

Humanities

Hard Times Means Good Times for Viewers

A new television drama of four one-hour color programs began May 11 on the Public Broadcasting Service. *Hard Times*, a novel written by Charles Dickens in 1854 to portray the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the human spirit, has been adapted for television with funding by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Exxon Corporation.

Hard Times has been produced jointly by WNET/13, New York, and Granada Television of Great Britain, and combines excellent scholarship, humanities resources, and production talent from both countries. It was filmed chiefly on location in the North of England, the novel's setting, which contains many well-preserved buildings and other locations from the period of the novel. The area is rich in industrial museums and nineteenth-century artifacts.

Project Director is Robert B. Kotlowitz, Vice-President for Programming for WNET. Executive Producer is Peter Eckersley, Granada Television's Head of Drama, and the Director is John Irvin. Granada provided more than half the production cost of the series. Other support for the project came from member stations of the Public Broadcasting Service.

The critic F. R. Leavis has written of *Hard Times*: "Of all Dickens' works, it is the one that has all the strength of his genius." Never filmed before, it is modern in tone, combining suspense, action, conflict, and an array of unforgettable characters into a scorching indictment of any system which robs human beings of their imagination and their individuality. The novel has a wide range of themes:

- the state of English education in the 1840s;
- the condition of an agrarian society suddenly thrown into monstrous urban working conditions;
- life dominated by an industrial system which had grown at breakneck speed;
- the effects of laissez-faire capitalism, of human life worn down by calculation and routine;
- the policing and hemming-in of the human spirit.

Scripts for *Hard Times* were written by Arthur Hopcraft, a screenwriter for dramatic adaptations who has written many plays for Granada Television and the British Broadcasting Corporation, and whose play, "The Nearly Man," won an award as the best single dramatic program in British television in 1974. Mr. Hopcraft worked in consultation with Dickens scholars in United States universities and with special Project

Consultants: Asa Briggs, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex and a major authority on the nineteenth century; George Ford, Professor of English at the University of Rochester; and Steven Marcus, Professor of English at Columbia University. The result of this collaboration is a faithful, thorough, yet entertaining adaptation of the subject.

Accompanying the dramatic series are four 8-minute sequences on the major themes arising from Dickens' work: Education; Political Economy/Utilitarianism; Urban Industrial Life; Marriage and Family. Material for these films was drawn from speeches by Dickens, scenes from his other novels and from analytical historical works, as well as primary resource materials. Works of other writers and philosophers who examined the same themes as Dickens' novel, writers such as William Wordsworth and John Stuart Mill, were also consulted. These separately dramatized elements will serve to enhance the individual and group viewers' understanding of the industrial world in both England and the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

(Continued on back page)



Josiah Bounderby, industrial magnate in *Hard Times*



Grants

Challenge Grants

Announced by President Ford in January and endorsed by President Carter soon after taking office, the NEH Challenge Grants program has generated lively interest among humanities institutions. Through Challenge Grants the Endowment offers institutions an opportunity to use a Federal grant in order to raise new and increased support from non-Federal sources—private citizens, business and labor organizations, state and local governments, and civic and other groups—in order to improve their financial condition and their capacity to provide services and programming in the humanities. (A brochure describing the program is available by writing to: NEH Challenge Grants, MS-800, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D. C. 20506.)

For the first cycle of Challenge Grant applications, the Endowment has received 167 formal proposals requesting over \$72 million. The applications will be reviewed by the National Council on the Humanities at its spring meeting, and the first awards are expected to be announced in late May/early June.

The Victorian Toy Theatre

When Charles Dickens was a boy he had a favorite toy—a model theatre with a homemade pull curtain and tiny plank stage. It was for this toy theatre that the imaginative young fellow penned his first bit of writing, a play, a tragedy he entitled, "Misnar, The Sultan of India."

