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Abstract

Books that reproduced artwork in the nineteenth century showcase the technological and aesthetic developments in printing that both enabled the growth of Victorian visual culture and represented that visual culture's shifting relationship with art. As books began to reproduce art by increasingly mechanized means, they simultaneously made art more accessible for the masses and harder to define and create. Were the reproductions of art art in themselves? By investigating the evolution of printing technologies linked to wood engraving, lithography, and photomechanical reproductive methods, and exploring the resulting spread of reproduced and reproductive art in books, we can see the tensions between art and mass printing at play. Contemporary responses to these media suggest a complicated relationship between art and artists, printing and printers, and the viewing public, anticipating the criticism of Walter Benjamin in his twentieth-century essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

Keywords

print illustration, reproduction, art, wood engraving, lithography, photomechanical reproduction, book history, nineteenth century.
In his essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin (1936/2010) writes that “what withers in the age of the technological reproducibility of the work of art is the latter’s aura” (p. 14). This “aura” is the trace of the artwork’s originality, an intangible quality described by Eva Geulen (2002) as “visible only to the extent that art has lost this character. The manifestation of aura arises out of its loss” (p. 135). The loss of the aura in art, for Benjamin (1936/2010), results in a “shattering of tradition,” as what was once original artwork transforms into mass-consumed media (p. 14). In the realm of the fine arts, such a transition is evident in the nineteenth century. Benjamin (1936/2010) writes that “[a] painting has always exerted a valid claim to be viewed primarily by a single person or by a few. The simultaneous viewing of paintings by a large audience, as happens in the nineteenth century, is an early symptom of the crisis in painting” (p. 29). Benjamin leaves this crisis in painting undefined, but he implies that the crisis was detrimental and possibly “shattering” to traditional views of painting. I argue that it was shattering to traditional conceptions of art more broadly, removing viewers from the “here and now” of the art and allowing for it to “reach the viewer in his or her own situation” (Benjamin, 1936/2010, p. 14).

Victorian culture was a highly visual culture, and it was perhaps indiscriminately so. The public was confronted with a heady blend of artistic and commercial, expensive and cheap, original and reproduced images at every turn. As Haskins (2012) notes, illustrative prints were commodities, being “a popular consumer product within the home where both originals and their graphic surrogates could and did decorate the walls” (p. 3). Printed images and works of art were both striving for public attention; copies and masterworks coexisted as the unprecedented development of public museums, galleries, and exhibitions made art accessible in public spaces. At the same time, printing technology developed and improved, and it naturally came to saturate an increasingly visually conscious culture with reproductions of this art. Images thus confronted the public in their “own situation,” as Benjamin (1936/2010) would say. Art was shared in accessible spaces, and printed images were circulated amongst the public, even finding their way into their homes.

Books that reproduced artwork in the nineteenth century highlight this phenomenon, showcasing the technological and aesthetic developments in printing that both enabled the growth of such a visual culture and represented its shifting relationship with art. Books reproducing artwork thus embodied contemporary anxieties about the nature of art, its audiences, and its creators, anticipating Benjamin (1936/2010)’s concerns about art in the age of mechanical reproduction. As books began to reproduce art by increasingly mechanized means, they simultaneously made art more accessible for the masses and harder to define and create. Were the reproductions of art art in themselves? What methods of image production counted as art, and who could create it? These questions suggest a crisis—not in the value or nature of painting as Benjamin (1936/2010) claims, but rather more broadly in the understanding of art when new technologies and media were used in the creation and dissemination of images. By investigating the evolution of printing technologies linked to wood engraving, lithography, and photomechanical reproductive methods, and exploring the resulting spread of reproduced and reproductive art, this paper will show the tensions between art and mass printing at play. Contemporary responses to these media suggest a complicated relationship between art and artists, printing and printers, and the viewing public.

