

Missing citations from SocialBook

This particular image of Coketown both highlights the era the story is set and offers a reason behind the "no fancy" attitude that Gradgrind loves so much. The mid 19th century followed the peak of the Industrial Revolution, with the full transition to factories and mass scale manufacturing. This economic turn created a variety of new possible occupations, most of which required years of training and education beforehand, as well as demanding longer hours from workers in the factories. This need for extended periods of working left no room for daydreaming or "fancies," requiring focus on the job, hinting at Mr. Gradgrind's attitude. Furthermore, with the Industrial Revolution bringing rapid progress to society, the immediate returns and practical value to daily life far outweighed the returns of earlier eras, marked with emphasis on the arts and cultural expansion. This perhaps drew people more to the ideals parallel with the Industrial era, bringing light to how the attitude of Mr. Gradgrind came to be.

Incomplete OED entry

Farrier refers to the occupation of a veterinary surgeon, or someone who shoes horses (www.oed.com). Mr. Gradgrind uses this word when talking to Sissy about the occupation of her father. Shortly after hearing this, Gradgrind immediately jumps to ask Sissy a straight fact the definition of a horse, in which she is too flustered to answer. This shows how Gradgrind regards this occupation as useless, and probably unnecessary. In this novel, the horse, as in this scene, or the pegasus in the circus, or the horse wallpaper from the circus tent, seems to be a symbol for the imagination, or the fancy. Sissy's father also is the farrier for the circus, which Gradgrind thinks is the absolute opposition of fact and his ideologies. Gradgrind seems to be the embodiment of everything factory or fact related, while a farrier, at least in this time and context with the circus is a career based on the need for fancy, and entertainment.

Seeing his children interested in a circus was extremely bewildering and horrifying for Mr. Gradgrind. In a world of fact, circuses did not belong. It turns out that Mr. Gradgrind was not alone in this type of thinking. Others in the 19th Century agreed that these places of entertainment were destructive to a person's integrity and should not be attended. "Popular Amusements" explains that the morals of circus goers " have begun to yield [and have] become corrupt." A considerable number of religious people felt strongly that circuses were places of trouble since audience members often "encountered temptations." These environments went against standards of morality, purity, and structure found in the Catholic church. Those who attended were looked down upon and were expected to be in a sense brain washed into adopting unethical desires and behaviors. The North Carolina Baptist Interpreter compares them to the "many persons [that] have resided in infected districts in times of plague who have not died" and even those who "have gone into the field of battle and have returned unhurt." While it is possible to go to a circus unaffected, the perceived probability and likelihood of that was thought to be near impossible.

Link to 1857 Circus Poster: [C-156.jpg](#)

Sources

Grand Equestrian Performances C156. Digital image. Circus Posters. Princeton University, n.d. Web. 6 Mar. 2015. <http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/Circus/Cir3/images/C-156.jpg>.

North Carolina, Baptist Interpreter. "POPULAR AMUSEMENTS." Christian Secretary (1822-1889) Jun 01 1833: 80. ProQuest.