Realism and Its Discontents

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Realism and Rhetoric in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*

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The terms used in my title, “realism” and “rhetoric,” were of course established concepts long before they were appropriated by literary theory. At least since Plato, these terms have been at the center of Western philosophical and hermeneutic thought. The first term has had a rather contradictory, even confusing history. While the “real” for Plato and many after him was to be found in the world of ideas, with physical substances flawed copies at best, for many latter-day philosophers what counts are the hard facts of material reality. To complicate matters further, as used in literary studies the term seems to have more to do with rhetoric than with the realism of the philosophers since it concerns the *verbal description* of their reality, whether ideal or material. In this, however, the literary scholars might be more honest than the philosophers, who have always had to rely on language in their analysis of reality. Pure realism carries no meaning. The difference is that where philosophers are forced to use language to describe reality, critics use language to describe language that describes reality, and are thus, as even Plato noted, twice removed from the real, however that is defined.

“Rhetoric” has always been viewed with theoretical suspicion by the philosophers, coupled with a pragmatic dependence on it. While Plato himself saw reality as residing in discrete suprasensory and non-linguistic ideas, and was profoundly skeptical of the persuasive strategies of the sophists, he could only describe and discuss that reality through the medium of the dialogue, i.e., by means of rhetorically constructed narratives. He even had to resort to the non-realistic and allusive fable. And while St. Augustine retained Plato’s deep distrust of language (for the Church Father, language was a consequence of the Fall), he nevertheless was the first to outline a theory of narrative, in the *Confessions* (books 10 and 11), based on a phenomenological investigation of memory and time. This influential synthesis led in Augustine’s own rhetorical practice to the first part of the *Confessions*, the plotting of discrete life events, or “facts,” into a meaningful autobiographical and psychological narrative, as well as to *The City of God*, the analogous narrative plotting of discrete historical events into a coherent world history. In a manner of speaking, Augustine straightened Plato out by transforming a circular and iterative cosmology into a linear and teleological chronology.

Interestingly enough, it is history and psychology, in addition to literary studies, that have come into focus in contemporary debate about the fundamental importance of narratives (see for instance Polkinghorne). Indeed, the consensus these days seems to be that we humans cannot make sense of the world without the aid of narrative employment, that the only way to process the “facts” around us, whether mental or material, is to mold them into a story. That is what not only language but thinking is all about. Used in this sense, “rhetoric” is a basic human activity, forming our (only?) connection with “reality.” While this view is broader than the more traditional definition of rhetoric, i.e., communication
written or spoken with the aim to persuade, the latter is a sub-category of the former, not different in kind.

As far as literature goes, an emphasis on narrative is of course old hat. However, because of its absolutely fundamental nature there will always be a need for continuing investigations of the interaction between rhetoric and realism in fiction. As a small contribution to this field my essay will focus on Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times*, written and published in 1854 during the height of literary realism. I have selected *Hard Times* because it not only exemplifies but also discusses the relationship between rhetoric and reality. The novel is unusual in Dickens’s oeuvre in that it approaches being a “novel of purpose,” a *roman à thèse*, which Susan Rubin Suleiman defines as “a novel written in the realistic mode (that is, based on an aesthetic of verisimilitude and representation), which signals itself to the reader as primarily didactic in intent, seeking to demonstrate the validity of a political, philosophical, or religious doctrine” (7). The title of Suleiman’s study is *Authoritarian Fictions*. A question worth asking is to what extent *Hard Times* can be classified as authoritarian, i.e., monologic in its didactic intent. As we shall see, the novel is deeply ambivalent about the use of rhetoric for persuasive purposes, undercutting virtually all authoritarian voices within the fiction, yet at the same time foregrounding a strong, univocal, authorial voice. A novel with the subtitle “For these times” appears to wear its propagandistic agenda on its sleeve.