Art and print technology have long been linked; however, with a number of printing innovations in the nineteenth century, images were more reproducible than never before. The
iron press—an improvement from the wooden presses that had been used since the advent of printing in the fifteenth century—delivered more pressure with each pull of the printer and enabled crisper impressions to be made. This technology was particularly important in the development of wood-engraved illustrations (Banham, 2007, p. 275). Illustrations carved from wooden blocks had existed for centuries, but with the exception of woodcuts created by masters like Albrecht Dürer, they were often rough, crude, and lacking in detail. The refining of woodcuts into wood engravings was first accomplished in the late eighteenth century by Thomas Bewick, in A History of British Birds. As described in Banham (2007), wood engraving is a relief-printing process that involves the engraver carving fine details into the end grain of a block of wood instead of the long grain, which was traditionally used for woodcuts. The end grain is stronger and better able to hold up to the immense pressure of printing than the long grain (which is prone to cracking and splintering with overuse). It is for this reason that wood engraving was popularized as a medium for illustration alongside the rise of the iron press in the 1820s. These illustrations could be conveniently set with letterpress type, unlike other illustrations printed via intaglio processes like copperplate engraving and etching, which were printed separately as plates. This efficiency led to the use of wood engravings in the production of books, newspapers, magazines, and advertisements. With wood engraving, graphic printing flourished.

As wood engraving increased in popularity, the demand for colour grew through the first half of the nineteenth century. By the 1830s, various methods were developed for printing full-colour illustrations from wood blocks. Books reproducing artwork embraced these methods, and according to the Gems of English Art of This Century, aspired to “preserve (so far as the process can) that element in a picture which, although beyond the reach of simply engraving, is the most characteristic of its elements—the colouring of the original” (Palgrave, 1868, pp. vii-viii).

The Pictorial Album, published in 1837 by Chapman and Hall, is a book of reproduced art employing one such method of coloured print illustration known as the Baxter process. The Baxter process, invented by printer George Baxter, was a multi-step printing process that involved the use of both steel-cut engravings and wood engravings in order to build up a detailed, multi-coloured image (see Figures 1-3). As described in the book’s introduction:

The first faint impression, forming a ground, is from a steel-plate; and above this ground, which is usually a neutral tint, the positive colours are impressed from as many wood-blocks as there are distinct tints in the picture. Some idea of the difficulty of Picture-Printing may be conceived, when the reader is informed, that, as each tint has to be communicated by a separate impression some of the subjects have required not less than twenty blocks; and that even the most simple in point of colour, have required not less than ten. The very tint of the paper upon which each imitative painting appears to be mounted, is communicated from a smooth plate of copper, which receives the colour, and is printed, in the same manner as a wood-block. (Baxter, 1837, p. xiii)
Figure 3: Baxter print reproduction of “Jenny Dean’s Interview with the Queen,” originally painted by Mrs. Seyffarth. From George Baxter’s *The Pictorial Album*. London, Chapman & Hall, 1837. Image source: McLean Collection, Robertson Davies Library, Massey College. McLean O 0483.
The process is a complicated one and requires expert engravers with a knowledge of mixing colours. Furthermore, like a painting, the images are built up on a coloured base (note the different colours of the pages in Figures 1-3, lending warmer and cooler tones to the illustrations). “Picture-Printing” is thus both described and enacted like the fine art form that it reproduces. Colours are layered in much the same way as they are in a painting.

In the publisher’s introduction to *The Pictorial Album*, a brief history of print illustration is provided for the reader, emphasizing this artistry by claiming that “[s]o little is known to the Public generally of the Art by which imitative Paintings in the present volume are produced, that it seems necessary to give here a preliminary sketch of its origin and progress” (Baxter, 1837, p. v). The history of printing as an artform is then outlined, beginning with fifteenth-century wood engraving, and culminating in the work at hand by George Baxter. In all cases, print illustrations are described as art in themselves; they are not just reproductions of other artworks. Baxter is appropriately celebrated as both an artist and an inventor in the text:

> Through his own unaided talent and his indefatigable perseverance—for he is both the engraver and the printer—its boundaries have been so far extended [...] To the art, as improved by Mr. Baxter, —which he almost may be said to have invented, and which he certainly has been the first to practice with success—a distinctive name is wanting; and none appears to be more appropriate than that of PICTURE PRINTING; for to the skilful use of the PRESS, in communicating the colour from the engraved block to the paper, we are chiefly indebted for the admirable fac-simile paintings which ornament the PICTORIAL ALBUM. (Baxter, 1837, p. xii)

The press, in this example, is the facilitator of art. It is not simply a reproductive machine, but a creative machine handled by a printer-artist of “talent” who has improved upon a definitive artform: that of “picture printing.”

