CHAPTER III
HARD TIMES AND GODAN

_Hard Times_ exhibits one of Dickens's most radical critiques of industrial England, and, perhaps, the most radical up to that time. Though not his last novel, and though it cannot be considered as his masterpiece, it gains in importance in the Indian context because it influenced Premchand's last complete novel and masterpiece, _Gadan_. Siegfried A. Schulz in his book, _Premchand: A Western Appraisal_ asserts this influence. He states that in each novel two theses are expounded. In _Hard Times_ Dickens attacks the injustice of the unhappy Stephen Blackpool and the oppression of the poor by the rich. In _Gadan_ Premchand questions the deeply ingrained concept of _dharma_ (the scrupulous observation of which inevitably leads to Mori's premature death) and the oppression of the poor by the rich. Dickens gives a third dimension to his novel through a specific attack on certain economic theorists, mostly utilitarians who worship 'Facts'. But Premchand confines himself to ugly aspects of Indian society.¹

Still when compared to the dharma which Mori espouscs in Godan and remains steadfast to till his death, the attack on the divorce laws takes up only a small fragment of Hard Times. Godan, deals with the life of a peasant, and his avowal to his dharma becomes a major theme of the novel. Stephen Blackpool is only one among the many in Hard Times, and his love for Rachael, and the injustice of the divorce laws form only one of the themes of the novel. Dickens attacked the legal system on a large scale in his previous novel, Bleak House, and this time he lays emphasis on the plight of industrial England in general. So his attack on utilitarians and their blind adherence to 'facts' should be considered his main pre-occupation. Thus the story of English industrialism can be juxtaposed with the saga of Indian peasantry and a comparative study of the two novels taking those two aspects can be made. In other words, a comparative study of the two novels can be attempted concentrating on the treatment of the 'Fact-oriented' system in Hard Times and the concept of dharma in Godan and their implications.

Hard Times is a novel dealing with 'Facts'.
The entire story revolves around the 'fact-oriented' ideology propagated by the hero of the novel, Thomas Gradgrind, and his associates. Gradgrind is a retired wholesale hardware merchant. The novel begins with Gradgrind's insistence upon 'Facts'. He says:

Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach those 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 those children. Stick to Facts, Sir. 2

In this school of Gradgrind all the teachers are full of 'facta' and the 'innocents' are 'murdered'. Gradgrind expresses his veneration, when he tells Sissy Jupe, a student of the school and daughter of a circus master, "Sissy is not a name. Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilis" (P.27).

2 Charles Dickens, Hard Times (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1977). P.25. All further quotations are from this edition. Corresponding pages are given in the text.
"The gentleman" in the school asks Sissy never to fancy. M'Choakumchild, the school-master, is a master of almost everything, of all factual knowledge. But Dickens says, "Ah rather overdone, M'choakumchild. If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more" (P.31).

This is 'Fact', 'Fact' as opposed to fancy, any use of the imagination. Gradgrind is a strict, sincere man bound to his system of 'Facts'. His five young children are models of his school. The other character who represents this down-to-earth system is Josiah Bounderby, a wealthy manufacturer and Gradgrind's close friend. In fact, he was as deep being Mr. Gradgrind's bosom friend, as a man perfectly devoid of sentiment can approach that spiritual relationship towards another man perfectly devoid of sentiment. So near was Mr. Bounderby—or, if the reader should prefer it, so far off. (P.36)

He exercises his power, his strict adherence to 'Facts' towards the workers in his factory.
In Godan, Hori, the protagonist can never forsake dharma and his life is doomed due to his scrupulous adherence to it. In fact, this is not the first time that Premchand is dealing with dharma and its' influences on the Indian psyche. Right from the beginning, i.e. from Savasadan itself he had envisaged the importance of dharma in the life of an Indian, especially an Indian farmer. Though his earlier novels have different themes and issues to be discussed, the life in a village and the life of a farmer are also parts of his concern, and the treatment of dharma becomes inevitable. But, as Godan has the life of a peasant as its main concern, dharma gains added importance in this novel. The word itself occurs about a hundred times in the novel.

The most telling evidence of Hori's concept of dharma is the passage where the village elders and others try to thwart Bhola's attempts at abducting Hori's bullocks by force. But Hori intervenes; Bhola has demanded that his widowed daughter, now pregnant by Hori's son, be thrown out of Hori's house or the money owed to Bhola by Hori in payment of the cow be paid forthwith. Hori explains to the village elders that he would not turn out his daughter-in-law...
and that he had no money to pay—so if Bhola’s dharm said that it was fair to take away his bullocks, he could have them. The village elders, when Hori has told them his side of the story look ‘glum’ and the deceitful old village Brahmin says hypocritically, “When you left the matter to his dharm the question of force doesn’t arise. His sense of dharm says he’s doing right. ‘Bhai’, the bullocks are yours. Go” (P.120). And “they looked at Hori contemptuously. Bhola lifted his neck, proudly marching, the bullocks following” (P.121).

Moreover, we find that whenever the term dharm is uttered by characters other than Hori, even by Hori’s wife Dhania, it has a distinctly hollow ring to it, is hypocritical. But Hori in his steadfast adherence to his own concept of dharm at least hopes that all others around him will naturally adhere to a traditional code of conduct appropriate to their own caste and stage of life. This would head to peace and harmony, but unfortunately Hori’s

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3 Premchand, Godan, Trans. Jai Ratna and P. Lal (Bombay: JaiCo Publishing House, 1987), P.120. All further quotations are from this edition. Corresponding pages are given in the text, P.120.
pious attitude is not reciprocated.\(^4\)

Schulz points out the master-worker/servant relationship in both the novels as one of the major similarities with the difference that the important characters are on the opposite scale in the two novels.\(^6\) Gradgrind (and even Bounderby) are masters, while Hori is a worker. Gradgrind's family can be compared and contrasted with Hori's family. The worker Stephen with Rechael can be juxtaposed with Mohta and Malti in Godan who hail from the city.\(^7\)

But compared to Godan, Hard Times is more an attack on the Victorian industrial society, the system in general rather than a critique of the master-worker relationship. Godan explores the life of the peasant, Hori, who lives the life of a worker and dies without gaining anything, still in debt. The Victorian industrial society considered a life of 'facts' more preferable. Dickens crumbles the system upheld by


\(^7\) Siegfried A. Schulz, *Prêmchand: A Western Appraisal* P.30.
Gradgrind and his men and exposes the hypocrisy of Boundorby. Boundorby's hypocrisy helps him in maintaining authority over the workers in his factory. He embodies the qualities of middle-class ambition and imaginative energy, even if the 'imagination' is used to assert the superiority of 'Fact' over fancy. For he himself is the great fantasist in the novel and not any of the circus people. He talks always in metaphors or in stories. The workers, he says, want only to eat venison and turtle soup with a golden spoon (P.135). Even in the wonderful showdown with Mrs. Sapseit, his housekeeper, when each antagonist knows what the other is upto, he dismisses her with a 'fiction' built out of his larger 'fiction' of his own and her aristocratic beginnings:

'I rather think you are cramped here, do you know? It appears to me, that, under my humble roof, there's hardly opening enough for a lady of your genius in other people's affairs. (P.285)

Ho denies that he was brought up by his mother and he talks of her as a vicious criminal whereas we come
to know later that his mother was both loving and helpful.

