) خلال الثورة الصناعية. يهدف هذا البحث لبيان المحصلة من نمط التعليم النفعي الذي يعتمد على سيد كرادكرند في مدرسته النموذجية وليبرهن كيف انتهت هذه الفلسفة بالفشل. جارلس دكنز يحاول ان يبين واحد من الجوانب المظلمة في تلك الثورة الصناعية وهي الاتجاه نحو منطق العقل اكثر من منطق القلب, لذلك في هذه الحالة الطمع عند البشر نحو الغنى واضح جدا في ذلك الوقت . جارلس دكنز يتغاضى عن موضوع النفعية جنبا على جنب مع التعليم والتصنيع . النفعية هي معتقد اخلاقي بعض الشيء اذا انها تساعد غالبية الناس . هي مبدأ يتضمن لا شيء فقط الحقائق ولا يتضمن الابداع والخيال . جارلس دكنز يزود امثلة رمزية عن النفعية في روايته (الايوقات العصبية) باستخدام سيد توماس كرانند كرنند , هو احد الشخصيات الرئيسية في الرواية , والذي لديه ايمان متشدد بالنفعية . هذا البحث هو التهكم على فلسفة الحقائق فقط المتبعة في مدرسة كراد كرنند النموذجية التي لا تعتمد على قيم نظام التعليم الحقيقي.

1.Introduction

Hard Times is one of the most important literary works written by Charles Dickens, it portrays the life of people during the industrial revolution. Charles Dickens described *Hard Times* as a novel that reproduces the Victorian utilitarian education. Utilitarian Education (an education system established on realities and usefulness rather than

entertaining and imagination), that presented by Mr. Gradgrind was the ideal education manner used by schoolmasters like Mr. Gradgrind to build up their students in that way. In the novel *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens hatch up a theme of utilitarianism, along with education and industrialization.

Utilitarianism is the conviction that something is honestly true if it supports a common of people. It is an attitude concerning nothing but truths and leaves no area for inspiration or imagination. Dickens offers symbolic examples of this utilitarianism in *Hard Times* by using Mr. Thomas Gradgrind, one of the main characters in the book, who has a rigid certainty in utilitarianism. Dickens be afraid that the facts of Utilitarianism could be negative without the assistance of fancy. This novel displays that these facets take us to the misunderstanding of people. The central characters of this novel understand that their education of facts only increases their depression and gloominess; some of them become passionately ravenous, and the conclusion is that they come across a different fate because of their useless hard work to obtain the education of Utilitarianism.

When the characters of the novel are embodied in this way it is noticeable that Dickens emphasizes the demolition of this concept of teaching. Dickens denotes the philosophy of facts and fancy in his novel, and it is the chief theme of *Hard Times*. Thomas Gradgrind is so into his beliefs of rationality and truths that he has forced this belief into his children's and along with his young students. Education is not what is believed by Mr. Gradgrind, but it is what is learnt with fun away from (only facts). We cannot use just fun or just facts in the field of education, we have to use both.

2.Utilitarianism

Eggleston (2012) defined Utilitarianism as an ethical theory according to which the rightness and wrongness of acts depends entirely on facts about the maximization of overall well-being. It is commonly associated with the phrase 'the greatest good for the greatest number,' and it typically requires people to act in whatever way will result in the greatest possible amount of well-being, where well-being is understood as closely related to happiness (p. 452). Zubair (2016) stated that Utilitarianism begins in *Hard Times* with the utilitarian philosophized man, who once was a parliamentarian is at present, a man of 'facts' and 'calculations' (p. 2392). Levrada (2014) also stated that inside a single paragraph Dickens be successful in outlining the portrait of a Victorian utilitarian schoolmaster who brings a speech about the significance of truths to his learners. As an explain here "In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir: nothing but Facts!" The little learners were "arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim (p. 110). Narita (2009) stated that *Hard Times* is "direct indictment on utilitarianism" (p. 186).

On the other hand, Muthmainnah, Suwargono, and Basuki (2015) stated that *Hard Times* offers a critique of the Utilitarian ideology in British society. It influences the society's economic system that most of them live prosperously. It also influences the educational system that make some children have worse future. They are forbidden to develop their imaginative thing to be a creative children. Charles Dickens as the author resists this ideology in his society. He explores the utilitarianism through the main character, Gradgrind who tend to reject fancy and imaginative thing. He just considers everything

based on fact and material. However, he does not think the consequence of his own action whether it is good or bad" (p. 1-2). *Hard Times* is a novel that refer to the educational structure of schools at the Victorian age. It clarifies in what way instructors teach pupils merely facts and don't teach them about thoughts. The attitude of teachers is very harsh and hard and it would affect their lives to be certain of that all educational places are just for learning realities like mathematics.

