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The Role of Imagination in Children's Upbringing and Education in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854): From Logic and Facts to Creativity and Fairytales

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Abstract

This article investigates the role of imagination in children's upbringing and education in Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times*. It has adopted Vygotsky's Creative Imagination and Socio-Cultural theories with the aim of examining the influence of the parents, teachers and culture in cultivating and developing children's imaginative functions in their upbringing and education. It explores the function of imagination in the psychological and cognitive processes of children's development from their childhood to adulthood. Furthermore, it links the gothic elements like the images of "haunt and uncanny" with the alienated imagination in children to highlight the danger of extreme scientific, rational, Utilitarian upbringing and education on the human nature and imaginative functions of children . Through the use of Charles Dickens's novel, *Hard Times*, as a case study , this article aims at showing that the lack of both parents and teachers' support of the children's imagination in the form of communication, provision and understanding of cultural tools affects negatively children's imaginative play and creative reworking of concrete objects in the world; while parents' support successfully internalizes, mediates and develops children's imagination as a higher mental function to make a conscious understanding of the world.

Keywords: *Hard Times*, Realism, Gothic, Uncanny, Vygotsky, Creative Imagination, Fairytales, Circus.

ملخص

يستكشف هذا المقال دور الخيال في تربية وتعليم الأطفال في رواية تشارلز ديكنز "أوقات صعبة". اعتمد المقال نظريات الخيال الإبداعي والاجتماعي الثقافي لفيغوتسكي بهدف دراسة تأثير الآباء والمعلمين والثقافة في زراعة وتطوير وظائف الخيال لدى الأطفال في تربيتهم وتعليمهم. يستكشف المقال دور الخيال في العمليات النفسية والإدراكية لتطور الأطفال من طفولتهم إلى سن البلوغ. وعلاوة على ذلك، يربط عناصر الرعب مثل صور "الشبح والغرابة" بالخيال المستبعد لدى الأطفال لتسليط الضوء على خطر التربية والتعليم العلمي والعقلاني والاستخدام المفرط على الطبيعة البشرية والوظائف الخيالية للأطفال. يهدف هذا المقال، من خلال استخدام رواية تشارلز ديكنز "أوقات صعبة" كدراسة حالة، إلى إظهار أن نقص دعم الآباء والمعلمين لخيال الأطفال في شكل التواصل والتوفير وفهم الأدوات الثقافية يؤثر سلباً على لعب الأطفال الخيالي وإعادة تشكيلهم الإبداعي للكائنات الملموسة في العالم. في حين يسمح دعم الآباء بدمج ووساطة وتطوير خيال الأطفال كوظيفة ذهنية عالية لفهم وإع للعالم.

الكلمات الرئيسية: أوقات صعبة، واقعية، رعب، غرابة، فيغوتسكي، الخيال الإبداعي، الحكايات الخرافية، السيرك

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Introduction

The nature of childhood has been a historical controversy in art and literature, viewed and treated differently by the Victorian society. Though it was associated with positive notions like innocence, purity, freedom, imagination, creativity, and spontaneity that were prescribed specifically for raising and educating children. by the Romantic poets and writers, the Victorians remained little convinced by these notions and embraced the Puritan belief of the original sin that sought idleness as a mischievous deed for children. Beside their strong influence by the Utilitarian theories, mainly during the industrialization of the country in the nineteenth century, the Victorians favored child labor and practical and rational thinking over the vagueness of imagination as righteous ends to the requirements of the century. Under that politico-economic boom, children's identity was shaped by the process of control and strict instructions in factories and continued to be more invisible when their minds were manipulated by inadequate practical education. As a consequence, the value of their creative imaginative cognition was widely destroyed.

The natural children's inclinations such as the love of amusement and imagination continued to be questioned and investigated by the Victorian writers until the emergence of children's literature. The instinctive child-figure qualities of simplicity, playfulness, the delight and fancy were celebrated in works like Catherine Sinclair's *Holiday House* (1839), Edward Lear's *A Book of Nonsense* (1846), and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). In Carroll's words, the purity of childhood and "their innocent unconsciousness is very beautiful, and gives one a feeling of reverence, as at the presence of something sacred" (qtd. in M.Gubar, *The Victorian Child*, Letters 381). From this general view, this article derives its interest from the need of cultivating and supporting the creative and imaginative cognitive processes in children to preserve their inner character. To be more specific, the concern of my analysis is to shed light on the role of imagination in children's upbringing and education, using Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* as a case study.

Hard Times is a novel written by the Victorian novelist Charles Dickens and published in 1854. The novel narrates the suffering of children whose imagination and play were forbidden and not cultivated under the strict upbringing of their parents who were highly influenced by the development of the Industrial Revolution and the application of science and technology. Besides, the novel depicts the manipulation of those children's minds by their teachers under a rigid utilitarian educational system, that refuses to let them develop their imaginative functions towards the received facts. Thus, the strict upbringing and rigid education limited their creative imaginative functions to define their own human character and understand the world around them. The main reason of choosing Dickens's novel is the impact it leaves on the reader to immediately sympathize with those deprived children who underwent negative and horrible effects on their human character due to their alienated imaginative faculty. Therefore, this article aims at stressing the necessary and important role that imagination plays in the upbringing and education of children. Then, to target the social group responsible for the development of such faculties like parents and teachers through the provision of artistic and cultural tools to children, like the fairytales and circus in order to strengthen their creative character and mark their identity.

