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An Old Dog Enters the Fray; or, Reading *Hard Times* as an Industrial Novel

Priti Joshi

Although Dickens had wanted to write an industrial exposé as early as 1838, it was not until 1854 that he published what is widely read as his denunciation of industrial dehumanization, Hard Times. Had he included in Nicholas Nickleby a disquisition on industrial ills as he had considered, he would have been present at the birth of the subgenre; as it is, Hard Times appeared during the dying days of—to paraphrase Franco Moretti—the subgenre’s life cycle. This essay examines the tropes and conventions of the genre as established by three predecessors, Frances Trollope, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Charlotte Brontë, and argues that Dickens’s rehearsal of the established tropes is tinged with fatigue and repetition rather than innovation. As an industrial novel, Hard Times marks the last gasp of a subgenre whose literary moment had passed.

After the phenomenal triumph of *The Pickwick Papers* (March 1836–October 1837) and the success of *Oliver Twist* (February 1837–April 1839), Dickens was hailed as a Fieldingesque talent who was willing to deploy his pen against social ills such as the New Poor Law of 1834. Those who had been working to improve conditions in factories and especially on legislation to protect children hoped Dickens would visit the north so he could see for himself and direct his considerable talent and caustic pen against the atrocities of industrial labor. Dickens visited Birmingham and Manchester and in a 29 December 1838 letter to E. M. Fitzgerald wrote, “I went, some weeks ago, to Manchester, and saw the *worst* cot-

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ton mill. And then I saw the *best*. *Ex uno disce omnes*. There was no great difference between them" (*Letters* 1: 483). He planned to return in a few weeks and also to write about what so horrified him; in the same letter he continued: "So far as seeing goes, I have seen enough for my purpose, and what I have seen disgusted and astonished me beyond all measure. I mean to strike the heaviest blow in my power for these unfortunate creatures [child laborers], but whether I shall do so in the 'Nickleby', or wait some other opportunity, I have not yet determined" (*Letters* 1: 484).¹

Despite his indignation and determination, the "blow" did not quite land: *Nicholas Nickleby* (March 1838–September 1839) and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (April 1840–February 1841) followed and while both novels' protagonists are young and face many challenges, neither Nicholas nor Little Nell (nor even the crushed Smike) are abused by a factory system. Nicholas's nemeses are the trash-happy Wackford Squeers of Dotheboys Hall and his cold uncle Ralph, while Little Nell is tormented by the grotesque Quilp. Both novels, along with *Oliver Twist*, depict a world in which evil adults scheme against an innocent young person for personal gain and greed. There are no "unfortunate creatures" pounded by industrial labor in Dickens's fiction of the period.² The factories, laborers, and critique had to wait fifteen years before they finally claimed Dickens's attention; *Hard Times*, widely regarded as Dickens's denunciation of the dehumanization of industrial conditions, appeared between April and August 1854. It is not entirely clear why Dickens waited so long to strike his "blow" against the conditions of industrial labor. What is clear, however, is that in the intervening years a number of writers entered the fray, and the subgenre of the industrial novel was born. The questions that animate this paper are prompted by Dickens's tardiness to the scene: first, is it fruitful to read *Hard Times*, as it generally has been, from within the framework of the industrial novel?³ And second, if we read it as an industrial novel, does it mark the genre's apogee or its nadir?

When we speak of the industrial novel, the usual suspects include (in chronological order) Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, Dickens's *Hard Times*, and Gaskell's *North and South*.⁴ The list indicates that Dickens was a latecomer to the generic scene; indeed, in a longer list of industrial novels, today obscure to most readers, Dickens's tardiness appears even more strikingly.

- Harriet Martineau, *A Manchester Strike* (1832)
- Frances Trollope, *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1839–40)
- Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, *Helen Fleetwood* (1839–40)
- Fredric Montagu, *Mary Ashley* (1839)
- Elizabeth Stone, *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* (1842)
- Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil* (1845)
- Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848)
- Charles Kingsley, *Alton Locke* (1849)

Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (1849)

Geraldine Jewsbury, *Marian Withers* (1851)

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854)

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1854)

Dinah Mulock Craik, *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856)

Not all of these novels posited factories or industrial labor practices as requiring reform; Stone's and Craik's novels, for instance, are sympathetic, even defensive, portraits of mill-owners. Even in this expanded cohort, however, *Hard Times* was written closer to the death of the genre than its birth.

In *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, Franco Moretti elaborates his theory of "distant reading" by charting novels published in Britain between 1740 and 1900. Interested in mapping large patterns—unavailable when we perform close readings of single or a few canonical texts—Moretti locates books as points on a graph and discerns that each subgenre of the English novel—the epistolary novel, Oriental tale, the Newgate novel, the nautical novel, the industrial novel, and some three dozen others—emerges and then dies with a surprising regularity. Moretti notices that each has a life cycle of approximately 20 to 30 years. In an effort to explain this phenomenon of fairly constant regularity for almost 45 subgenres across 160 years of the British novel (replicated in French, Italian, Danish, and Japanese novels as well, although Moretti does not elaborate on those), he speculates that "a [sub]genre exhausts its potentialities—and the time comes to give a competitor a chance—when its inner form is no longer capable of representing the most significant aspects of contemporary reality. At which point, either the [sub]genre loses its form under the impact of reality, thereby disintegrating, or it turns its back to reality in the name of form, becoming a 'dull epigone' indeed" (17). To this socio-formal explanation, Moretti adds another: "Books survive if they are read and disappear if they aren't: and when an entire generic system vanishes at once, the likeliest explanation is that *its readers vanished at once*" (20). And why would readers vanish? Moretti's answer is simple: "what most attracts readers is the drama of the day, then, once the day is over, so is the [subgenre of the] novel" (24). To illustrate his points, Moretti offers a reading of the life-cycle of a single trope in a series of "village stories" between 1832 and 1853 ("Maps") and of the "micro-level of stylistic mutations" in British detective fiction between 1891 and 1900 ("Trees"; 91).