The misery of the workers is the responsibility of Bounderby and of the "ideology" articulated by Gradgrind. The novel is set in Coketown, which could be Manchester, or some other similar city. Dickens had visited Manchester once to look at a factory, and only then did he see the reality which he had read in the many parliamentary reports. Ho stated,

I went some weeks ago, to Manchester, and saw the worst cotton mill. And then I saw the best. Ex uno disce omnes. There was no great difference between them . . . . I mean to strike the heaviest blow in my power for these unfortunate creatures, but whether I shall do so in the 'Nickloby', or wait some other opportunity, I have not yet determined. 9


9 quoted from Louis Cazamian, p. 164.
But Dickens could devote himself completely for this purpose only in *Hard Times*. His description of the city reflects the existing atmosphere of an industrialized city in powerful terms:

Coketown . . . was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. . . . 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. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness.
It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom everyday was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next. (Pp.42-43)

Boundorby calls the workers in his factory 'Hands' because they are nothing more to him. He has no humanitarian concern for his workers. This is evident from his response to Stephen Blackpool's request for help or advice. Stephen is wedded to an alcoholic wife, and so cannot marry the woman he loves dearly, Rachael. Boundorby tells Stephen that established institutions do not provide any help for a poor working-man. He concludes saying,

You didn't take your wife for fast and for loose, but for better or worse. If she has turned out worse--why, all we have got to say is, she might have turned out better. (P.90)
Through Stephen's predicament, Dickens attacks the divorce laws in England.

Meanwhile, Gradgrind is so obsessed with his 'rationalism' that he finds Bounderby best-suited to be the husband of his daughter, Louisa, trained under the same system of her father, though she does not like Bounderby for her husband, gives consent to her father. Dickens makes use of Louisa and Tom Gradgrind, the oldest son of Gradgrind, in a remarkable manner in order to exhibit, as the story progresses, the varied responses to and debilitating influences of Gradgrind's philosophy. Gradgrind's system does not encourage any use of fancy or the imagination, so even love. He tells Louisa that love was irrelevant in the context of marriage; he mentions the 'Facts', that is the statistical evidence that a large proportion of the marriages in England and France are contracted between parties of very unequal ages, and that the elder of these contracting parties is, in rather more than three-fourths of those instances, the bridgroom* (P.110) and that similar results are obtained among the natives of the British possessions in India, also in a considerable part of China, and
among the Calmucks of Tartary" (P.110). He silences the dismayed Louisa by compelling on her his 'Fact-oriented' marriage proposal. He says:

It appears to me that nothing can be plain or. Confining yourself rigidly to Fact, the question of Fact you state to yourself is: Does Mr. Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does. The sole remaining question then is: shall I marry him? I think nothing can be plain or than that? (P.111)

In Godan, Hori gives off his eldest daughter in marriage to a man only a few years younger than him. But, unlike Gradgrind, he is not unconcerned about the love his daughter requires, his helplessness drives him towards this decision. He does not have money to give the dowry.

More than anybody else, Hori remains a part of the village community. Yet, he shows the courage to confront the authorities in his community after deviating from certain norms which he finds not to concur with his dharma. He is bound by tradition,
still he comes out of it and gives shelter to Gobar's wife, Jhunia and to Matadin's chamar wife Siliya. He retains Hira's wife Puniya in his house even after he knows that Hira has poisoned his cow. These are special features of the character, Hori, unlike the previous characters of Premchand and the characters in post-Premchand fiction. Hori shows himself to be a complete man. His characteristics exhibit the qualities of certain heroes who rise above the circumstances, traditions, root out the existing corruption and oppressive rules of society, and lead them to complete humanity. Hori beats his wife mercilessly when she tells the police that Hira has poisoned the cow, and when the police threaten to search Hira's house he borrows money to bribe the police inspector. He helps out on the farm of his runaway brother, much to the detriment of his own family. He does all this to uphold the honour of his father's family, which is a part of his dharma. He is not ready to send his daughter-in-law, Jhunia,

out of his house even after she has earned a bad name for the family. The village elders get together and condemn Hori for sheltering an immoral girl.

Many of the members of the panchayat are themselves men of questionable reputation. But that does not prevent them from expressing horror at Hori's adharma. Dhania, his wife, protests against the decision of the panchayat to impose a fine of one hundred rupees and urges her husband not to pay the fine. But Hori cannot think of disobeying the command of the village council. He tries to calm Dhania by saying,

> we are all limbs of the community.
> How can we break away from it? You must submit to the decision of the Panchayats.
> Death is any time better than leading a life with a blot on your name. (P.97)

He firmly believes that for a humble person like him the voice of the 'panchayat' is the voice of God. He says,

> It's the voice of God that speaks through the Panchayats. I'll abide by your verdict to the letter. If God wills that we should leave the village, we shall certainly leave. (P.97)
Hori could not imagine life outside the fold of the community. The feeling that there could be no integration of life without the community, that marriages, religious rites, birth and death had meaning only within the community, had been deeply ingrained in him. Outcasted, he would just disintegrate. (Pp.97-98)

Thus Hori wants to strike a compromise, a balance between his dharma and his respect for the 'community' but whenever in a conflicting situation, surely his dharma triumphs.

From the beginning of the novel till the end, Hori represents a typical peasant with his problems in life, his oppression by the landlords and the guardians of society, his cheerful family life though intermingled with quarrels, his continuous existence in debt to the money-lenders, and his tendency to suffer and ignore all those thinking that it is his fate. Through Hori Promchand reveals the nono-too-happy prospect of the Indian farmer and gives a warning that this life of misery would continue until
there is no change in the approach of the Indian farmer towards his environment.

Gradgrind and Bounderby are products of Dickens's imagination representing the contemporary purely materialistic scientifically bent utilitarian and theorists. But their characters are exaggerated and sometimes far-fetched. As it happened with Dickens quite often, these characters tend towards caricature. This is unlike the characterization of Hori in Godan. The success of Premchand may be due to his closeness towards the Indian peasantry. Novel after novel he was concerned with the sorry plight of the Indian farmer, and he improved in his portrayal of the farmer character novel after novel. And in Godan, he succeeds in portraying the character of Hori in the best manner possible, as realistic as possible. On the contrary, in Hard Times, Dickens deals with "people and things outside the range of his own experience,"¹¹ which is one reason for the partial response to the book. Louis Cazamian says,

The appearance and manners of north-country workers were different from those Dickens had known in London. He could not fathom their inmost thoughts and feelings... the passing scene did not speak directly to him. And so *Hard Times* is the imperfect work of an artist who tried to bring traditional modes of feeling to a new subject. It is a repeat version of *The Chimes*, adapted to industrial conditions.  