Paradoxically, in his striving to be relevant in the “real world,” Dickens uses non-realistic, “parabolic” techniques, reminiscent of the parable and the fable. *Hard Times* is often classified as an “industrial novel” (together with, for example, Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*), yet precisely because its aim is to make a difference, indeed, to change the society which produced it, it cannot simply rely on realism with its mimesis and verisimilitude. That is why a near-contemporary of Dickens, E.P. Whipple, could complain in 1877 that the novel was “especially wanting in that power of real characterization on which [Dickens’s] reputation as a vivid delineator of human character and human life depends” (350). The very gesture ofanchoring the text in a contemporary context moves it into the non-realism of rhetoric. The paradox is expressed succinctly in Dickens’s description of the books borrowed by the Coketown workers from the town library: “They sometimes, after fifteen hours’ work, sat down to read mere fables about men and women, more or less like themselves, and about children, more or less like their own” (38). This is an exact description of Dickens’s own novel: preoccupied with the real world but planned as a fable or a parable.

According to Suleiman, the parabolic text is organized along three hierarchically related levels: the narrative, the interpretative, and the pragmatic. To each level there corresponds a specific type of discourse: the narrative discourse tells a story; the interpretative discourse comments on the story in order to reveal its meaning, which takes the form of a generalization; the pragmatic discourse derives from that meaning a rule of action, which takes the form of an imperative addressed to the receiver (reader or listener) of the text (Suleiman 35).

The narrative discourse of *Hard Times* tells the story of the Gradgrind family, with special emphasis on the father and two of the children, Tom and Louisa. A related subplot gives the story of Stephen Blackpool. The interpretative discourse is performed by an omniscient and omnipresent narrator who has much in common with Dickens the author, but should be distinguished from him. Richard J. Watts, in his pragmatic study of Dickens’s novel, usefully distinguishes between what he calls the “author’s
abstract” and the “narrator’s abstract” (116). The author’s abstract consists of structural components; in this case, the title and subtitle of the novel (Hard Times: For These Times), the titles of its three parts (“Sowing,” “Reaping,” and “Garnering”), and the titles of the first chapter of the first and third part (“The One Thing Needful” and “Another Thing Needful”). In addition Watts connects the author’s abstract with the initial and final paragraphs of the novel, i.e. the first a speech by Mr. Gradgrind and the coda. While the primary function of the narrator is to present and interpret the story, on the author rests the main pragmatic burden of transforming the message of the story into action. It is the presence of this third, pragmatic level (whether explicit or implicit) that distinguishes the parable (and fable) from ordinary stories, and it is in the author’s abstract that the parabolic nature of Hard Times is most clearly underlined, even if it is also elaborated by the narrator.

In addition to their didactic and pragmatic purposes, the fable and parable share another significant feature that links both genres to Dickens’s strategies in Hard Times, the oral and oratorical nature of presentation. A speaking voice is always present in fiction, a fact underscored by Dickens’s own public readings of his novels. In Hard Times, however, we are not only read to, but also preached to. The reader of the novel, like the reader of the parable or the fable, “occupies, in relation to the writer, a position analogous to that of the listening or reading public in relation to an orator, a teacher, or a preacher” (Suleiman 27).

Rhetoric is indeed at the center of Dickens’s novel, and not only in terms of the overall authorial strategies. On the level of character, the book is full of orators, whether teachers, union agitators, or members of Parliament, and here the perspective is radically different: one cannot find a public speaker who is not also deluded or corrupt, using his rhetorical abilities for insidious purposes. The ability to speak persuasively in this novel seems to stand in inverse proportion to the speaker’s moral rectitude.

The few exemplary characters, such as Mr. Sleary—endowed with a “voice (if it can be called so) like the efforts of a broken old pair of bellows” (27)—or Stephen Blackpool—completely unable to “make speeches and carry on debates” (49)—impress us with their lack of conventional rhetorical ability. While they possess a biblically based rhetoric of innocence, as orators they are hopeless, being either lisping, muddled, or tongue-tied. In contrast, the novel opens up with a carefully constructed formal speech delivered in a classroom setting:

Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these little boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir! (1)

The speaker is Mr. Gradgrind, schoolmaster and the novel’s main protagonist, and his explicit audience is Mr. M’Choakumchild the teacher, although a visiting “government officer” is clearly meant to be duly impressed and the assembled pupils suitably persuaded.

