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**The Power and Influence of Illustration: A Future Perspective**

**How will an increase in multi-culturalism, globalisation, political and environmental change affect the future needs and expectations for visual communication?**

*Professor Male discusses censorship, freedom of expression, ethical and moral responsibility and which professional contexts of practice might diminish or increase*

We all know and understand the raison-d’etre for illustration, particularly its history *and* its contemporary status. We also know that the most powerful and meaningful illustrations are those that have *significant impact on their prescribed audience*; in fact, it’s been like that since our Palaeolithic ancestors communicated messages by drawing on rocks and the walls of caves and then slightly after that as hieroglyphics emblazoned across ancient tombs and other structures.

Moving forward in time by several millennia, today the discipline of illustration is often lauded by the way it enriches and expands the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of individuals. In fact, it’s known to create and interpret cultural capital in all of its forms, most notably by its contribution to education and learning, research and new knowledge. It’s also known for its massive contribution to imaginative and fictionalised entertainment from *children’s books*, *classic literature*, *graphic novels* *and comic strips to motion pictures and video games*. Indeed, most of the myriad of awards and distinctions given for illustration are attributed to these areas of practice.

However, there are other contexts of practice that don’t often receive such plaudits; and I’m now talking about the communicating of *persuasive and propagandist ideas* by *hard sell advertising* and images that are *opinion bearing and journalistic.* It’s interesting that with these areas of practice, it’s deemed necessary for organisations in the UK such as the *Advertising Standards Authority* to monitor complaints, regulate content and establish a code of practice. Also, *the press* and other news organisations are sometimes castigated for their *intrusive* *and unethical behaviour* in order to ‘get a story’- not least by tapping the phones of certain media inflated individuals.

*So, where does illustration fit into all of this?* I intend, through this lecture to focus on examples from those contexts of illustration practice that I have previously mentioned, that both historically and contemporaneously have had some significant impact; especially those attributed with a handle of notoriety by way of controversy and even revulsion. I’ll also concentrate on those examples that raise questions and perhaps leave them unanswered regarding one’s own practice and whether or not as individual illustrators we feel either able or not to accept or proceed with a commission. I want to determine *what the future holds for* *our discipline*, particularly in light of the way our *social and global infrastructure* is likely to pan out in the future. I would also like to consider the *religious*, *political* and *cultural* implications for all of this. *What are the consequences for us as practitioners?* Are we to adopt new or fresh approaches to our practice? Adopt different attitudes and thinking? Acquire sharper values perhaps?

‘Islamic terror cannot be stopped by the security and intelligence services alone. It has to be fought culturally and economically. We had a culture once that would have done the job just fine. But multi-culturalism came along and destroyed it.’

*London Revisited*, 11 Jan 2015

This is a quote from the online journal *London Revisited*, 11 January. It is a commentary on if Europe (and the rest of the Western ‘free’ world) is to overcome *Islamic Terror* it needs to fight for the values it holds dear. Many would say that certain individuals in Paris and Copenhagen have paid with their lives *holding these values dear*.

The vast majority of people throughout Europe have expressed horror and revulsion at the *Charlie Hebdo* murders. Indeed, most of that majority think that the journalists and cartoonists who were killed had a perfect right to express their opinions and should have been able to do so without recourse. However, I wish to relay an anecdote related to my own teaching. About 2 weeks after the events in Paris I conducted some seminar group discussions with level one undergraduate illustration students at my university. Their average age is 19 years. Not that that should have borne any consequence to the debate being held at the time. *But*, surprisingly, many of the group didn’t share the broadly accepted opinions that I have presented. Indeed, some even went so far as to suggest, that while they didn’t *necessarily* think that the Hebdo staff should have been murdered, they certainly deserved some punishment and should not have been allowed to publish such *offensive material.* I subsequently presented them with some imagery which fired up a substantial discussion. This was one of them- *The Twin Pencils*, (as I call it) drawn as an immediate reaction by a French cartoonist and posted on Twitter- it went viral. The students thought it was an insult to Islam…!? Many others that I have spoken to believe the image to be simplistically powerful, poignant and thought provoking; would it seem that emergent illustrators within the young adult age group have different values to the majority of the rest of us? Do they represent the broader views of their age group? If so, is it restricted to the United Kingdom? I would like to seek the opinions of their equivalents in terms of age and ambitions in Denmark and France. Are my students a *sign of what is to come*- or does this represent *a chance* occurrence? Let’s briefly review the *cartoonists*’ backlash. The *machine gun* and the *beheaded cartoonist* images are defiant and certainly not holding back with regards to the message they are communicating.