3. Utilitarian Education in *Hard Times*

Charles Dickens is provided a critique of Utilitarian philosophy in the British culture through *Hard Times*. It affects the educational system, which makes the future worse for some kids. They are not allowed to make an imaginative thing to be a creative child. This ideology in his culture is resisted by Charles Dickens as the author. Through the main character, Thomas Gradgrind discusses utilitarianism, which appears to reject fancy and imaginative stuff. Everything he considers is based on evidence and materials. He does not consider, however, whether it is good or bad, the outcome of his own conduct. The philosophy of utilitarianism is exposed to be in the novel *Hard Times*, the social situation greatly influences the educational system. This philosophy is influencing individuals to get more advantages in their actions. Gradgrind thought what he did by instilling the utilitarian philosophy that made him worry about the impact of his ideology.

In the section "Murdering the innocents" The students are distributed by numbers, and Gradgrind asks Sissy Jupe, who is pupil number twenty, to factually describe a horse. Sissy is the daughter of a clown at Sleary's circus, and she is not able to do so to her wonder and dismay, however when Bitzer, a devoted pupil of factual philosophy at the model school of Mr. Gradgrind: "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive ... Age known by marks in the mouth" (Dickens, 1854, p. 6). This shows the utilitarian logic in education by Mr. Gradgrind as a school master who only believes in teaching facts.

Here a few examples of how the storyteller shows utilitarianism in *Hard Times*. In the first paragraph in the first chapter of the first book, the necessity of facts in education and nothing other than facts is expounded (Dickens, 1854, p. 3). These are the words of Thomas Gradgrind, who is the headmaster at a school that applies utilitarian principles in education. He is characterized in the second chapter as a person of facts and calculations "ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature" (Dickens, 1854, p. 5). This is reminiscent of Bentham's "felicific calculus". He is in a classroom of his school and the children are portrayed as "little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts" (Dickens, 1854, p. 5). Sissy is referred to as girl number twenty, and admonished for even using the word, "to fancy": "But you mustn't fancy [...] you are never to fancy [...] You must discard the word Fancy altogether" (Dickens, 1854, p. 9)

As he explains the teaching of a government officer in Mr. M'Choakumchild's school, Dickens makes fun of the utilitarianism "a professed pugilist ... ready to fight all England. ... He was certain to knock the wind out of common sense, and render that unlucky adversary deaf to the call of time. And he had it in charge from high authority to bring about the great public-office Millennium, when Commissioners should reign upon earth" (Dickens, 1854, p. 6-7). With these words, Dickens rejects the teaching of the Utilitarian principle of facts in England, and he sorts it a point in *Hard Times*. The aim of Dickens is to show the bad side of this education method, because unless fancy was

involved, he thought that facts were not proper. The command by Gradgrind not to teach boys and girls anything but truth results in nothing but adverse effects.

In *Hard Times*, Dickens explains England's education system and Mr. M'Choakumchild is its leader there. Education was Dickens's main concern and in the novel he introduces the fail of that educational system. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is married, and Louisa, Tom, Malthus, Adam Smith, and Jane are his children. "and they were models every one. They had been lectured at, from their tenderest years; coursed, like little hares. Almost as soon as they could run alone, they had been made to run to the lecture-room" (Dickens, 1854, p. 11). In order to succeed in life, Gradgrind brought up his children, and to do so, he believed that the best approach was the utilitarian teaching of truth. When their souls were like hollow containers that looked-for to be occupied with knowledge of truth, Gradgrind started this teaching. But when she tells her father, Louisa feels like something is missing "What do I know, father, ... of tastes and fancies; of aspirations and affections; of all that part of my nature in which such light things might have been nourished?" (Dickens, 1854, p. 134). Dickens ridicules the Victorian education system, and in the novel he also uses satire and sarcasm to criticize what he considers to be unethical or stupid. Learners are taught under a severe instruction in the classroom, and the purpose of education is to learn truth. Kids are not encouraged to use their imagination or "fancy" (Dickens, 1854, p. 8) Gradgrind offers a utilitarian view of education that is intended to censor everything that clashes with the idea of teaching just truth. He later admits that this on his part was a mistake, so both Louisa and Tom become depressed and struggle to be successful in life.

As Dickens begins the novel by describing Gradgrind's school's classroom, saying that "the scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom" (Dickens, 1854, p. 1). By naming it a vault, which is an allusion to a catacomb or a cemetery, he criticize the schoolroom. As mentioned above, this classroom was purposely formed as a factory for the development of future industrial workers. The principle of utilitarian concepts, which Gradgrind have faith in as a way of educating children, governs school education. The children were deprived of their innocence and their hearts of creativity by this education. Dickens portrays mass education and how it suppresses those who can enable the school to be innovative and imaginative.