All of Western philosophy, it has been said, has developed as footnotes to Plato; so, in like fashion, the whole of Dickens’s novel grows out of this one rhetorical seed (the agricultural
metaphor is deliberate and fundamental both on my and Dickens's part. It is already here at the very beginning (enforced by the headings of the three books, “Sowing,” “Reaping,” and “Garnering”) that the author announces the program of the novel. The parable of the sower is turned upside down as the readers are expected to ask themselves if Gradgrind’s seed will fall by the wayside, on stony ground, amongst thorns, or on good soil. The initial rhetorical flourish thus has a double function. On the narrative level it sets up the orator and protagonist for a fall through the use of irony, while on the interpretative and pragmatic levels it signals (if only with hindsight) the parabolic agenda of the text.

But Gradgrind is not the only authoritarian voice under scrutiny. Other smooth talkers in the novel are Bounderby the capitalist and Slackbridge the union agitator, who despite being social and political antipodes are united against Stephen Blackpool, the “muddled” model worker. The detrimental effects of an authoritarian rhetoric are depicted in chapters 4 and 5 of book 2, in which Blackpool “by the prejudices of his own class, and by the prejudices of the other ... is sacrificed alike” (121). Chapter 4, entitled “Men and Brothers,” like the novels initial chapter (and unlike all the intervening ones), starts with a set speech, of which we at first do not know the speaker or the audience:

Oh my friends, the down-trodden operatives of Coketown! Oh my friends and fellow-countrymen; the slaves of an iron-handed and a grinding despotism! Oh my friends and fellow-sufferers, and fellow-men! I tell you that the hour is come, when we must rally round one another as One united power, and crumble into dust the oppressors

that too long have battened upon the plunder of our families, upon the sweat of our brows, upon the labor of our hands, upon the strength of our sinews, upon the God-created glorious rights of Humanity, and upon the holy and eternal privileges of Brotherhood! (105)

The speaker turns out to be Slackbridge, and the audience the assembled workers of Bounderby’s mill, including Blackpool who is the real reason for the gathering. The speech is of course a textbook example of a persuasive oration in the sophist tradition. Using all the tricks of the trade, including repetition, exaggeration, and generalization, Slackbridge successfully attempts to move his hearers into action, in this case to ostracize Blackpool for not joining the union, the United Aggregate Tribunal. The oration is constructed in three steps. The first, which we have just read, emphasizes the need for unity and brotherhood, the second paints Blackpool a deserter and a traitor, indeed a Judas, while the third, after Blackpool has had his say, turns pragmatic in its insistence on harsh measures to punish him. One of the ironies of the performance is of course that phrases like “Humanity,” “Brotherhood,” “Freedom,” and “Right” are used, in effect, to put someone to death. Incidentally, a surprising number of critics have felt the need to take Dickens to task for his presentation of Slackbridge, but is he not, five years before John Stuart Mill’s On Liberty (1859), pointedly criticizing “the tyranny of the majority”? Chapter 5, entitled “Men and Masters,” also begins with a direct quotation, this time a question addressed to Blackpool: “‘Well Stephen,’ said Bounderby, in his windy manner, ‘what’s this I hear? What have these pests of the earth been doing to you? Come in, and speak up’” (111). The interchange takes the form
of a private dialogue rather than a public oration. Its setting is Bounderby’s home, and the congregation, in addition to Blackpool, consists of Tom, Louisa, and a visitor, Mr. Harthouse. The beginning might seem promising and open-ended, but this is no Bakhtinian dialogue; indeed it is a set-up for Bounderby to compromise Blackpool before Harthouse. Its only purpose is to confirm Bounderby’s monologic prejudices:

“Here’s a gentleman from London present,” Mr. Bounderby made a backhanded point at Mr. Harthouse with his thumb, “a Parliament gentleman. I should like him to hear a short bit of dialogue between you and me, instead of taking the substance of it—for I know precious well, beforehand, what it will be; nobody knows better than I do, take notice!—instead of receiving it on trust from my mouth.” (114)

And this of course is what unites Bounderby and Slackbridge: an authoritarian ethos that paints “reality” in black and white and uses rhetoric to enforce these unyielding dichotomies, in the process killing the individual that gets caught in between. As Rachel concludes in chapter 4 of the third book: “The masters against him on one hand, the men against him on the other, he only wantin’ to work hard in peace, and do what he felt right. Can a man have no soul of his own, no mind of his own?” (191). A larger question of my essay is to what extent Dickens’s own authorial strategies in the novel, which at one point he considered naming Black and White, is open to the same critique.

