

**Of the Repository:
Poetics in a Networked Digital Milieu**

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ABSTRACT

Of the Repository: Poetics in a Networked Digital Milieu

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This doctoral dissertation is a material and cultural analysis of the entwined histories of the three major North American digital repositories of contemporary avant-garde and experimental poetry: the Electronic Poetry Center at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Kenneth Goldsmith's UbuWeb, and PennSound at the University of Pennsylvania. The dissertation takes up a media-historical methodology to document the actors, publics, discourses, aesthetics, institutional environments, technological infrastructures, and social relations involved in the production of these open online repositories. The research begins from the premise that, in the study of what writing is, has been, and might be, the discourse of poetics and the figure of the archive fuse together. If, as Kate Eichhorn (2003) argues, "[t]o write in a digital age is to write *in* the archive," in this research I ask: What can the composition of archives – their materials, contexts, protocols, and interfaces – teach us about poetics today?

Since the mid-1990s, these three repositories have served as a primary means for extending the purview and program of poetics as a contemporary institutional formation. In doing so, the creators of these repositories have utilized them as important media infrastructures for the publication, dissemination, and storage of poetic works and critical analysis on the contemporary production of poetry. Each digital repository is an argument for a specific poetics. Their entwined histories and cultural-technical infrastructures articulate numerous affinities, yet each is distinct in the way it casts a new light on certain critical terms for literary studies. Approaching each in terms of its emphasis on, respectively, *access*, *circulation*, and *format* enables a detailed engagement with the aesthetic, institutional, legal, and technological concerns of the digital repository. Here, this dissertation develops a unique methodology for addressing these complicated structures called digital repositories by emphasizing each case study's

particular *bias*. Such an engagement opens on to a more general consideration of language, writing, and textuality in networked milieus, and emphasizes the particular affordances that make the digital repository a significant, yet underacknowledged, archival genre.

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Preface

This research begins in an unexpected place. Where the Deh Cho (Mackenzie River) intersects with the Arctic Circle, there is a small community called Radili'ko – “place of rapids” – by its Sahtu Dene inhabitants, though the town is marked on most maps by its anglo-colonial name, Fort Good Hope. The one spot on the entire route of the broad Deh Cho – from Great Slave Lake to the Beaufort delta – where it narrows and the water becomes turbulent, Radili'ko is where those travelling the river are forced to stop and direct their craft to land. It became a permanent settlement area called Fort Good Hope in 1805 when the North West Company arrived and established the first fur-trading post in the lower Mackenzie Valley right on the riverbank. Missionaries and mounted police followed later. While living in Radili'ko over the course of two years, 2007 and 2008, as I raised my young daughter and worked as the town's unofficial bingo caller on the radio each evening, I began to study poetics.

This is an “unexpected” place to begin such an endeavour because, in one sense, Radili'ko lacked the resources one might imagine to be necessary to carry out such study. For example, books. The community of 400 people was endowed with Elders who had learned and passed on traditional practices for the dissemination of cultural knowledge, such as storytelling, beading, hide-tanning, and mapping the surrounding land so as to harvest its offerings, but books were hard to come by. There was no bookstore in Radili'ko. The closest one was over 300 kilometres away, as the raven flies, in Inuvik. The town's library, housed in the Chief T'Selehye School building, had around 200 volumes, ones primarily intended for children and young adults, and a dozen general reference texts. Getting books in from elsewhere was a difficult process. Flights to Radili'ko were infrequent and very costly, and the only overland routes from the south were navigable by trucks over an ice road for about four months each winter, and by boats and barges each summer along the river. To this extent, Radili'ko was, and still is, one of the most remote communities in the north.

Yet, on Monday and Thursday afternoons once school had let out, visitors were able to use one of the library's four desktop computers to access the Internet for periods up to 30 minutes. The connection, provided by an early broadband service over satellite, was dodgy and acted as if it were weather-dependent. Temperatures below –40 degrees Celsius seemed to halt

the signal, perhaps freezing it in mid-air, as would the regular ice fogs or gusts of thick snow. Often, a new user coming online was enough to shut down the entire network, much to the frustration of the teenagers who had waited in line to play their favourite online games. Yet it was in that library in Radili'ko, during these thirty-minute intervals of occasional connection, in search of something to read, that I happened upon the writings on poetics and the digital repositories that are the subject of this dissertation.