While this essay does not attempt the *longue durée* "distant reading" that Moretti advances, his framework offers a fruitful entry-point for our query about *Hard Times* as an industrial novel. I borrow from his insight about the shelf-life of a subgenre and propose, to alter the metaphor, to locate Dickens's novel within its generic strata; in doing so, I hope to illuminate the birth of a number of key tropes of the industrial novel and assess Dickens's novel's contribution in light of his predecessors'. Had Dickens written about the crushing weight of industrial labor on some of the most vulnerable populations as he considered in

1838, he would have been present during the infancy of the subgenre; instead he wrote his industrial novel some fifteen years later during its dying days. Did those fifteen years make a difference? The question is one of those “what-ifs” and difficult to answer. Yet, knowing the arc of Dickens’s career, his interests and their development in some detail, we can speculate that whatever he wrote in 1838 or thereabouts would likely have been accomplished—but unlikely to have been as satiric as the 1854 novel is, nor as melancholy. But while we can only conjecture about the phantom 1838 novel, we can answer the question of the difference those fifteen years made by considering the way the novel reads given the shape and developments of other industrial novels in the intervening years. By reading *Hard Times* against key industrial novels that preceded it, we can assess it from within the subgenre of the industrial novel that it helped bring to a finale.

Let us begin with the specific and gradually broaden our scope of inquiry. Specifically: what precipitated Dickens’s decision to write an industrial novel in 1854? One suggestion has been the Preston strike and Dickens’s visit to the town on 29 January 1854.⁵ Yet as Dickens himself wrote on 11 March 1854 to Peter Cunningham—whom he suspected as the author of a news item to this effect—the rumor was “altogether wrong. The title [of the novel] was many weeks old, and chapters of the story were written, before I went to Preston.” Dickens added that the “mischief” of such a rumor was that it “localizes” a story that has “reference to the working people all over England, and it will cause ... characters to be fitted on to individuals whom I never saw or heard of in my life” (*Letters* 7: 290–91). The warning, however, has not stopped some from seeking in the months’-long strike at Preston impetus for Dickens’s belated turn to industrial conditions.⁶

Others have taken a longer view, tracing Dickens’s interest in industrial questions back to *Pickwick Papers* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, while yet others have pointed to essays in *Household Words* that sometimes critiqued, sometimes celebrated industrial practices.⁷ But an interest in industrial questions is one thing, an industrial exposé of the sort some hoped for and Dickens indicated an interest in producing in 1838 is another. As his letter to Fitzgerald above indicates—and as House and Storey confirm—Dickens had considered including a section in *Nicholas Nickleby* about industrial ills and child labor. But he abandoned the idea when he learned that Frances Trollope’s *Michael Armstrong*, a meandering novel that exposed both “orphan farms” and industrial child labor, was starting to appear in a few weeks. Put out by the news—in particular an advertisement for Trollope’s novel that indicated to Dickens “its doubtfully honest or respectable imitation of *Nickleby*,” a similarity Dickens refused to believe was “unintentional” (diary entry for 8 February 1839 cited in *Letters* 1: 640)—Dickens resorted to his characteristic sarcasm; in a 9 February 1838 letter to Samuel Laman Blanchard he wrote: “I will express no further opinion of Mrs Trollope than that I think Mr Trollope must have been an old dog and chosen his wife from the same species” (*Letters* 1: 507). If this sounds petulant, it was; while even a few years later the point was moot, at the time, as the Trollope scholar Pamela Neville-Sington

writes, "Dickens saw her [Frances Trollope] as a serious rival" (20).⁸ The seeming convergence between his and Trollope's novel and her apparent poaching on "his" territory so upset Dickens that, in a second letter to Blanchard the same day, he seemed to wash his hands of industrial fiction altogether, declaring that his next novel, *Barnaby Rudge* (February 1841–November 1841), "has nothing to do with factories, or Negroes—white, black or parti coloured. It is a tale of the riots of Eighty, before factories flourished as they did thirty years afterwards, and containing—or intended to contain—no allusion to cotton lords, cotton slaves, or anything that is cotton" (*Letters* 1: 507). That Trollope was on his mind is evident by the reference to "Negroes—white, black or parti coloured"; her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832) fulminated against slavery and established her as a critic of social evils. The comment has led the critic James Simmons to remark: "This disclaimer might lead one to suspect that Dickens felt that there was enough literature on the market about factory workers" (347).

Whether Dickens thought so or not, some others certainly did. As early as August 1839, an *Athenaeum* review of the early numbers of *Michael Armstrong* rebuked Trollope for being too late: "But we pray Mrs. Trollope to reflect that this contingency has passed away. A cry, a fanatical cry has been raised on the subject; the evil is in the hands of the legislature, and fully before the public; for all purpose of practical good the Factory Boy has come too late" (qtd. in Kestner 51). The 1840s have been called the "Hungry Forties," but it would not be too fanciful to designate them the "Blue Decade": the sheer volume of royal commissions, Parliamentary reports (bound in blue covers), and media-sponsored or individually-undertaken investigations launched and publicized during the "long '40s" is simply staggering. Factory and mine, children's and women's labor, urban and agricultural conditions, windows and sewers—all came under scrutiny in this period of pulsating investigative energy, all passed under the "hands of the legislature ... and before the public." While the *Athenaeum* reviewer was of the "fiction-as-avant-garde" school, others, as we shall see, believed that novels could play a more reflective role in engaging social questions. Nonetheless, by the end of the '40s, the market for industrial fiction was saturated, and the topic seemed more or less exhausted as the following passage in Kingsley's *Alton Locke* suggests. On his way to a Chartist meeting, Alton meets a fellow-delegate who denounces factory conditions. Alton, generally indignant about industrial ills and eager to expose the wealthy, instead dismisses his "rural cousin[s]" ... rambling bitter diatribe on the wrong and sufferings of the labourers; which went on till late at night, and which I shall spare my readers: for if they have either brains or heart, *they ought to know more than I can tell them, from the public prints*" (255; ch. 28; emphasis added). This 1849 fictional character closely echoes the 1839 reviewer. In a similar vein, when Dickens invited Harriet Martineau to contribute to *Household Words* in 1850, they both agreed that because "our chief textile manufactures were already familiar to every body's knowledge," Martineau would write about the manufacture of lesser-known products such as tea-trays and dyed silks

(Fielding and Smith 418; she eventually wrote a series of sanitary tales). While the remark is specific to the textile industry, it indicates that discussion of industrial conditions had reached saturation point. This is not to imply that by 1854 the problems that plagued Britain's entry into industrialism had been "solved"; rather, the *perception* existed that its worst excesses were known and that mechanisms to address its abuses were in place even if they weren't always enforced.⁹ Thus, by the time Dickens started to publish *Hard Times* the sense of crisis that had propelled the genre of the industrial novel into existence had passed, suggesting, to use Moretti's terms, that the "drama of the day" had moved elsewhere. If by the 1850s this "drama" had played itself out, it had been ushered to the stage by a well-known concatenation of circumstances in the 1830s: unregulated industrial growth that led to developments such as the Sadler commission, the agitation for the Ten Hours Bill, blue books and journalistic investigations, an assertive working-class press, and Chartism, all of these serving to thrust industrial conditions and relations to the forefront of middle-class consciousness. The fictional form this consciousness took is embodied in the subgenre of the industrial novel. In what follows I trace the development of the genre in three key industrial novels that preceded *Hard Times*: Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, and Brontë's *Shirley*. I focus on conventions that each introduced or developed that became key tropes of the genre and conclude with an assessment of *Hard Times* in light of these conventions.

