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Clio's Twitter Feed: the Humanities in a Digital World

Michael L. Gillette Ph.D.

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*Carl
Hertzog*
Lecture Series



**Clio's Twitter Feed:
The Humanities in a Digital World**

by Michael L. Gillette, Ph.D.

The Carl Hertzog Lecture Series

Carl Hertzog Lecture Series



The 2015-2016 Carl Hertzog Award and Lecture
were made possible through generous underwriting support from the:

Robert B. and Lorez M. Price & Mary Smith Price Endowment

Special thanks to:

Clive R. Cochran

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The Carl Hertzog Lecture Series

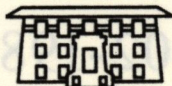
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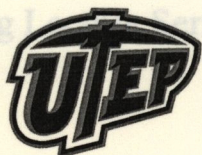
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Clio's Twitter Feed: The Humanities in a Digital World

by Michael L. Gillette, Ph.D.

◆
March 13, 2016

As we contemplate this transformation and its impact on our reliance on the humanities, I want to begin with a quotation and an historical comparison. First the quote:

"An interconnecting and interconnected web of communication . . . has been woven about the individual. It has transformed his behavior and his attitudes no less than it has transformed social organization itself. The web has developed largely without plan or aim. The integration has been in consequence of competitive forces, not social desirability."¹

These words resonate in today's world, but they actually come from a report commissioned in 1929, in midst of a much earlier technological revolution. In that year, a group of leading social scientists undertook an exhaustive study to determine how the innovations they had experienced were changing the nation. Their ambitious report, titled *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, not only provides a useful comparative frame of reference; it also illustrates why we should proceed with caution in generalizing about our own very dynamic time. Assessments that appear reasonable today may seem simplistic, even ludicrous, to audiences in the future. Consider, for example, the report's summary of the automobile's significance: "To think of the automobile as a more speedy substitute for the horse is to underestimate its influence."²

Carl Hertzog Lecture Series, No. 17

1. President's Research Council, *Report on the Social Consequences of the Automobile* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), 217.

2. *Recent Social Trends*, 141.

I entered the digital age when I purchased my first computer: December 27, 1982. The date is indelibly etched in my mind. It is memorable, however, not for the computer, but for a second acquisition. That night I took LeAnn to the hospital to give birth to our first son, who arrived early the next morning. Although both of those new additions would dramatically transform our lives, you can imagine which one assumed greater importance—then and now.

I vividly remember purchasing that computer. It was an IBM-PC with two floppy disc drives and a small black and white monitor. It also came with what the salesman assured me was all the memory I would ever need: 64K. Today, a flash drive that is the size of my little finger possesses a million times the memory of that first computer. What changes in technology we have seen since 1982!

As we contemplate this transformation and its impact on our reliance on the humanities, I want to begin with a quotation and an historical comparison. First the quote:

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1 President’s Research Committee on Social Trends, *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), 217.

2 *Recent Social Trends*, 141.

The scholars who produced *Recent Social Trends* had witnessed the same kinds of changes that we ourselves have experienced: massive waves of immigration had doubled the nation's population in forty years. New forms of mass media, transportation, and other innovations had stimulated fundamental changes in the economy, even as the distribution of wealth had become more unequal. American society had undergone changes in life styles, becoming increasingly secular and adopting more liberal attitudes on sexual freedom. New educational methods and assessments were implemented, while more technical and vocational courses replaced such humanities subjects as Latin, Greek, and history.³



One of the early 20th century's greatest innovations was the radio. As the report stated: "The dramatic evolution of the radio within one decade from a mysterious curiosity to a widely diffused and universally accepted instrument of entertainment, business, learning, and mass communication, has few if any counterparts in social history."⁴ The 1930 census revealed that 12 million families, representing 46% of the population, owned radio sets. In the following decade, that ownership would soar to 80%. Just how important was the radio? A survey in the 1930s found that Americans in need of rent money would prefer to sell their refrigerators, bath tubs, telephones, and beds instead of their radios.⁵ *Recent Social Trends* listed 150 ways in which radio had already impacted American life in education, government, politics, business, and the practice of religion. Piano sales, for example, declined as people no longer had to make their own music. Interest in sports increased, as did the urge to write letters to celebrities. The researchers also appreciated the impact of radio as a stimulus to other developments, including military aviation and the creation of news magazines. They even anticipated the promise of television if it could overcome the technical challenges of capturing sporting events and theatrical performances.⁶

The social scientists emphasized radio's impact on mass communication.

3 *Recent Social Trends*, 127-128, 328-333, 412-421.

4 *Recent Social Trends*, 211.

5 Robert J. Gordon, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 193

6 *Recent Social Trends*, 134, 152-156.

They recognized that, by providing a common stimulus, radio was making the nation more homogenous and diminishing regional differences. However, the researchers also expressed concern about radio's power in the hands of a centralized authority. In fact, the wholesale mind-control that worried them was already taking place in Hitler's Germany. In 1933, the same year that *Recent Social Trends* was published, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels declared that "It would not have been possible for us to take power or use it in the ways we have without the radio."⁷

Having applied this lens of history to open an aperture of analysis, I want to focus on how the recent revolution in information technology has affected the status and study of the humanities. What dividends and liabilities accompany the remarkable changes we are experiencing?