Being addressed to “the Public,” *The Pictorial Album* engaged with the contemporary desire to edify the masses through exposure to art. Victorian morals were closely tied to Victorian aesthetics, perhaps most notably by artist and critic John Ruskin who once wrote that “good taste is essentially a moral quality” (qtd. in Peters, 1961, p. 10). Through the nineteenth century, movements in support of public galleries and museums sought to share art and invention with the population as a whole for this purpose. When, in the eighteenth century, most fine art was accessible only by expensive travel or costly purchases (Watson, 2012, p. 128), government funded museums and galleries that housed historic works and works formerly hidden away in private collections were now established as the means by which the masses could become familiar with art (Watson, 2012, p.130). After much debate about the social benefits of such spaces, the National Gallery was established in 1824, the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) in 1851, and the National Portrait Gallery in 1859 (Watson, 2012, p. 130). As Watson (2012) notes, Sir Robert Peel argued at the time that “encouraging the masses to visit art galleries would create a bond between classes and minimize the danger of social unrest” (p. 130). Similarly, Henry Cole, the organizer of the Great Exhibition and the director of the South Kensington Museum, claimed that “attracting the ‘artisan classes’ to late evening and week-end opening of galleries instilled civic values and kept them away from drink” (Watson, 2012, p. 130). Art shared with the masses could save society’s growing working and middle classes from corruption.

The promotion and sharing of art with the public in this manner culminated in the Great Exhibition of 1851, bringing art and inventions from all corners of the world to England. As the first and the largest exhibit to feature both works of art and industry, it inspired a number of other exhibitions, including the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, the Great Exhibition.
of 1862, and the National Portrait Exhibitions of 1866, 1867, and 1868 (Watson, 2012, p. 133). In the foreword to the illustrated periodical *The Art Treasures Examiner*, published for the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, the publishers wrote that

The object of the Art-Treasures Exhibition was to make known to the people of England the art-wealth of their own country, and, by inducing a greater familiarity with the beautiful, to increase and extend its refining influences [...] To illustrate this great undertaking has been the desire of the Publishers of the Art-Treasures Examiner,—the only record of an occasion which cannot fail to become a prominent epoch in the social history of Manchester. (*The Art Treasures Examiner*, 1857, n.p.)

Manchester, being an industrial town with large middle and working-class populations, explicitly desired the “refining influences” of art. Through art, it could raise itself culturally, and an event like the exhibition was so important that it was considered “a prominent epoch” in its social history.

Furthermore, as written in the *Examiner’s* first article, by journalist W. Blanchard Jerrold, art was changing. It was of immediate relevance to workers and artisans, like those living in Manchester, and was no longer the exclusive work and property of the elite:

We are moving onwards in art, bravely. Our schools of design; our provincial exhibitions; our art-union; the receipts at the metropolitan art galleries, are evidence of the new time that is dawning. From the scornful patron, the modern artist appeals to the liberal and grateful people. Public bodies give commissions to our sculptors; our manufacturers woo our artists to their looms. Potters seek life and grace for their clay, in our studios. The demand for art grows daily; and with it will come, in fair time the full and great supply. (*The Art Treasures Examiner*, 1857, p. 1)

This demand for art—a popular and consumable art—speaks to the greater public’s interest in accessing what was previously inaccessible and becoming a part of the art world themselves. Print illustration stood as a means by which art could literally be brought into the daily lives of many individuals, filling their homes and filled their books; it was one such method by which this demand could be met, alongside the rise of public museums, galleries, and exhibitions. The demand for art increased the demand for print, and consequently, colour illustrations and reproductions flourished in Victorian print culture.

While colourful prints like in Baxter’s *The Pictorial Album* were highly valued as fantastic displays of technological and artistic innovation and mastery, and similar standalone colour prints were displayed at the Great Exhibition (Korey, 1995, p. 49), colour wood engravings were also mass produced in cheaper formats to create illustrations for various purposes. For instance, alongside ubiquitous print advertising and lavish book production, colour prints were used in the production of cheap ‘yellowback’ books, catching the eye of passersby with vibrant cover designs. These books were named as such, because the printed papers that wrapped their boards were often yellow in base colour—not for artistic purposes, as the base colours in Baxter’s prints were designed to be, but because they did not dirty as easily as white paper. Such books, sold at railway stations, were cheap productions for one or two shillings; this was a profitable enterprise for publishers, as many Victorians purchased them for entertainment while travelling (James, n.d.). This commercial aspect of colour printing raises questions about the nature of printing, particularly the printing of books. Was it a technological artform as it developed, or was it an efficient, commercial enterprise? Insofar as lavish books like Baxter’s *The Pictorial Album* were highly valued for their beauty and technical skill, they might be classified as art and certainly reproduced art well; often, however, such books were also sold as gifts for Christmas, and, conspicuously, books were not displayed with other printed materials at
the Great Exhibition (Korey, 1995, p. 49). Printing, and especially book printing, was a hybrid—simultaneously an art and a business venture, but not easily classified as distinctly one or the other.