A few years earlier, I had completed an undergraduate degree in philosophy and, afterwards, began to study languages – Latin, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, French, German, and then, once settled in Denendeh (Canada's Northwest Territories), the basics of Athabaskan grammar. Alongside this study, I started to read philosophical writings concerning language and histories of communicational practices. My reading was self-directed and haphazard – if a reference or endnote signalled something that might be of interest, I followed that trajectory to the best of my abilities, depending upon the materials present wherever I was. En route to Radili'ko, having come across a number of books that referred to the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, I picked up German-English bilingual editions of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*. I found their mix of analysis and play, aphorism and inquiry, to be fascinating. For me, they signalled a new way to think of language, *in* language. Having read little else besides these two books throughout my first long winter in north, one afternoon at the Chief T'Selehye School, I sought out supplementary materials online. A search and surf through a series of pages led to a site called the Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) where I found an essay that was particularly interesting, the introductory chapter to a book by the poetry scholar and critic Marjorie Perloff, *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (1996).¹ In this essay and in a number of other Perloff essays I had access to via the site, I learned about poetic works I had never before heard of and could have hardly imagined, ones that experimented with and explored the possibilities for verbal exchange, in content and form. These works often premised these explorations upon specific communicational media that made such exchange possible.²

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes: "The limits of my language stand for the limits of my world" [*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt*].³ I understood the works of poetry I encountered through the Perloff essays – many of which I could access as text, sound, video, or image files on the EPC or, if not there, on two sites linked throughout it,

UbuWeb and PennSound – to be instantiations of or attempts to expand the limits of my language, of my sense of articulation and syntax and perception, thus, of my comprehension of the world. They seemed to have less to do with “poetry” as I had until then understood such a category, and were, instead, more like rare and exotic specimens of language, ones that belonged in a natural history museum where archivists meticulously collected, documented, and explained the systems and conditions of humanity’s most shared substance. There, amid such a collection of works, one’s sense of the robust difference of the world expands.

I became enthralled with investigating the materials collected on these sites. I began showing up to each thirty-minute Internet session at Chief T’Selehye with a USB key so I could download items – essays, poems, entire books, audio recordings, and visual works – to read and study offline. I had never encountered such artistic and critical works before, yet my studies and interests in language, philosophy, and culture seemed to point to their possibility. And here they were, online, free for the taking. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes, “the meaning of a word is its use in language” [*Die Bedeuteng eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache*].⁴ I recognized this as a fundamental component of the sites, that they created an important context for these works. In combining various modes of critical writing with and alongside these odd and intriguing specimens, I was able to comprehend their uses, their forms, their contexts beyond such sites, and, therefore, their meaning and importance as texts and as performances, as acts of language. Over time, I came to think of this combination of creative experiment and critical reflection to be of the domain of poetics, a field of study the three sites had references to throughout their documents.

As much as any individual work or constellation of works broadened the horizon of my language, my conception of an articulable world (and there were many that did just that), these sites’ overall media infrastructure became the aspect I wanted to study. The fact of their existence, their construction and organization for disseminating materials, was as important as, if not more than, the specific contents they relayed. John Durham Peters describes media as “world-enabling infrastructures; not passive vessels for content, but ontological shifters.”⁵ That discernment – something close to it, not as clearly articulated – is what I felt upon encountering the Electronic Poetry Center, UbuWeb, and PennSound on the computers at the Radili’ko library. That I, from a remote village on the arctic circle, could freely access and download documents and media that I imagined existed only elsewhere, in a university’s special collections or a

museum's archives 5000 miles away, felt revelatory. It profoundly changed my conception of where I was and what was possible there.

Over time, that perception extended beyond my own individual context. As I used the sites more regularly, as I began to write and study and correspond with other people engaged with them and their materials, I wondered: How do the infrastructures of these repositories effect and enable other writers and artists, other communities, other activities elsewhere? For whom might this be the case? And how do these sites, in turn, impact the aesthetic communities and institutions from which they emerge and respond to? How might they alter the very idea of literature?

A decade later, now in Montreal, I have carried these questions with me throughout my graduate studies concerning poetry and poetics, which the three repositories I encountered in the Chief T'Selehye School library inspired. These three repositories have also left a deep impression on my sense of what poetry and poetics are: they are part of a terrain that is linguistically rich and formally expansive; they make use of all kinds of media and formats; they are exploratory and iterative, and the ways in which they are produced, published, and disseminated create specific kinds of relations and communities. That, too, is a part of the work.