When Robert Louis Stevenson was a lad of ten he found high adventure and "giddy joy" in browsing through Edinburgh stationery shops to buy "penny plain, twopence coloured" sheets of paper scenery for *his* toy theatre; he always chose the cheaper, black-and-white sets and gleefully colored them in himself with bright crayons.

This spring the very stages and prints (already colored-in) from the 19th-century toy theatres these Victorian boys loved are on tour in an exhibition entitled "The Drama in a Romantic Child's Eye."

Prepared by Joseph Viscomi with assistance from an NEH Youthgrant in the Humanities, the exhibition accomplishes a remarkable piece of stage business: it rebuilds the three cardboard walls of the toy theatres that fired the imaginations of Charles and Robert and

other such romantic children, and also reconstructs that fourth wall—upon which is reflected the cultural tastes of the parents.

Displayed high in a stone Gothic building, up four winding iron staircases, through several arched doorways, in a quiet room of wooden floors, are wild men in turbans and bloomers, with fezzes and feathers, dancing on the ivory walls.

There, in the prim elegance of the Philomathian Literary Society of the University of Pennsylvania, the actor Mr. Carlitch can be seen as Tippto Saib; the distinguished Mr. Edmund Keane wears a grass skirt and wields saber in left hand, hatchet in right; and the hero of "Mazeppa: Or the Wild Horse of Tartary"—often played by a woman—is captured at that thrilling moment in Act I when she dashes over the mountains bound to a horse. Half a century of high Shakespearean tragedy, teary melodrama, and ridiculous farce is frozen in miniature cardboard splendor.

The exhibit brings together three types of artifacts: 143 contemporary theatre prints, 8 complete toy theatre set stages, and 10 printed play books.

Theatre prints were handsome portraits, the equivalent of 8 x 10 glossies, of great actors and actresses captured in stunning poses from their latest hits at Drury Lane or Covent Garden. At the time they were simply elegant promotional pieces drawn by the likes of illustrators Cruikshank and Heath, but today they gain the distinction of being our only graphic record of the thespians' roles and robes.

These pin-ups were transformed into cut-outs as toy theatres gained popularity and paper theatre reproductions passed out of the realm of passive adult souvenir and into the garden of children's fun. Now the celebrated Mr. Kemble and dashing Mr. Macready could be bought at the neighborhood stationery shop, be clipped, colored, folded and placed on the tabletop stage to perform a special nursery matinee.

Toy theatres were more than just toys, more than mere child's play. Oh, surely they were fun, all the fun of dollhouses, toy soldiers, chap books and play-acting contained in something no bigger than a breadbox. But they also led young children into the creative acts of producing and performing the abbreviated plays in a way that passive young television watchers of today could hardly imagine. The little theatres were dressed with all the garish decoration of real ones—painted-on cherubs and scrolls, Neptune,

Trojans, and winged chariots. A "pit" with full orchestra was drawn onto the base. And little blue candles in tin holders were the footlights.

The third component of a toy theatre extravaganza, and the third feature of the exhibition, was the script published to accompany the character and scenery sets. These play books were simplified scripts of the actual plays, complete with dialogue and stage directions, that allowed a young David Merrick to show his stuff for the amusement of his indulgent family.

Mr. Viscomi is the exhibition's curator, stage manager, producer and director. He is the young man who has us so willingly suspend our disbelief as to relish grotesque paper pirates in the throes of histrionics, while he carefully reminds us of the larger cultural significance of these specimens. As he explains:

"We can read these prints as toys, as popular prints, as theatre documents, and they are all three. They preserve what cannot be recalled from the text: the spirit, color, mystery and romance of the original productions. But it is as a means of recreating the 19th-century stage that the Toy Theatre acquires its fullest value and meaning."

Two summers ago the 23-year-old Columbia University graduate student, at work as a curatorial assistant in the Museum of the City of New York, found a treasure trove of toy stages and prints in a warehouse. Originally owned by the famous actor, Alfred Lunt, they now belong to the Theatre Arts Collection of the Museum and form the nucleus of the exhibit.