As the century marched on, print and colour print illustrations were increasingly mass-produced in newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and on the covers of yellowbacks. Because of the popularity of mass production, the medium slowly shifted to become increasingly associated with cheap and commercial production over lavish artistic craftsmanship. This would not have been the first time that such a thing had happened in the world of print. Although various forms of print illustration had been recommended to the Royal Academy as artforms through the nineteenth century, they were often rejected. Perhaps most famously, Dickens pushed for line engraving to be recognized as a fine art, in support of his illustrator George Cruikshank, but the Royal Academy declined his petition (Curtis, 2002, p. 37). As Gerard Curtis (2002) suggests, this may have contributed to the decline of the medium’s value amongst the discerning public (p. 37). According to the Academy, print illustration, especially as it related to books, was not a part of the world of fine art, and it is possible that this opinion contributed to the devaluation of not only line engraving, but also, as suggested above, colour prints.

In such a saturated visual culture and market, better and cheaper printing methods were constantly being sought out. Lithography developed in this way, first invented by Alois Senefelder in 1796 in Prussia, as he tried to devise ways of printing his own writing more cheaply (Korey, 1995, p. 35). This method of printing involves using a greasy crayon to draw upon a stone that is subsequently wetted; the water adheres to the stone, but is repelled by the crayon. Following this, the ink is applied, which is repelled by the water and attracted to the crayon. Once inked in this way, the image is then ready to be printed on a sheet of paper pressed to the stone’s surface, and it will reproduce the crayon drawing on the stone exactly. While able to capture freely hand-drawn lines, lithography was limited by its inability to be printed simultaneously with letterpress text (being printed on an entirely different press), and it was ultimately a slower printing process than that of traditional relief printing (Banham, 2007, p. 284). Even so, it was a potentially better illustrative process for capturing and reproducing artistic styles and effects. The lines drawn on the lithographic stone could be directly reproduced without the need for the interpretation of an engraver.

This was not without controversy, however, and lithography faced a cool reception in England. Many critics saw such printing methods as exacerbating issues of reproducible art—namely, the debasement of art by such lesser, mechanical methods of reproduction. Engraving, while rejected by the Academy as a fine art, at least had a history behind it. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, lithography had yet to be perfected. On a larger scale, too, lithography threatened the world of art as a whole. As an artform in and of itself, it was a new method by which artists could create work that existed in multiple copies, eliminating the possibility of there ever being an original creation.

Charles Hullmandel (1824), an early adopter of lithography in England, noted some such criticisms in the introduction to his manual, The Art of Drawing on Stone:

I must still be allowed to say a few words, in answer to a most ungenerous attack made on Lithography by a reviewer of Captain Franklin’s Journey, in a quarterly publication. A hope is expressed by him that the public will no longer be presented with “the greasy daubs of Lithography;” and a note declaresthat “the above attack is not dictated by any peculiar animosity, but merely with a view to confine the art in its proper limits, and hinder it from presuming to
Hullmandel (1824) parried this attack by noting that “Michael Angelo affected to despise oil-painting, and also to point out its limits, by saying it was only fit to be handled by women. Had his opinion been followed, and that art abandoned, what admirable productions of the human mind should we not have been deprived of!” (p. viii). Similarly, contemporary critics would be wrong to condemn lithography as a lesser art form, just because it used new techniques and materials. For Hullmandel, technology did not threaten art; rather, it held the promise of artistic innovation.