It is obvious that these innovations favor science and engineering. The modest limestone humanities buildings that once comprised the core of the UT Austin campus are now dwarfed by gigantic new science and engineering complexes. Within their walls, new fields of study are tackling big challenges like climate change, dark energy, finding a cure for cancer, and mapping the human genome. Although these labs and faculties are expensive, they attract large government contracts, private grants, and patent revenues. They also attract students who, when they're inclined to listen to their parents, gravitate to the majors that offer lucrative employment. Who can blame them when they are facing soaring tuition costs and huge debts on their student loans? As a result, undergraduate humanities enrollments have declined since their peak year, 1970. Harvard has had a 20% decline in humanities majors over the last decade. The most popular major at Stanford is computer science, while only 15% of the students are within the humanities cluster. Women, in particular, who once comprised a disproportionately large percentage of humanities students, have shifted to other fields of study.⁸

At the same time, Americans are now more inclined to view college as having the narrow objective of vocational training, instead of educating the whole person. It is as if we are cutting a key to fit a single lock, rather than

⁷ *Recent Social Trends*, 215-216; Joseph Goebbels Speech, "The Radio as the Eight Great Power," August 18, 1933, German Propaganda Archive, Calvin College.

⁸ Tamar Lewin, "As Interest Fades in the Humanities, Colleges Worry," *New York Times*, October, 31, 2013; Heidi Twarek, "The Real Reason the Humanities are in Crisis," *The Atlantic*, December 18, 2013; *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 1, 2013.

teaching students to learn how to learn and inspiring in them a lifelong love of learning. Some elected officials have even called for reducing public funding for the humanities disciplines. It is not clear whether their underlying motives are economic or political or both.⁹

Yet employers need more than technical skills. They also need employees who can think creatively, solve problems, communicate effectively, and work successfully in groups. The humanities nurture all of these attributes. In fact, China and some European countries are trying to replicate our established model of a well-rounded education so that they can foster innovation and social cohesion.

The allure of STEM in today's digital world is not the only reason that the humanities are losing ground in the academy. Faculty hiring decisions often subordinate the quality of teaching to research and publishing. Humanities courses sometimes focus entirely too much on a professor's own scholarly interest instead of more significant topics.

The inadequacy of secondary education is also a critical part of the problem. When teachers fail to inspire their high school students' interest in history and literature, those students are already beyond reach when they enter college. More teachers are teaching subjects in which they're not competent. Fewer than 30% of public high school students are taught by a history teacher with a degree and a certification in history. Perhaps, as a result, in 2010, only 45% of high school students demonstrated at least a basic understanding of U.S. History. More than two-thirds of all American students scored below "proficient" in a recent assessment of civics knowledge.¹⁰

But whenever the statistics are discouraging, we humanities exponents can always resort other means of measurement. How, for example, has America's pursuit of the humanities changed in qualitative terms?

Fifty years ago, the Book-of-the-Month Club offered an irresistible incentive to join: the ten-volume *Story of Civilization* practically free. Will and Ariel Durant had spent half a century researching and writing their

9 Verlyn Klinkenborg, "The Decline and Fall of the English Major," *New York Times*, June 23, 2013; *Washington Post*, March 5, 2016.

10 Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences, *The Heart of the Matter* (Cambridge: American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2013); National Center for Education Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card*, 2010.

magisterial “integral history” that explored not only government and military history, but also religion, philosophy, science, literature, and the arts from the ancient civilizations of Egypt and the Far East through Greece and Rome to the French Revolution.¹¹ The Durants’ prodigious endeavor raises two questions regarding the humanities in the 21st century. First, would today’s readers, some of whom regard a physical book as an impediment, even be tempted to possess a 10-volume set, totaling more than 8,000 pages and weighing in at almost forty pounds? Second, in today’s silo-bound scholarship, would any contemporary author even undertake such an ambitious interdisciplinary assignment as *The Story of Civilization*?

Although the Book-of-the-Month Club no longer enjoys the popularity it once did, twenty-first century America is still a nation of book clubs, with an estimated five million members. Online reading groups like *goodreads.com* have tens of millions of members. Despite today’s digital dominance, the traditional book is still alive and well. E-books comprise only 27% of total book sales, and independent bookstores are actually holding their own.¹² Book festivals have sprung up throughout the country, thanks to Laura Bush’s inspiration.

After all, modern America doesn’t just pursue the humanities between the covers. Documentary films, cultural destinations, and web-based resources reach large audiences with educational programming. The documentaries of Ken Burns have given millions an appreciation of history. His *The Civil War* series brought that tragic conflict to life through letters, diaries, and photographs. Some 33 million viewers followed Burns’ saga of the Roosevelts.¹³ Feature films have also waded into history and literature with varying degrees of accuracy and success. Hollywood’s version of history rarely satisfies historians, but Shakespearean plays on the big screen often receive high praise from literary scholars. If Alexander Hamilton were alive and in the audience today, what on earth would he think of the wildly popular Broadway musical that narrates his life through the cadence of hip-hop?

11 Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Part X, Rousseau & Revolution* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1967). An eleventh volume, *The Age of Napoleon*, was subsequently published in 1975.

12 James Atlas, “Really? You’re not in a Book Club,” *New York Times*, March 22, 2014.

13 Peter Tonguette, “American Iliad,” *Humanities*, September/October, 2015, 29-33.

Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the proliferation of significant new museums have been catalysts for major historical and cultural exhibitions. Today's humanities exhibitions are generally not only more balanced than their earlier counterparts, but they are also more diverse and inclusive and, of course, more interactive.