Any assessment of *Hard Times* as an industrial novel should take account of the harsh assessments that have been levied against the subgenre as a whole, authored as it was by middle-class writers standing at an ideological remove from their working-class subjects. Philip Collins writes:

Notoriously no significant Victorian authors, with the solitary exception of Mrs. Gaskell, had a long-term or intimate knowledge of an industrial town: and this must be one reason, though not the only one, for the remarkably sparse and feeble literary response to a phenomenon so evident and momentous as England's becoming the first predominantly industrial and urbanized community in the history of mankind. For, like the Great American Novel, the great industrial novel never got written. Few novelists, and fewer poets, seriously attempted the topic at all; hence the disproportionate attention given to the few who did. Such a lamentable fiction as Mrs. Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, the *Factory Boy* (1839–40) would never have been heard of, had it entered a competition more severe than this 'industrial novel' class. (652)

Peter Brooks offers a more generous approach to evaluating "lesser" literary forms such as the industrial novel: "Before 'social realism' could become a watchword—and perhaps with greater effect than was ever achieved by more sober novels—the lurid and melodramatic fiction opens up the social concerns, makes them imaginatively available" (168). That "social concerns" are not a priori social

concerns but had to be made “imaginatively available” echoes the point Moretti makes via “distant reading”: novelistic genres emerge to help readers grasp a particular “contemporary reality.” Industrial novels made the stark world of factories and industrial labor “imaginatively available” to scores of readers for whom they were at best a news item. That process of imaginative labor was messy at times, and Brooks’s patience for the “lurid and melodramatic” will hold us in good stead as we plunge into the pioneering texts of the industrial novel.

I begin with the “lamentable” *Michael Armstrong* because it is the first full-fledged industrial novel and also because it develops a number of themes that recur, with variations, in those that follow. Seizing on the stardom she had achieved with the publication of *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, Trollope turned her critical eye to horrors being committed on British soil. She felt compelled to write *Michael Armstrong* because she wished “to drag into the light of day, and place before the eyes of Englishmen, the hideous mass of injustice and suffering to which thousands of infant labourers are subjected, who toil in our monster spinning-mills” (preface). Exposure of hidden ills was a central feature of industrial novels, their incipient *raison d’être*, and it lends them a starkly polemical air. Drawing on journalistic, blue book, working-class accounts, and a personal visit to Manchester, Trollope attacks the ills of industry in prose that reveals the labor involved in birthing a language to describe this new “contemporary reality.” Here is the novel’s first description of a mill:

The ceaseless whirring of a million hissing wheels, seizes on the tortured ear; and while threatening to destroy the delicate senses, seems bent on proving first, with a sort of mocking misery, of how much suffering it can be the cause. The scents that reek around, from oil, tainted water, and human filth, with that last worst nausea, arising from the hot refuse of atmospheric air, left by some hundred pairs of labouring lungs, render the act of breathing a process of difficulty, disgust, and pain.... [T]he whole monstrous chamber, redolent of all the various impurities that ‘by the perfection of our manufacturing system,’ are converted into ‘gales of Araby’ for the rich, after passing in the shape of certain poison, through the lungs of the poor. (98; ch. 8)

Trollope’s sentences strain as she attempts to capture the sounds and smells that stultified the senses. Her clunky metaphor of the lungs of the poor acting as a filter that transforms not only cotton into textiles but also filth to gold falls flat, as does her allusion to Araby and her derisive citation about industrial progress. Trollope’s prose is fueled by her outrage: “Two hundred thousand little creatures, for whose freedom from toil during their tender years the awful voice of nature has gone forth, to be snatched away, living and feeling, from the pure air of heaven ...—taken for ever from all which their Maker has surrounded them for the purpose of completing his own noblest work—taken and lodged amidst stench and stunning, terrifying tumult ...” (274; ch. 23). It was passages such as these that

earned her praise from reformers and in the working-class press and vilification from more highbrow reviewers. Her prose is, to use Brooks's language, "lurid and melodramatic," but it is a first, tentative step to make "imaginatively available" a social problem of immense magnitude.¹⁰

Following close on the heels of industrial exposé is the trope of social awakening. Michael Armstrong, the factory boy who labors in appalling conditions, is rescued by a young heiress, the daughter of the richest mill-owner in town. Mary Brotherton—a character whose name evokes both Carlyle's appeal to "brotherhood" to suture the hostile relations between "rich and poor," and also the Abolitionist slogan of a chained black man asking "Am I Not A Man and Brother?"—awakens from her life of luxury one day to ask "whether, by the nature of things, it is impossible to manufacture worsted and cotton wool into articles useful to man, without rendering those employed upon it unfit to associate with the rest of their fellow-creatures" (137; ch. 11). When Mary learns the horrors of factory conditions and child labor, her anguished cry—"Alas! alas! Is it thus my wealth has been accumulated?" (236; ch. 19)—resonates through the novel and is its moral north. Moments of awakening such as this are the second convention of the industrial novel. If exposé was about bringing the attention of the haves to the plight of the poor, the awakening of the haves was its necessary next step, and Trollope developed the theme at length (it preoccupies almost half the novel).

