

Illuminated manuscript

How far it is from gold

Enlightening acts shrunk into the mountains

The teeth surrounding the tongue

Yet their scriptoriums are draped in silence

True thoughts hidden in the margins

An error reflected in an error

Progress crawls in its ink-colored shadow

The shoulders of giants quiver under the shaking pen

Lead supported by wood and baked clay

The first words sprout from the seeds of yellow cotton trees

Scaping linearly down the tracks of progress

The wheels of man churn

And out comes God

How soon it must be gold

### **How far it is from gold / How soon it must be gold**

The matching lines 'how far it is from gold / how soon it must be gold' is comparing the illuminated manuscript to the printed work of Johannes Gutenberg's press. The illuminated manuscripts sometimes featured gold, yet took a long time to make. It is 'far from gold' because

it contains many mistakes despite the amount of time it took. The last line, ‘how soon it must be gold’ refers to the work of the printing press and how it compared to illuminated manuscripts. The work of the press was made quicker, and was golden in the way that it brought knowledge and information to common people. It did not have nearly as many mistakes, making the work a higher, ‘golden’ quality. The knowledge gained by common people from cheaper books lead to a better quality and standard of life.

### **Enlightening acts shrunk into the mountains**

Monks were typically in mountainous or remote locations. The monks were responsible for illuminated manuscripts and every monastery was required to have a library according to the rules of Saint Benedict of the sixth century CE.

**The teeth surrounding the tongue / Yet their scriptoriums are draped in silence / True thoughts hidden in the margin.**

Illuminated Manuscripts have become an important source of information when it comes to the medieval ages. Monks are a crucial part to the ‘medieval voice’ that gives us an idea of how life was in the age, what religion was like, and what people knew about the world around them. This is contrasted to the scriptorium, a room where these books were produced. A director, who supervised the room, would stop monks from talking. This silence was fought by monks who wrote in the margins of their pages, which were passed around the room.

**An error reflected in an error /Progress crawls in it’s ink-colored shadow /The shoulders of giants quiver under the shaking pen**

The next three lines deal with errors and their effects. When monks copied texts, they would often use abbreviations to save paper. The texts they were copying could already have

their own errors, wear and tear, or messy handwriting. These errors, combined with errors monks made while copying, meant a new copy could be stuffed with errors. Science was laborious and slow because of these books. When science takes longer to develop, people are more likely to have a lower quality of life. Since science builds on previous science, the incorrect preservation of information paired with its inaccessibility was a serious hindrance on progress.

#### **Lead supported by wood and baked clay**

Gutenberg's movable type is made of lead. Before him, however, movable type in China was made of wood and eventually baked clay.

#### **The first words sprout from the seeds of yellow cotton trees**

The yellow cotton tree seed can stay dormant before growing, like the knowledge that had stayed 'dormant' before mass communication. Knowledge that wasn't well known was suddenly accessible to the public who was becoming more geared to interpret and accept it. Yellow cotton trees are also in China, where paper and movable type originate.

#### **Scaping linearly down the tracks of progress**

I included this line because the invention of the printing press eventually led to the linear model of communication in the 20's and mass communication as we know it.

#### **The wheels of man turn / and out comes god**

These lines talk about the printing press' significance. The first thing printed was the bible, which led to the spread of christianity and new christian ideas.

## Works cited

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