Our inventory of major museums has multiplied. In Washington, D.C. alone, a few of the numerous recent additions include: the Newseum, the Holocaust Museum, the Capitol Visitor Center, the National Museum of the American Indian, and soon the National Museum of African American History and Culture. In Texas, we have such jewels as the Bob Bullock State History Museum, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, and San Antonio's new Briscoe Museum of Western Art. Here in El Paso, your fine Museum of History complements the well-established Museum of Art. Also, Texas has not one but three presidential libraries, each of which has an ambitious museum component.

How has digital innovation affected humanities research? Technology has brought both challenges and opportunities, and one of the biggest challenges is preservation. The enduring longevity of the written word on papyrus, parchment, and paper has been such that ancient texts, hidden for centuries, are still legible. Will their "born-digital" descendants have the same life span? Will the creators of significant emails attach enough importance to these communications to retain them, assuming they are even worth retaining? If so, can the archivist who has custody of such records muster the resources and technology to preserve them? The enormity of this escalating challenge came into focus for me in the 1990s when the National Archives accessioned more electronic records from a single agency in that one year than it had received from the entire federal government throughout all previous years combined.

Almost every week, we have seen the political pitfalls and security challenges that sensitive but elusive electronic records can pose for government officials. By contrast, just imagine if Edward Snowden had tried to cart off a million classified paper documents. How much more difficult would his action have been? Solely internal leaks are not the only security concerns, as we've seen with widespread domestic surveillance and hacking of government and corporate computer systems.

These challenges to privacy, cyber-security, and preservation notwithstanding, digital technology is here to stay, and it has advanced humanities research in at least three significant ways: vastly enhanced access to sources, miraculous search capabilities, and the development of new research tools. Enhanced access has been a product not only of technological innovation, but also of attitudinal change. The archivist's traditional "gate-keeper" instinct to preserve documents by limiting access has given way to a new strategy of serving a much larger remote customer base through internet access. Robust institutional websites feature collections of digitized documents and photographs as well as online finding aids. The Library of Congress, for example, has digitized one million of its 14,000,000 prints and photographs, a century of House and Senate Journals, and, in collaboration with the NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities), a growing number of 19th and early 20th century newspapers. The University of Virginia's Miller Center offers a wealth of online primary sources on the modern presidency, including hundreds of recorded telephone conversations and oral history transcripts.¹⁴

This enhanced access is not confined to the records of presidents and other elites. Cornell University's *Freedom on the Move* website is developing a database of ads for runaway slaves.¹⁵ Such web resources as *Ancestry.com* and *FamilySearch* have revolutionized genealogy by digitizing millions of census records and creating digital family trees that facilitate communication and collaboration among mutual descendants.

Local communities sponsor "history harvests" to which residents bring their heirloom documents and photos for scanning into a common database. The two History Harvest pilot projects that Humanities Texas conducted in San Angelo and Brownsville yielded an extraordinary trove of materials, including Civil War letters, 19th century glass-plate negatives, and photographs from the Mexican Revolution. An important complement to these initiatives is the University of North Texas's *Portal to Texas History*, which serves as a common searchable repository.

Digital technology gives scholars a powerful research tool for databases, searches, and text-mining to show progressions and correlations. As digital historian Andrew Torget observes, "We have gone from a problem of too

14 www.loc.gov; www.millercenter.org

15 www.freedomonthemove.org

little access to research material to a problem of too much.”¹⁶ We now have to navigate through massive databases with millions of records. His solution is better tools for sorting through and making sense of this new wealth of information.

In addition to its invaluable labor-saving capability, perhaps the most significant aspect of digital technology in research is the potential for collaboration. The web extends an open invitation to scholars to share and collectively contribute data, working in concert as musicians performing a symphony. Some large-scale, labor-intensive projects are even crowd-staffed by remote volunteers.



Two areas where technology has already had a profound impact are publishing and education. *Google Books* has made millions of titles accessible online. *JSTOR* allows us to search hundreds of digitized scholarly journals. Many institutions like Humanities Texas use electronic newsletters and journals to drive audiences to their websites at a much lower cost than print publications. Audio, video, and stunning color images are embedded alongside text, giving the reader a richer, more engaging experience than merely reading blocks of text. Back issues live on websites for easy retrieval. With just a few key strokes, articles and entire issues can be shared far and wide.

Educational applications offer promise and creativity. Such online courses as Robert Pinsky’s free poetry class have the advantages of flexibility, accessibility, and economy. While the pedagogical merits of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) have been uneven, their deficiencies should diminish with time, experience, and innovation.

Many museums and other institutions feature educational resources on websites, podcasts, and public radio. The superb Back Story radio series, which explores historical antecedents of contemporary topics, airs on 173 stations in 31 states.¹⁷ Inventive scholars and classroom teachers are actively developing and uploading their own lesson plans and modules on

¹⁶ Memorandum, Andrew Torget to author, February 22, 2016.

¹⁷ BackStory with the American History Guys, www.backstoryradio.org

discrete topics.¹⁸ These imaginative resources reach students where they are, providing compelling graphics and even gaming technology for today's visually sophisticated students. Interactivity has the power to stimulate engagement and critical thinking.



In summary, this digital world has not only opened new horizons for humanities research and education; it has also broadened their reach, giving us unprecedented access to vast resources that had once been the exclusive domain of scholars with travel stipends. At the same time, public libraries have been transformed into portals of free access to minimize a very significant digital divide.