The front page of *The* *Daily Mirror* as published on January 12 this year. A national UK tabloid newspaper with a big circulation, the headline doesn’t require any exemplification from me!

And then, published the same day in a broadsheet UK newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, this image is a reaction to the same news-story. Incidentally, The Daily Mirror didn’t publish a cartoon. This particular illustration was drawn by *Bob Moran*, a former student of mine who graduated about 6 years ago he has worked for The Telegraph for most of that period. Moran would be about 9 or 10 years older than the students I was referring to earlier *and*, as is evident by this cartoon, has completely opposite views. Indeed, if I were to recount his fellow student year group, the majority would undoubtedly be in agreement with his views. When I advised him the need to temper the content of his illustrations for being too provocative and offensive for publication, his contemporaries were merely amused and appreciative of his work. Today’s cohort would castigate him for having a total disregard for political correctness. The shadowy backdrop refers to the fact that the extradited preacher, *Abu Hamza* was convicted in a United States court for inciting terrorism and subsequently sentenced to a lengthy prison term in spite of his appeal. Hamza was notorious whilst living in the UK.

I’m going to stay with *religion* as I believe that this aspect of global culture will continue to impact significantly, particularly where the visual communication contexts of persuasion and commentary are concerned. Historically, the genre of *illustration and religion* has an engaging history. Notably, its earliest beginning- in a mass distribution published form- was facilitated by the *invention of printing* in Germany, 1439. This in turn, perpetrated one of the most significant and important events in history, bringing about the advent of the modern knowledge based economy and helping to action a chain of social and political consequences and repercussions, most notably that of the *Protestant Reformation*. The spread of paper printed proclamations, incidentally by anonymous authors and illustrators, presented an alternative Christian faith belief to the established Catholic Church in Europe, thus providing significant reach for early protestant reformers to spread their messages. But it was the symbolism and potency of the imagery that influenced the majority- most of whom could not read! These *block printed woodcuts* often conveyed wildly distorted truths and were produced to render contentious arguments and discontents often depicting hated religious and political leaders as *satanic* and *wicked*. This illustration depicts a priest in league with the Devil. This one shows further irreverence; knaves duly breaking wind in the direction of the Pope. At the time, these images would have been considered overtly blasphemous by some.

A return to the present day, but before events in Paris; interestingly, I’d suggest that if all of the published Hebdo covers displayed imagery such as this, it wouldn’t have incited the Jihadists to exact the revenge that *they* did. As you can see, this is an overt slight at *Christianity*. It begs the question; how do the cartoonists’ critical observations and satire aimed at Christians compare with those late medieval counterparts in terms of relevance, justification and uncompromising offence? Not much would be my summation. It would appear that Christians still have to put up with much criticism and offence with *illustration* frequently at the heart of the communication to the masses. Just to review this image and its message, would you say that this unflattering portrayal of *Jesus* equates to the visual insults directed at *Allah*? An interesting question that I would like presented to my students.

Keeping with religion, Jews and their faith have probably been the recipient of the most virulent and appalling discrimination and treatment by their fellow human beings- ever! I’m now going to present, albeit briefly, a really *dark side* to Illustration’s history; where the essence and culture of a whole race have been targeted. This *disgusting* image reflects- sadly- attitudes that prevail today across certain sections of global society. It brings very much into question, *and* I’m looking into the future, will illustrators and other professional visual communicators, continue being commissioned to produce filth like this? And, if so, where might their consciences lie? Undoubtedly, the ‘illustrator’- and I feel ashamed to say that here- appears to have relished the opportunity to express the view being communicated.