In *Speclab: Digital Aesthetics and Projects in Speculative Computing*, Johanna Drucker develops a mode of interpretation based upon her reading of Charles Peirce's tripartite theory of signification, in which "a sign stands for something to someone and does not operate merely in the formal signifier/signified structure outlined by Ferdinand de Saussure."⁶ Drucker takes up Peirce's notion of the sign – "representing something to someone for some purpose"⁷ – so as to situate questions of audience and use in the development of digital platforms in the early years of humanities computing: Who is this for? How is it used? Whom does it exclude? Why is it useful? and so on. And I want to state clearly here, at the start of this project, that I have undertaken this history of the three digital repositories for a reason that extends beyond merely contributing to scholarly discourses, even as I, of course, recognize that as an important and valuable thing in its own right. With this work, I intend to make a map for others to find, a guidebook of sorts, that will be of use to those who are interested in creating infrastructures via which such rich thinking in language and all its possible manifestations and performances can be communicated over an expanse that is both territorial and cultural.

It seems both curious and fitting that – as I begin to make legible for myself the methodology by which I have attempted to respond to those questions I have carried with me over this last decade – I am, suddenly, surprisingly, returned to the north. During the summer of 1924, Harold Adams Innis, the scholar of communications who Peters describes as “one of the first to insist that infrastructure should be at the heart of media theory,”⁸ travelled down and up the Deh Cho, stopping in Radili’ko.⁹ His fieldwork diary, as Peter van Wyck shows, blurs the exact dates and locations of his movements, as well as the observations and reflections anchored to those places.¹⁰ Yet, during his time in Radili’ko, we know that Innis was in the midst of the “dirt research” that would provide the groundwork for his study on the topography, infrastructure, and techniques of colonial empire, *The Fur Trade in Canada*.¹¹ Charles Acland describes this mode of inquiry:

By “dirt” research, Innis meant a form of witnessing and experiencing the sites, routes, venues, and operations of industrial production, refinement, and transport. To do this, he travelled extraordinary distances through remote regions, doing so by rail, boat, and canoe. This “dirt” research was not conventional ethnographic writing, but rather a form of attentiveness to the minute and localized aspects of extraction, transportation, refinement, and distribution stages of the economy, whether at moments of ascension, prosperity, or decline.¹²

In the north, Innis was concerned with tracing out the production of a particular discourse – “the vectors of circulation and exchange that, he believed, were crucial to the emergence of ‘Canada’ as a territory, political entity, and idea.”¹³ In this narrative, the river systems and waterways of the Canadian Shield played a central role as an infrastructure, “an underlying base or foundation,”¹⁴ that helped define, support, and connect the various assemblages of economic, political, and social exchange across a vast territory. As he wrote in his Mackenzie River diary, “Whole Arctic civilization a capitalization of a swift river;”¹⁵ or in his official report of that fieldwork, “The river holds sway. Since the rivers are the Highways, the buildings of the missions, the trading companies and the police, each with a separate landing, are strung along the banks.”¹⁶

In this work, I attempt nothing so monumental as Innis’s tome on a nation’s political economy over the course of four centuries. Yet his attention to documenting media infrastructures, his mode of inquiry – the combination of fieldwork paired with archival examination, the insistence on being a body that seeks to understand the dynamics of a terrain in its midst, the charting out of how localized geographical, technological, and discursive

components both inform and are shaped by the production of a networked infrastructure – has inspired the way I have conducted this research. This way of perceiving and interacting that I have learned and have striven to embody is an additional facet of this research that I hope this work extends, that will for its readers hold sway.

Introduction

Eine Geschichte der Poetik, ein Hilfsmittel zur Orientierung kenne ich nicht.

[A history of poetics, a device for orientation I know not.]

–Wilhelm Scherer¹⁷

In the study of what writing is, has been, and might be, the discourse of poetics and the figure of the archive fuse together. Not confined to a singular narrative or trajectory, but a vast territory or “complex volume” of articulations¹⁸ in which “heterogeneous regions are differentiated or deployed in accordance with specific rules and practices that cannot be superposed,”¹⁹ the discourse of poetics and the figure of the archive concern the assembling and organization of past compositions, the transmission of their inscriptions into the present, and the viable futures those traces make legible. If, as Kate Eichhorn argues, “[t]o write in a digital age is to write *in* the archive,”²⁰ in this research I ask: What can the composition of archives – their materials, contexts, protocols, and interfaces – teach us about poetics today?