On Saturdays and Sundays, in his museum workroom, Viscomi gently labored over the pieces: cleaning, identifying and restoring them. These, together with prime items loaned from the renowned Toy Collection of the Museum of the City of New York, several fine private collections, and the Columbia University Library, make up the theatrical fare.

"The Traveling Exhibition in Three Acts", as it is billed, has been on the road since January, and al-

ready played engagements at Columbia, SUNY at Purchase, Princeton, and, most recently, the University of Pennsylvania. It will return "home" to the Museum of the City of New York for the summer run.

—Elaine F. Weiss

NEH & Scholarly Publishing

The Endowment should soon be able to assist some presses engaged in publishing the products of Endowment research grants. NEH policy and interest in this area was re-defined and enhanced in a December 1976 report from the Chairman to the Congressional appropriations committees. Representatives of non-profit and commercial presses met with Endowment staff on April 6 to discuss ways of implementing this new policy.

Scholars to Visit China

With a grant from NEH to the National Academy of Sciences, American humanities scholars in three different fields will visit the People's Republic of China and meet with their Chinese counterparts for the first time in 28 years.

A ten-member group of art historians will spend a month this spring studying Chinese art works from an historical perspective, visiting museums in several mainland cities.

A group of ten specialists in applied linguistics will travel to the People's Republic of China in the fall to compare Modern Standard Chinese as spoken today in China with the language as taught from textbooks in the West.

A third group of five Chinese specialists will travel to China as humanities members of a scientific delegation in keeping with the Endowment's six-year commitment to a program of science and human values.

Joseph Viscomi with section of exhibition showing toy theatre and theatre prints

Photo by Todd Weinstein



THE ESSENCE OF

When Edith Wharton died in 1937 she had every reason to feel secure about her place as a major literary figure. Praise from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for her adolescent poetry had launched a career that resulted in forty published volumes of fiction, poetry, and criticism. Her novel, *The Age of Innocence*, had won a Pulitzer Prize and she had been considered the literary peer of her friend Henry James. The public adored her books and made many of them best-sellers.

Wharton did not foresee the decline of her literary reputation, but she was right about one thing. She knew she would be remembered in history as a Victorian bluenose even though she secretly thought of herself as another George Sand. She had the gift to see herself as others saw her and she worried about the "things people are going to assert about me after I'm dead."

She frequently alluded to a future biographer with hopeful expectation that the truth would someday replace the comic legend of her as a haughty grande dame physically constricted by stiff corsets and emotionally constricted by turn-of-the-century social convention. But even scholars were taken in by stories of the pompous and stilted Mrs. Wharton and the legend stuck.

R.W.B. Lewis, an NEH Research grant recipient and Yale professor of American Studies, spent the better part of eight years documenting how little we actually knew of this remarkable woman. With his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Edith Wharton: A Biography*, he succeeded in putting an end to the false Wharton legend once and for all. In deciphering the real Edith Wharton, he found there were a number of paradoxes to resolve.

Was she the stiff grande dame who sat with her French friends like a "woman who had swallowed an umbrella," or was she the animated prankster that American friends remembered as the source of frequent laughter?

Was she lordly and imperious like "a full-rigged vessel [unable to] manoeuvre in a toilet basin," as described by one friend, or was she warm and giving with "a compassion deeper and more authentic than any other human being," as described by another?

Was she "shy and retiring," as noted by a London acquaintance, or did she have a "deranging and desolating, ravaging, burning energy," as Henry James believed?

Was she a woman of frosty reserve or a fiery romantic? Were twenty-eight years of sexless marriage proof of her puritanical repression, or could there be truth in the persistent rumors of a passionate love affair in her middle years?

Who was Edith Wharton?