Hullmandel (1824) claimed that lithography would be the basis for an artistic revolution. He noted that the multiplication and reproduction of artwork made possible by lithography, considered by some to be cheapening and debasing, would introduce the public to great art, and improve them by such:

If millions have acknowledged the blessings which the invention of printing has conferred upon mankind […] surely the same reasoning holds good with regard to a sister art, which has the power of multiplying the original productions of an eminent artist, of offering clever originals for copying, to persons who formerly could only afford to purchase very inferior models, and thereby infusing taste amongst those classes of society whose means did not allow them to possess the superior and more expensive productions of Art. (Hullmandel, 1824, pp. iv-vi)

Lithography was, for Hullmandel, the democratic means of sharing art with the masses. It could allow artists to work in a new, highly reproducible medium themselves, without needing the interpretation of a third-party (e.g. an engraver). This did not cheapen art, but freed it for greater consumption and for the betterment of society, anticipating the arguments made by Ruskin and the many other proponents of public galleries and museums. As Hullmandel concluded his introduction to *The Art of Drawing on Stone*,

Lithography will greatly tend to develop this taste for objects of Art: for the ease which excellent drawing-books and models can now be given to the Public at a cheap rate, will induce many, nay, thousands of parents (as the sale of works of this nature well shews) to give their children a knowledge of drawing; and it is evident that this circumstance must within a few years form a class of amateurs and collectors amongst our rich manufacturers, farmers, and tradesmen, who, but a few years back, never bestowed a thought on the subject. This will be one among the many benefits conferred by Lithography. (Hullmandel, 1824, p. xiv)

This is indeed what happened in the years following this book’s 1824 publication. As Rowan Watson (2012) notes, guides and instruction manuals for various artforms, like drawing and painting, were being published in great numbers and were very commercially successful by the middle of the nineteenth century (p. 144). These books point to the growing amateur art practices and the coexisting printed proliferation of art among the masses in public museums and galleries. Such artistic guides and manuals of the period marketed themselves by using nationalistic and moralistic language, “supporting a tradition of Britishness” and encouraging the expression and recognition of the “national genius” (Watson, 2012, p. 151). For these reasons, books of art reproducing paintings by old masters and contemporary English masters were also increasingly popular, fuelled by the direction of such manuals.

*Gems of Art*, a book of lithographically reproduced artwork by masters including Rubens, Titian, Cuyp, Hobbima, Carracci, Both, and Turner, was published in 1861. In this book, the unnamed author writes in his introduction that his object has been “to supply a book likely to be acceptable to the Art Student, as well as to the ordinary admirer of painting” (*Gems of Art*, 1861, n.p.). Furthermore, he states that
In no preceding age has the public taste been so universally cultivated, nor Art and Artists been invested with so much interest for the million. In all times and all countries, we have had critics and connoisseurs of Art, but they have formed a very small minority. The reverse is now the case. Art Education has become popular. We all know something—and most of us desire to know more—of Painters and Painting; and this is a sign of the times, which we hail with the liveliest satisfaction. (*Gems of Art*, 1861, n.p.)

The print culture of the period successfully rendered art a public subject, and there was an increasing demand for it to be shared.

The reproductions of art that were produced in print at this time were of varying quality, however, as different print methods were tested and refined. While a promising and new artistic medium, as suggested by Hullmandel (1824), lithography was not yet the most reliable method for reproducing art. *Gems of Art* was far from being a faithfully rendered set of copies (see Figures 4 and 5). Engraving, both line and wood-block colour engraving, would remain the most successful forms of print illustration in books reproducing art until the advent of photomechanical reproductive processes.

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Note that this illustration provides no proper title for the reproduced artwork. Instead, many elements common to Turner’s art visualizing Italian landscapes are incorporated into one image. One of Turner’s paintings containing relevant subject matter can be seen in Figure 5, below; the colour and atmospheric effects are quite different in the painting versus the copy.
Although the reproduction of art through direct photography was not yet feasible,\(^1\) by the 1870s, photomechanical processes enabled the mass production of engraved copies of paintings. This put an end to print-run limitations imposed by the wearing out of original metal plates and wood blocks. Such processes involved taking a photograph of the printed engraving (to be copied) and then exposing the negative onto a metal plate covered in light-sensitive chemicals; these chemicals hardened where exposed. Before the plate was exposed to an acid bath, the metal plate was treated with an acid-resist that adhered to the hardened lines; the acid etched away the unhardened surfaces, leaving the lines standing in relief and creating a copied surface much like the original engraving or etching that could then be printed (Banham, 2007, p. 287). Through such reproductive processes, renowned and hard-to-acquire prints were now able to be shared with the public, as they were published in books (see Figures 6-7). As written in the preface to *The Great Works of Raphael Sanzio of Urbino*, printed in 1870,