Yet, in the final analysis, we must ultimately ask, as the social scientists did almost ninety years ago, "What is the effect of this technological revolution on us?" How are these bells and whistles affecting who we are as individuals and as a society?

First and foremost is the ever essential smart phone. This wondrous tool provides instantaneous communication, navigational guidance, and access to a world of information. Even if you accidentally leave it in a New York taxi, your cell phone keeps you informed of its various locations as it rides around Manhattan, picking up subsequent passengers. This instrument also empowers all of us to contribute to the flow of information. As columnist Tom Friedman has observed, "Everyone with a smart phone is now a reporter, a news photographer, and a documentary film producer."¹⁹

But are our emails and text messages making our communication less reflective, less expressive, and less imaginative, just as the telephone diminished the art of letter-writing in the last century? Does our concentration tend to trail off when reading more than 140 characters? Could it be that our smart phones are actually making us dumber?

Are these addictive instruments pulling us inward, leaving us less connected to and observant of the world around us? On college campuses, students walk to class with their eyes trained on the small screens in front of

18 See, for example: *Congress Creates the Bill of Rights*, www.archives.gov/legislative/resources/bill-of-rights.html

19 Thomas L. Friedman, "The Age of Protest," *New York Times*, January 13, 2016.

their faces, ignoring everything else in their midst. Is social media making us anti-social?

Nevertheless, isn't it ironic that young people rarely use the cell phone for its original purpose—talking? They seem to prefer more impersonal forms of communication to avoid unmediated human relationships. The result, some researchers believe, is a measurable decline in empathy for others and that decline's most extreme manifestation—cyberbullying.²⁰

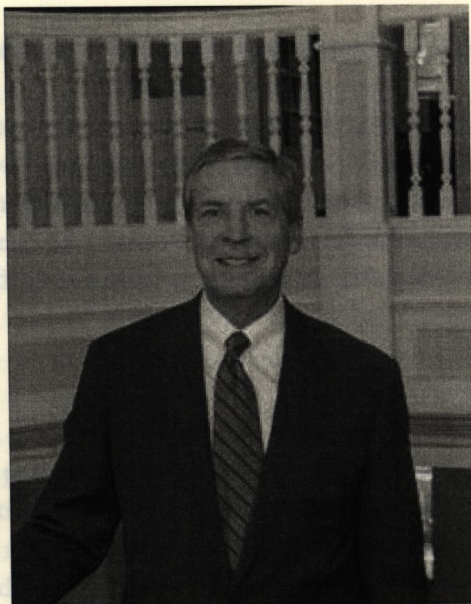


Finally, the prospect of powerful, centralized mass media that worried the social scientists in the early 1930s is now becoming a reality. Talk radio and cable news shows that thrive on slanted reporting and charged commentary are stampeding segments of the population to flee the “reality-based community.” The blogosphere, which is saturated with lies, engenders anger and hate. This steady stream of misinformation has spawned “birthers” and “truthers” and others who lack the knowledge and reasoning skills to analyze and make sound independent judgments. Political candidates can now spout outrageous, “pants-on-fire” claims with impunity.

If the humanities are now being subordinated, they have never been more vital than they are today. Globalization and information technology have simultaneously compressed and expanded our world into a shared village of diverse cultures. America needs citizens who can speak foreign languages and understand other cultures. More importantly, our representative government depends on critical-thinking voters who can absorb the expanding and increasingly complex flow of information and make judicious decisions. That is what Benjamin Franklin meant when, upon leaving the Constitutional Convention, he declared that the founders had given us a Republic, if we could keep it.



20 Jacob Weisberg, “We are Hopelessly Hooked,” *New York Review of Books*, February 25, 2016.



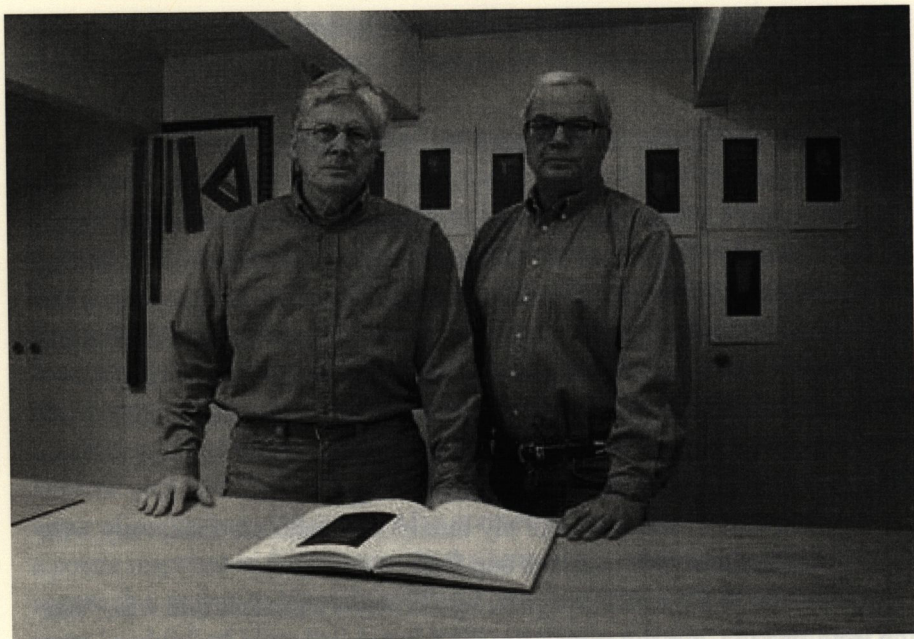
Michael L. Gillette, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Humanities Texas

Michael L. Gillette has been Humanities Texas's executive director since 2003. His former positions include directing the LBJ Library's Oral History Program from 1976 to 1991 and serving as director of the Center for Legislative Archives from 1991 to 2003, with responsibility for the official records of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives at the National Archives.