Uno realises that in *Godan* Premchand has mastered the realistic technique of constructive arrangement. He withholds the influence upon the reader's emotions, and the theatrical instinct has diminished. In his earlier novels, he was concerned with the plot and social purpose, so he portrayed many characters, hardly succeeding in the portrayal of one single character. The emphasis was on the group rather than on the individual. But in *Godan*, Premchand succeeds in portraying the life of a character who becomes

immortal due to his difference from other characters in the same novel and from other characters in his earlier novels who are more angelic than human. Hori is the only purely realistic hero of Premchand in his entire fiction. What finally gains importance in the novel is not his usual concern for reformation, but characterisation, especially of Hori.¹³

Godan is far ahead of Hard Times in the classic portrayal of Hori, the protagonist. Still, resemblances between the two novels make a study of characters and characterisation in the two novels, not only of Hori and Gradgrind, or Hori and Stephen, but also of other characters, inevitable. Both the novels reveal the social purpose of the author through character and this chapter makes not only a comparative analysis of characters but highlights the social predicament through this analysis.

In Hard Times Sissy or Cecilia Jupo is an important character representing the antithesis of the scholars of the Gradgrind school. She is one of the students

¹³ Inder Nath Madan, Premchand (An Interpretation), Pp.119-20.
in Gradgrind's school and is later adopted by Gradgrind himself because her father deserts her. The circus-master, Mr. Sloary tells Gradgrind that her father wanted her to be well-educated and that there is no one to look after her. Schulz points out the similarity with Godan in this context. He refers to Hori giving shelter to the untouchable chamr girl, Siliya, with whom Matadin has fallen in love. The names also sound very much similar.

Siliya's illegitimate son's language has similar defects like the language of Mr. Sloary in Hard Times. Schulz's attempt is to convince us that Premchand has borrowed ingenuously from Hard Times.

When Gradgrind agrees to take Sissy to himself he is very particular that she should follow his system of education. She has strong impulses of running away in the first months of her stay but the hope that her runaway father would come back forces her to stay back. She is a very poor student and cannot get the 'Facts' into her head. She gives absurd answers to M'Choakumchild's questions. When

14 Siegfried A. Schulz, Premchand: A Western Appraisal, P.31.
ho asks for her remark on the proportion when twenty five out of a million inhabitants are starved to death in the course of a year, she replies that she thought that it must just be as hard upon those who were starved, whether the others were a million, or a million million (P.74). And the percentage of the people who were drowned or burnt to death is nothing to her because it is nothing "to the relations and friends of the people who were killed" (P.75). She tells Louisa, "And the worst of all is, that although my poor father wished me so much to learn, and although I am so anxious to learn, because he wished me to, I am afraid I don't like it" (P.75).

Sissey is developed in stark contrast to the character of Louisa who is badly influenced by her father's "system". She becomes a good companion to Louisa and amuses her with her interesting talk. She is a comfort to her in her distress. Gradgrind fools that she should have been trained at an early age. She has lived too long among the circus-people to perform properly in this school. Even though she is in the Gradgrind house she is in a world of her
own expecting letters from her father and waiting for his return. Dickens counters Gradgrind's world of 'Facts' with Sissy's world of fancy. She brings warmth and understanding to the Gradgrind home.

Louisa's younger sister, Jane, grows up to know love, to dream, and to wonder because of her influence. Dickens shows Sissy's future to be bright in contrast to the bleak one of Louisa.

An extension of this contrast of 'Fact' with fancy emerges in the delineation of the circus itself. The longing for freedom of the students is hinted in the beginning of the novel when Gradgrind's children, Louisa and Tom are caught peeping through a hole at the circus-people of Sloary's Horse-riding (P.34). This is a 'loophole' in Gradgrind's method of teaching. Dickens tries to confirm the sway of the imagination on young minds. He upholds his faith in the magical circus in contrast to Gradgrind's school and this "is a paradigm of his contribution to the social novel: he transformed 'Facts' through the entertainment of the imagination, making the reader see social reality in a new light."15

The Sloary circus appears in the beginning as well as at the end of the novel. Sloary, like Sissy stands for common-sense. He comes from a generation of the wise or holy fool. The asthmatic Sloary utters the solemn moral of the story and is the voice of Dickens, when he says, "People must be amuthod, Thquirc, thomochow" and continues, "they can't be alwayth a working, nor yet they can't be always a learning. Make the botht of uth: not the wurth" (P.60).

Dickens had not projected an industrial worker as a major character before Hard Times. With Stephen Blackpool and his relationships with his employer Bounderby, and the other workers, he portrays the physical and psychological distresses of the working class. In considering all workers as 'Hands' Bounderby denies any sense of fellow-feeling towards them. He ignores Stephen's need to divorce his wife and to lead a happy life with his true love, Rachael. Stephen on his part, is not influenced by the workers' call for a strike, though his allegiance is, doubtless, for his class. In the end he loses his job after he talks in defence of his fellow-workers when he meets
Bounderby the second time. He is not only dismissed by his employer but also isolated by his fellow-workers.

Although Schulz traces the striking similarities between the rich Gradgrind in *Hard Times* and the poor Hori in *Goderd*, one cannot ignore the possibility of an analogy between the lives of Stephen and Hori. Stephen is a good character who has his own weaknesses, and despite his tendency to destroy his wife, emerges as one of the most lovable characters in the novel. His simplicity and honesty are almost akin to and as important as Hori's *dharma*. He does not participate in the strike (Dickens had visited Preston and had witnessed the strike there) and pronounces Slackbridge to be not a worthy leader. Yet he defends his fellow-workers in the presence of Bounderby and loses his job. We are reminded of Hira poisoning Hori's cow, and Hori bribing the police to rescue Hira from punishment. Their fellow-feeling and love, added to their simplicity and honesty provide further scope for exploration of their likeness of character.

For Stephen "Life is aw' a muddle" and continues
to be so till the end. All his hopes remain a mirage till his death. He is ignored by his fellow-workers and dismissed by his employer. Moreover, he is not able to lead a married life of his choice. He loves Rachael deeply but the divorce laws prevent their marriage. He is forced to leave the town in search of a job, which he does not get, he is accused of robbery, of which Tom Gradgrind is the real culprit, and he dies a tragic death, falling into Old Well Shaft, an abandoned mine shaft. He dies only after many people come to his rescue. By that time his body is broken and wasted from starvation. He dies quietly, his hand in Rachael's hand and his eyes gazing at the comforting star. His dead body is carried back to Coketown in a procession.

Horii, too, dies in similar fashion. He dies with still the desire of buying a cow, and in the end he hands over the little money left to Dhania to give it to the priest and says that it is his godan. Horii's death indicates the defeat of the Indian peasant in the face of unbearable odds against him. Stephen's fall into the mine shaft symbolizes the destruction of the working class by the industrial
upper class. But both Hori and Stephan exhibit their extreme faith in life and in the immense potential of their class.