I-The Parents' Role Vs The Role Of Imagination in Children's Upbringing in *Hard Times*

The reading of *Hard Times* from a fairytale-like perspective shows its richness in imaginative treatment of the narrated setting, events and characters. Throughout his use of gothic symbols, visualization of the people and children's suffering under industrialism and the political system, Dickens proves to be the most prominent humanistic writer of the Victorian era. The novel is the reflection of creative imagination ideas in which the children's

well refined and restrained imagination is the product of the parents upbringing. The narrated childhood experiences, inner struggles and repressed imaginative pursuits of Louisa, Tom, and the little Gradgrinds are expressions of the Utilitarian system-like upbringing within an oppressive mechanized world while the character of Sissy Jupe's childhood experience, the freedom of imaginative functions are the results of the fairytale-like upbringing towards the bleak reality. The concluding part includes the role of creative imagination plays in these children's upbringing, choices and existence they live through in their life.

I.1. Gothic Imagination in *Hard Times*

Obviously *Hard Times* is filled with gothic implication in particular to its industrial setting Coketown which is portrayed as a dystopian world. In this novel, Dickens manages to link the dark reality of the Industrial Revolution that was taking place in England with the dramatized and horrific suffering of people. By combining the two genres of writing that is to say realism and gothic in the description of life circumstances in the novel, he attempted to draw out the reader's sympathy and support for social reform. His flowing capacity of imagination enabled him to visualize all the hidden realities in fictional pictures or symbols, so that to make the reader imagines what it was like to live among those oppressed people within those dark realities, and feels all the internal and external effects brought by the revolution. The forgotten pastoral lifestyle like family communication, which was strongly encouraged in the past, and the deserted value of imagination, haunt the present of the practical family and threaten the stability and happiness of its members. In short, to describe the dramatized suffering of the Gradgrind children especially Tom, Louisa and the little Gradgrind who suffer from the lack of their parents support and their deprivation from playing and/ or any other sort of cultural tools such as short stories, and fairytales.

Therefore; the lack of communication and negligence to support imagination through providing cultural tools the children needed which were once celebrated in the old pastoral family's communication, the parents threatened their children's human nature, happiness, feeling, creative and imaginative functions. In addition, the alienated imaginative faculty of the children "Tom, Louisa and Blitzer" due to the excessive scientific education of the utilitarian principles had also haunted and threatened their innocence, purity, sympathy, emotional and creative reworking. Eventually, their alienated and repressed imagination contributed to the horrific effects and suffering those children underwent in becoming as worse as monsters unable to define their human nature. Thus, the gothic elements help to show the darker sides of the industrial revolution also the technological and scientific development that people had to endure under the mechanization of machinery and extreme rationalism specifically in the rigid upbringing and education children were suffering from. Therefore; those elements will pave the way for both theories of Vygotsky to consider those children's horrific suffering, effects and results through examining the roles of both the parents and teachers in influencing the cultivation and development of imagination in the children's upbringing and education. Consequently, emphasizing the role of imagination in children, urging the society to take great part of responsibility to encourage the value of that alienated faculty for humanity.

The forgotten spirit and purity of the pastoral nature haunt the presence of the industrial revolution through the dreadful appearance and gloomy atmosphere of its urban city, Dickens portrays Coketown¹⁵ "...where nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in..."(77), as if it has been cursed by the wicked effects of the Industrial Revolution, mainly its factories that damaged the purity of nature and faded the beautiful rich color of the city's brick away by their smoke, this description of the city's bricks itself conveys Dickens's nostalgia for the old pastoral nature "it was a town of red

brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage” (Dickens 29). Also the description is even an indication of the way the old pastoral lifestyle continues to haunt the present industrial lifestyle of people which was characterized by the overcrowded and repetitive cycle of life in polluted urbanized cities. N. Page states in this context that, “The regularity and monotony of the town-planning is the result of a rapid growth that is itself 'unnatural': instead of growing slowly and in response to human needs, the town has mushroomed to satisfy the profit motive...” (70). I agree with N. Page, because in my opinion this transitional state or change from the domestic ordinary living into overcrowding one which people experienced in this modern industrial city was an image of the uncanny. So, this uncanny change challenged the Victorian perspective regarding the aim behind the spread of industrial revolution and scientific, technological development that would modernize and civilize the life of many people. However; this familiar perception that has been taken for granted by the Victorians, turned out to be very unfamiliar one through the drastic effects of both the industrial revolution and science that have left on the human life and children in *Hard Times* novel. Because the chaos produced by the abnormal overcrowd was itself dramatized as uncanny. In the rapid race and competition to satisfy their materialistic interests and greed, people neglected to respond to their human nature such as the manifestation of feelings, imagination and spirituality. The forgotten ideals of those romantic aspects frighteningly haunted and threatened the human nature leading to disorder, “... a violent hurry for some one man’s purpose...” (Dickens 77) increased selfishness and decreased sympathy thus leading to a savagery “uncivilized people”. Moreover; the mechanized society was similar to the programmed working of machinery. People lived a shallow life through the same daily routine in a disordered world. Where it contained “...many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another..., to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow...” (Dickens 29). The chaos was even taking form in the grotesque physical structure of this town or as has been depicted by Dickens as “...the labyrinth of narrow courts upon courts, and close streets upon streets..., where the chimneys, for want of air to make a draught, were built in an immense variety of stunted and crooked shapes...” (77).