> The famous engravings from his most celebrated works […] have become very rare, and can only be seen in the portfolios of the wealthy. Luckily, for all lovers of art a new aid has lately sprung up which offers the present generation a wonderful advantage. The marvellous power of Photography has rarely been more beautifully shown than in the reproduction of these magnificent engravings. (Cundall, 1870, pp. v-vi)

While awe-inspiring, these prints were still not perfect representations. As lamented in the

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\(^1\) Gradation of tone was not able to be captured in printed photographs until the development of the halftone screen, perfected by the end of the nineteenth century. With only blacks and whites visible in most mid- to late-century photographic prints, photographs of engraved copies of art, composed of only black lines, were the means to creating more faithful reproductions (Banham, 2007, p. 287).
preface to a contemporary book of photographed engravings, *The World’s Pictures*, “By the aid of a new craft, we are able to give some notion of the beauties of these works. Would that we could reproduce the colours of the originals!” (*The World’s Pictures*, 1869, n.p.).

Photomechanical reproduction still could not yield exact copies of original artwork; they relied on human interpretation through the act of engraving and sacrificed the representation of colour, as was possible through colour wood engraving.

Photomechanical reproduction did, however, signal a shift in printing. As the twentieth century loomed on the horizon, the creative touch of the printer became increasingly removed from the carried-out presswork. This is most evident in books reproducing artwork, because the print reproductions no longer constituted art themselves. With the exception of Hullmandel (1824)’s vision of lithography as an art in and of itself, and created by an artist, the work of the printer no longer required creative and inventive talent. Instead, printing relied upon the correct handling of machinery to produce exact copies of others’ work. It is worth noting that while Baxter was both the engraver and printer for *The Pictorial Album*, later books of art like *The Great Works of Raphael Sanzio of Urbino* and *The World’s Pictures* were not printed by those who created the engravings reproduced within them. In these books, the artist and the printer exist as entirely separate identities. This presages later direct photographic reproductions of art, in which a greater divide exists between the original creative artists, and the photographers and printers merely operating the technology of reproduction. As Haskins (2012) writes, “By 1890, the transformation was virtually complete, and reproductive techniques would lose their key connection to art labor” (p. 5).

This is ironic when one considers the overarching aim of the nineteenth century to bring art to the masses. The artisanal and working-classes, while desiring and receiving access to art, were now cut off from creating it if they worked in the printing industry. As declared by the Royal Academy, reproductive printing techniques did not constitute fine art. Such developments anticipate William Morris’s urge at the end of the century to return to “an art made intelligently by the whole body of those who live by their labour” (Morris, 1883/1961, p. 280), and not an art made by workmen “fulfilling the office of cogwheels and cranks”—such a system being one in
which “it is impossible to turn out art” (Morris, 1883/1961, p. 286).

Rather than a crisis in painting, as Benjamin (1936/2010) claims emerged in the nineteenth century, it thus may be more accurate to state that Victorian print culture and its age of mechanical reproduction resulted in a broader crisis in art. Developments in printing technology and the reproduction of art that coincided with the development of public museums and galleries marked a shift in the artistic landscape. From the nineteenth century on, the fine arts were no longer the exclusive domain of the wealthy. Workers, artisans, and amateurs were invited to admire art and pick up their brushes and tools, as they gained access to examples from which they could learn. Furthermore, with the advent of new printing technologies and photography, visual art was challenged to do more than just reproduce scenes; simply creating images was not enough to constitute artwork, insofar as the Royal Academy rejected various print methods as formal artistic media, and the operators of such presses were not considered artists. The art world struggled to define art. It bristled at the concept of art existing in multiple copies without an original, as was becoming increasingly possible with such new technologies. In this way, Victorian print culture, as expressed in books reproducing art, led to a “massive upheaval” and the “shattering of tradition” that Benjamin associates with the loss of the artistic aura (Benjamin, 1936/2010, p. 14). Art in the age of industrial printing and technological advancement spread and changed as never before, proving Benjamin (1936/2010)’s theory right: “[t]he technological reproducibility of the artwork changes the relation of the masses to art” (p. 29). Yet, as evident through wood engraving, lithography, and photomechanical printing processes, it also changes the nature of that art itself.

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