This dissertation responds to the question by means of a material and cultural analysis of a specific archival genre, the digital repository. I examine the entwined histories of three particular case studies: the Electronic Poetry Center, UbuWeb, and PennSound. Since the mid-1990s, these three repositories have served as a primary means for extending the purview and program of poetics as a contemporary institutional formation. In doing so, the creators of these repositories have utilized them as important media infrastructures for the publication, dissemination, and storage of poetic works and critical analysis on the contemporary production of poetry. In creating access to collections of out-of-print and difficult-to-acquire compositions as well as new writing and its related media, these repositories have profoundly reconfigured the space and time of literary production and dissemination. In generating new circulatory channels for works composed in an array of formats – including text, sound, and (moving) image – these repositories exhibit the fundamental intermediality of poetic practice like no prior platform for publication.²¹ To this extent, these repositories incorporate characteristics of other vital means and platforms for the dissemination of works in literary and artistic communities – for example,

the little magazine, the anthology, the reading series, and the program²² – bringing together aspects of each in a single venue. Therefore, they serve as an ideal set of objects for “charting out,” as Charles Bernstein describes it, “the relation of the digital to poetry and poetics”²³ in the early information age.²⁴

Each digital repository is, as I detail in the case studies that follow, an argument for a poetics. Their entwined histories and cultural-technical infrastructures articulate numerous affinities, yet each is distinct in the way it casts a new light on certain critical terms for literary studies. Approaching each in terms of its emphasis on, respectively, *access*, *circulation*, and *format* enables a detailed engagement with the aesthetic, institutional, legal, and technological concerns of the digital repository. Here, I intend to develop a unique method for addressing these complicated structures called digital repositories. One could, certainly, approach issues such as *access*, *circulation*, and *format* in each one of these repositories, as they work in concert throughout each instantiation. By focusing on one specific theme in each case study, I mean to emphasize that repository’s particular *bias*,²⁵ a component often absent in literary analysis of the production of digital texts. Such an engagement opens on to a more general consideration of language and writing in networked milieus, and emphasizes the particular affordances that make the digital repository a significant, yet underacknowledged, archival genre.

The Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) is one of the earliest digital repositories focused on poetry and poetics in the English language. In 1995, Loss Pequeño Glazier, in dialogue with Kenneth Sherwood and with the support of Charles Bernstein, initiated the EPC as a pre-Web Internet site using TelNet and Gopher protocols, designing it to function as a hub that could support a virtual ecosystem for poets, poetry, and the study of poetics. Founded footsteps away from the Poetry Collection at the University of Buffalo (UB), a prominent archives of English language literary materials, and within the context of UB’s Poetics Program, Glazier’s central aim for the project was to create “a site for access, collection and dissemination of poetry and related material” in cyberspace.²⁶ The site’s focus on works of and information on the radical modernist traditions of twentieth century North American poetry stemmed from Glazier’s interest in those traditions’ formats for publishing (for example, the small press publication from hand press to mimeo, Xerox to offset), their modes of conviviality (such as conferences, readings, and talks), and the multimediality of their poetic practices (in that the poets often materialized their works, in addition to being texts, as performances, installations, image- or

sound-based works). To this extent, we can approach the EPC by considering how it is a crystallization of sets of social practices and relations within the cultures and institutions of poetic practice.²⁷

Trained as a computer scientist, an information systems technician, and a bibliographer, Glazier's skillset allowed him to confront the challenging task of collecting and organizing such pluriform works in the then-emergent space of the Internet.²⁸ Approaching the field of poetry, in Bernstein's words, "as a culture that can be documented,"²⁹ Glazier assembled in one place individual poems, entire books, poets' biographical and bibliographical information, series of journals and magazines, reviews, critical essays, statements of poetics, talks, correspondences, newsletters, mailing lists, and, later, image-based works and sound recordings. Over the course of twenty years, the EPC has maintained, in Glazier's words, a "centrality in the margins of poetic practice."³⁰ Though it served as the main interface on the Web for UB's esteemed Poetics Program and has set an important precedent for numerous digital objects founded after it, main themes in the story of the EPC's production concern its struggle to attain institutional recognition and its lack of material support. Catalyzed by Glazier's decades-long devotion to the expanded field of poetic activity and the countless hours of labour he has spent in order to document it, the EPC is, in its creator's eyes, a utopian project with the purpose of creating unbridled access to rare and difficult-to-access poetry and poetics resources for all to read and learn.³¹ To this extent, Glazier envisioned the networked environment of the Internet as a liberatory space for poetry, for poets, for poetic practice.