Exposé, Awakening ... Solution: Trollope stumbled considerably on this last step. The Rev. Bell, a reform-minded clergyman Mary meets during her search for truth, informs her that although he wishes to

"encourage your generous benevolence, I cannot in conscience tell you that it is in your power effectually to assist [factory children]. That you may save your own excellent heart from the palsy of hopeless and helpless pity, by the indulgence of your benevolence in individual cases of distress, I need not point out to you; but that any of the ordinary modes of being useful on a larger scale, such as organising schools, founding benefit societies, or the like, could be of any use to beings so crushed, so toil-worn, and so degraded, it would be idle to hope." (243; ch. 19)

The Rev. Bell counsels her to support the Ten Hours Movement as the only effective response to the atrocities she has witnessed. While Mary initially heeds his advice, she soon proceeds to "indulge her benevolence" by rescuing Michael, his brother, and a young factory girl and fleeing to Germany. Reviewers and critics have lambasted Trollope for her lack of consistency: does she propose legislation or philanthropy focused on rescuing individuals? Legislative change or paternalism? System reform or escape? Should the state enact social change or should private persons intervene? On the one hand, the novel presents the manufacturing process itself as the root of the "evils." (Trollope was unique among industrial

novelists in her fierce critique of industrialism itself). On the other, Trollope was a Tory-Radical and took her cues from Shaftsbury and Oastler, who supported Parliamentary reform. On an implausible third hand, the novel could envision only individual, philanthropic intervention as capable of changing the blighted lives of factory workers. A rejection of the system of industrial labor, a defense of state protectionism, and an advocate of paternalistic intervention all at once, *Michael Armstrong* is an unsteady early step in the exploration of the social relations created by industrial labor. Such vacillations regarding solutions, we know in hindsight, are the hallmark of the genre: almost every novel swings between describing and escaping the problems it identifies, offering solutions it evinces little faith in itself.¹¹ Few pull in so many contradictory directions or are quite as unstable as *Michael Armstrong*.

Michael Armstrong deserves our attention because it highlights the contours of the industrial novel in its early manifestations and lays the groundwork of its central concerns that persisted through the next decade-and-a-half. Gaskell's *Mary Barton* appeared almost a decade later, a decade in which the commentary on industrialism exploded, and in which the working classes became more politically organized and vocal. Gaskell's novel is more sure and sophisticated in its language and plots than Trollope's, drawing on similar themes and tropes even as Gaskell extends them in new directions. Like Trollope, Gaskell exposes industrial ills,¹² but, in her handling, exposé takes second-place to a quasi-ethnographic exploration of workers' everyday lives. Rather than factory or work conditions, Gaskell emphasizes the domestic lives of her working-class characters; indeed, *Mary Barton* contains not a single scene showing a mill in operation and the only mill in the novel burns down early on. As Collins notes, Gaskell's depth of knowledge about working-class lives far surpassed that of any other industrial novelist's.¹³ Because Gaskell's focus is primarily on working-class characters, she, unlike Trollope, who painstakingly narrated her upper-class protagonist's slow awakening, is less concerned with unfolding such awakening in her text. While *Mary Barton* is roused from her fantasy of upward mobility, and John Barton and the senior Carson both arrive at personal transformations, the primary awakening the novel aims for is directed outward—to its middle-class *readers*, who Gaskell hopes will hear the "agony of suffering" of their working-class brethren.¹⁴

More significantly, Gaskell differed from Trollope in that the former did not represent industrial labor or factories as an inherent evil, nor did she echo almost every journalist and reformer who traced a direct line from, as one critic has called it, "power loom to prostitution" (Zlotnick 149). Gaskell denied that factory work carried a sexual taint; indeed, Mary's aunt, Esther, becomes a prostitute precisely because she considers herself too good for factory work and, aspiring to the condition of a lady, winds up on the streets. Instead, Gaskell went out of her way to celebrate mill workers as independent and intelligent. In the opening pages Mary is presented as a spirited lass, neither bashful nor coy. She does not, of course, work in a mill, but she is a child of Manchester and serves as a contrast

to her sickly mother, an agricultural “rustic” (20) with a “deficiency of sense in her countenance, which is likewise characteristic of the rural inhabitants in comparison with the natives of the manufacturing towns” (4). Furthermore, as several critics have pointed out, it is not in a mill but in the genteel profession of dress-making that Mary is exposed both to Sally Leadbitter’s dreams of upward mobility and Harry Carson’s eye (Nord 150). Neither is industrial labor crippling for men: both Barton and Jem Wilson are prosperous and steady workers who are dignified by their work and earn enough to support their families—in good times, that is. In *Mary Barton* privation comes not from industrial work, but from the lack of work or a depression in wages brought about by fluctuations in the market. When his “gaunt, anxious, hunger-stamped” fellow-workers come to advise John Barton on the eve of his trip to London, their list of grievances begins and ends with the distress brought about by a downturn in trade (see 98, 99, and 101).

Gaskell replaces Trollope’s generalized critique of the manufacturing system with another target: the lack of communication and understanding between masters and men in industrial towns. She was by no means the first to identify this gulf or yearn for class reconciliation: Carlyle spent much of his early career developing the theme. In his 1829 “Signs of the Times,” he identified the first adverse effect of the Mechanical Age in “the increas[ed] distance between rich and poor” (35), and in the 1839 *Chartism* he insisted that what was needed was “a genuine understanding by the upper classes of society” as to what “torments these wild inarticulate souls.” “All battle is misunderstanding,” he declared, yet continued more optimistically: “did the parties know one another, the battle would cease” (309). The 1843 *Past and Present* offers the most comprehensive exploration of the theme of class warfare and its detrimental effects, as Carlyle contrasts a medieval monastery in which brotherhood prevailed against the present in which all deny kinship with one another. “It is not to die, or even to die of hunger, that makes a man wretched,” he writes, “but it is to live miserable we know not why; to work with a cold universal Laissez-faire: it is to die slowly all our life long, imprisoned in a deaf, dead, Infinite Injustice.... [In the past] sisterhood, brotherhood was often forgotten; but not till the rise of these ultimate Mammon and Shotbelt Gospels did I ever see it so expressly denied” (210).

The turn to “brotherhood” as an antidote to class divisions was one that many in the 1840s and 1850s were drawn to: we saw it in Trollope’s swing toward paternalist intervention, and we see it again in Disraeli’s *Sybil*. When the protagonist Egremont challenges the belief that “the Privileged and the People formed Two Nations, governed by different laws, influenced by different manners, with no thoughts or sympathies in common; with an innate inability of mutual comprehension,” *Sybil* responds haughtily: “Sir! I am one of those who believe that the gulf is impassable ... utterly impassable” (245–46; bk. 4, ch. 8). The novel’s mission, of course, is to prove her wrong, which it does, but only by first acknowledging and then denying the import of class difference: both *Sybil* and *Egremont* move seamlessly from an aristocrat’s mansion to an agricultural laborer’s hovel,

and Egremont's plea, "I am a man, Sybil, as well as a noble" (276; bk. 4, ch. 15), replaces class difference with the more "natural" gender difference. And as every reader has complained, the late-breaking news that Sybil is not a commoner after all but an aristocrat hardly bodes well for Disraeli's vision of reconciling the "two nations." That Disraeli's faith in the idea of "brotherhood" to suture class differences crumbles (or was abandoned) part-way through his narrative is in keeping with the genre's instability regarding solutions. But it also underscores the appeal of brotherhood as a trope for uniting the classes.