It would not be far-fetched to state also the comfort and energy received by both Stephan and Hori from their beloveds in times of distress and tension. There is one conspicuous difference between Rachael and Dhania. Rachael is always loving but Dhania exhibits her volatile nature occasionally. Rachael has no qualms in helping and saving the life of Stephan's miserable wife. To Stephan, Rachael is the shining star that illuminates the darkness of the whole world when compared to a candle that dispels only a little of it. Dhania hesitates to allow Hira and his wife to stay in her house after that poisoning incident. But she later acquiesces with her husband's decision. She has her own opinions to make and shows her protest often in contrast to the meek, submissive nature of Hori. She blurts out the secret that Hira has poisoned the cow to the police and later receives beatings from her husband. Both have their own ways, yet ultimately they too the same line. But for Stephan Rachael is the guide and there is
nothing accusatory about Rachael. She is typical of Dickens's heroines. She is able to understand and forgive Louisa, who appears to have also been involved in the plot against Stephen. She easily makes friends with Sissy and Mrs. Pogler, and she, like Sissy, forms a link between the various groups, all part of the ignominy created by the industrial system.

This striking analogy notwithstanding, it would be worthwhile to consider the parallel outlined by Siegfried A. Schulz. Just as he pointed out resemblances between Horie and Gradgrind (even their families) who are on the opposite scales of life, he highlights the similarities in the important sets of characters in the two novels i.e. the similarities between Stephen and Rachael in Hard Times and Prof. Mohta and Miss Malti in Godan.

Before an exposition could be made about these two sets of characters it would be essential to note that, as in many previous novels of Premchand, in Godan also there is the shifting projection of life in the village and life in the city. One tends to forget and even ignore the treatment of city-life in
this novel due to the concentration of the theme of the story on the life of the peasant, Hori. Moreover, the portrayal of city life is not as authentic as the portrayal of the world of Hori. This new world of people in the city has nothing concrete about its experiences and the characters are prone to talking and discussing instead of acting.  

The above remark seems true when one goes through the long philosophical discussions of Mehta and Malti. More talking is done. The married life of Khanna and Govindi is a failure. The essential pattern of life or the unhindered smooth flow of life is missing in the life of the city. The presentation of the important characters of the city, those belonging to the middle-class is not realistic and the treatment of the life itself of the middle-class does not carry conviction.  

Stephon becomes a martyr in the novel and nobody else in the novel is portrayed with such poignancy  


17 Indor Nath Madan, Premchand (An Interpretation) P.111.
that he may be called the hero of the novel, a major feature which leads to his parallel with Hori. But his role in the wide compass of the novel is only limited. And his association with Rachaal and their characterisation leads to the comparison between them and the characters of Mohta and Malti in Godan, whose roles are also limited in the novel. Mohta devotes his life for knowledge and Malti for social service. They love each other, they are not married, yet they live like husband and wife. This happens due to the changing approach to life in the cities. They belong to the new order of society in which Mr. Khanna and Onkar Nath are also included and from which Rai Sahab and Mirza Khurshod are excluded despite their efforts to change over to this new order. Mohta and Malti express freedom of thought. Through these two characters Premchand represents the emergence of a free-thinking, unfettered society. But he exposes the complications inherent in this society and the difficulties faced by other individuals of this society. All Mr. Khanna's hopes are shattered when his sugar-mill catches fire. The new order has emerged, but Premchand seems to hint that, it will
be a long time before it settles down and takes its steady course. 18

The two pairs of characters are similar so far as their dedication is concerned. Apart from that there is a wide gulf between these two pairs, as pairs and as individuals respectively. The difference in their positions in life is understood. Their outlook on and approach towards life are also dissimilar, even though they have sincere intentions. Dickens's portrayal of the two characters is realistic, especially his portrayal of Stephen in contrast to the portrayal of Mohta and Malti in Godan. Mohta and Malti expose Premchand's idealism or one can say Premchand portrays realistically two idealist characters. Stephen does not represent the emerging working-class but he is an individual drawn by a master-hand, and so, individually cannot be placed. Beside Mohta apart from their sincerity and dedication, Mohta represents the middle-class trying to form the new order of society. Even though he has immense faith in social service, he gives less importance to the material and practical side of life. He is

a kind of philosopher who has lost his traditional faith, and is groping for a new one in the emerging bourgeois civilisation. Mehta, along with other characters of the middle-class serves also Premchand's purpose of expressing his developing ideas. Stephen sticks to his traditional faith and is ready to suffer. He does not toe the line of his fellow-workers against his conscience and decides to distance himself from the strike.

As stated earlier the delineation of the middle-class in *Godan* lacks authenticity. Malti becomes a changed woman only after coming under the influence of Prof. Mohta. She, too, comes near Rachael only when the selflessness of both the characters are taken into consideration. Before coming under the spell of Mohta, Malti is shown as an example of a product of western civilisation. She considers herself and the whole of her sex on equal terms with man socially and politically. She flirts with Mr. Khanna, and before that, falls in love with Mohta, who does not respond to her love. She creates a rift between Mr. Khanna and his wife. Here, she represents Premchand's bitter hatred for the westernised Indian
woman. All through his novels, he had upheld his faith in the Indian ideal of womanhood and had tried to point out its excesses and drawbacks. But here was a new class of women, influenced heavily by western education, trying to emulate the western woman and mocking at their "unsophisticated" sisters. Premchand was vehemently against this trend in Indian society, and Malti becomes the target of his sarcasm and satire in Godan.

Govindi, Mr. Khanna's wife, is an important character in the novel so far as her purpose is concerned. She is a contrast to Malti, and she represents the Indian ideal of womanhood. She is an embodiment of the ancient ideal of self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice. She is fashioned after the 'mother ideal' consistently upheld by Premchand in his woman characters. Mr. Khanna is self-controlled, selfish and greedy and relatively Govindi is much more sensible, practical, honest and generous. It is against this ideal character of Govindi that Miss Malti is drawn as a contrast. 19

19 Indor Nath Madan, Premchand (An Interpretation), P.111.
Yet, Malti later casto away her love for the glitter of western civilisation, though she is not able to accept the Indian ideal totally. She remains unmarried, she has her own views, and tries to be useful to others in her own manner. Both Mohta and Malti are the precursors of a new order but Premchand remains sceptical about the endurance and longevity of this new order.

Stephen mouthes Dickens's disgust towards the existing system when he says repeatedly, "It's aw a' muddle", and he expresses Dickens's attitude towards the working class and the trade unions when he abstains from the strike and is sceptical about the leadership qualities of Slackbridge. All this was influenced by Dickens's visit to Preston to watch the effects of a strike of the cotton workers there. He wrote about it in the article "On Strike" in "Household Words" of 11 Feb., 1854. He was surprised by the still atmosphere and the lack of any turbulence or agitation at the two meetings he attended. There was the presence of an outside orator also (a prototype of Slackbridge) whose influence on the workers is
censured in the article. But despite all the silence and lack of any ill-will, the article quotes one instance of an open condemnation of a particular man, and the strikers seem to be morally on the right. But Dickens does not approve of this strike. 20

Dickens uses Stephen to represent his views both in word and deed, and even Rachael holds on to this purpose. But neither Mehta nor Malti, and not even Hori represents Premchand's views in toto i.e. both in thought and action. Hori signals the doom of the tradition-bound, honest farmer. Mehta voices Premchand's views on the role of women in Indian society but he himself fails in practical life. He is a misfit at home, and his class does not have a bright future. Malti shows that she is sincere and dedicated but who is far from Premchand's ideal of an Indian woman.