Wharton's long life spanned a turbulent era from her birth during the Civil War to her death shortly before World War II. She was an active participant in the events that shaped history, and her life converged with the lives of most of the luminaries of her times. She was a familiar figure in both American and European society, and her frequent travels gave her added insight into the cultural heritage of many countries.

Lewis knew that research into so long, so far-flung, and so crowded a life as that of Edith Wharton could never really be completed. Still, having been granted exclusive access to the 50,000 items comprising the Wharton papers that were unsealed for his use at Yale University's Beinecke Library in 1968, he had a head start on what proved to be a Herculean task.

Much of the material in the Beinecke Library was fresh and had to be combed through with painstaking care. But the search for information eventually led him out of the Beinecke into a physical and cultural re-creation of old New York, Edwardian England, and *la belle époque* of France.

Lewis read through piles of documents in archives, institutions, and private collections all over Europe and America. In Italy, the Villa I Tatti collection alone consisted of thousands of letters between art critic Bernard Berenson and his wife Mary that related to the circle of friends they shared with Wharton.

It was, of course, necessary to read and reread all of Wharton's own writings as well as numerous books and publications that helped to sketch in the historical and cultural background of her era.

All of this was important, but was it enough? Is it really possible to come to know a woman like Edith Wharton in the closeted rooms that house her memorabilia? Lewis didn't think so.

He had come to believe that place, movement from place to place, and the arrangement of space were central to her imagination. Travel frequently headed her list of favorite things and the variety of settings she incorporated into her fiction were drawn from her own travels. She often made symbolic comparisons between places, and interior spaces—houses, rooms, formal gardens—were among her most powerful metaphors.

Always on the go, Wharton put her incessant travels to good use. Her superior and original travel books, *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, *Italian Backgrounds*, and *A Motor Flight Through France*, earned her the reputation as the finest travel writer of her generation.

Retracing Wharton's steps, Lewis toured the countryside with related documents and diaries in hand and visited the dwellings in America, England, France, Germany, and Italy that had figured in her aesthetic,

F A LIFE

literary, human, and religious development.

While following the Wharton trail in Europe and America, Lewis stopped to interview people who might be able to tell him something useful about Edith Wharton. He talked with everyone, from the rug beater at Hyères where she spent the last sixteen years of her life to an aging French Comtesse who had been one of her closest friends.

Some of his most startling insights came from the descendants of those who had been involved with Wharton. Many families had preserved the personal documents of their ancestors, and Lewis found these to be invaluable. For the most part, however, their owners regarded them as nothing more than family keepsakes.

Lewis quickly learned not to be misled by the small historical importance people placed on the tattered papers and worn mementos in their possession. Early in his research, for instance, Lewis phoned a Marchesa in Rome whose stepfather, Percy Lubbock, had written *Portrait of Edith Wharton*. The Marchesa graciously agreed to talk with him although she, too, felt she had little that would be helpful.

"We spent two enthralling hours at her palazzo talking about old New York society and the lowly status in it of writers and artists. I left with a suitcase literally full of irreplaceable materials," said Lewis.

The papers included more than two dozen written recollections of Wharton that Lubbock had solicited from her friends when he was preparing his own biography of Wharton. Lewis described this incident as not untypical of the results of his different inquiries.

From these interviews came the rich details and intimate anecdotes that enlivened the scholarly process and allowed Lewis to present Wharton and her associates as if he himself had been one of the group that referred to themselves as the "happy few."

During her later years, Edith Wharton became close friends with the much younger Kenneth and Jane Clark and allowed herself to relax more in their presence than she did with many of her lifelong associates. The Clarks were able to provide Lewis with a wealth of information including several amusing and revealing incidents.

As her old friend, Bernard Berenson, left a holiday party at her Hyères estate, he remarked to Clark that he felt exactly as though he had just been let out of school. As Berenson drove off, Wharton waved goodbye to him and said to Clark, "Now, I can take off my stays."