Furthermore; the society was mechanized and manipulated through the rational thinking and practicality of science, dedicating their life to the Utilitarian system facts thus it was devoid of sentiments and humanity. As it is illustrated by Graham M. Vaughan and Michael A .Hogg the life of people in Coketown is a mirror that reflects “Positivism”¹⁶ in which “Science as religion” (21). I think this is exactly what the novel shows, specifically in “The keynote” chapter, where facts and interest were the only religious devotions for people in Coketown .While love, spirituality and virtues were considered as means to an end that is to say for the sake of materialistic pursuit. It is described by Dickens in which there was “Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial...and the relations between master and man were all fact...” (30). Also the dehumanizing process the system attempted to furnish in the life of people via its “tabular” (Dickens 31) and rational ways of thinking, left them deprived from any kind of amusement such as music, dance, poetry, good humour, relaxation or enjoyment of children in play. The amusement was like “a bell in a birdcage” (Dickens 30) in the town, strangled and imprisoned in the souls of its people who stuck to reason.

Most importantly, the people and children were alienated from liberating the most powerful human capacity which is imagination, the only faculty which shapes their identity and questions their existence in the world manipulated by the utilitarian system and repressed by the mechanism of industrial revolution .Because, according to Dickens their life without these fanciful and creative activities, will know no “healthy existence”(32) in the midst of

their heavy struggle and turmoil in the reality they are living. That is why Dickens as Ostry declares has relied on "...the romance tradition such as the fairy tale, melodrama, pantomime and gothic..." (93) to reform this mechanized society.

The suffering, horrific conditions and mistreatment that the "Hands" experienced in the industrial city, were another disillusionment caused by the mechanization of the industrial revolution. They were tormented by the hardship and dirtiness of their work in running machinery at factories. Just as machines worked monotonously, they had to work hard in tandem without stopping.

...wiping their swarthy visages, and contemplating coals. The whole town seemed to be frying in oil. There was a stifling smell of hot oil everywhere. The steam-engines shone with it, the dresses of the Hands were soiled with it,...The atmosphere of those Fairy palaces was like the breath of the simoom: and their inhabitants, wasting with heat, toiled languidly in the desert. (Dickens, 132)

Considering Dickens's treatment of imaginative elements fused within his narrative gothic style in portraying the dystopian Coketown in his novel, it has led to a controversy. In this context Robert E. Lougy writes, "*Hard Times* world is a world of romance gone mad. The fairy tale elements are present-castles, fairy palaces, serpents, giants, and dragons- but they have become parodies of an earlier imaginative world whose qualities they perversely mock."(239). While N. Page describes the dystopian world of Coketown which "is associated with untamed beasts" (70). Both critics have given their attention to the dystopian description of Coketown in terms of the imagery and symbolic animals used. However, N. Page's idea of "untamed beast" serves much my opinion regarding the role of imagination has to show in representing the hidden realities in *Hard Times* novel.

Because, the excess of imaginative description of Coketown is not used just to imitate the fairy-tale elements without direct aim. That is why E. Lougy's idea is not much applicable to the purpose of imagination I want to convey, his idea about Dickens's use of fairy tales description which is part of imagination, indicates the triviality of imagination that served just as romantic exaggeration of real events in the novel. However; Dickens's imagery alludes to the way the forgotten peace of pastoral lifestyle haunts or threatens the tranquility of people in the modern industrial city. The untamed beasts such as serpents and mad elephants refer to the wildness of factories smoke that never ends and the noise that stems from the mechanism of machinery through which people experienced unstoppable anxiety, nervousness and pressure. Therefore; Dickens's imagination served to describe the dramatized suffering and horror of the people in the dark reality of the devilish industrial revolution in which "...serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled...piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness"(Dickens 29).

Furthermore; the alienated imagination and forgotten spirit of the pastoral family's communication still haunt the Gradgrind family in the novel, and threaten to disperse the stability and happiness of the household's members within the urban statistical house "Stonelodge" where it was only devoted to scientific and rational upbringing. The idea of the household has been the shared subject matter for both Elaine M. Ostry and William J. Palmer. In broader context, M. Ostry considers "the Victorians believed that strong homes should be founded on a solid moral system and the domestic imagery of the household affections was important" (209). Then, J. Palmer specifies this notion of the household in regard of *Hard Times* novel to comment on the Gradgrind's home "Stone lodge" where there was "...the perversion of all that is natural in the world. And, because the very centre of that perversion is

Thomas Gradgrind...(71). However; I agree with J. Palmer because according to me, the Gradgrind children “little Gradgrind, Louisa and Tom” were not given the natural upbringing like play and amusement also they were not allowed to express their inner feelings and repressed imagination in a form of communication with their practical parents “Gradgrinds”. Unlike the previous pastoral family or household where this kind of communication to support the feelings, play and imagination in their children’s character was completely embraced. Yet, under the requirements of modern industrial revolution, technological and scientific development ,the Gradgrind parents adopted rigid upbringing to their children based on their strong belief on the priority of science and its practical importance for their children’s life over the cultivation of affections, feelings and imagination.