Imagery that stirs up mass hatred and keeps discriminated peoples oppressed and suppressed will be categorised as being within the context of *propaganda;* as opposed to editorial and journalistic commentary; which is where the *last* image would lie. This is a poster, commissioned by the Nazis during the 1930’s. Translated from the German, the slogan means *imagine*. I don’t want to dwell too much on this, but it’s interesting to note, and I don’t think I’ve misinterpreted this, that the ‘cartoonist’ has rather proudly signed this image- in large letters! Another example; same client-similar message! A seemingly well rendered painting. *And* a caricature that has sadly become a cliché. Undoubtedly designed and produced by a seasoned professional, the attention paid to gesture, pose and characterisation would suggest nothing less. I would like to know, how much in agreement the illustrator was with the sentiment being expressed here and whether or not he (I’m assuming it’s a ‘he’), accepted this commission out of fear or excitement!

Briefly, a return to an earlier theme but still relevant to this discourse; a further sideswipe at Islam but with a sense of *irony* thrown in; the Catholic priest may appear to be castigating the sword-wielding Muslim for being violent, but many would suggest that the *real* message here is imbued in presenting complete hypocrisy; throughout history, the Christian Church has embarked on as much bloody warfare in the name of ‘God’ as Islam.

So, *how insulting to Islam is this?* I’d like to counsel traditional or what some might patronisingly call ‘moderate’ Muslims for their views. This illustration was published in an American tabloid newspaper, *The New York Post* on Sunday, October 12, 2014. Its appearance was prompted by the rise and increasing malevolence of *ISIS* or IS in the Middle East. Most of us are aware of the heinous acts of brutality and murder they carry out in the *so-called name* of Islam. This cartoon was aimed at an American audience, it would not be considered offensive by the paper’s editorial team. Indeed, most people that I’ve shown it to seem to agree with the sentiment being expressed here.

An image conceived and drawn by the renowned British illustrator *Peter Brookes*; it was published in the UK based broadsheet newspaper *The Times* on Wednesday January 7, 2015: Produced in response to an *anti-Islam* march in Germany by so-called *Pegida* or more accurately *Patriotic Europeans against the ‘Islamisation’ of the West.* The march occurred the day before the publication of this image and the event attracted more than 18 thousand people in Dresden. Interpretations regarding Brooke’s message vary, but most agree that the woman’s eyes display much fear and suspicion whilst hiding within the infrastructure of the country that is her home and expects should protect her.

Cartoonists are not obverse meting criticism of the West; this hard hitting image might cause rankle to those individuals responsible for administering and supportive of the torturing of those suspected of terrorism; the illustration was published in the UK broadsheet newspaper *The Guardian* and highlights the plight of Guantanamo Bay inmates, notoriously subjected to waterboarding.

The demonising of specific individuals by artists and illustrators has been prevalent for centuries with caricature being the overriding character of this domain of practice. Most politicians and other media inflated individuals can expect no quarter from those illustrators contriving to humble, humiliate and mock! But how far can one go regarding offence and insult; *and*, how dangerous might it be in this day and age when certain personalities wield considerable power and influence and contrive to exact revenge on those considered subversive or mocking of their ego, their religion or their politics. Death and the threat of death, is on the increase…

These are two images produced by the British borne illustrator David Hughes. Stylistically they are the same. The level of facial distortion equates, yet one character is globally respected broadly speaking- the other has already paid with his life with practically the whole of the Western Free World rejoicing in his demise at the hands of the American military.