Interviewing and investigative footwork helped to destroy the myth of puritanical repression. "In previous work on Wharton the assumption was that her only relationship with a man that held a seed of the

EDITH WHARTON



Painting of Edith Wharton by Leonard Baskin

romantic, never mind the erotic, was with the dry-souled patrician American lawyer Walter Berry," said Lewis. "But the facts did not bear this out."

Edith's marriage to Teddy Wharton in 1885 had been a sexual disaster, and both the externals of her life and her published writings suggested unhappiness and frigidity in love. When Lewis came across a letter from Morton Fullerton, an American journalist, that extravagantly described Wharton's passionate and erotic nature, he was disbelieving. At the time, Lewis had in his possession a narrative journal written by Wharton in Paris in 1908 and addressed to her lover, whom she left unnamed. "Despite other evidence, I took it stubbornly for granted that it was Walter Berry to whom the diary was speaking so ardently," said Lewis.

Still, Fullerton was of interest. A research assistant, Marion Manwaring, located an undiscovered cache of Fullerton papers in France after several incredible feats of detective work. The affair with Fullerton was

confirmed through matching certain chronological and geographical facts in other documents with entries in Wharton's 1908 diary.

Slowly, Lewis began to piece together the scattered and oddly-shaped clues that Wharton had left behind as testimony to her unconventional nature. Just how unexpected these discoveries were can only be understood when placed in perspective with the events of her life.



Born in 1862 into the security and luxury of old-line wealth, Edith Newbold Jones spied on an endless parade of Gilded Age society from the elegant staircases of her family's New York and Newport homes. At an early age, she learned that the upper crust of her era shied away from intellectuals and artists.

The aristocracy of old New York dealt in social propriety, gracious small talk, elegant dining, clothes from Paris, and money. To differ in any way from the social norm was a dangerous undertaking for a man and an inconceivable thing for a woman.

By the time she was six, it was clear that Edith Jones was going to be different. Holding a book in her hand and pretending to read it, she would pace back and forth across the floor inventing a rush of stories about people like her parents and their friends.

The words and rhythms of poetry and the play of philosophic ideas were as exciting to her as they were irritating to her mother. Being careful to conceal her new knowledge, she quietly educated herself in her father's library of classics in what she later described as a "secret ecstasy of communion."

Although she was tutored in European languages in preparation for travel abroad, a formal academic education was out of the question for someone in her position. Sons of the socially prominent were educated to be gentlemen at Harvard or in England, but daughters were expected to cultivate womanly skills at home.

There was no one quite like her in all of old New York, but it would have been difficult to distinguish her. She wore the same fashionable clothes, attended the same parties, and behaved in the same way as other well-bred young girls. It was said of her, "She was everything that was right and regular, but the young hawk looked from her eyes."

Far from inciting admiration, her flair for creating with words and her philosophical intensity were a source of dismay among her family and friends. But she also took pleasure in fashion and the social trappings of wealth and her literary gifts were tolerated as childhood play.

No one doubted for a moment that her unsettling intrigue with literature would end with a suitable marriage and the crowded calendar of a society matron. Anything else would be unthinkable.

For a time, it seemed they were right. At fifteen, she wrote *Fast and Loose*, a 30,000 word novella. At seventeen, she published a poem in *Atlantic Monthly*.

Two more poems appeared in *The New York World* soon after and then nothing more for a decade. During this time she married Teddy Wharton and attempted to fulfill all the social expectations of her upbringing.

Although it was twenty-five more years before Henry James was to say so, from the very beginning her marriage was "an almost—or rather an utterly—inconceivable thing." Teddy and Edith Wharton had little in common outside of a mild fondness for each other. During the early years of her marriage and before she had established her identity as a writer, her greatest pleasure was an annual European tour where she mingled in a society more tolerant of ideas and artistry.

Her new acquaintances encouraged her literary ambition and, with some hesitancy, she returned to her youthful passion for storytelling. Her first short story was published when she was twenty-nine and the next decade was a time of struggle for her sense of self. Literary success was coupled with emotional breakdown, and there were frequent blocks between periods of frantic productivity.