The lecture hall is portrayed by Dickens as an inhuman universe that also be present outside the school. The classroom is structured like a factory with the goal of creating future workers. "For, the boys and the girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval" (Dickens, 1854, p. 5). Children are not permitted to inspire their imagination, and Mr. Gradgrind is cynical and cruel to Sissy in this chapter, who represents Victorian femininity, made up of compassion and sensitivity. He speaks to her that: "You are never to fancy" (Dickens, 1854, p. 8), When she says she likes flowers on carpets, she admits that: "They would be the images of what was very attractive and enjoyable, and I would fancy –" (Dickens, 1854, p. 8). The teacher at the school said: "You do not walk upon flowers in fact; ... You must use, for all these purposes, combinations and modifications ... of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste" (Dickens, 1854, p. 9).

Education that ignores facts and seeks to remove fancy is a reason for children to discard fancy and imagination, and is, as the chapter heading suggests, an effort to destroy children's imagination and fancy.

In every section of the novel, Dickens is portraying the Victorian utilitarian schoolmaster who always speak about the necessity of facts to his students: "In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir: nothing but Facts!" these innocent students were "arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim" (Dickens, 1854, p. 13). This is unusual to Dickens' feeling of humor that shows the character's exaggerated desire is educating his students with only facts away from imagination or fancy. Dickens is using the word "square" many times in the novel to portrait Mr. Gradgrind "the speaker's square forefinger", "the speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs", and "square shoulders" (Dickens, 1854, p. 13).

Dickens is using the word "model" to describe Mr. Gradgrind as a schoolmaster who wants his school to be model school. Mr. Gradgrind believes that there is nothing belong to imagination, but only facts in his thoughts for teaching. He is an smart rich gentle man with his own lookout, he thinks that truths characterize the greatest philosophy educated in schools. Nobody can change his view about the education established by him when he was a child, thus he attempts to offer it to his own children and to the pupils studying in his school. Mr. Gradgrind thinks that the education delivered by him is the best (Levarda, 2014, p. 110).

Muthmainnah, Suwargono, and Basuki (2015) stated that It is proved that the ideology of utilitarianism influences much the social condition in the novel *Hard Times*. This ideology influences people to get more advantages in every their action. Thus, other people who have helped need to purchase it materially. Gradgrind thought what he had done by his instilling the ideology of utilitarianism that has made him worry about the effect of his principle. Louisa is unhappy with her marriage. Gradgrind knows what he does to Louisa is wrong. He forces Louisa to follow his desirability without thinking Louisa's feeling. Louisa frustrated in his father forcement. Tom also becomes the victim of his father's principle. He becomes a thief to fulfill his own need. His life becomes tragic. He dies in hospital which is caused by fever. He also dies in regretting what he has done in his life. However, the other characters who do not apply the ideology of utilitarianism. They live happily. Sissy Jupe's finally marries and she has a child. It is contradictory with the life of Louisa that is not as happy as Jupe. Sissy Jupe wants to teach her children's growth in right way. She will teach them how to be natural person and learn as childish do and certainly becomes a good people in their life (p. 3).

Mrs. Gradgrind does not like when her daughter, Louisa, wonders. She listens when Louisa says to her brother Tom: "I have such unmanageable thoughts, that they will wonder" (Dickens, 1854, p. 70). Because of that her mother gets annoyed and says: "Thomas, it is really shameful ... that a boy brought up as you have been, ... should be found encouraging his sister to wonder, when he knows his father has expressly said that she is not to do it" (Dickens, 1854, p. 70). She is not in good mood and says, "I really do wish that I had never had a family, and then you would have known what it was to do without me!" (Dickens, 1854, p. 71). Mr. Gradgrind is repeatedly away on parliament responsibilities, and the upbringing of the children is totally in her hands, but she does not all the time doing her duties because she is a miserable lady.

Thomas Gradgrind is the head of the beliefs of rationality and truths that he has enforced this faith into his kids and in addition to his young pupils. Mr. Josiah Bounderby, Thomas Gradgrind's best friend, also studies utilitarianism, but he was further involved in supremacy and money than in truths. Dickens uses Cecelia Jupe, daughter of a circus entertainer, who is the complete contrasting of Thomas Gradgrind to arrange for a excessive contrast of a utilitarian conviction.

Dickens uses Thomas Gradgrind to determine precisely how a basic beliefs of rationality self-interest. Thomas Gradgrind has belief that human nature can be controlled, calculated, and governed entirely by truths. Definitely, his education tries to turn fresh children into small machines. Dickens's key aim in *Hard Times* was to represent the dangers of allowing humans turn into nothing but machines, suggesting that the absence of compassion and imagination in life would be unbearable. Louisa blames her father for only teaching her lessons on truths and nothing on life, she feels that's the cause she is ill-fated in her marriage.