An image conceived and produced by a former student of mine; unpublished in the UK and US, but taken by a couple of European journals, its explicitness and level of insinuation would deeply offend many, not least the individuals concerned, the rest of the Royal Family and the British Establishment generally. The message is meant to be a joke. It does not really imply that the now Duchess of Cornwall *was* or *is* a sex worker. Its message is a satire on the Prince of Wales finally being allowed to marry the woman he loved long before his betrothal to Diana Princess of Wales- the only partner suitable for him at the time because she didn’t ‘*have a past’*; needless to say, Camilla does *‘have a past’*- hence Richard Stanley’s effort here. I’d like to comment further on the attitudes of my level one, undergraduates. During the seminar sessions I have previously mentioned, I also presented this image to them, inviting comment. Most were horrified at the level of explicitness shown and were extremely surprised that it had been produced by a fellow illustration student, albeit 7 or 8 years previous. At the time that the image was produced, Richard’s contemporaries were neither horrified nor offended; much mirth and laughter prevailed! Are we to believe that in the future, imagery such as this might be subjected to lawful censure? It’s what several students suggested. Might our society be heading in that direction generally, meaning that illustrators will have to be extremely careful regarding thresholds of subject and message?

Throughout the ages, artists and illustrators have produced imagery with the sole intention of inciting disagreeable reactions in the audience. The rationale underpinning such a strategy is usually to present unpalatable truths or suggestions often by way of introducing contentious propositions. It’s sometimes prevalent to observe the sanctity of certain themes and individuals and then *bastardise* them all in the course of providing *deliberate shock*. We’ve already looked at religion, but now well-known individuals, their integrity taken away beyond the edge of acceptable satire to vicious, personal insults including unnatural sexual practices. But, is it right to do so. What if you are an illustrator who specialises in caricature and comment but a client requires you to go way beyond your own personal threshold for ethics and responsibility. Would you accept the commission? Richard Stanley had absolutely no qualms about making an overtly hard hitting comment regarding the supposed crimes of this international entertainer. His costume is meant to be that of Peter Pan, I think the rest needs no explanation. Again, my students were horrified- even more so than that of the royal couple.

Many will recognise the work of *Sue Coe*, internationally renowned, not just as an illustrator, but for the contentious and hard hitting campaigning imbued in her work for issues that she feels both deeply concerned *and* angry about. In fact, to some she’s established a reputation for notoriety. I’m not apologising for showing at least 4 examples of her work as I believe she represents a cusp in the parameters of illustration practice between what is now barely publishable- and that which is not. Again, perhaps generically in the same domain as Richard Stanley (but much better known), her work is explicit and does not shirk from *showing it as it is*! Themes represented are gang rape and the most prevalent of all of her subjects, The Slaughterhouse and Vegetarianism. I think the images speak for themselves.

Images of Hitler will always invite controversy, especially when someone is publically implicated as being like him; here, the Iranian President is accused of being likened to the Nazi Dictator. However, democratically elected Western politicians, such as Nigel Farage, Leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party, might consider this Hitler inspired narrative not only offensive to him personally, but a total misrepresentation of his political values.

Illustrations commissioned by the Chinese Communist Party sometime during the 1960’s; traditional propagandist poster images, extolling the virtues of the regime and its philosophy through education, unity, hard work and collectivisation. It also implies a total regard for unswerving loyalty and commitment to the regime and its leaders; absolutely *no* opposition, criticism or even the slightest hint of activism against the state; any such thing, proven or not would be classed as sedition and treason! The death penalty awaited; so, who produced these illustrations and what were the circumstances. After Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution, all traditional art and other forms of cultural heritage was deemed illegal and banned from sight and production. Illustrators of the time cowed to one client and one client only- The Communist Party Machine. Personal illustration styles and visual languages that didn’t conform to the accepted *modernist-* sometime Brutalism or Stalinistpictorial representation- were outlawed.Any sign of formal religious or other philosophical iconography was deemed irrelevant and banned. China was an atheist state. Anyone wishing to continue or pursue a career in illustration would comply to one style only and do as their Masters bidding with regards to content and message. The illustrators brief was controlled, heavily directed and extremely prescriptive. The illustrator was simply no more than a colouring in technician! Today, circumstances are different in the People’s Republic of China. Indeed, I went there 4 years ago to discover what or if there was a creative and media industry sustaining of illustration and other forms of visual communication. Alas, Japanese Manga prevails, although there are sparks of recovery; Chinese society seeks and engages with Western goods and services. However, there’s still no place for the ‘political cartoonist’ I’m afraid; intolerance prevails regarding any criticism of the regime.