This monologic pattern is characteristic of virtually all the dialogues in the first two books of the novel. Unbiased, reciprocal communication rarely takes place. Typically, a stronger and more articulate speaker persuades someone else to do something that he, or more often she, would be much better off not doing, whether it is Gradgrind influencing Louisa to marry Bounderby, or Harthouse tempting Louisa to elope, or Harthouse goading Tom on to greater recklessness. Tom in his turn emotionally blackmails Louisa who, along with Stephen, is the character who most often receives the brunt of other people’s rhetorical blows.

Rhetoric has thus far gotten short shrift in Dickens’s novel, and further examples are not hard to find. The pulps of Coketown’s “eighteen denominations” assisted by the “Teetotal Society” reiterate the Gradgrind / Bounderby message that the “people are a bad lot altogether” (18), while the state church is equally rigid in its proclamation of divorce laws: in Blackpool’s “long, troubled dream” he is left alone with a clergyman, while “the commandments at the altar” condemn him (65-66). Even innocent speeches like after-dinner orations go sour, as complete strangers “boasted, in quite a rampant way, of Bounderby. They made him out to be the Royal Arms, the Union-Jack, Magna Charta, John Bull, Habeas Corpus, the Bill of Rights, An Englishman’s house is his castle, Church and State, and God save the Queen, all put together” (33). That both Gradgrind and Harthouse are among “the national dustmen” making speeches in Parliament (164) does not make us more confident in the beneficial effects of rhetoric. One could easily conclude that orators, like the inhabitants of Coketown, “are a bad lot altogether.”

Like Plato and Augustine, Dickens shows a great distrust of human speech, and yet, also like them, he simultaneously depends on speech and writing to propagate his own view of reality. In a novel filled with smooth talking and persuasive strategies, Dickens concentrates his critique of rhetoric to the
level of the characters. On the level of the narrator, however, he suspends that critique and allows a counter-rhetoric for beneficial ends. With the employment itself, Dickens manifests full confidence in his own abilities as an orator: the author’s abstract, being parabolic, is subtly designed as a sermon based on a particular (if implicit) biblical text, and aimed to persuade the readers, causing them to change.

But let us first explore the level of the narrator. A textbook example of narrative voice, often discussed in the criticism, is provided by the novel’s first chapter. After the initial paragraph we have already looked at, which reproduces Mr. Gradgrind’s short but momentous oration, the narrator takes over with a vengeance:

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker’s square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster’s sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellaring in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker’s obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders—nay his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was—all helped the emphasis. (I; emphasis added)

As David Lodge has noted, the narrator’s performance in this passage is as carefully designed according to rhetorical rules as the set speech it follows (148–51). To this Watts adds that “the narrator makes use of linguistic structures strongly reminiscent of the oral style of lecture or speech delivered to his readers, [such as] frequent repetition of key-words ..., synonymous lexemes ..., syntactic parallelism, and, above all, the direct oral address” (120). But Watts’s observations not only bring out the oral and oratorial aspect of the narrator’s presence, but also underscore the rhetorical nature of the novel. Nowhere do we find “objective” descriptions of the fictive world, that is, descriptions that adhere to some neutral version of verisimilitude or realism. There is not a single paragraph in the whole novel that is not part of the narrator’s (and through him the author’s) persuasive strategies. Whether we get a description of Coketown, its inhabitants, or natural phenomena such as the weather, the sense of rhetorical artificiality is ever-present, coupled with a persistent irony. While this is true in some sense of all fiction, in Hard Times it is made a self-reflexive principle: the presentation of reality is always rhetorical.

Dickens is clearly committed to these rhetorical strategies, and he openly satirizes those who pretend they can do without them. Despite their own rhetorical abilities, the Hard Fact people of the novel are committed to a crude version of realism. Revealing a numbing literalism, they allow only discrete particulars,
a strategy which, if systematically carried out, would prevent communication, even understanding. A government gentleman, visiting Mr. Gradgrind's classroom, in his wisdom upbraids Sissy Jupe for wanting to carpet her floors with flowers:

"So you would carpet your room—or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband—with representations of flowers, would you," said the gentleman. "Why would you?"

