

In this essay I will be looking at how the printing press effect illustration and the domino effect it caused through history.

Our timeline begins with the Printing Press, which was established in 1440 by Gutenberg, the printing press was revolutionary in Europe as it was one of the first printers introduced and had a significant changed how books were made from being handwritten to printing, which cut down time immensely. The printing press had an extension where you individually place letters and symbols which would be arranged in to form the desired text.

It was in 1454 when Gutenberg commercialised his printing press, this causes a changed within the renaissance ear (14th-17th century) The public release of the Gutenberg's press influenced many things being, the catalyst in for information.

'Knowledge is power [...] the invention of the mechanical movable type printing press helped disseminate knowledge wider and faster than ever before' (Dave Roos, 2023,) this quote brings up the thought of how the printing press was used mainly by the church to spread there beliefs and prophecies they also producing new bibles which was named after Gutenberg being commonly known as the 'Gutenberg bible' these bibles were significantly cheaper due to new found efficiency of using a printer, in turn made it easier for the common person to own their own bible, which in hand raised literacy rates during the late renaissance era. However, words alone did not spread the beliefs of the church there was also an increase of prints within in Germany, of illustration depicting stories from the bible to reach those who could not read.

The Gutenberg press unintentionally cerated a revolution in art effecting both style and processes, when researching I discovered a link between the printing press and relief printing as in the late 15th century relief prints became popular after the release of the Gutenberg press, artist begging to develop new ways to create art using wooden blocks, carving designs in to them to then press them into paper with ink to leave a inked image on the paper.

A artist which was a major lead within this moment was Albrecht Dürer who was a famous painter and later on printer, 'the appearance of Dürer's first wood-cuts and engraving which were radically to transform the printmaking profession' (Giulia Bartrum, 1995, p.7) Düere's work was highly detailed with strong definition and compositions which he achieved through carving out very fine lines within the wooden block, Dürer's work showed the value of manual labor in art as the viewer can see the work put into the drawing by the indications of pressure indents in the paper from the printing block and how the ink ripples from it being pushed into the paper, which I believe by seeing Düeres work encouraged other artists to work with printmakers in order to manufacture there works proficiently.

Dures experimentation in printing cerated a pathway in techniques for fellow artists to adopt and adapt creating a development in printing quality this can be backed up by the

following quote; 'The work of Albrecht Dürer represents a traditional state between the 15th and 16th centuries and was the single most significant factor which affected the function and techniques of print during the period' (Giulia Bartrum, 1995, p.17)

During the mid 15th century printing became immensely popular; 'Germany appears as the most active centre, but printed wood cut soon spread from the bear to Austria, France, Italy, and Netherlands and finally to England and Spain' (Michael Rothenstein, 1970, p.14) with the surge of artist using printing to distribute their work very slowly the equipment started to develop along side it which resulted in the Albion, Columbian, and Washington presses which are all very similar in design and function, which assisted relief printing such as wooden blocks, and etching. These printing presses all came about around the 19th century due to Industrial Revolution, the Colombian press was first to make a appearance in England in 1820 which was produced by Clymer of Philadelphia and was used for a short period as the Albion quickly became more favourable than Colombian press as it was quicker to operate as well as, was easier to repair. Albion press made it easier to print with it lever system in which let you use most of your body weight by leaning back to pull the press down which is what made it superior to the Colombian press.

Amongst the industry revolution advertising such as posters as well as news papers became highly popular due to a surge of new product be it machines or food. Along side the new productions it created a desire for illustrators, as businesses as well as publishing companies wanted to have illustrations to go alongside with their advertisements and newspapers to catch people's attention. This gave many aspiring artists to pressure illustration as an occupation. 'Advertising was an important source of finance for papers, as sales alone were often inadequate to cover production costs' (Amy J. Lloyd, *British Library Newspapers*, 2007)

An illustrator to experienced the need for artists was Louis Wain who is very famous for his anamorphic cats, Louis Wain was highly valued freelancer in *The Illustrated London News*, established by Herbert Ingram in 1842, which was a unique publishing company which was one of the firsts to strictly use illustration which caused it to be a widely popular newspaper. Louis Wain has a extraordinary ability to draw with both his left and right hand simultaneously making it so he could draw a portrait by 1 minute on average, which suited the need for Illustrators to draw the latest events in a timely manner to keep up with schedules, so that they could be paired with the news for a visual appeal and for a easier understanding of the narrative with visual communication.

In 1884 Louis wain started selling his work to the company by doing observations drawing from latest events which then would be used in the newspaper, however wain started to draw and paint cats during his person time, he drew cats so that he could entertain his sick wife. "In the last years of her life they had a family pet, a cat by the name of Peter, and to amuse her he would do caricatures, just privately - they weren't for publication," said Colin Gale (director of the Bethlem Museum of the Mind) But the cats began to develop into a unique series of anthropomorphic cats. Which cached the

eyes of editors within *The Illustrated London News*, they offered to showcase one of Louis Wain's drawings called *A Kitten's Christmas Party*, and it became quickly popular within London. So popular in fact that it changed the views on cats, they were originally often looked at as nothing more than animals to get rid of mice and rats. However Louis Wain's drawings made cats more lovable, his illustrations were lively and were often human-like, which was shown through visual communication such as putting them in suits and dresses, they were also made to be more human-like through expressive faces and body language such as giving them a distinct smile and confident pose, which could be the reason why people within London started to like cats as Louis Wain's drawings made them appear more friendly. I believe this shows the power illustration can have on society.

Louis Wain is also a good example of the importance of copyrights, as he ended up being badly affected later on in life. While printing presses assisted artists it was also used against them. As their work would be quickly reproduced and sold, with none of the profits going towards the original artist.

Copyright issues could be seen since the invention of the Gutenberg press as '*New works were quickly republished by competing printers [...] European governments set up systems of licensing controls over printers, issuing individual printers exclusive licenses to print a particular work for a period of time.*' (The UK Copyright Service, 2024) However, it was not until 1862 a copyright act was put in to prevent work from being distributed without permission '*The introduction of the 1862 Fine Art Copyright Act was the first time that photographs and artworks enjoyed copyright protection under statutory law*' (The Gazette, 2020) But due to this act being new, it meant that it wasn't a common practice artists followed.

During the late 19th century they discovered how to efficiently copy photography, therefore there was a decrease in illustration as cameras were now seen as a quicker and cheaper option than illustrations which left artists competing with cameras '*all the hand-crafted print processes, relief printing among them, have been overtaken to some extent by developments in photography*' (Michael Rothenstein, 1970, p.29) even the *The Illustrated London Newspaper* started to use photos rather than illustrations in 1860, however the rivalry started to dispute as many people now look for traditional art as it has a strong sense of authenticity due to the rich history behind processes such as relief printing, as I believe in a world with advanced technology where it has been made easy for artists to reproduce art on a high scale the art loses its value, meaning that printing presses are still very much prevalent and sought after even in modern times as it is perceived in a higher manner.

In conclusion the printing press gave way to new forms of expressions in information and art, and was a vital tool in production so that illustrators could make a living for many centuries, and even though that the printing presses such as the Albion press is no longer seen as the first choice to manufacture work due to the advancements of digital printers, it is still highly regarded in giving art value.

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