Gillette serves on the advisory board of the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University and the board of directors of the Congressional Education Foundation. He is a member of the Philosophical Society of Texas and served as its president in 2009. His previous affiliations include the board of directors of the Everett Dirksen Congressional Leadership Center and the Law Library of Congress's National Digital Library Program.

Gillette is the author of *Launching the War on Poverty: An Oral History* and editor of *Texas in Transition*. His newest book, *Lady Bird Johnson: An Oral History*, was released by Oxford University Press in 2012. He received his BA in government and his Ph.D. in history from The University of Texas at Austin. He is a recipient of the UT College of Liberal Arts' Pro Bene Meritis award.

Photo credit: Lindsey Elan Wall



Richard Wagener and David Pascoe

2016 Recipients of the Carl Hertzog Award
for Excellence in Book Design

Title: *Loom*

Author: Alan Loney

Artist: Richard Wagener

Publisher: Nawakum Press, Santa Rosa, CA and
Mixolydian Editions, Petaluma, CA (2014)

Printers: Richard Wagener and David Pascoe

**Remarks by Richard Wagener at the Carl Hertzog Lecture,
March 13, 2016:**

We are very proud and honored to be here today to accept the Carl Hertzog Award.

David and I would like to thank Dr. Natalicio, the University of Texas, El Paso, and the Friends of the Library for sponsoring the Carl Hertzog Awards celebrating excellence in book design. We would like to express our appreciation to Robert Stakes and Lydia Limas for their wonderful planning of this event. We would also like to thank Jackson and Donna Curlin, Hector Retta and Lorez Curlin Retta, J. Sam Moore, and John and Ailbhe Byrd for the gracious hospitality we've been shown during our time in El Paso. Thanks also to Beto Lopez, our wonderful tour guide.

I would like to acknowledge my family here with me today: my wife Cathy, our daughter Erica, and our son Jeff.

In the 1950s TV series *Dragnet*, Sgt. Friday's signature line was, "Just the facts, Ma'am, just the facts." But the facts can obscure the truth. As Ray Bradbury pointed out, "no one goes to see *Hamlet* to find out who murdered the father." They go for the asides. That is where the art is. All projects like *Loom* embody a wealth of stories. Here is one.

David and I first met at the 2011 Codex Book Fair in Berkeley. As it turned out we live about twenty miles apart in Sonoma County, a little north of San Francisco and Berkeley. Afterwards we got together a number of times to talk about books, ideas, and explore possible projects for collaboration. However, the projects we discussed didn't seem right for me. Finally I said, why don't we wait a while and see what I'm doing in a year? Perhaps there will be something that we both like and want to pursue.

One of many ideas I've pursued over the years came when I was writing the text for my first book, *Zebra Noise with a Flatted Seventh*. Editing was a way of answering the question, how many words do I need to tell my story? I used the same approach when writing the text for another publication, *Cracked Sidewalks*. For that book, I extended the thinking to one of the engravings. How many lines do I need to engrave to sell the image?

More than a year passed. I was printing one night and began thinking conceptually about a loom and weaving, something I've thought about off

and on for forty years. Yet this time, similar to the past projects I mentioned, I reduced it down to an essential question: How many threads does it take to make a weaving?

That night while printing *The Sierra Nevada Suite* for the Book Club of California, and with that question in mind, I turned to drawing to find my answer. I left the drawing on the table close to the press and kept looking at it. Then came a second drawing, and a third. As I completed the printing, I found that I couldn't stop looking at the drawings and thinking about what they were saying to me. For the next two months they continued to haunt my thoughts. I was excited about something I couldn't explain. I didn't know what I was going to do with the images or where they would take me.

At the 2013 Codex Book Fair and Symposium I heard a talk by New Zealand poet Alan Loney. I was very taken with the ideas, the feeling, and a sense of gentle thoughtfulness. Alan seemed to be an ideal person to provide a poetic response to the images. At the same time I questioned how I could approach a person of his stature when I only had three conceptual drawings and a head full of ideas that I couldn't yet explain or define. I was afraid to approach him, fearful of what he might think.

Two days later at the Gala dinner, I worked through the fear and went over to talk to Alan and asked what he would think if I sent him some engravings to get his response. He readily said that would be fine, adding that he really liked my work. That's good, I said. However, these engravings are not like anything of my other work that you have seen. He still agreed.

I was excited that my talk with Alan went so well yet still apprehensive of what he might think once he saw the images. Nevertheless I kept thinking about the drawings and staring into the unknown of where they might lead.

I have been engraving for over 35 years now. As wood engraving is a very unforgiving medium, I've developed a way of thinking through an idea, putting a drawing on a block, and planning how I might achieve the image before ever putting the tool to the wood. That is not to suggest that there aren't edits and changes that occur during the engraving process, but it is the realization that in wood engraving, once you go forward you can't go back. Preplanning, then, has served me well.

The first three engravings were already planned out. For the subsequent engravings I had loose drawings and notations to guide me as I began to

engrave. From block to block the drawings on the blocks diminished until the last image in the book was engraved without any preplanning or notation on the block. All these images grew very organically through the process. Beyond the first three, all of the resultant images turned out differently than how I first envisioned them. This took me into areas I had never been while engraving and was more like abstract expressionist painting.