Gaskell maintains her faith in brotherhood but does not take Disraeli's easy road; rather than produce brotherhood by denying class differences, she acknowledges those differences but insists that there exists a convergence of interests between masters and men. When an order of goods comes in from "a foreign market," the narrator intervenes to explain that manufacturers have to lower wages because rivals on the Continent were poised to snatch the market by producing the goods cheaper. The moral is briskly articulated: "Distrust each other as they may the employers and employed must rise or fall together" (200; ch. 15).¹⁵ Shared interests, however, are merely a lever; Gaskell's larger point is that ignoring their mutual interests causes unnecessary pain and "mute reproach" (199; ch. 14). When Carson Sr. mockingly asks if Barton was "an Owenite; all for equality and community of goods, and that kind of absurdity," Job Legh quietly replies that "John Barton was no fool" but "what hurt him sore, and rankled in him" was that his masters "kept him at arm's length, and cared not whether his heart was sorry or glad" (452–53; ch. 37). Echoing Carlyle, Gaskell presents this lack of sympathy as the tragedy of the industrial age, although, tellingly, the only resolution she is able to narrate to it is pushed to the margins of the text's closure.

As Charlotte Brontë started to plan *Shirley*, her contribution to the subgenre of the industrial novel, she wrote to her publisher, W. S. Williams on 28 January 1848: "Details, situations which I do not understand and cannot personally inspect, I would not for the world meddle with, lest I should make even a more ridiculous mess of the matter than Mrs Trollope did in her 'Factory Boy'" (qtd. in Smith intro.; Brontë x). Instead, she turned to the recent past, the 1811–12 Luddite unrest in Yorkshire, which she researched in the local papers. The historical distance gives *Shirley* the appearance of being distinct from other industrial novels, but it was of the same ilk. Indeed, half-way through writing her novel, Brontë read *Mary Barton* and again wrote Williams on 1 February 1849: "In reading 'Mary Barton' ... I was a little dismayed to find myself in some measure anticipated both in subject and incident" (Smith xi). Despite her concerns, Brontë left her mark on the industrial novel by transforming Gaskell's convergence of interests between masters and men into an argument about the parallel between the position of middle-class women and that of industrial workers.

In contrast to Trollope, Brontë refrains from describing mill conditions and, unlike Gaskell, she shies away from focusing on workers' lives; indeed, readers might be hard-pressed to recall the name of a single mill-worker or rebel

in *Shirley*. Instead, Brontë focuses intensively on the lives of Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar, the middle- and upper-class women with whom the novel is primarily concerned. Considering this focus, why, then, is *Shirley* included in the pantheon of industrial novels? Primarily because Brontë uses the historical distance of some three decades to develop a series of parallels between women and workers that reflected on the present: in *Shirley* both workers and middle-class women resist and rebel (one against marriage, the other against the machine); both find themselves out of purposeful work; both are largely invisible to the men who have considerable authority over their lives; and both find themselves facing hunger or starvation (self-imposed in the case of the women, industrially-induced in the lives of workers). Yet, contrary to those who argued that “masters” and men shared interests, Brontë never suggests that the interests of the well-off women and workers are identical or even that they are natural allies. Indeed, as consumers of cloth that they idly transform into fancy-work for the “Jew-basket” and sell at “four or five hundred per cent. above cost price” (112; ch. 7), middle-class women could not be further removed from the problems workers face and are in fact their competition in a small way. But, as commodities in a marriage market, they share the fate of workers: both women and workers in this novel, as Sally Shuttleworth has pointed out, must sell—either their labor or their goods—on an open market (185). The notion that there is a connection between economic and sexual exploitation is one Gaskell had raised in *Mary Barton*—Harry Carson is both the father’s dismissive master and the daughter’s seducer—and Brontë dilates on this point and makes it the central focus of her novel.

In drawing the analogy between middle-class women and workers, Brontë links two distinct strands of the industrial-novel genre: the crushing effects of industrial labor and the urgent call to bridge the gulf between masters and men. While Gaskell—and Carlyle—bemoaned the gulf between classes introduced by industrial relations, Brontë suggests that underlying this gulf is a commonality shared by some, that physical privation and emotional hunger are equivalents. Thus, at the nadir of the novel, Caroline, devastated because the man she loves is not interested in her, stops eating and wastes away. That the focus of her affections is Robert Moore, the mill-owner who leads the other owners in suppressing the workers’ demands, is crucial to Brontë’s argument that physical and emotional poverty—one experienced by working men, the other by well-off women—are intertwined. Presenting middle-class women and workers as similarly positioned—in arguing that workers’ rebellion and women’s passivity are two sides of the same coin—Brontë extends the scope of the industrial novel, utilizing an industrial lens to bring domestic issues that concerned her, the superfluity of women, into focus. Most powerfully, the analogy illuminates both parties, politicizing middle-class women and domesticating the alienated worker.

By 1854 when *Hard Times* started to appear, very little about industrial conditions or workers’ lives was unknown, and the conventions of the industrial novel well established. The arc of Dickens’s own fictional writings indicates that he

had travelled a good distance from the outraged reaction of his 1838 letter to Fitzgerald. Social ills concerned him more than ever, but his scope had broadened considerably, as is evident in *Dombey and Son* (October 1846–April 1848) and, of course, *Bleak House* (March 1852–September 1853). Indeed, after the conclusion of the latter novel in September 1853, Dickens was so spent that he planned to take a short break from fiction. But sales of *Household Words* were languishing, and Dickens's printers prevailed upon him to write a novel for the journal to buoy sales (Ford and Monod intro.; *Hard Times* ix–x). Dickens somewhat reluctantly undertook the project, and *Hard Times* started to appear in April 1854. Thus it was that Dickens not only found himself working on another novel, but this time on a weekly deadline, a particularly taxing schedule and one he had abandoned since *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841. These material factors—the publication schedule and condensed length—might explain why the novel has felt to some critics more like a “menu card” for a meal than one of Dickens's “feasts” (qtd. in Ford and Monod intro.; *Hard Times* ix). Others, such as Anne Humpherys, have argued that Dickens turned such cramped conditions to advantage, producing a text with sharper narrative coherence, a darker ending, and rich figures of speech (“*Hard Times*”; 394–97). Much of the debate in regards to assessments of the novel has swirled around differing emphases in regards to verisimilitude: whether or how well the novel grasps and represents industrial conditions vs. its imaginative vision of social change. My own reading seeks to consider *Hard Times* less in terms of its material context or critical vision and more laterally against its predecessors in the subgenre of the industrial novel and the tropes they introduce. What use, if any, does *Hard Times* make of Trollope's exposé and plot of middle-class awakening, of Gaskell's insistence on brotherhood and a convergence of interests between masters and men, of Brontë's use of the industrial plot to explore an analogy between workers and women? What does Dickens's novel contribute to the genre?