The other characters belonging to the middle-class, Mr. Khanna, Rai Sahob, Mirza Khurshed are portrayed according to the role they play in society. Khanna

is a mill-owner, and he represents the callous attitude of a rich businessman. He enhances the misery of Hori after his agent cheats him of his earnings. This happens after the entire produce of sugarcane and other articles from Hori's village is sent to this sugar-mill situated in its neighbourhood. The Rai Sahob, on the other hand, exacts forced labour from the poor despite his patriotism and his genuine sympathy with the peasant. More than that, he bribes the editor of a newspaper to suppress this cruel treatment of the poor. Mirza Khurshed, like Mehta and Malti, shows his zeal for service, and is concerned about the labourers and the dancing girls of the red light district. But, still, Mirza's indulgence is only a superficial one which does not yield any fruitful results.

Stephon is fed up with his wife, and longs for a break-up of their relationship. A similar fate envelops Louisa, who has been forced to marry Boundorby, a man much older than her. A little later she comes in contact with James Harthouse, one of her father's friends who is at present assisting Boundorby. He is not one who gives much importance
to the 'Fact-oriented' life but is able "to take to the hard Fact follows with as good a grace as if he had been born one of the tribe, and to throw all other tribes overboard, as conscious hypocrites" (P.170). He says to Louisa about the 'Fact' follows,

whom none of us believes, my dear Mrs. Bounderby, and who do not believe themselves. The only difference between us and the professors of virtue or benevolence, or philanthropy—never mind the name—is, that we know it is all meaningless, and say so; while they know it equally and will never say so. (Pp.170-71)

Their intimacy leads to the dawning of knowledge upon Louisa and her complete resentment towards her father and his system. This revelation on the part of Louisa also paves way for the disillusionment of Gradgrind with his hitherto infallible system of 'Facts'.

In James Harthouse Dickens creates "one of the most purely realistic characters in Hard Times."
possibly because he exists only in relation to Louisa's fate. Dickens is not concerned with Harthouse's personal destiny, as he is with that of certain similar characters--Stooforth in *David Copperfield* for instance and Eugene Wrayburn in *Our Mutual Friend*. But it is also true that Dickens was particularly fascinated by the blend of cynicism and irresponsibility present in Harthouse, which may explain why the depiction is directly realistic, and without grotesqueries or mythic overtones of any kind.  

So it is that one evening when Bounderby is out on business Harthouse approaches Louisa and expresses his deep love for her. He goes away asking her to meet him the same night. His attempt to seduce her fails as she, instead of meeting him, meets her father in his house, where she pours out her pent-up feelings. She asks her surprised father, who does not know anything of the matter,

> How could you give me life, and take from all the inapproachable things that raise it from the state of conscious death?

---

Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, O father, what have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here? (Pp.214-15)

She continues,

Father, chance then threw into my way a new acquaintance; a man such as I had no experience of; used to the world; light, polished, easy; making no pretences; avowing the low estimate of everything, that I was half afraid to form in secret . . . . There seemed to be a near affinity between us. I only wondered it should be worth his while, who cared for nothing else, to care so much for me. (P.217)

She tells her wonder-struck father that Harthouse was expecting her that night declaring herself her lover (P.217). She says,

I do not know that I am sorry, I do not know that I am ashamed, I do not know that I am degraded in my own esteem. All that
I know it, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means! (Pp.217-18)

This revelation brings about an attitudinal change in Gradgrind's mind. He is no more the 'Fact-oriented' heartless father he was. And,

he tightened his hold in time to prevent her sinking on the floor, but she cried out in a terrible voice, 'I shall die if you hold me! Let me fall upon the ground!' And he laid her down there, and saw the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system lying, an insensible heap, at his feet. (P.218)

In the demolition of Gradgrind's system Dickens shows the futility of the blind adherence to any system invented by man, which has no place for imagination and sentiment in it. He encourages the way of a reformed educational system teaching both 'fact' and 'fancy' apart from the living way shown by Sissy, Louisa (in the end) and even, partly by
Grodgrind and the way of suffering of Rachael. 22

Harthouso, along with Mrs. Sparsit represents the fading aristocracy. He is not too concerned about life. He has taken many jobs and found all of them boring. At last he reaches the "hard-fact follows" accepting his brother's recommendation. He is a clever man who manipulates his activities well in Coketown. After meeting Mrs. Sparsit, he comes to know about the nature of Coketown society. From her he understands the strained relationship between Bounderby and Louisa. So it is that henceforth he tries to flatter Bounderby and he is successful in his attempts. Louisa also does not show any dislike for him. But she is not able to reveal herself to him, and here she seems to be a riddle to Harthouso. So he decides to convince himself of the real character of Louisa. Her mysteriousness leads to Harthouso's curiosity and determination to know the truth.

Harthouso, though a pretender and a manipulator

John Foster, Quoted in Kate Flint, Dickens (Sussex; The Harvester Press Limited, 1986), Pp.94-95.
as far as the ways of the world are concerned, 
tries to show himself as artlessly frank before 
Louisa. He disclaims to be a politician and his 
assumed honesty impresses her. Ultimately he notices 
the cheerfulness which lights up her face whenever 
she comes across her brother Tom. So he makes friends 
with Tom and learns from him that nobody, including 
Louisa, loves Bounderby, and all her affection is 
bestowed on her only brother. And through Tom, 
Harthouse is able to get nearer and nearer to Louisa's 
heart.

Harthouse begins after this to pay frequent visits 
to the Bounderby's. Bounderby does not much care for 
elegance and polished manners and leaves his wife 
to attend him. Harthouse talks about Tom in her 
presence and he is surprised to find that Louisa 
begins to show the effects of his influence in a 
marked manner. He learns about her concern for Tom. 
Harthouse pretends to suggest excuses for Tom's 
reckless behaviour and promises her to try to reform 
him. But on meeting Tom he comes to know that he 
is far too much in debt and it is difficult to redeem 
him. Harthouse is at least capable of persuading 
Tom to apologise to Louisa for his rude behaviour
to her on a previous occasion. He apologises and swells up the love for him in Louisa's heart, and Harthouse also receives a share of Louisa's affection for the favour done to her.

It is after this that Harthouse plans with Louisa to elope, and he finds the right moment for that when Bounderby is away in London for a few days. Louisa also is convinced that this is the only solution to her problems.

At this juncture Louisa proves her innate purity, goodness when she decides against meeting Harthouse at his hotel. She has to choose between two options before her and she chooses the one which retains her purity, her sense of moral values.

Harthouse proves to be an amoral character but he is not a wicked character in truth. He might have been moved by pity at the condition of Louisa, after finding her father to be a machine, her brother a whelp and her husband a bear. In the end, he is forced to leave Coketown, dissatisfied with his venture. Before that, he comes to know of Gradgrind's hospitality and love for Sissy. He is
shocked and feels the absurdity of such a relationship.