To follow on with the political theme, I would like to feature some 19th century propagandist illustrations produced on behalf of the American Democratic Party. The illustrator in question, *Thomas Nast*, is considered one of the most influential in the history of the United States; *President Lincoln* claimed that without Nast he would not have won the election. This pre and post-Civil War period in American history marks significant social and political change; many parts of the World merely floundered in its wake regarding progressive democracy; the majority of European countries had yet to rid itself of the autocratic old guard Monarchies and in the UK, conservatism, religion, prudishness and Victoriana dominated all value systems. It’s true that the artist-illustrator *William Hogarth* and others highlighted the plight of the social underclasses, but they didn’t really influence much in the *way of opinion* yet alone propagate *actual change*. Nast did; The Emancipation of Slaves, the plight and subjugation of Black Americans and the dangers of extremism such as the emergent K Klux Klan.

America really does incite a breadth of opinion and exasperation. Perhaps they haven’t really progressed much since those heady nineteenth century days. Would Nast have illustrated this message produced by the celebrated British illustrator *Ralph Steadman*? I somehow doubt it. I also doubt if many – *if any* US based journals would publish it. The political-illustrator class in America tends to mainly produce work that does not criticise too much. We all know how much US society in general feels about the satirical film maker Michael Moore.

I have said on many occasions that illustrators who make comment and provide satirical observations are *journalists*. *Concept and metaphor* can also form a basis for their craft. The demise of Libya’s *Colonel Gaddafi* provided the illustrator with a myriad of opportunities to get their images published such was the accepted loathing for this individual. However, I wonder what, if any, the reaction might be if a British, American or other European Western politician was castigated for causing the death of thousands of innocent people. Indeed, it has been suggested that the *Blair regime* in the UK colluded with US President Bush to invoke a technically illegal invasion of Iraq in order to oust Saddam Hussein. In fact Blair and his spin doctor Alistair Campbell have been accused by many of concocting a ‘dodgy dossier’ based on research into whether or not Saddam had WMD. It was found that he did not. Blair lied to the British Parliament claiming that the dossier proved Saddam did. An impeachable offence! The rest is history; but, I would like to see what the reaction might be if a cartoonist implicated Blair in the same manner as those representing the misdemeanours of Saddam and Gaddafi; after all, thousands of innocents died as a result of the invasion- Blair must take some blame!

A bridge now between politics and children’s books; published visual imagery can subvert in such a covert manner so as to bring down governments, bring about regime change and incite bloody revolution. One such example is the children’s book entitled *Little Black Fish*, published and distributed in 1960’s Persia, or *Iran* as it is now known. The book’s illustrations won the Hans Christian Anderson Award. However, unbeknown to many, the images contained coded symbols and messages, only understood by revolutionaries opposed to the regime of the Shah. It provided instruction and guidance for seditionist activity that could undermine the Persian government. The Shah was ousted in a bloody revolution in 1979 and his regime replaced by that of the Islamic Fundamentalist Ayatollah Khomeini.

I now want to discuss moral standards and ethics, paying particular attention to children’s illustrated literature. Book publishing of this nature is typically careful to ensure strict adherence to international and national audience sensitivity guidelines. This is especially relevant when representing characters and objects; if the published narrative demands the depiction of human interaction and drama, the physical gestures made by figures and the appearance of other signifiers of taste such as styles of clothing or aspects of behaviour must conform to all cultural sensibilities; what may be bearable or entertaining to the peoples of one society may be offensive to another. This is an example of a book published in the UK during the late 1950’s. The imagery features two subjects outlawed in the United Kingdom. Whilst it is not illegal to show foxhunting it is unlawful to practice it. The other subject, being overtly racist and offensive, is now strictly taboo. I don’t think any decent person would object to the enforcement of that particular law. However, the 1950’s are not that long ago. I belong to a generation that was born then. Indeed, I can remember clearly when dolls and illustrations of this subject were common place. So, attitudes and ethical considerations have come a long way in that relatively short time. But, so many themes like this were considered normal. What might the future hold? What is it that we accept today as morally applicable, that in the future might be unlawful? Again, perhaps another potential impact on illustration.