Despite its reputation as an industrial novel¹⁶—today based not least upon the oft-anthologized “Key-Note” chapter in which Dickens first introduces his fictional industrial town Coketown in deft and inspired images¹⁷—*Hard Times* contains little in it of factories, machines, trade, market fluctuations, or even workers' lives. We learn nothing about the condition of Bounderby's mills although we are by Stephen Blackpool's side during a work day (see chapters 11 and 12). Workplace injuries, a topic Trollope had fulminated about and that was being angrily written up in *Household Words*, is excised from the novel.¹⁸ The relation between masters and men plays a role in this novel, but with a significant twist. As we have seen, Gaskell interpreted Carlyle's vision of brotherhood as a “convergence of interests”—both economic and emotional—between masters and men. In *Mary Barton*, when John Barton eventually meets Carson, Sr. and witnesses his anguish about his son's death, “The eyes of John Barton grew dim with tears.... The mourner before him was no longer the employer; a being of another race, eternally placed in antagonistic attitude” (431). The veil of class

conflict is rent and Barton can finally see. A kind man willing to tend to those in pain, Barton has killed, and for Gaskell his next gesture is equally important: "But who was he, that he should utter sympathy or consolation.... He had forfeited all right to bind up his brother's wounds.... Stunned by the thought, he sank upon the seat, almost crushed with the knowledge of the consequences of his own actions" (431; ch. 35). "Forfeited all right to bind up his brother's wounds": while Barton may have lost the chance, his abject sinking serves as a fable and Gaskell's moral. Dickens recaps the "gulf between masters and men" theme in *Hard Times* on two occasions, one a mechanical rehearsal, the other a more substantial extension. The first is Stephen Blackpool's dying monologue when he declares "If soom ha' been wantin' in unnerstan' in me better, I, too, ha' been wantin' in unnerstan' in them better" (201; bk. 3, ch. 6). An echo of Barton's words, these sound precisely like an echo—hollow—reiterating a familiar refrain in mechanical fashion. (Given his portrayal of Bounderby, Dickens could not seriously be suggesting that Stephen should have tried harder to get along with his blustering master).

But Dickens comes at the convergence-of-interests question from another direction as well, one akin to Brontë's analogy between working-class men and middle-class women. Early in the novel Stephen Blackpool visits his master Bounderby at his home. To readers accustomed to the conventions of the industrial novel, the reason for Stephen's visit comes as a surprise (as it does to Bounderby himself): Stephen comes not regarding work—the grounds on which he and Bounderby share an association—but about his marriage. That Stephen should turn to Bounderby for "advice" (58; bk. 1, ch. 11) about his wife is an explicit expression of the Carlylean exhortation that workers and masters ought to be bound by ties of "love" not just "cash-payment."¹⁹ But even as he endorses the Carlylean vision, Dickens adds a satiric gloss to it that suggests the impossibility of realizing such a vision in a Coketown. In approaching Bounderby, Stephen Blackpool assumes a Carlylean commonality between them. And, indeed, the men *are* linked only, not in the way Stephen supposes: both men are seeking *release* from a woman, Stephen from his wife, Bounderby from his mother. The former's plight constitutes the novel's tragic subplot, the latter's posturing its satiric exposé of the *soi disant* self-made industrialist.

But Dickens, like Brontë, makes a more explicit analogy too, a parallel between workers and the prosperous children: "Is it possible," the narrator wonders, "that there was any analogy between the case of the Coketown population and the case of the little Gradgrinds?" (24; bk. 1, ch. 5). Of course, there is: both are crushed by the Gradgrind-Bounderby regime of facts and statistics; both lack Fancy; both Louisa and Stephen are trapped in unhappy marriages, Stephen's tragic marriage twisted into Louisa's desperate one to Bounderby; Louisa's two conversations with her father mirror Stephen's two conversations with Bounderby; and Stephen's entirely pure relationship with Rachael takes a dangerous turn in Louisa's dalliance with James Harthouse. Even the images of the Coketown Keynote ripple outward from the industry they purport to describe and settle on the novel's

middle-class characters: thus, the “painted face of a savage” returns as young Tom in blackface; the coiled serpent as Mrs. Sparsit eavesdropping on Louisa’s garden of Eden; and the melancholy head of a mad elephant returns as Mr. Gradgrind’s large head that takes a very definite turn toward the melancholy. The middle-class characters, it seems, are as deeply imprinted by industrialism as the working-class ones who work in the Coketown mills.

Yet, even as Dickens develops the parallel, he eventually abandons the plot-line of the crushed worker in lieu of the crushed children’s plight. The first encounter between Louisa and Stephen is a case in point. As she follows Stephen to his room, Louisa, following the familiar trope of the industrial novel, has her moment of awakening: “For the first time in her life Louisa had come into one of the dwellings of the Coketown hands; for the first time in her life she was face to face with anything like individuality in connexion with them” (119; bk. 2, ch. 6). If in Trollope’s hands Mary Brotherton’s awakening leads to engagement, in Dickens’s Louisa’s encounter leads not to sustained engagement with the social problem, but to the narrator’s disquisition on Louisa’s inadequate education in anything but Utilitarian principles, the novel’s ultimate target. “She knew of their [workers’] existence by hundreds and by thousands. She knew what results in work a given number of them produce in a given space of time,” intones the narrator in a syntactic flatness that echoes the flatness inside Louisa. But there appears to be more than form-mirroring-content here: Louisa’s numbness and tepid interest in the workers seems to have spread like a virus through the novel. The shift her mind makes at this moment from an individual connection to her rote learning, is surprisingly replicated in the plot’s lack of interest in and displacement of workers’ lives with those of the industrialist’s children’s. Humpherys has argued that although Louisa’s story threatens to intervene in and disrupt the “father’s story” and indeed generates much of the narrative, ultimately “the novel’s overt interest is in the father’s story and his need for redemption” (“Louisa Gradgrind’s Secret” 179). Her reading teases out a narrative thread that is “present intermittently,” but never allowed to displace that of Gradgrind’s fall and return to grace. It also heightens our attention to the text’s other suppressed or unnameable narratives, primarily that of the workers.