Her first novel, *Valley of Decision*, was published when she was forty, and for the remainder of her career she was in the forefront of American literature. Her literary earnings were phenomenal for such lofty writing as hers, and no one was more aware of this than Henry James.

When Wharton arrived at his home in a fashionable new car purchased with a portion of her earnings from *Valley of Decision*, James is reported to have said, "With the proceeds of my last novel, I purchased a small go-cart. . . . It needs a coat of paint. With the proceeds of my next novel I shall have it painted."

Contrary to the image of writer as recluse, Wharton's human encounters increased as her literary effort became more accomplished. Her mornings were spent in creative solitude, but her afternoons and evenings were filled with social engagements in the intellectual circles of Paris where she now lived.

In spite of what Henry James referred to as her "whirligig" life, her great unhappiness was evident in her writing. The emptiness of her marriage to Teddy caused her to feel shut off from emotional fulfillment, and imprisonment was the driving theme of her work from this period.

In a notebook, she copied Emma Bovary's reflection that her husband's conversation "was as flat as a sidewalk in the street," and her own life "was as cold as a garret whose windows face north."

While Edith Wharton was able to convert her sense of confinement into art and thereby overcome it to some extent, there was no outlet in Parisian society for a simple, outdoor man like Teddy Wharton. The beginning of Edith Wharton's success was the beginning of Teddy Wharton's decline. His eventual emotional breakdown led to their divorce in 1913.

Divorce, even under extreme circumstances, was not the custom of her country, and neither were love affairs outside of marriage. During the traumatic final years of her marriage and after a lifetime of sexual

deprivation, Wharton met Morton Fullerton and found courage for a long moment of emotional gratification.

The affair ended in 1910, less than two years after it had begun, but Wharton was able to write, "I have drunk of the wine of life at last, I have known the thing best worth knowing, I have been warmed through and through, never to grow quite cold again til the end. . . ."

As James expressed it, with Fullerton she had been able to "drain the cup of pleasure to the dregs." When her marriage ended, she experienced a different, but equally satisfying emotion. After twenty-eight years of entrapment in her metaphorical prison, Wharton at last felt free. She expressed her new exhilaration in a whirlwind of travel that took her to seven countries on three continents in fifteen months.

She was determined to eat the world "leaf by leaf," she told her friend Berenson, and, in the opinion of Henry James, she was succeeding. He complained of the rate at which she consumed worlds, "eating up one for her luncheon and one for her dinner."

His dismay was in partial jest, but only partial. After a visit from her during this period, he wrote that she had left him and his friends "ground to powder, reduced to pulp, consumed utterly."

Her frenetic travels were ended with the beginning of World War I. Wharton returned to Paris and poured her energy into vigorous effort on behalf of refugees. Her extraordinary talent at organization and her generosity with both her time and her money were rewarded by the French Legion of Honor.

Whatever she did, she did with enormous energy. But her most intense feelings were reserved for her writing. Though her stories of old New York are as exquisitely wrought as fine needlepoint, the world that Wharton dominated and cherished no longer exists and her books are often dismissed as stylized period pieces. Her novels are the continuation of literary tradition, but readers today sometimes lose patience with the ponderous gentility of the tea table.

Has our stereotype of Wharton as a stiff and comic grand dame caused us to treat her writing with less seriousness than it deserves? Lewis makes a strong case for her artistry in his biography but, in retrospect, he believes that he underestimated her literary achievement because she herself had made a habit of deprecating her talent.

Wharton used Daudet's words, "I dream of an eagle, I give birth to a hummingbird," to describe her sense of failing to match what she thought the novel ought to be. Even as a youngster, she denounced her own writing in uncompromising terms.

In explaining her harsh self-criticism, Lewis points to the fact that it was simply not proper for a woman of Wharton's social background to write fiction. One could do so only if one joked about it or treated it as amusement. He feels that if she had not been a woman we would probably regard her writing in a different light.