By the time I was ready to send something to Alan I had fourteen images. I shipped off the proofs to Melbourne, Australia, where Alan now lives, and included two letters I had written that tried to capture the ideas and associations I had while creating the engravings.

Alan responded very enthusiastically and we shared the sense that his poetry should not address the images, but should rather resonate with his response to the ideas and feelings behind the engravings.

At this point I remembered my commitment to David. I was somewhat apprehensive because my engravings and this project were quite different from anything we had discussed. At my invitation, on Earth Day 2013, David came over to my studio and saw the images for the first time. Something clearly resonated with David and he quickly said "let's do this," and we started the long process of questioning and figuring out what we had and brainstorming ideas about the best way to pull it all together. It is interesting that in our discussions we talked about having Patrick Reagh, who cast the type for this book, do some printing for us. David pointed out that Patrick had won the Hertzog Award, and as they say, the rest is history.

The story of *Loom* revels in the wisdom of two critical decisions. The first was choosing Alan to provide a poetic response to my ideas. His poem far exceeded my expectations and truly captures the spirit of my engravings. The second was asking David to partner with me on this project. David has an unerring eye for detail and a great design sensibility. David's mind never stops asking questions and coming up with interesting answers. Throughout the ensuing months there was fun and excitement as together we developed an internal logic that guided us through every decision. Nothing in the design was arbitrary. I would not be standing here today without David.

Now as I think back over my career, I recognize that my best work has come out of those times when I was initially too afraid to begin and had to work through a certain fear before taking the leap. This project presented way

too many instances in which I wasn't sure what I had and where it might take me. Among other things, this caused me to be afraid to approach Alan, and then hesitant to approach David.

This brings to mind a Texas singer/songwriter who paraphrased an idea he read in Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*. Ray Wylie Hubbard wrote: "Our fears are like dragons guarding our most precious treasures."

Loom is my treasure.

Thank you.

Richard Wagener, March 2016

Biography: Richard Wagener

Richard Wagener attended the University of San Diego and received a B.S. degree in Biology, and Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles (now Pasadena) earning a M.F.A. degree in Fine Arts.

In 1980 Wagener's work shifted from painting to engraving in wood. Ten years later he met Peter Koch, letterpress printer and publisher in Berkeley, California. Wagener's first book, *Zebra Noise with a Flatted Seventh*, was published by Peter Koch Printers in 1998. This book was included in a show *Artists' Books in the Modern Era, 1870-2000* held at the Legion of Honor, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Wagener then created a suite of abstract color engravings that accompanied *The Fragments of Parmenides*, new translation by Robert Bringhurst and published by Editions Koch, 2003.

In 2006 Wagener established his own imprint, Mixolydian Editions, for his own fine press projects. The first publication was *Cracked Sidewalks*, vignettes and prose poems by Wagener about growing up in Los Angeles. The second book was *Mountains & Religion*, twenty engravings based on imagery from a journey to Nepal and Tibet in 1995, published in 2011.

The Book Club of California published *California in Relief*, 2009, thirty wood engravings by Wagener with a foreword by Victoria Dailey. Jan Elsted noted: "Wagener's essential engravings of an outer landscape remind us of the echo within ourselves of an interior one, and we respond with grateful recognition."

In 2013 Wagener created a companion book, *The Sierra Nevada Suite: Thirty-One Wood Engravings*, published by the Book Club of California. This book continued Wagener's observations of the sometimes stark and austere details of California's landscape and featured two fold-out panoramic engravings of Yosemite. It received a Juror's Choice Award at the Fine Press Book show in Oxford, England.

Wagener and David Pascoe of Nawakum Press in Santa Rosa, California met at the 2011 Codex Book Fair in Berkeley, California and

began discussing the possibility of working together on a book project. The opportunity for such a venture presented itself after the 2013 Codex Book Fair where Wagener had met New Zealand poet Alan Loney and got him to agree to write a poem for a series of engravings. Pascoe and Wagener collaboratively designed and published the resultant book, *Loom*.

Pascoe and Wagener collaboratively designed, printed and published a second book, *Trading Eights*, 2016 featuring jazz portraits by Montana engraver Jim Todd, an essay by jazz critic and musical historian Ted Gioia, and a poem by Dana Gioia, California's Poet laureate and former Director of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Wagener is the 2016 recipient of the Oscar Lewis Award for Contributions to Book Arts given by the Book Club of California.

**Remarks by David Pascoe/Nawakum Press at the Carl Hertzog Lecture,
March 13, 2016:**

Good afternoon. My friend and co-conspirator in crime Richard has done a good job just now giving you the back story on our book *Loom*, and also in thanking those who have helped organize and be a part of this wonderful weekend celebration, including The Friends of the University Library. I would like to second those thanks and also thank the judges who chose our book from almost fifty entries. That could not have been an easy decision, as the competition was very stiff with many wonderful books. Some of the work is on display in the library so if you get a chance to go over and take a look you won't be disappointed. To be recognized for excellence in book design by the Carl Hertzog Award is both an honor and a delight. I am humbled when I take a look at the list of exceptional past winners. So thanks again, and thanks to Carl Hertzog, whose brilliance in publishing and book design is responsible for getting us together here today.