For this reason; the Gradgrind’s rigid upbringing as it is shown in the novel within the present situation of the industrial revolution, indeed turned out to be uncanny present to what the Victorians believed or expected to be important for a strong household as M. Ostry claimed. Because it turned out through the Gradgrind rigid upbringing that reason was important than affections and imagination for strong children .Thus, his view of what the Victorians were certain to be important for the household is not applicable to what the children especially Tom and Louisa have experienced in their gloomy house under the rigid practical upbringing they were raised in. In this sense, the deserted old pastoral family’s communication along with the alienated imagination contributed to the suffering of Gradgrind children under the strict upbringing in which they grew unable to satisfy their repressed feelings and develop their creative imaginative functions, for instance Louisa’s childhood memory of the household she was brought up into , was as Dickens describes “Her remembrance of home and childhood were remembrance of the drying up of every spring and fountain in her heart as it gushed out. The golden waters were not there” (232).

I.2. The Role and Influence of Parents in Their Children’s Creative Imagination

Children are the seeds to be well cultivated in a rich fertilized soil by their parents. Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* is the applicable novel of Creative Imagination principles, in which the writer alludes to the importance of parents in supporting and developing their children’s creativity especially through his division of the parts of the novel into Sowing, Reaping, and Garnering. This process highly includes the role of Mr.Gradgrind and Mrs.Gradgrind in influencing the development of creative imagination in their children’s upbringing mainly Louisa, Tom, and the little Gradgrinds Adam Smith, Malthus and Jane. I will also analyse the role of Signor Jupe in fostering the creative imagination in his daughter Sissy during her upbringing.

The little Gradgrinds in the novel, or more precisely in A Loophole chapter, seem to be deprived of all sorts of childhood activities. At most they were deprived of amusement and play, they were not even provided with toys or let to listen to songs or children stories or any other child-like manifestation. Intentionally, their parents (Thomas Gradgrind and Mrs. Gradgrind) forbade these kinds of amusements in order to not stimulate their imaginative play towards the concreted objects that according to Vygotsky every child at his 2 years old needs, to enable him later on to construct abstracted hidden meanings and symbols that these “stories and songs” carry; or to define their actions through their playing of toys. Because, these objects, as Dickens also agrees, enhance the creative imagination of children and the responsibility of providing them lies on their parents, the role of those parents in the novel was not presented in directing the imaginative function in their children’s thinking. On the contrary, they were diminishing it.

No little Gradgrind had ever seen a face in the moon; it was up in the moon before it could speak distinctly. No little Gradgrind had ever learnt the silly jingle, Twinkle, twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are! No little Gradgrind had ever known wonder on the subject...No little Gradgrind had ever associated a cow in a field with that famous cow with the crumpled horn who tossed the dog who worried the cat who killed the rat who ate the malt, or with that yet more famous cow who swallowed Tom Thumb... (Dickens 14)

The lack of parents' support which those children were in need of at their younger age¹⁷ to internalize word meanings, creative thinking and language into their inner speech, was obvious in *Hard Times*.

Instead of directing their imaginative play into a well internalized inner speech and higher mental thinking, as creativity and intentional memory, Thomas Gradgrind was only subjecting his children from their most tender age to "a lecture-room" where "The first object with which they had an association, or of which they had a remembrance, was a large black board with a dry Ogre chalking ghastly white figures on it" (Dickens 14). Indeed, their eminently practical father with his framed mind, had never interacted with his children on the purpose for example, to abstract meaning from that Ogre shape of statistics and numbers. Their mental functions were only manipulated or limited to receive those facts and to never engage their imaginative play to wonder about them or about the shape of Ogre on the board. In this way as Wiggins declares "The Gradgrind family philosophy involves the nurturing of industry, political economy and the mechanization..." (7). From my own point of view, what Wiggins says is exactly the same to what I believe the Gradgrind parents are trying to do in their children because, their support was taking form only in transmitting heavy facts without interacting with their children, their imaginative functions in order to be internalized into successful and well directed inner mental thinking. That is to say, the parents' external interaction with their children was only to make them receive facts and never let their imaginative play to take place in their inner mental function or creative reworking of those facts. In this process, their father's role towards their imaginative faculty, as is expressed by Dickens, was like "...a monster in a lecturing castle, with heaven knows how many heads manipulated into one, taking childhood captive, and dragging it into gloomy statistical dens by the hair" (14). Therefore; manipulating and mechanizing his children's minds according to the principles of the political economy system and the industry by suppressing their imaginative functions to effectively be integrated within their reasoning.

Louisa and Tom Gradgrinds, on the other hand, were not spared of strict upbringing with which their father was much satisfied. They were also deprived of play and entertained with no pleasing sight in their gloomy statistical home "Stone Lodge" where it was haunted by their misery and suffering. They were alienated from their imagination, and the light of fancy was never shone upon the shadow of its heavy statistical building also "their dreams of childhood" were stuck in that stony house. At their younger age, when they mostly were in search for support in their parent's dialogue to direct their behaviors and inner-speech through imitation, the word meanings and language received were negatively minimizing the development of their inner imaginative play in the sense that the communication of the parents with their children was limited to development of reason only. Both Mr. Gradgrind and Mrs. Gradgrind were in charge of inserting the tabular upbringing and thinking "devoted to Utilitarian system facts" in their children's minds, neglecting by this the cultivation of the most important faculty of imagination any child needs to make a creative reworking of the imitated things.