In Harthouse Dickens presents the decay of the aristocracy, which he had shown in his earlier novels also. His system, his philosophy which is peculiar to him, crumbles. Dickens always upheld the middle-class. Gradgrind, though his philosophy also exhibits its futility in the end, is doomed as he is honest. But Harthouse, who does not care for the world and considers everything to his own advantage and amusement, has no hope of redemption.

The other character who is doomed and belongs to the fading aristocracy is Mrs. Sparsit. She is Bounderby's house-keeper and remains one of the sinister figures in the novel. She is a malignant variant of the character of James Harthouse. Harthouse does not have any wickedness or hatred but Sparsit has no fellow-feeling and is always quick to seize any opportunity to further her selfish ends. She even boasts of her aristocratic origin and high connections to everybody she meets. She became a widow at the age of twenty-four and after that due to her impoverished condition decided to serve Bounderby as his housekeeper. Bounderby is elated
to have an aristocratic lady employed under him considering his past humble history which he narrates to others. Boundorby is able to manage her by pointing out frequently the disparity between her past history and her present position. But Mrs. Sparafit persists with her references to her ancient glory and continues foiling Boundorby in his attempts to ignore her. But the reader, in the repeated references to her of aristocratic beginnings, as in the case, Boundorby's own origins, begins to doubt the veracity of her statements.

Mrs. Sparafit delights in gaining ascendency over others. She wishes to dominate Boundorby all the time. But she pretends all the time to act according to the wishes of her master, to be coaxed to sit at the table, and to be ordered to eat with him. But in his absence she enjoys herself eating the delicacies she has hidden for herself. She also pretends to consult Boundorby on trivial matters regarding the household which she runs as she likes. She feigns happiness at Boundorby's proposal to marry Louisa and opines that a wife may relieve her of her duties. But she also says that she would be
happy to continue to receive the "annual compliment", by which she means the salary. Bounderby does not realize that her agreement in his decision to marry is only a mask, and is happy with her. He gets her posted as a matron in the bank. Bitzer is her assistant. Sparsit and Bitzer prove to be a good combination; they are good spies. The bank robbery provokes her failure at the bank and she shows signs of terrible sickness. She comes back to Bounderby's house and stays there till she recovers.

At the bank she had kept in constant touch with the relationship between Bounderby and Louisa, and had come to the conclusion that Louisa would not be able to live happily with Bounderby. And when Harthouse reaches Coketown and comes into contact with Louisa, she sees the fate of Louisa. Mrs. Sparsit is clever enough to think of an involvement between those two before they meet. She begins to devote enough time to study their relationship, and later finds Louisa sinking gradually down her 'staircase', which is the atmosphere of shame and disgrace built round Louisa. She keeps close watch on Louisa and follows her to the garden on the day
when both the lovers meet and decide to elope (She had taken into account Boundorby's departure on business for a long period to London). But she misses the full content of their conversation as it begins to rain in between. Her imagination completes the story and she relates to Boundorby that his wife has eloped with Harthouse. She remains exposed and is sent back to the bank by a disgusted Boundorby.

Mrs. Sparksit's next act of spying brings in the mysterious Mrs. Poglor. She is forced into Boundorby's house and she reveals herself to the disappointment of both Sparksit and Boundorby that she is none other than Boundorby's mother. This event also brings to light the false boast of Boundorby that she had abandoned him in the gutter. All Mrs. Sparksit's unnecessary meddling, flattery and intrigue, lead to her disgrace and her dismissal from service. Yet she tries to retain her customary superiority and says before leaving,

If that portrait could speak, Sir---
but it has the advantage over the original of not possessing the power of committing itself and disgusting others,--it would
to testify, that a long period has elapsed since I first habitually addressed it as the picture of a Noodle. Nothing that a Noodle does can awaken surprise or Indignation; the proceedings of a Noodle can only inspire contempt. (P.286)

Gradgrind, Horiz, Louisa, Rupe, Stephen and Rachael, Mohta and Malti, all those characters and their representations have revealed close parallels between the two novels and the possibility of the influence of Hard Times on Premchand's Godan cannot be ruled out. In fact, Siegfried A. Schulz maintains this claim. He says:

But Premchand borrowed and transplanted from Dickonson more than just structural elements. He took events and characters, even acts of characters, which he inverted and then adapted with great ingenuity to the Indian scene. The dismal Coketown of Hard Times, in an industrialized country, becomes the poverty-stricken village of Bolari, a prime example of the rural blight exhibited in Godan . . .

23 Siegfried A. Schulz, Premchand: A Western Appraisal, Pp.29-30.
Two more characters need our scrutiny. They are Tom Gradgrind, the son of Gradgrind, and Goboz, the son of Hori. Louisa's intimacy with James Harthouse has a parallel in the romance of Goboz and Jhunia, but Louisa's purity reflected itself in the end, while Goboz left with an illegitimate child to Jhunia. This aspect, this freakishness in Goboz's character instantly reminds one of the reckless nature of Tom Gradgrind.

Tom also like Louisa is a student of Gradgrind's system but unlike Louisa he is stricken with hatred for his home. He has a natural bent for self-advancement and likes to act according to the ways of the world. He is a product of his father's system but his sorry predicament is that instead of keeping within the limits of the system he crosses it into dishonesty. He allows himself to be used by Harthouse, and when gambling leads to an unprecedented amount in debts, even beyond the capability of Louisa to assist, he unflinchingly commits the bank robbery, which results in Stephen Blackpool being accused of the crime. It is he, in fact, and not Louisa, who sinks down the stairs to utter damnation.
In Louisa and Tom, Dickens produces a glaring contrast in character. Yet Tom remains Louisa's "most affectionate" brother. He does not have the patience and restraint of Louisa. He is very much disgusted with his father's house and his system. He says, "I wish I could collect all the facts we hear so much about" and "and all the figures, and all the people who found them out; and I wish I could put a thousand barrels of gunpowder under them, and blow them all up together!" (P.69). He calls his house a "jolly old--jaundiced jail" (P.68). He decides to compensate for the rigidity and boredom at his house by becoming an assistant to Boundorby at the bank.

It is Tom who takes Louisa with him to look through a hole in the circus tent, and when they are caught peeping into the forbidden area, Louisa takes all the blame. And again it is Tom who forces Louisa to marry Boundorby for his own monetary benefits, and he exploits Louisa until, in the end, even she is not able to help him. By now he has become a thorough profligate beyond redemption. He even begins to confront Boundorby. He is exploited by
Harthouae when he does not receive any money from Louisa. He promises Harthouae to be more grateful to Louisa and later begs pardon for his rudeness to her. It is after this that he commits the bank robbery.

Louisa understands that it is Tom who has committed the offence. But Tom's feigning ignorance and his lack of confidence in his sister hurts her. She decides to leave Boundorby, and later also decides to stay away from Harthouae, thus leaving Tom in the lurch. Stophen's dying words to Gradgrind also enhance his insecurity. In the end, he escapes abroad with Sloary. But he dies of fever there and reports at the moment of death.