The novel’s deployment of Sissy Jupe, the antithesis of the Utilitarian principles Dickens attacks, mirrors Louisa’s avoidance of connection and engagement with Stephen—and breaks, too, with the analogy trope of the industrial novel that Brontë developed. Gradgrind “rescues” Sissy from a life in the circus—a deliverance promptly challenged by Sleary’s counteroffer of an apprenticeship (34; bk. 1, ch. 6)—for largely instrumental purposes: he wishes to use her, he tells Bounderby, “as an example to Louisa, of what this pursuit which has been the subject of vulgar curiosity, leads to and ends in” (31; bk. 1, ch. 6). The novel, of course, trumps his arrogant disregard of the girl: the one who learns any lesson is not so much Louisa, who early doubted the system of education and never embraced it as ardently or self-interestedly as Bitzer or Tom did, but eventually Gradgrind,

who humbly acknowledges to Louisa that “some change may have been slowly working about me in this house, by mere love and gratitude: that what the Head had left undone and could not do, the Heart may have been doing silently” (166; bk. 3, ch. 1). In the Gradgrind household Sissy functions as “the Heart,” pumping life into its members—but she is also largely “silent,” doing the work Gradgrind can’t. In a compressed “moral fable,” as *Hard Times* as surely is, the elision of a worker is unremarkable; but in light of the text’s status as an industrial novel, the repeated suppression of workers’ stories for the distorting effects of Utilitarian principles on the minds and lives of middle-class children signals less an analogy between them than a displacement. One cannot help but wonder if Louisa’s enervation does not mirror Dickens’s own, if descriptions of “the large streets all very like one another” and the “small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another,” who “went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work” (22; bk. 1, ch. 5) do not reflect Dickens’s own exhaustion about a topic he had put off writing about for fifteen years and now only did so at the behest of his printers.

Moretti writes of the regular pattern in which one subgenre dies and another is born. In *Hard Times* we witness the dying gasps of the industrial novel as Dickens, sometimes mechanically, rehearses the familiar tropes, but also innovates in directions that leave the subgenre behind.²⁰ I want to end this essay by pursuing another axis on which we might consider *Hard Times*, an axis that Moretti’s “distant reading” of genre does not allow for: that of Dickens’s own oeuvre. Perhaps nothing better captures the subgenre fatigue of *Hard Times* than a consideration of the death of Jo in *Bleak House*, the novel that preceded *Hard Times*, and that of Stephen Blackpool. The former is Dickens at the heights of his power: from the metaphor of the cart that grows heavier to Jo’s “letter” of apology to Esther (the only thing this crushed boy has to bequeath) to his faltering inaccuracies as Woodcourt leads him through the Lord’s prayer to the narrator’s anguished final words that boys like Jo are “dying thus around us every day,” the chapter rises to a crescendo that conveys Dickens’s grief and rage, his deep sorrow and shame too, that is ours as well. Stephen’s death, by contrast, is talky and labored, lacking dignity or drama, confusedly bringing together pastoral, mine, and mill, drawing on tropes of the industrial novel but unable to infuse them with freshness or make them relevant to this novel. The scene is, in the words of one critic, “feeble beyond belief” (Barnard 376).

More profoundly, *Hard Times*’s “Is it possible there was an analogy” between Coketown and the Gradgrind children echoes *Bleak House*’s “What connexion can there be, between the place in Lincolnshire, the house in town, the Mercury in powder, and the whereabouts of Jo ...? What connexion can there have been between many people in the innumerable histories of this world, who, from opposite sides of great gulfs, have, nevertheless, been very curiously brought together?” (235; ch. 16). This is the central preoccupation of Dickens’s late career: what connection can there be between the exalted and the abject, forgotten creatures of

society? Dickens's answer is that Lady Dedlock and Jo *are* connected, and not merely through the accident of Nemo, but more fundamentally through a responsibility she and the rest of society bear toward his making. Many first-time readers of *Bleak House* expect a late-breaking revelation that Jo is Lady Dedlock's or Jarndyce's or some other rich person's son, much as Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby* was. Activating and then subverting that novelistic convention, Dickens's point is that Jo *is* Lady Dedlock's—or, more broadly, Britain's—"son," if not biologically then materially, the product of, as Dickens put it in a *Household Words* essay, "England's sins and negligences" (4 Jan 1851: 338). One achievement of *Bleak House* lies in Dickens's transformation of the tropes of lineage and lost sons that the eighteenth-century novel was preoccupied with into a broader ethical concept that insisted on asking where a community fails and in activating a moral response to that failure. The novel immediately following *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, extends this investigation of the national community into a broader "ecology of local, national, and cosmopolitan identities" (Buzard 413). Sandwiched between these two massive novelistic investigations, *Hard Times* appears as something of a detour, even a throwback or valediction to an earlier time of his career, a time when Dickens was engaged in a searching analysis of the structural interconnectedness of social totalities. Where *Little Dorrit* was to lead readers on a tour of their many forms of self-incarceration, readers of *Hard Times* may have felt imprisoned within the narrower confines of a dying form where good and ill could still be localized and starkly opposed.

NOTES

1. Madeline House and Graham Storey comment: "He postponed the 'blow', although he had prepared for the possibility by placing the Cheerybles' business in Lancashire." (*Letters* 1: 483n4).
2. Chapter 44 of *The Old Curiosity Shop* offers a brief glimpse of a man brought up from childhood to stoke the fires of a factory.
3. The number of critics who have written on it in this vein is long and illustrious: from Raymond Williams to Catherine Gallagher, Rosemary Bodenheimer to Suzan Zlotnick, Louis Cazamian to Joseph Kestner, and many more.
4. While Raymond Williams and Catherine Gallagher include George Eliot's *Felix Holt* (1866) in the pantheon of industrial novels, other critics dispute its inclusion: Rosemarie Bodenheimer calls it a "metafiction of industrialism" (233) and Susan Zlotnick a "postindustrial novel" (224). I contend it is a political coming-of-age novel more than an industrial one.
5. The earliest reference to Preston as the origin of the novel is an *Illustrated London News* story of 4 March 1854 that stated: "The title of Mr. Dickens's new work is 'Hard Times.' His recent inquiry into the Preston strike is said to have originated the title,