Moreover, the parents in their communicative speech with their children were precisely conveying the language or word meanings that would fit only the logical process of that system. Any words or objects and expressions that would help their children to develop their creative imaginative mental functions, were totally prevented, forbidden and rejected all together. So as the little Gradgrinds were forbidden from playing, Louisa and Tom were punished for being sneaking curiously at the circus, the hidden treasure they had always been looking for to satisfy their inner repressed play of imagination.

‘In the name of wonder, idleness, and folly!’ said Mr. Gradgrind, leading each away by a hand;’ what do you do here?

‘Wanted to see what it was like’, returned Louisa, shortly...

‘I am sorry to hear it. I am very sorry indeed to hear it. It makes Thomas no better, and it makes you worse, Louisa.’

‘You! Thomas and you, to whom the circle of the sciences is open; ..., who may be said to be replete with facts; ..., who have been trained to mathematical exactness; ..., here!’ cried Mr. Gradgrind. ‘In this degraded position! I am amazed’.

‘I was tired, father. I have been tired a long time,’ said Louisa.

‘Tired? Of what?’ asked the astonished father.

‘I don’t know of what-of everything, I think.’

‘Say not another word,’ returned Mr. Gradgrind. ‘You are childish. I will hear no more.’(Dickens 18, 19)

Through this dialogue, there were a lot of word meanings addressed to Tom and Louisa. Yet these words used by their father during his external conversation are meant to kill the creative imagination in his children inner mental functions, and he strictly employs other tabular word meanings to program them in accordance with the system of facts or Utilitarianism. Furthermore, when the father catches them trying to figure out what it is like to see the world that would fit to their creative imagination and answer in a way a lot of the repressed questions in their curious minds, they are treated roughly by their father. He is taking the strict or tabular manner in reacting to the sudden issue, the word meanings he rebukes his children with are: “in the name of idleness, and folly” ;“what do you do here?”; “I am very sorry indeed to hear it”; “it makes you worse”; “ this degraded position”; “Say not another word”; “you are childish”; “I will hear no more”, then he adds later in the novel “vulgar curiosity”; and “destructive nonsense”(Dickens 25, 59).

All those addressed negative word meanings about the imaginative pursuit of the two children as I consider are meant to reduce its development in their creative inner mental functions and replace them by another tabular word meanings to be forever internalized in their inner-speech:“the circle of sciences”; “to be replete with facts”; “ you have been trained to mathematical exactness”. So their father is not providing the support they are in need of, he does not allow them to discuss with him their wants and hidden desires or even to express their opinion freely. Whenever they try to develop a discussion with their father about their repressed emotions, imaginative questioning to seek for truth or search for a new meaning and reality, it is never intended to be developed. The creative discussion is not even allowed to take place between the siblings Louisa and Tom to encourage each other to figure out their hidden ideas and express their repressed imagination for: “When she was half a dozen years younger, Louisa had been overheard to begin a conversation with her brother one day, by saying ‘Tom, I wonder’- upon which Mr. Gradgrind, who was the person overhearing,... said, ‘Louisa never wonder!’”(Dickens 60).From childhood into adolescence the conversation between the daughter and her father has been limited or not completed enough to direct her behavior and plan out her activities in her life. Further, she is not able to express her true

desires and opinion to her father about the marriage she has been proposed for by Mr. Bounderby, and "...the lack of imagination makes communication and understanding impossible...when Louisa and Gradgrind discuss Bounderby's proposal" (Oshima 27). I agree with Oshima, because even the eye contact is not attached with her father's to freely express her true opinion about the fate of her life to him, her life according to her father "...is governed by the laws which govern lives in the aggregate'18" (Dickens 120). Thus the conversation is held with her father about the "decision" to take in her life in accordance with the rules and interests of the Utilitarian system, excluding in this process the importance of his daughter's inner mental function "imaginative play" that would answer her own needs and desires.

The role of the mother, Mrs. Gradgrind, is also taking a form of severely discontented way of delivering reproaching word meanings in her communication with the two deprived children, mainly because they are found peeping at the circus, the mother, like the father, treats them as guilty for their want of amusement: "How can you, Louisa and Thomas! I wonder at you. I declare you're enough to make one regret ever having a family at all. I have a great mind to say I wish I hadn't. Then what would you have done, I should like to know?" (Dickens 23). Similarly, the language, word meanings and questions that have been delivered in their mother's speech are internalized or imitated in the same way into their own inner-speech. Therefore, their imaginative mental functions in my opinion are not directed successfully, because these impressions Tom and Louisa have acquired are negatively used against the development of their creative reworking of those previous experiences. In addition, similar questions and meanings are conveyed negatively against her children imaginative functions such as: "What can you possibly want to know of circuses then? I am sure you have enough to do..."; "Nonsense"; "Don't stand there and tell me such stuff..." (Dickens 24,66). So instead of letting them associate their imaginative functions through this communication, she gives them orders and instructions to subject them to the scientific facts they have been brought up with.