Tom represents the natural and nasty influence of the "fact-oriented" system on rootless adolescence. The burden of the system weighs too hard on him. On the other hand, the burden of tradition is unbearable for the younger generation in Goden, represented by Gober. As opposed to his father's generation, instead of showing strains of revolt, he shows himself to be a weak person, without any ability to confront crucial situations. He speaks
a lot, but in practical life he is weak and powerless, without any aim, and borof of faith. In the favourable contexts of a debate his turn has come by more coinicidence—otherwise his character is not suited to the rebellious emotions of the people.24 The best example of his moral cowardice is the consequences of his love affair with Jhunia. He leaves her at the door of his house and escapes from the place, fearing the wrath of his parents. The incidents that follow show his ignorance of the better side of his parents even after living with them for so many years. They shower their love and concern for Jhunia and do not hesitate to confront the Panchoo and defend her as their daughter-in-law. Contrary to Gobar's thoughts, Dhania calls him a coward, and says, "He should have stood by you" and Hori says, "We are not his enemies. What's done is done. One has to take the rough with the smooth. By running away he has made us all miserable" (P.92).

Dickens uses Coketown itself with its mills and machines to depict the pallid state of human existence. Coketown is like a red-brick monster,

24 Komal Kothari, Premchand ko patra, ed. Vijaydhan Datha, P.205.
its mills like fairy palaces and the piston of the steam-ongino is described as working "monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness" (P.43). The images are in contrast to the intermittent factual reporting and tell us a great deal about the mad urgency of production for gain. It is in the evocation of these images that Dickens shows his ability as an artist. In Hard Times he is consistent and effective in his symbolic description of the town and the mills. At the beginning of Book the Second he describes a hot summer day and makes the readers nauseated by stating, "The whole town seemed to be frying in oil. There was a stifling smell of hot oil everywhere" (P.122). The "dark satanic mills" of Coketown are dreadful on many levels. Through the power of the machinists the employers and statisticians cause the physical bodies of the workers to get stunted. It is, indeed, a threat which represents the further deterioration of the plight of mankind. Yet, Dickens very cleverly manages to juxtapose the suffocating effect of the pattern of industrial life in Coketown with the life values of humanity through his figurative description of Coketown.
Apart from the industrial atmosphere and its consequences, the parliamentary procedure is highlighted by Dickens. Its dreariness and waste is symbolised in the "dust heap" which recurs with much more significance later on in the novel.

The choice of names for characters, and even the titles of the three sections of the novel are symbolic. There is a definite contrast between the subject of the novel—industrial society and the titles of the three sections—Sowing, Reaping and Garnering and it brings forth the novel's leading idea which is that inherent life and growth ultimately triumph over theory and calculation. Life cannot be reduced to a set of facts and figures however hard the laissez-faire economist may try to do it. Boundorby may make men and machines equal to one another. Machinery is regarded as a living entity and the industrial smoke is related to the wiliness of hypocrisy and deception. But the process of inner growth always continues. As a man sows so he must reap and garner.

Symbolism is extended even to inanimate things like Sissy's bottle containing "the nine oils" and
to the mine into which Stephen falls. Sisay does not allow herself to be parted from her precious bottle which symbolises much more than her loyalty to her father, being a sort of talisman to cure and heal. The mine into which Stephen falls is a significant part of industrial society and continues to exert influence even when it has been forgotten. Stephen himself refers to this just before his death, "When it were in work, it kills wi'out need; when 'tis lot alone, it kills wi'out need" (P. 265).

Even the personalities of Boundorby, Harthouse and Gradgrind, though expressing definite purposes on the surface, reveal the principle of life and growth. As one can understand from their characters, Boundorby and Harthouse conceal their real selves and Gradgrind transforms himself later.

Unlike Dickens, Premchand does not portray an alternative character to Gobar or to Hari who could challenge the malignant nature of the existing system which oppressed the peasant class and denigrated the heritage of India. Neither does he show any optimism of the kind Dickens reveals through his symbolic
technique. Still, Promchand maintains the versatility of his style throughout the novel. As in his other novels, he expresses his ability to manipulate his style to suit the situation. For instance, when Bhola's daughter Jhunia comes to Hori's house some months after her illicit liaison with Gobar, Hori expresses his anger in the following words: "I'll drive her out of the village!" and "The secret will be out sooner or later. Why not let it out to-day?" (P.91). The next moment when Jhunia falls at Hori's feet, he bent over her and caressing her back said, 'Have no fear, daughter. This is your house. You are as much my daughter as you are Bhola's" (P.91).

The language reflects the mood of the character. In fact, Hori and also Jhunia are depicted as typical characters belonging to the peasant class, where joy and suffering alternate as a natural process.

In contrast to this is the delineation of the characters belonging to the middle class and upper middle class whose words reveal their pretence and hypocrisy. By the time Promchand started writing Godan, the agitation to use Hindustani as the medium of writing was gaining momentum. So, as in Karamabhum in Godan too, the language is devoid of the unwanted
glitter of Arabic and Persianized vocabulary or the extra chastenoes of Sanskritized language, thus making the readers easily comprehend the text.

In Godan, Premchand shows the failure of the middle class also. It is possible to agree with many critics who have mentioned that Premchand had severed his links with Gandhiasm by the time he wrote Godan. In other words, he had lost faith in a tolerant attitude towards life. But whether or not he had accepted Communism or taken a radical stance is a doubtful question. In that case he could have expressed his opinions through a strong alternative to Gobar, but that element is missing in this novel. Premchand sees India’s future as bleak, all the optimism of his previous novels is lost, yet he upholds the values of Indian society which do not slacken the will and courage of the Indian. He is not surprised at the doom of Hori, but he glorifies the man in him, his will to work, to co-operate, to survive. This will itself would have led to India’s progress but for the class-distinctions and the oppression. Contrary to his other novels, Premchand does not give a solution in Godan but discusses the issues. Godan takes a giant leap
from the other novels through this artistic approach of Premchand. In fact, it is the right novel to culminate his writing career with.