"If you please, sir, I am very fond of flowers," returned the girl.

"And is that why you would put tables and chairs upon them, and have people walking over them with heavy boots?"

"It wouldn't hurt them, sir. They wouldn't crush and wither if you please, sir. They would be pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy—"

"Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn't fancy," cried the gentleman, quite elated by coming so happily to his point. (6)

What the government gentleman is refuting, of course, is the use of metaphor in language, and as an extension, the use of narratives: "You must use," said the gentleman, "for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is Fact. This is taste" (6). The government commissioner attempts to transfer the methods of the natural sciences to the human sciences, something Dickens is rightfully scornful of. The amassment of discrete facts may be a type of extreme realism, but it does not in itself make any sense. Meaning indeed requires a big dose of fancy.

And of course, the Hard Fact people cannot possibly live by their creed. Already in his first speech, Gradgrind commits worse transgressions than painting flowers on the floor by using his metaphor of sowing and reaping, which brings up whole cartloads of transferred meaning, not to speak of cultural baggage. And when Mr. Bounderby provides Mrs. Gradgrind (and us) with "the facts of his life" (13), he is not content with a bare chronicle, but with broad strokes paints a picture that may have little relation to known facts but is archetypal in its reliance on rhetorical clichés and narrative stereotypes. It is instructive to note that when "reality" catches up with Bounderby in the shape of Mrs. Pegler, his dispossessed mother, she successfully silences him with a counter-narrative of her own that convinces both the Coketown citizens and the readers through its simplicity and lack of rhetorical flourishes, demonstrating what I would like to term a "rhetoric of innocence."

The same rhetoric of innocence is seen in Mr. Sleary and in Stephen Blackpool in the two chapters of book two we have already examined. Since the framework is provided by the high-powered oratory of Slackbridge or the bullying of Bounderby, Blackpool's verbal unobtrusiveness is all the more pointed. It reminds us, and is designed to remind us, of Christ's reticence before his accusers in the passion drama, with Slackbridge playing the role of the accusing scribes, the other workers a reluctant but finally persuaded people, Bounderby an unresponsive and autocratic Pilate, and Rachel in the role of the women following Christ. As in the gospels, the two chapters take us from a public tribunal to a private interview, which together
pave the way for the ignominious death of an innocent man.

The identification with Christ is not restricted to Blackpool, however. In the next chapter it is the narrator, directly addressing the main culprits of the novel, who assumes that role: "Utilitarian economists [i.e., Bounderby], skeletons of schoolmasters [i.e., Gradgrind], Commissioners of Fact [i.e., the government gentleman], genteel and used-up infidels [i.e., Harthouse], gabblers of many little dog's-eared creeds [i.e., Slackbridge], the poor you will have always with you" (125). In addition to echoing Christ's words about the poor, the narrator's allusion to the Gospel of John (12:4-8) implicitly connects the novel's culprits to Judas, to whom Christ originally spoke those words.

The passage continues with the narrator making a connection to the author's parabolic abstract, the basic metaphor of sowing and reaping introduced in the novel's initial paragraph: "Cultivate in them [i.e., the poor, meaning in this case the workers but also the children], while there is yet time, the utmost graces of the fancies and affections, to adorn their lives so much in need of ornament" (125). There then follows a realist twist to this whole parabolic and rhetorical exercise, when we feel that Dickens the author breaks through the fictional scaffolding to address the people of power in the real world: "or, in the day of your triumph, when romance is utterly driven out of their soul, and they and a bare existence stand face to face. Reality will take a wolfish turn, and make an end of you" (125). It would be the task of a different kind of paper to address the highly relevant political issues brought up by this quotation, but here my aim is to point out the parabolic context of the "author's abstract."