- and, in some respects, suggested the turn of the story” (qtd. in Ford and Monod’s ed. of *Hard Times* 273).
6. See George Ford and Sylvère Monod’s selection of documents on Preston in the Norton edition of *Hard Times* or Robert Barnard’s discussion of the novel in terms of Preston. John Holloway, while not claiming origination-status for Preston, nonetheless locates it centrally when he writes of the “deliberate falsification of what Dickens knew, from his visit to Preston, to be the facts” (167).
 7. Philip Collins offers the most comprehensive analysis of Dickens’s attitudes toward the industrial question in his fiction and journalism. See also Patrick Brantlinger. As numerous critics note, Dickens at times supported manufacturers, at others critiqued practices.
 8. In a 30 November 1836 letter to Richard Bentley, Dickens called “the show of names” for the prospective journal “excellent” (*Letters* 1: 202); House and Storey identify Frances Trollope as one of the prospective contributors. By 1839 Dickens appears to have been feeling less sanguine: in a fastidiously and one senses mockingly polite letter of 30 January, he declined Trollope’s invitation for dinner on account of a friend’s visit (“I fear this circumstance—which would not occur with me once in ten years—will deprive me of the happiness of joining your party”; *Letters* 1: 499). Two decades later, when any trace of rivalry between them had been supplanted by Dickens’s inimitable status, their relationship took a novelistic turn: in 1858 when Fanny Ternan, Ellen’s sister, went to Florence to study voice, Dickens wrote to Trollope who was living there with her eldest son, Thomas Adolphus. In the 20 September 1858 letter he asked Mrs. Trollope “to shew [the bearer of this letter] any aid or attention in your power,” adding “if you bestowed it on one of my daughters, it could not be more welcome to me” (*Letters* 7: 667). Trollope must have been assiduous in fulfilling the charge: eight years later, Fanny Ternan married Thomas Adolphus, and in 1895 she published the first biography of Frances Trollope.
 9. For instance, the Factory Act of 1844 reduced the hours of children in textile mills and for the first time included women as a protected class; the Act of 1847 limited the working hours of women and children to ten; and the Act of 1850 specified that working hours could only occur between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.
 10. By contrast, a decade later when Alton Locke enters a tailors’ workroom, he is assailed by “the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth” (Kingsley 23). The language—and outrage—is far more restrained and less melodramatic.
 11. In his analysis of industrial novels, Raymond Williams writes: “Recognition of evil was balanced by fear of becoming involved. Sympathy was transformed, not into action, but into withdrawal” (109). More specifically, of *Mary Barton* he writes: “Her response to the suffering [of the industrial poor] is deep and genuine, but ... [i]s joined ... by the confusing violence and fear of violence, and is supported, finally, by a kind of writing-off, when the misery of the actual situation can no longer be endured.... A solution within the actual situation might be hoped for, but the solution with which the heart went was a cancelling of the actual difficulties and the removal of the persons

pitted to the uncompromised New World" (91). While withdrawal or violence do not play a role in *Michael Armstrong*, escape does, and Williams's larger point about the instability of solutions offered in industrial novels resonates.

12. In a 1848 letter to Mary Ewart, Gaskell wrote: "I do think that we must all acknowledge ... evils existing in relation to [the manufacturing system] which may be remedied in some degree, although we as yet do not see how; but surely there is no harm in directing the attention to the existence of such evils" (*Letters* 67).
13. In his review of *Mary Barton* Charles Kingsley praised her for just this intimate knowledge: "In spite of blue-books and commissions, in spite of newspaper horrors and parliamentary speeches, Manchester riots and the 10th of April, the mass of higher orders cannot yet be aware of what a workman's home is like in the manufacturing districts" (qtd. in Butwin 63).
14. Gaskell noted in an 1848 letter: "[M]y intention was simply to represent the view many of the work-people take" (*Letters* 67). In writing *Mary Barton* Gaskell did not aim to be even-handed; in a 16 July 1850 letter to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, she wrote that her urge to write *Mary Barton* was "caused by my feeling strongly on the side which I took.... I know, and have always owned, that I have represented *but one* side of the question.... I believe what I have said in *Mary Barton* to be perfectly true, but by no means the whole truth.... I do not think it is possible to do this in any *one* work of fiction" (*Letters* 119).
15. Gaskell's *North and South* contains a twist on the notion of masters' and men's shared interests: Bessy Higgins explains to Margaret Hale that she is dying of consumption because both the masters and the workers resist efforts to install a "wheel" to remove fluff from the air, the former because of costs, the latter because the machine would deprive them of matter that fulfills their hunger (102). Here, masters' and men's interests converge to work *against* reform.
16. As Humpherys notes: "The compression of the novel has encouraged a focus on the novel's industrial and utilitarian themes. Dickens himself prompted this concentration by dedicating the first book edition of *Hard Times* to Thomas Carlyle" ("*Hard Times*" 397).
17. The current editions of all three major undergraduate anthologies for Victorian literature in the U.S.—the Norton, Longman, and Broadview—include the opening of "The Key-Note" chapter in their Industrialism-in-context sections.
18. In the manuscript version Dickens included a passage in which Stephen speaks of Rachel's "little sither ... Wi' her child arm tore off afore thy face." In the proofs, Dickens inserted a footnote to the passage that reads: "See *Household Words* vol. IX page 224, article entitled GROUND IN THE MILL" (Ford and Monod 247, note to 70.27). Neither the passage nor the footnote made it into the published version. Butwin's discussion of the relationship between fiction and journalism at the time provides what is probably the most likely explanation for its excision. He argues that "the novel of social reform exists in a continuum with journalism" (62) and that in *Hard Times* Dickens counted on a readership that had "been trained to respond to journalism" (67). "Within the novel," Butwin continues, "specific complaints of the workers are abbreviated, and attention is diverted from the novel to the journal where the editorial voice suggests action on the part of the middle class rather than the working class" (73).

19. From *Past and Present*: "Love of men cannot be bought by cash-payment; and without love, men cannot endure to be together" (207).
20. In a sensitive essay, Humpherys shifts our attention from the industrial plot to the "father-daughter" plot, particularly the questions of marriage and divorce by which "parts of Louisa's story enter the narrative and vie for center stage with her father's story" ("Louisa Gradgrind's Secret" 180), and more recently, Helena Michie has called it the first "Novel of Divorce." There are a half-dozen other subgenres from which we might read *Hard Times* productively, but that is not the project of this paper.

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