It’s becoming noticeable with children’s books how UK and US publishers in particular are reluctant to broach subjects that they deem unsuitable for young audiences. Death, family breakup, sex and other such themes are considered too ‘upsetting’. Indeed, the US *Disneyesque* styling that pervades most publications offer safe, repetitive and bland engagements. Not so the East European genre. For example, Brothers Grimm are standard children’s fair in these countries and I don’t mean the ‘soft appropriation’ versions either; I’m referring to the original Gothic tales in all of their explicit detail. The story of *Little Red Riding Hood* has been told in many different ways and is clearly couched in East European Folklore, most notably that of horror and the legend of the Werewolf. Less gruesome versions have been recast for younger audiences with most people familiar with the characters and unfolding narrative. Many visual interpretations abound, mostly simple with upbeat characterisation that are deemed most appropriate for ‘sensitive’ Western children (and their parents!). Others rely on a deeper more symbolic approach with the narrative coming through by visual analogy and metaphor. This version is by a former student of mine *Rebecca Whiteman*; she presents a rather unnerving concept.

Many will know the narrative that underpins the origins of the iconic figure of *Santa Claus*. Borne out of a ‘blue-chip’ *Coca Cola* pre-Christmas advertising campaign, the New York illustrator *Haddon Sondblum* is credited for conceiving this characterisation, first encountered during the early part of the 20th century and characteristically emblazoned in the familiar Coca Cola red and white livery; now the most potent symbol and identity for Christmas throughout most of the Western world. However, in recent times, it has incited harsh and critical reaction to the consumerist and over inflated commercialisation of what is supposedly a religious festival. There’s much cynicism levelled at the politically correct stance taken by large sections of American society by referring to Santa as ‘*corporate branding for the new religion of Happy Holidays’*! Other associated ‘crimes’ make reference to *corporate greed*, *decadence* and *gluttony*. The ‘seven deadly sins’ come to mind… This critical and cynical viewpoint has overflowed into the advertising industry generally with some illustrators already taking an ethical and moral stance by refusing to engage in any part of the process, claiming that it doesn’t comply with their own values and also claiming that certain brands and campaigns go beyond their thresholds of responsible and ethical practice. An example is a colleague of mine, a talented and experienced illustrator, who practises strict veganism and will not accept any commission that promotes meat products and meat extracts including leather made goods. It wasn’t such a long time ago that many illustrators were commissioned to work on campaigns promoting certain brands of cigarette; the landscape regarding what advertisers can and cannot promote is rapidly changing and the future for the use of illustration in advertising will undoubtedly follow along the same path.

During the mid-1980’s I was commissioned by the big, international chemicals company *ICI* to produce two separate images for their *Plant Protection* division. Today, it is doubtful that I would accept this commission. It is true that its message is not offensive or detrimental to individuals, however its remit is to promote a product deeply damaging to the environment; an insecticide developed to kill all known species of so-called harmful insects and a rat killer branded as *‘Klerat’* –need I say more! The insecticide would however kill many other forms of insect and associated life- creatures that provide sustenance for a great many predators and an essential part of the food chain and subsequent ecosystem. After spraying, the insecticide would leave the fields of crops free of any insect life and in the long term render the whole environment sterile and dead. The potential customers were global with farmers in North America the key target. Consequently the fee offered was sizable; even thirty years ago I was paid a four figure sum- and that was for each illustration; good even by todays pricing standards. The brief was to conceive a *chimeric* fictionalised organism comprising several parts taken from a small number of what was to be considered unpleasant and harmful insects- I created a *superbug*; the head of a mosquito, the thorax and fore legs of a cockroach, the abdomen and wings of a housefly, the tail and sting of a scorpion. There is an *irony* here; none of the species I selected are harmful to plants- in fact several types of scorpion feed exclusively on locusts! However the client loved the image, believing my concoction was so horrific to look at anyone would want to kill it! I presented this case study to the same student forum as previously described. I wanted them to consider being confronted with an ethical dilemma; to envisage a time in the future, perhaps two or three years after graduation and working as a commercial freelance illustrator; a client presents them with a similar advertising brief, perhaps even the same one with a remit to promote a product overtly damaging to the environment. Also, they were to be offered a five figure fee. The quandary I wanted them to ponder over was that their sole income was through illustration *and* that by then they had ‘grown-up’ responsibilities such as a mortgage or large rent, perhaps a family or even a credit card or banking debt. The big question was: what would you do? Nearly all said that they would not want to do it. However, a small number were pragmatic claiming that if they didn’t, someone else would and that their livelihood had to take precedent. Again, how attitudes have changed. Thirty years ago I didn’t even think about it; now I would think very carefully. Incidentally, the rat had to look realistic but ‘nasty’ and ‘worthy of death’. I visually distorted and caricatured its worst features; elongated and pointed its nose, gave it much spikier and dirtier fur, pointed ears and an angry and aggressive cast to its eyes; a totally incorrect scientific representation.