Dickens dislikes the mixture of utilitarian education with political economy, and Cecilia is the character who verifies that facts educated by habit aren't as significant as factual life lived by the poor children employed in factories. Cecilia is asked by Mr. M'Choakumchild to provide the response of a mathematics exercise using simple mathematical calculations. Cecilia's response does not satisfy her teacher's expectations. She cannot support thinking about the actual matters of the many children and people who live a tough life occupied in factories which are possessed by some of rich aristocrats with higher education, but with no soul. Through Cecilia's sympathetic heart Dickens carries into argument a kind of charitable benevolence. In Baker's view humanists "believe that education is incomplete if limited to the accumulation of miscellaneous facts, to appease curiosity, or to master a skill which earns one's daily bread" (Baker, 1950, p. 128).

The human beings may convey their sadness and their pleasure, and they should follow their hearts. They shouldn't be suppressing or neutralizing their emotions. Mr. Gradgrind not only expresses his feelings at the end of the book, but also asks Bitzer, his past student, to use his heart to support his son. The response from Bitzer, however, is simple and ruthless: "I have a heart" which "is accessible to Reason, Sir", "and to nothing else" (Dickens, 1854, p. 280). Remarkably, the one who offers to support young Tom is Mr. Sleary, a circus man who was a close friend of Cecilia's father many years ago. I think the author is trying to teach us a valuable lesson about a bad circus entertainer's enormous heart that was not raised in the spirit of utilitarian education (Lavarda, 2014, p. 114).

"The Utilitarians considered universal education an essential prerequisite for achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number ... Under the guidance of James Kay-Shuttleworth, the monumentally important Minute of 1846 had set up a teacher-training programme devised to improve educational standards by rapidly producing a large number of qualified instructors". (Schlicke, 1998, p. xii)

Thoroddsen (2012) mentioned that Gradgrind is an Practical thinker and his beliefs as such is that human nature can be led by rules. He had been in the hardware trade before he turns into a Member of Parliament, and currently he is a schoolmaster at his private school in Coketown. His thinking of truths and fancy, however, changes meaningfully throughout the progression of the novel. Utilitarianism was a technique to rule society -

life should be be alive conferring to logic and truths, not perception or feelings. Utilitarianism is a theory on actions that are clear cut, and which commands that people choose on what is of the utmost usefulness for them but in *Hard Times* (p. 5).

"Dickens gives the lie to the Utilitarian principle that pursuit of individual fortune benefits society as a whole" (Schlicke, 1998, p. xiii).

Thoroddsen (2012) said that Dickens mocks Victorian education, and he frequently uses sarcasm and mockery in the novel to attack or reveal what he thinks is immoral or thoughtless. In the lecture hall the pupils are skilled under a firm command, and the aim of education is to study truths.

The children are not permitted to use their thoughts, or "fancy" as their lecturers call it, and Gradgrind presents a Utilitarian idea of education that is destined to repress everything that clashes with the norm of teaching merely facts. Later he recognizes that this was a disappointment on his behalf, because Louisa and Tom both come to be hopeless and fail to be successful in life (Dickens, 1854, p. 7).

4. Conclusions

This paper detects what method the Utilitarian philosophy is used to affect the truths and to exclude fancy and imagination in public's lives and how the consequences are both unsatisfied and destructive. Gradgrind's children, Louisa and Tom, turn out to be wrecked and isolated, but Jane flourishes because of Sissy's tenderness and good supervision at Stone Lodge. Louisa not once marries again, but then Tom escapes the sentence of his crime in England and pass away alone in another country. Nevertheless, Sissy gets married, had children, and leads a wealthy and blissful life. This displays that she decided to assimilate realities and fancy with good consequences. In *Hard times* Dickens constantly debates that "fancy" (imagination) is desirable for purpose to be real; this aspiration is replicated through the notion that there desires to be the true equilibrium between Fact and Fancy. He debates that partitions between fact and fancy are incorrect, and concentrating on one of them can be very risky. Such as in the words of Elaine Ostry in the book *Social Dreaming* "Without imagination, reason becomes one-sided; it becomes a damaged image of fancy. It becomes more than unreasoned; it becomes negative." In *Hard Times* Dickens highlights the complications with a utilitarian education organization through the use of his characterization and language but does not suggest practical means of varying it.

Hard Times deals with the opposite of philosophy of utilitarianism. There's the double resistance between the utilitarian and non-utilitarian. Dickens displays this parallel resistance among the characters in *Hard Times*. A few characters are utilitarian. They agree with this philosophy of utilitarianism. In any case, a few other characters are not utilitarian. They don't concur with this philosophy. Dickens needs to give a message to the readers about the negativism of the philosophy of utilitarianism. In the end of the story, Dickens investigates the effect of the philosophy of utilitarianism towards a few characters in *Hard Times*. Particularly, it gives bad affect in their social life. This utilitarianism appears the negative affect in applying it. Grandgrind realizes that his rule that he ingrains to his understudies and his children impact their life to be pitiful.

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