When Richard first told me that we had won the Hertzog Award and would be going to El Paso to accept it and say a few words, I was very pleased. As my kids would say "it was awesome, rad, and even epic." But I let him know immediately that I was glad he was going to El Paso because I would be able to blame him for everything that might have gone wrong with our book, or didn't really work out well. You see I grew up in a family of four brothers, and I wasn't often asked to speak; so "how can I blame the other guy?" came to mind first no matter what the circumstance. Richard grew up with five sisters and one brother, so I'm not sure what he made of my reaction. He's still probably scratching his head. Well, fortunately with our book nothing really went wrong at all, and now it seems everything has gone right.

Designing and publishing fine press books and artists' books is often accomplished within a very small vacuum. It can be a rather solitary experience, carried out far away from those who understand and appreciate the making of fine books by hand. Inspiration comes when not really

expected: in the middle of the night, in a traffic jam, in the dentist's chair. So to receive recognition on this scale is very much appreciated. On the other hand part of the joy of working in the book arts is that I do get to collaborate with some very creative and talented people, people who are not only good at what they do, but also have been doing it for a very long time. In my case and with *Loom* it was a great pleasure to work with Richard, Alan Loney the poet from Australia, Patrick Reagh, a former Hertzog winner himself, who printed the books and cast the lead type for it at 700 degrees, and Craig Jensen from San Marcos, Texas, the hand bookbinder on the project who has contributed bindings on a number of former Hertzog winners. So I share this award with all of them responsible for bringing this book of ours into print, and with all the countless others who have spurred us on with all our bookmaking endeavors.

Lastly I would also like to thank my daughter Jenessa, who traveled here with me to El Paso. She has been a fan and supporter of my work for a very long time. She may in fact be the youngest fine press publisher in the world, for at the age of eight she wrote and illustrated her own work, then printed it on my Vandercook proof press, and helped bind it under her own press name. I was there to help and get out of the way. I very much appreciate her support. In closing then I would simply say *muchas gracias por todo, y Viva el libro!*