All parables, writes Suleiman, have their "intertextual context" in "the doctrinal statements made by Jesus, and in particular the central doctrinal text of the New Testament: the Sermon on the Mount" (44). That is true for the parable of the sower, but we get even closer to Dickens's agenda if we investigate other parts of the author's abstract, the titles of the three books and the initial chapters of the first and third books. Dickens's preferred narrative trope on this meta-level is the synecdoche: his method of implicit allusion substitutes the part for the whole, thereby simultaneously hiding and pointing out the crucial intertext. The parts in this case are "Sowing, Reaping, Garnering" and all three can be found in one single verse in a crucial section of the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 6:24-34. The initial chapters of books 1 and 3, entitled "One Thing Needful" and "Another Thing Needful," fill out the picture by alluding to a parallel text from Luke 10:42.

As I have set out in greater detail elsewhere, the novel can be read as "a sermon based on key texts in the church year as set out in the Anglican Prayer Book, in particular the Gospel for the 15th Sunday after Trinity" ("Homiletics" 107). The text from Matthew 6 for this particular Sunday includes a verse on sowing, reaping, and garnering, but starts out with an uncompromising dichotomy that casts its shadow across every page of Hard Times: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (as translated in The Book of Common Prayer).

"God" and "Mammon," concepts also found in Thomas Carlyle's Past and Present (see Bergvall 112-14), become for Dickens the extreme points of a thoroughlygoing dualism:

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Virtually every chapter in the first and third book of the novel starts with a paragraph in which one of these dichotomies is contrasted in one way or another, drawing attention to the parabolic and pragmatic level, but also making the novel very polarized. It forces the reader to take a stand, to choose sides, which is made explicit in the coda to *Hard Times*, in which the author speaks to us in his own voice: “Dear Reader! It rests with you and me, whether, in our two fields of action, similar things shall be or not. Let them be! We shall sit with lighter bosoms on the hearth, to see the ashes of our fires turn gray and cold” (227). Here the pragmatic agenda is laid bare, and in terms that seem to leave no middle ground for the reader.

A description of the rhetoric in the novel (developed from Suleiman and Watts) might therefore look like this:

- pragmatic level (author) > parabolic rhetoric (sermon)
- interpretative level (narrator) > counter-rhetoric (irony)
- narrative level (character) > rhetoric of oppression/innocence

While a large part of the rhetoric on the narrative level is authoritarian, the question is whether the novel as a whole is guilty of the same offense. The black-and-white sermonizing of the pragmatic level would seem to go against the liberal message that is also present, being a version of the same kind of polarities that crush Blackpool. Does *Hard Times*, like the roman à thèse, aim for “a single meaning and for total closure” (Suleiman 22)? In the final analysis, I do not think so. The critique of rhetoric on the narrative level, as well as its rhetoric of innocence, goes against such cut and dried assessments. Also, the parabolic level is oblique rather than overwhelming, hidden behind elliptical subtitles and biblical allusions.

Nevertheless, Dickens seems to have been uneasy about his preaching. Never again does he attempt a similar parabolic and openly pragmatic strategy. Indeed, he goes to some trouble to avoid relentless dichotomies. *A Tale of Two Cities*, despite its name, does not allude to Augustine’s antagonistic and apocalyptic cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, but propagates moderation in the teeth of extremes, whether radical or conservative. And in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, his last, unfinished novel, Dickens resorts to a rhetoric of riddle. He makes a point of frustrating the readers’ expectations, in part by setting up some of the same dichotomies as in *Hard Times* (such as the square vs. the round) only to subvert them. The dualism of *Hard Times* is internalized, in *Edwin Drood*, in the tormented and divided soul of Jasper (echoed, with a humorous twist, in Miss Twinkleton’s daytime/nighttime existence), and in the process the narrative becomes much less pragmatic or polarized. Whether this makes for greater “realism” is a moot question. As in *Hard Times*, the text is rhetorical through and through, even as it reflects the author’s changing perceptions of, and interaction with, the world.
NOTES

1 While Luke 10 is not one of the official texts for the 15th Sunday after Trinity in The Book of Common Prayer (BoCP), the intertextual ties to Matthew 6 are well established. In the Swedish Lutheran Church both Matthew 6 and Luke 10 are used as Gospel readings on this particular Sunday, and indeed the heading given to the Sunday in Den Svenska Evangelieboken (the Swedish equivalent of the BoCP) is “Ett är nödvändigt” (“The One Thing Needful”).

REFERENCES