In the novel, through a communication of Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa about the proposal of marriage to Mr. Bounderby, he convinced her to choose the practical action which is likely to produce greatest utility (according to the calculation/rules of the utilitarian system) both for him to be a member in Parliament and his son Tom to get a position at Bounderby's bank. instead of circuses!"; "Go and be something logical directly" (24). Indeed, both Louisa and Tom are not allowed too, by their mother, to perform a dialogue in order to practice their imaginative play towards anything that is provided in their gloomy house, like the fire that Louisa always contemplates and tries to figure out from it some hidden meanings with her brother. However, before getting the chance to do so, they have always been monitored by each of their parents to make sure that this discussion of creative reworking of concrete objects shall never reach their ears: "... I beg of you, Louisa," said Mrs. Gradgrind, who had opened the door without being heard, 'to do nothing of that description, for goodness sake, you inconsiderate girl, or I shall never hear the last of it from your father. And, Thomas, it is really shameful..." (Dickens 65). Their parents are taking all the precautions needed to weaken the function of creative imagination in their children's minds, from the prevention of concrete objects, like toys, cultural tools like songs, short stories or fairytales that are considered to their parents "idle story-books", (Dickens 26) to the lack of efficient language and word meanings in a form of external dialogue that the children are in need of to be imitated and directed into successful inner imaginative play. These unfortunate children, in the novel, are deprived of their parents support and from play or amusement in their environment.

Contrary to the Gradgrind children, Sissy has been brought up at an amusing environment of the circus where all the children are raised into a healthier upbringing. Their

upbringing at the circus is like a fairytale, the parents there including Sissy's father, provide all sorts of amusement and play their children need. The relationship between the parents and their children in the circus is totally different from the one at Stone lodge with the Gradgrind family. Oshima clarifies, in this context that "Lack of imagination or a failure to feed it, on the other hand, makes family relations problematic and unnatural as Dickens shows with the dysfunctional Gradgrind family"(23). I believe that Oshima's view of "dysfunctional Gradgrind family" is right because it seems to me in the novel that there is huge difference between the kind of upbringings of the two families. Unlike the practical family in Stone lodge which lacks imagination and affections breeding, in Sleary's Horsemanship chapter, the family in the circus have, according to the novelist, "a remarkable gentleness and childishness" and were ready "to help and pity one another,...deserving ...as much respect, ...as much generous construction, as the every-day virtues of any class of people in the world."

I.3 The Role of Creative Imagination in Children's Upbringing

Moreover, The creative performances the parents play there are a mediating support to develop their children's inner mental functions including creative imagination. One of these good people's creative performances is that of Mr. E.W.B. Childers with Cupid or Master Kidderminster who accompanies him as his infant son who has been supported by the different acts of his father (Mr. Childers) to help him direct, imitate and plan out his activities and behavior and internalize those creative acts of the play or performance into his inner-speech. So when his inner-speech becomes internalized he is be able to stand up on his own feet without the need of the social support or the parents, and becomes "this hopeful young person soared into so pleasing a Cupid" (Dickens 38), to the extent that this paternal manner would find much attention from "the Wild Huntsman of the North American Prairies" (Dickens 38), or instead, this performance breeding must also be applied to the Wild upbringing of the Gradgrind parents at Stone Lodge to be learnt from or to another applicable paternal manner like that of Mr. Sleary's creative upbringing to his daughter Josephine, "...who have been tied on a horse at two years old, and had made a will at twelve..." (Dickens 46). All these parents' upbringing with their provision of plays, tools and creative performances to direct their children's actions, are as far as I can see the vivid examples of what Vygotsky's creative imagination theory tries to develop, and of what Dickens makes as the contrasting kinds with the unnatural upbringing of Gradgrind parents .

To start with, Sissy's upbringing is quite similar to those in the circus, due to the fact that her father Signor Jupe is a clown and her late mother was a dancer. The enchanted childhood Sissy experienced at her earlier age, was full of adventurous travels with her father across the country, she was always in company of her father that she has good memories of. "He carried me about with him when I was quite a baby. We have never been asunder from that time'" (Dickens 71). This past experience in her childhood was enough to satisfy her curious desires to discover new places. Most importantly, the father provided his daughter with all the support and love she was in need of. Her father was trying to develop her higher inner mental functions such as creative imagination, thinking in concepts and the memory for "He has been picking up a bit of reading for her, here- and a bit of writing for her, there... a bit of ciphering..., somewhere else - these seven years'."(Dickens 43).

Actually, these readings were certainly accessible due to his provision of fairy-tale books to his daughter which he was in turn so fond of. He was encouraging the reading of fairytales to Sissy many times for they were the happiest moments in her life. Giving the freedom of reading the fairy-tales, as I deduce it allowed for more interaction to take place between him and his daughter, in the sense that he was always wondering and anticipating for what would happen later on in the stories of the fairytales, like of the Arabian Nights, and waiting for his daughter to answer him about "whether the Sultan would let the lady go on