Gobar leaves the village and reaches the city where he becomes a labourer. He, who had shown signs of emerging into a socialist leader in his village, who had started life as a rebellious person, could not come up to this expectation, and when he left the village and earned some money, he began to lend it at high rates of interest. It is an irony of fate that Gobar, who hated money-lenders should become a more ruthless money-lender. He could not help it. He could only be an exploiter or an exploited person in the existing social order. Premchand exposes the contradictions in Gobar's character, and thereby wants to suggest that a total shake-up of the existing system is necessary. Until then the peasant is doomed to Hori's fate. 25

Like Dickens Premchand suggests that industrialisation is not a solution to the problems of workers and unemployed peasants. On the contrary, it leads to

25 Indar Nath Nadan, Premchand (An Interpretation), Pp. 101-2
their complete ruin. The peasant is a slave of poverty. His misery, and exploitation is expressed succinctly through a farcical drama staged by the villagers. The peasant falls at the feet of the Thakur and begins to sob. The Thakur hesitates, but later agrees to give him ten rupees. After signing the promissory note, the peasant receives only five rupees from the Thakur. He is surprised, and says,

'There are only five rupees, my Master'.
'They are ten. Go and count them again at home.'
'No, Sir, they are five.'
'One rupee goes for my gratification, Right?'
'Yes, Sir.'
'One for writing the paper. Right?'
'Yes, Sir.'
'One for the paper itself. Right?'
'Yes, Sir.'
'One as my customary fee. Right?'
'Yes, Sir.'
'One as my interest. Right?'
'Yes, Sir.'
'Five rupees in cash. They makes ten. Right?'
'Better keep these five too with you.'
'Nonsense!'  
'I mean it, Sir. One rupee as my gift to your younger wife. One for the older. One rupee to buy betel leaves for the older wife. And one for the younger. That makes four. The fifth rupee is for your funeral rites'. (P.174)

If this depicts the predicament of the peasant, the plight of the worker is worse. Premchand remarks about the life of workers:

They live in dirty, stinking, and wretched holes. You will feel like vomiting in them. They wear clothes with which we shall not like to clean our shoes. They eat food which our dog will refuse to eat. In spite, the capitalists and industrial magnates deprive them of their crumbs in order to pay the shareholders.26

Influenced by city life, Gobar also becomes competitive and selfish. He loses all the virtues of traditional life.

26. Inder Nath Madan, Premchand (An Interpretation), P.87

27. Inder Nath Madan, Premchand (An Interpretation), P.87
The passage quoted above places the misery of the cities in the right perspective. More than this it contrasts city life with village life. Though there is abject poverty and suffering in villages, people don't have to live in "dirty, stinking, and wretched holes". The villagers live not in palatial houses but their humble abodes are clean; their food is not luxurious, yet it is pure and healthy and their clothes are not costly, yet they are not dirty.

It is not merely to point out the spiritless nature of the younger generation of Indian farmers that Premchand draws Gobar into the picture, but he provides the only link between the village and the city in the novel. After staying for sometime in the city and having become quite successful in his ventures, he decides to return to his village and bring Jhunia back with him. But when he returns he sees that his father has sunk deeper in debts. The competitiveness of the city has instilled some life into Gobar, and he does not want his father to accept all oppression from the zaminder and the money lenders meekly. Gobar forces the zaminder's agents to admit that they had not given any written receipts to Hori.
when they come to collect false arrears from Hori and Gobar threatens to complain to Rai Amar Pal Singh. Gobar also states point-blank to Datadin, the moneylender that he would not give anything more than sixty rupees as the amount borrowed from him plus the interest on it for eight years. Datadin had asked for a staggering total of two hundred rupees. But Hori does what is natural to him—he goes to Datadin later and asks for his forgiveness, and promises to pay what was demanded.

The little vivacity which Gobar has attained due to his life in the city is bound to finish soon after his return to the city. He misses his job, takes up another job but becomes exhausted soon. He takes to drink and sometimes attacks Jhunia whose life becomes miserable.

As stated earlier Gobar alone provides a link between the two worlds. His love-story is connected with the main issues of the novel, that is, the structure of change. From the beginning he shows his tendency for change. He reacts instinctively against injustice. He represents the vital energy
of the new generation which does not in any manner conform with the lothargic, sluggish conventional mode of living. Compared with Gobar's experiences in love the case of the Matadin-Siliya affair is not so complex. It ends in the triumph of love, and the emergence of a new Matadin.

Gobar undergoes varied experiences after falling in love with Jhunia. After enjoying the thrill, experiencing the sense of guilt, alienation from his parents, responsibility of running a house, he is able to reconcile with the status of a married person in the end. His heart is torn between conflicting forces. Just as in the novel each important character experiences its humiliation in a different way from the other character, Gobar too experiences in a particular manner. Unlike the Rai Sahob's experiences which deteriorate his spirit, Gobar's experience has beneficial effect on him. He shows his profound understanding when he learns that "whatever one's situation, greed and selfishness would only make it worse." 28

28 quoted from Promechand: Our Contemporary, ed. Shivkumar Misra, P. 144
Also, in Gobar along the central issues of the novel seem to get resolved. He passes through all vicissitudes of the novel’s experience. Though he is transplanted to the urban world, his sensibility is rooted in the rural world. While Mori is liberated at the end of the novel, Gobar has still to live and face his life. From this perspective also his character is significant. 29

There are some apparent resemblances between the characters of Tom and Gobar but still they are two different characters at the bottom. Gobar returns again to the village and endears himself to everybody unlike Tom who escapes abroad and dies there. In brief, Gobar is a character who, though not satisfying, wins the reader’s sympathy but Tom, with all his tasteless experiences, remains an abhorred character. Still, Tom like Gobar becomes the link between the two worlds in *Hard Times* when he is carried off in the end by Sloery.

Unlike the two worlds of "fact" and "fancy" in *Hard Times*, the two worlds of the village and the

29 Premchand: Our Contemporary, ed. Shivkumar Misra, PP.143-144.
city are kept apart in Godan. There is only an apparent "total view of society." One explanation for this separation between the two worlds could be that the novel, perhaps, predicted the disintegration of our society. 30 Dickens hopes for the best. Premchand seems to have lost hope.

Yet Dickens hopes for the best only through the massage and imaginative energy of his novel. His novel as such is ironic and bleak. The three books of the novel titled "Sowing", "Reaping" and "Gathering", themselves are ironic, projecting the decaying life in Cokotown. Moreover, an alternative happy ending to the novel, to the lives of its different characters, is totally agreeable with Dickens's technique. But he deviates from his comfortable method and gives no chance of hope to his characters. Louisa does not marry Harthouse, Stephen is not rescued and cannot marry Rachael, Sisay's father does not turn up. But the atmosphere of Cokotown inhibits Dickens from such a tendency. He rejects all hope with calculated brutality and the smoke sorpents and the melancholy

30 Premchand: Our Contemporary, ed. Shivkumar Misra, P144-145.
mad elephants are soon in their usual manner. But this was not the case in his earlier novels, and readers of *Domboy and Son* and *Bleak House* might have predicted a happy ending.

Similarly, it is an understood fact that previous to *Godan*, Promchand had produced a happy-ending to his novels. And it is also agreed that he was under the influence of Gandhism till *Godan*. In *Godan*, he exposes his pessimism, his loss of faith in the ability of the Indian psyche to overcome challenges. So, he ends the novel with the defeat of Hori in his mundane life. He had longed for a cow till his death.

Dhana is admonished by Hira to make the _odan_ to the Brahmin as Hori is dying. She went in and brought twenty annas which she had earned from the sale of yarn. Placing the coins in the icy palm of her husband, she looked at Datadin. "Maharaj, there's neither a cow, nor a calf nor any money in the house. This is all the money I have; this is all I can give. Take this in place of the cow. "And she collapsed and sank to the ground" (P.288). In one stroke, *Godan* expresses Promchand's break with a tolerant, liberal and compromising attitude towards life and a move in a different direction.
In brief, both *Hard Times* and *Godan* express
the authors' departure from their established norms
of writing and views of life.