Another important context for illustration and visual communication generally is that of *Knowledge*; the area that provides educative, informative and documentary material. In fact, there’s now an insatiable need from many audiences globally for new knowledge and instruction. However, this case study represents a dilemma, typical for those engaged producing material imbued with great authority and integrity and appropriated for educational consumption. The image entitled *A Carboniferous Fauna-scape* was conceived, researched, designed and illustrated by myself. It’s borne out of primary research with species recently discovered being shown for the first time. It is also part of an illustrated evolutionary procession, here passing through the Carboniferous period which was approximately 350 million years ago. It’s a composite arrangement showing the complexity, confusion and texture of a teeming coal forest ecosystem. The essence is palaeo-ecology infused with new knowledge relating to the morphology and diversification of emergent life. You would think that this reference to *The Evolution of Life* would be an acceptable theme and subject to be provided for young audiences, particularly in the West, where knowledge of scientific fact and theory is both respected and accepted as important and essential. Not so; there’s still deep opposition to evolution in certain societies. Not even the *Stopes Monkey* trial in the US during the 1920’s has quelled the opposition by perpetrating lawful insistence that certain state curricula teaches creationism and evolution in equal measure. A Public Policy Poll in 2012 revealed that 60% of voters across Mississippi and Alabama believed unequivocally in *Divine Creationism*. It has been reported recently that books and other learning material containing references to evolution were ceremoniously burnt! So, how might this impact on the illustrator because it’s widely accepted that across the world, education for the young will become more reliant on visual learning with a growth in media and published material to facilitate this trend. Might it be that reference and educational science books for children will have to be compromised?

To conclude, I believe that if our discipline is to thrive in the future, it’s not going to be to do with the superficiality of trend or the vicissitudes of visual language, but much more to do with *compliance* and *toleration* regarding *content and message* and an increasing acceptance for audiences and their thresholds of moral tolerance; *extreme violence*, particularly in *video games*- incidentally so often developed and visually conceived by illustrators- have become exposed and subjected to much criticism. Our professional contexts of practice will also have to be increasingly mindful of global ethical concerns, including a regard and attention for cultural diversity. We have already evaluated to a certain degree here, the future role of illustration through journalistic comment and opinion. However, should illustrators be compliant? I have presented examples of where illustration has perpetrated change and invoked fresh direction regarding attitude particularly with politics and social issues.

With regards to advertising, this has changed dramatically in recent years particularly in relation to social acceptance and toleration of certain products and services; the banking sector comes to mind. As to whether these contexts will increase or diminish I don’t believe we can predict; they will certainly change. A *buzz word* to consider moving into the future; *intolerance*. Not just from society at large but also from within; practitioners are already making their mark as shown by the attitudes revealed by my own students.

As an epilogue, a positive and hopefully upbeat prediction taken from the *Introduction* to my latest book *Illustration: Meeting the Brief*, published last year by Bloomsbury.

‘There will always be individuals seduced into a career in the visual arts, with illustration providing a natural home for many. People will forever want to draw, to be creative with ideas and graphic mark making, and to connect and empathise with the subjects of their artistic endeavours. Whatever the future holds, the discipline of illustration will continue to flourish as a working art.’