with storytelling, or would have her head cut off before it was finished” (Dickens 72). Also, in the same time this tolerance of reading the fairy-tales was the chance for developing his daughter's imaginative play towards the word meanings they contain i.e. “the Fairies, the Dwarf, the Hunchback, and the Genies” (Dickens 59). They had a very intimate conversation, even during his sad moments he was going through due to the loss of his talent, he was interacting with his daughter so kindly, expressing his true feelings and disappointments to her openly as she remembers, “...he grew so scared and trembling, ... because he felt himself to be a poor, weak, ignorant, helpless man (those used to be his words), that he wanted me so much to know a great deal...”(Dickens 72).He loved and cared for his daughter's future to the point he felt that his useless existence will cause her only pain and failure ,that “she should have done better without him all along”(Dickens 74). Thus this kind of upbringing is so parallel to the cultivation of creative imagination as a higher mental function in Sissy Jupe's childhood, thinking processes and life. As for Louisa whose“...starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow” (Dickens 18) or the flames of her imaginative pursuits have turned into ashes, she is another victim of her parent's dry upbringing. Despite of her hints to her parents about her inner imaginative play, Louisa fails to get the support she needs from them during her childhood. A reference to that is expressed when she was to deliberate with her father about her inner struggles of what his upbringing had led her inner imaginative functions to become, accordingly she realizes“ You have been so careful of me, that I never had a child's heart. You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear” (Dickens 121). Those words were enough to make her father understand her inner feelings and the decision to take regarding her marriage, yet for him these words were the triumph of his tabular upbringing. The parents support and the cultural tools that she has been deprived from, have made her in turn helpless to comfort her brother Tom's anger, she clearly testifies this to him “...how unfortunate it is for me that I can't reconcile you to home better than I am able to do. I can't play to you, or sign to you. I can't talk to you so as to lighten your mind, for I never see any amusing sights or read any amusing books...”(Dickens 62).

According to Terry Castle “An extreme form of rationalism might lead to the alienation of the faculty of imagination, which ends up being estranged from reason and then repressed”(qtd. in Kanarakis 26).I agree with Castle because, Louisa's imaginative play grew very inactive, she only could use this function in relation to the system of facts. In other words, imagination and reason “thinking in concepts” in the adolescent Louisa converge and fuse together without diverging to abstract new meanings of concreted things and objects. Her contemplation of the fire, was not a dimension for new reality “solution” or meaning that would serve both of her situation and her brothers .As a result , She could only come up with one existing reality which is of her father's rational upbringing of facts that they will be forever trapped in ,without depending on the use of other reality “imagination” to solve her problems and to take action that would conform to her own wants .She describes how limited her inner imaginative play towards “the fire” functions “I don't see anything in it, Tom, particularly. But since I have been looking at it, I have been wondering about you and me, grown up” (Dickens 65).Therefore she could not easily distinguish between reality and the fancied created world in her play, she could not reach to new meaning of the fire like her inner flames of true feelings and desires that need to be expressed rather than burnt into ashes into nothing, and into no true identity. Daly also affirms Castle's view in regard of the strict rational upbringing of Louisa's father left on her imagination, and “his system of Hard Fact has done all it can to stifle her imagination” (38). Consequently, she grew without mastering the imaginative play and creative reworking of concrete things in her life.

Yet, father, if I had been stone blind; if I had groped my way by my sense of touch, and had been free, while I knew the shapes and surfaces of things, to exercise my fancy somewhat, in regard to them; I should have been a million times wiser, happier, more loving, more contented, more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am with the eyes I have. (Dickens 255)

Her vision of life thus transcends into one reality only, which is the sparkle of her imaginative functions is faded away from existence. Her imagination was not nourished in her childhood to help her develop her own opinions, feelings and desires during her adolescence. I think that, this horrific effect also applies to what I wanted to show in relation to the gothic implication in the way that this repressed imagination in both Tom and Louisa haunts their present and contributes to their suffering through the frightening reality they were unable to overcome.

It remains as Vygotsky has proved in his theory that this egocentric speech Sissy formed was when Mr. Gradgrind, Mr. Bounderby, Mr. Sleary and the rest of the circus members were within the hearing distance. Therefore her imagination that was involved in it to require new understanding, as I believe was not to serve only her emotional wish-fulfillment, to think of herself only, of what she will do without him, but to think of what would happen to her poor father without her help to him. At the contrary, her egocentric speech stimulated a creative thinking of solving this problem to reach to new understanding that enables her to keep a good image of her father despite of leaving her, to do what he always wished her to be.

Moreover, the word meanings of the fairytales she used to read to her father about such as “the Genies and Fairies”, indeed were the allusions of her to make meanings from, like miracles could happen, then her father’s return could happen too one day and definitely the sun will shine after darkness and stormy weather. Unlike Louisa, Sissy was capable to comfort her father’s pain through amusing him with reading the fairytales due to his support to her to allow her use imagination and providing her the cultural tools (fairy-tales books) she needed in her childhood. After all what happened to Sissy, she could depend on herself to overcome her difficult situation without the need of social support. Through her well directed and developed imaginative functions, she could give her life abstracted meanings such as “hope, faith and strong belief of her father’s return” to be her own solace in the harsh reality, “experiences” she has gone through. Instead of growing helpless and desperate in her adolescence, she managed to become mature and wiser enough to reach into an independent state of thinking and even deep understanding against the dilemma she faces in her life mostly of her father abandonment, she concludes “...Nobody understands him as I do; nobody knows him as I do. When he left me for my good-he never would have left me for his own-I know he was almost broken-hearted with the trial. He will not be happy..., till he comes back”(Dickens 71). The strong hope of coming back kept living in Sissy’s heart, she even kept “the nine oils ready for him, and she knows he will come back” (Dickens 74), this is likely the transcendent new reality she keeps drawing in her imagination.

Concerning Sissy’s successful well directed imaginative play, Vygotsky states that “imagination is a learnt thought process, originating in collective social interactions and eventually differentiating so that it can serve either personal wish-fulfillment or be used in creative problem-solving in art and science” (qtd. in Smolucha and C. Smolucha 4). Whereas, Piaget considers the child’s imagination “is ruled not by “gnostic” but by “pathic” attitudes. This attitude can be described as egocentric and vague. It evokes temporary reason for immediate satisfaction and pleasure. And it is further and further removed from a real

situation” (qtd. in 51 Gajdamaschko 36). Both Vygotsky and Piaget's concern was about the way imaginative play works in the child.