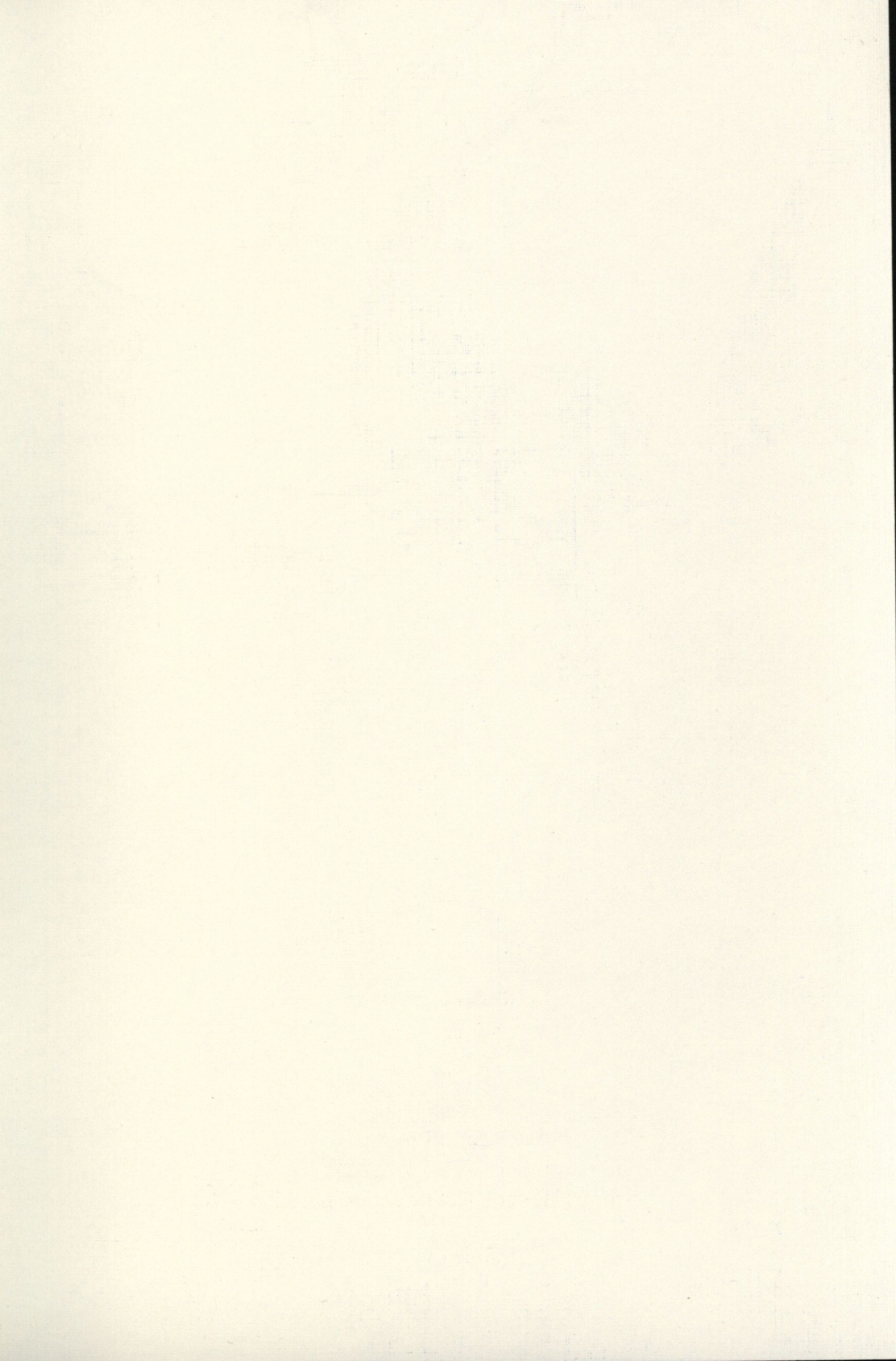
Biography: David Pascoe/Nawakum Press

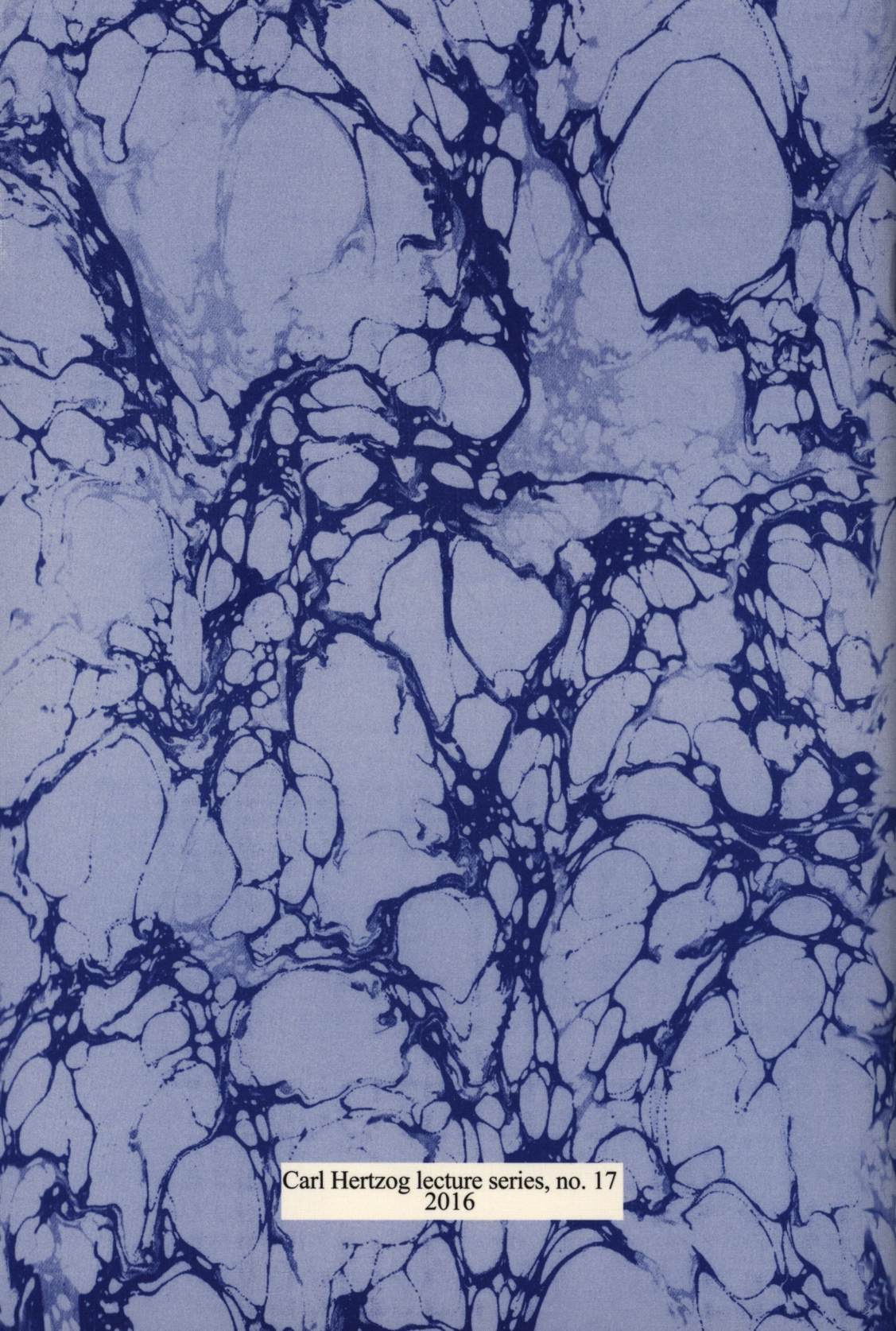
David Pascoe is the proprietor of Nawakum Press in Santa Rosa, California. He publishes handcrafted fine press and artists' books. The Press both originates and manages its own projects while collaborating with authors, artists and the very best of those practicing in the book arts field today.

Mr. Pascoe first studied letterpress printing and book design with Don Greame Kelley of The Feathered Serpent Press in San Anselmo, California. Mr. Kelley was an artist, cartographer, author, and book designer who had set up his own fine press in 1975. Following this early exposure to book design and publishing, Mr. Pascoe established Nawakum Press in 1979 in Sebastopol, California. He went on to own and run a commercial graphic design firm, and later a successful printing brokerage based out of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Nawakum Press was re-established in 2008 and has published an eclectic list of titles, with authors and poets as diverse as Herman Melville and Paul Muldoon, Barry Lopez and Jorge Luis Borges, Rachel Carson and Robert Bly. Nawakum Press editions can be found in over seventy-five libraries around the world including Yale University's Beinecke Library, The National Library of Australia, Stanford University, The New York Public Library, The Irish National Library, and The Library of Congress. Mr. Pascoe is an alumnus of Yale University.

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