In her writing, as in her life, Wharton stayed true to herself. Complaints that her novels never strayed

from the social milieu of the very rich angered her. "The assumption that the people I write about are not 'real,' because they are not navvies and char-women, makes me feel rather hopeless. I write about what I happen to be nearest to, which is surely better than doing cowboys de chic," she wrote.

Lewis believes that although Wharton misjudged her own artistic achievement, she was almost without peer in her American generation as a judge of fiction and poetry.

"She was decades ahead of critical opinion in her high assessment and appreciation of poets as remote from each other as John Donne and Walt Whitman. Her most unfashionable pronouncements in the 1920's on new literary idols like Joyce and Eliot seem, in certain special perspectives, to have more cogency with every passing year," he said.

Wharton was a contemporary of the "charmed circle" of Gertrude Stein and the "Bloomsbury rebellion" of Virginia Woolf, but she chose to remain aloof from what she judged to be superficial and strained. She preferred the cultivated brilliance and mannered graciousness of her own familiar cluster that included Henry Adams, Henry James, André Gide, Sinclair Lewis, Aldous Huxley, and Kenneth Clark.

"The long life of Edith Wharton seems to me to embody a solid, stalwart humanism of a sort one looks for almost in vain on the current literary scene," Lewis said.

When he speaks of Wharton, as when he writes of her, you can feel a living presence being evoked from the stuff of scholarship. The dedication that he brought to a monumental task has rescued Edith Wharton from the stilted pose she seemed destined to hold in history. Lewis has shown us the essence of her life and given shape to her hope that she would someday be known and understood as the vital, complicated human being that she was.

—Pamela Brooke

R. W. B. Lewis photo by Ralph Ellison



(HARD TIMES continued from page 1)

The filmed adaptation of *Hard Times* has been at pains to reflect the characterization and narrative of the novel; the design, casting and use of location are faithful to the details and tone of the novel's setting.

The circus plays an important part in *Hard Times*: it is a symbol of the imagination, and the freedom of the circus folk is contrasted with the colorless, numbing routine of the men, women and children who work the dehumanizing machines. Because of its significance as symbol and contrast, the *Hard Times* production re-created a complete Victorian circus which filled a five-acre set with 25 performing circus acts, 15 horses, hundreds of costumed extras, and the inevitable dancing bear.

Hard Times is being shown not only on public television in the United States; it will be broadcast in the United Kingdom and possibly throughout the world. There will be subsequent audio-visual distribution to community groups, libraries, schools and universities.

To increase the value of viewing the segments of *Hard Times*, Granada Television will publish a soft-cover edition of the novel, and NEH is supporting preparation of a free viewer booklet which will be available on request through local public stations.

Consultant Asa Briggs points out that the novel has been as widely read by social critics, including economists and sociologists, as by historians who have considered it as "evidence" about the texture of life

in a new urban industrial community and the values that sustained it. Briggs goes on to state: "Anyone concerned with the first industrial revolution in the world will turn to it for its symbolism (of town and factory) as much as for its plot. . . . Dickens related from the start what he had to say about industrialization to what he had to say about education. Both started from the same premises and both involved failures in human understanding. . . . It is about the past, but it awakens contemporary reactions. It encourages not just uncritical reception but 'pondering' and 'argument.' "

—S.D.T.

NEH Appropriations

Supplemental appropriations for FY 1977: House and Senate conferees agreed in March on \$9 million for NEH in order to launch the NEH Challenge Grants Program this year.

Final action on the FY 1978 appropriations request has not yet been taken by either the House or the Senate. That request comprises a total of \$121.5 million: \$87 million for regular program funds, \$7.5 million for matching private gifts made on behalf of projects approved by the National Council on the Humanities, \$18 million for Challenge Grants, and \$9 million for administrative expenses.

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