However; I totally agree with Vygotsky's view that imagination is a learnt thought process acquired through social interactions “support”, because what I wanted to show through my analyses is that Sissy's well successful imaginative play was due to her father's support and provision of cultural tool “fairytales”. Therefore; her imagination became a well directed thought process converges with reason then diverges to construct new understanding and meaning in her life. Even the imaginative play that was involved in the egocentric speech Sissy formed, was not to serve only her emotional wish-fulfillment, to think of her own trial only but to think of what would happen to her poor father without her help to him. In addition; through her egocentric speech her imagination stimulated creative thinking of solving the problem or the reality of her father's departure she had to overcome then enabled her to reach to new understanding “hope of his return”.

Thus, both thinking in concepts “reason” and imagination were fused together in Sissy's imaginative play to develop new understanding in her adolescence. This proves how Sissy could develop an independent thinking and bring solutions of the problems without the need of social support because, her imagination became completely internalized and successfully directed by her father's support whether in communicative form or through cultural tool provision. Hence; this successful imagination resulted in Sissy still proves that Piaget's assumption of imagination is just as an egocentric thinking originates in the childhood without the social interactions and is separated from reason ,to be wrong.

Throughout the images of “haunt and uncanny”, I reached to an understanding that the changes like the forgotten pastoral ways of living “like communication in the past family” and the neglected imagination to raise children with, haunted their present and contributed to the horrific suffering of people from the devilish effects of the industrial revolution and to children under the mechanization and extreme rational upbringing of science. Also those horrific effects turned out to be uncanny results and facts to the whole Victorian convictions regarding the spread of the industrial revolution and development of science to bring civilization and modernity, then to be disillusionments for people and Gradgrind parents specifically. Thanks to Vygotsky's creative imagination theory helped to examine the role and influence of parents' upbringing on the functions of creative imagination in their children.

It is established that mainly the parent's support of their children through communication and provision of play and fairytales determines and directs their imaginative play and creative reworking of those concrete representations. Therefore, it shows the role of creative imagination in their upbringing, childhood and thinking process. Indeed the cultivation of creative imagination in the upbringing of children leads to the development of their higher mental functions such as logical thinking, memory and creative meanings formation in their life. Like the support of Sissy's father in the cultivation and direction of her imaginative functions through communication and provision of fairytales that led to the development of these imaginative functions in her adolescence. Consequently, due to her successful imaginative functions Sissy had acquired, grew independent in her life without the need of social support

Conclusion

This article focused on the value and function of imagination mainly in children's upbringing and education as portrayed in *Hard Times* novel. Using both theories of Vygotsky's Creative imagination and Socio-cultural application in analyzing the novel, the article investigated the parents and teachers' influence on the cultivation and development of

the children's imaginative faculty. Then, it explored how imagination functions both in the psychological and cognitive processes of children's minds from their childhood to adulthood in serving their own personal wish-fulfillment and making conscious understanding of the world surrounding them. Two main theories were adopted in the analysis of the novel. Those theories were Creative imagination and Socio-Cultural criticism. The article examined the role of parents in influencing the function of imagination in their children during their upbringing. Then by drawing a parallel link between the negative effects of the parents' strict upbringing, like that of the Gradgrind, and the Gothic elements such as the images of "haunt and uncanny", I highlighted the dark side of extreme scientific and rational upbringing on the imaginative and humane nature of children. I have also shown how the parents' support for their children, like that of Mr. Jupe to his daughter Sissy, through communication and provision of play and fairytales, successfully directed her imaginative play and creative reworking of the concrete representations.

Moreover, I have shown the way such effective external support helped to reflect the role and function creative imagination played in the psychological needs and cognitive processes of children from their childhood to adolescence. Therefore, the imaginative functions were explored through analyzing the children's character and thinking process in the novel specially in Sissy's well developed creative imaginative functions, such as thinking in concepts to define their behaviors and activities through imaginative play of concrete objects, conscious use of both imaginative and logical abstraction of meaning to satisfy their psychological needs serve their personal wish-fulfillment, and creative problem-solving and understanding of the world, enhancing memory, imitation and internalization of language and word meanings.

All in all, the endeavor of proceeding this study in Dickens's novel, *Hard Times*, allowed me to realize that the key of handling a world filled with conflicted problems, rules, upsetting realities is actually to be born to trust our innate instinct faculty of imagination, persistently connect it to our logical thinking to offer us the most convenient creative answers. That is why the novel carries with it a transcendent message to all humanity, not being necessarily abided by the Victorian era and society. It addresses the parents and teachers all over the world to support and develop imaginative thinking in their children, the upcoming future generation who would be able to serve themselves and the world by bringing creative solutions to different fields of studies. Examining the role and function of imagination in children's upbringing and education in *Hard Times* novel, will not only have further implications and applications in the literary works related to the Victorian studies, but also to the contemporary fields of psychology, sociology, development of cognitive processes in children's minds, pedagogical approaches of education and more specifically to the parent's upbringing of their children. However, the part which may require further investigation is the role of imagination in transmitting ethical and creative lessons in children's readings like the fairytales and short stories.

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