In this work's first case study, I complicate the relationship between the discourse around Glazier's poetics and hopeful technological determinism with the actuality of the EPC's material articulation on- and off-line. In introducing the EPC, though, I want to emphasize here its significant contribution to transforming the idea of "accessibility" in terms of poetics. In the decades prior to the EPC, the "accessibility" of a poetic text primarily referred to a work's specific internal stylistic, often premised upon notions of "direct speech" and "self-expression" that a supposed "general reader" would comprehend rather immediately upon the encounter of reading.³² In making available key documents of radical modernist poetic traditions – ones often difficult to track down, yet also often deemed *inaccessible* in the prior sense of the term – the EPC underscored the obtainability of the text over its supposed intelligibility. I address this transformation at length, approaching it as an important paradigm shift for poetics, one that alters

the techniques and values shared by members of literary communities, and thus acts as a common model or example that sets the stage for a discussion of the two other digital repositories that follow from the EPC and with which it is profoundly interlinked.³³ If, as Fredric Jameson reminds us, failure is a necessary component of articulating and exploring utopian spaces,³⁴ we can approach the EPC's liberatory ideology and its slow demise by considering the ways it established a ground that supported numerous digital literary projects, in particular UbuWeb and PennSound, to develop in its wake.

UbuWeb, founded in 1996 by Kenneth Goldsmith, is a Web-based repository of text, sound, image, and video works related to historical and contemporary avant-garde aesthetic movements. Initially focused on materials emerging out of the internationalist movement of visual and concrete poetry from the mid-twentieth century onward, UbuWeb grew to feature media related to the various disciplines of literature, dance, video art, music, sound art, performance, and outsider art. Like the EPC, UbuWeb concerns itself with creating access to "hard-to-find, out-of-print and obscure materials, transferred digitally to the Web."³⁵ Referring to the repository as a "distribution center,"³⁶ Goldsmith underscores the importance of establishing access through the creation of new circulatory regimes for media. Goldsmith has privileged the circulatory component of UbuWeb above other considerations – for example, above *quality* (of a work's reproduction compared to its original) and *permission* (from the work's creator in order to host and circulate it). To this extent, UbuWeb has been and continues to be instrumental in shaping open culture and media commons for information and educational resources today.

As Monoskop, an important wiki and online media commons for educational resources, notes: "UbuWeb is the most significant and largest online archive of avant-garde art. [...] UbuWeb has grown into a relevant and recognized critical institution of contemporary art. Artists want to see their work in its catalog and thus agree to a relationship with UbuWeb that has no formal contractual obligations."³⁷ Goldsmith himself has addressed the reason behind this approach:

[I]n terms of how we've gone about building the archive, if we had to ask for permission, we wouldn't exist. Because we have no money, we don't ask permission. Asking permission always involves paperwork and negotiations, lawyers, and bank accounts. But by doing things the wrong way, we've been able to pretty much overnight build an archive that's made publically accessible for free of charge to anyone.³⁸

Yet due to Goldsmith's controversial production practices, UbuWeb is often, if not always, in jeopardy of being shut down.³⁹ Although the main location of the repository's production is Goldsmith's Manhattan loft, for the majority of its existence UbuWeb has depended on outside contributions from institutions to support its material media infrastructure, such as bandwidth and servers. Because institutions are wary of risking litigation for having materials in defiance of intellectual property law hosted on their servers, UbuWeb has faced several evictions from the servers that supported the project and has been shut down, at various moments, from the Web without notice. Therefore, several times over the last two decades, the specific locations where UbuWeb *is* – off- and online – has shifted. And the collection hosted on UbuWeb is constantly changing, too, in terms of the files themselves (as they are added and pulled) and in terms of the formats of those files (as they are changed so that they might more fluidly circulate). This means that, in addition to being a “distribution center” focused on circulating media, UbuWeb itself has existed as a media object in constant circulation and transfiguration.

In this work's second case study, I trace out the trajectory of UbuWeb's development through the thematic of circulation, “a cultural process,” as Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma write, “with its own forms of abstraction, evaluation, and constraint, which are created by the interactions between specific types of circulating forms and the interpretive communities built around them.”⁴⁰ Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth Povinelli, writing on the circulatory matrix of cultural and technological forms, note that “in a given culture of circulation, it is important to track the proliferating copresence of varied textual/cultural forms in all their mobility and mutability than to attempt a delineation of their fragile autonomy and specificity.”⁴¹ I therefore approach UbuWeb's media poetics by tracking and detailing the repository's transitions from New York to Buffalo to Toronto to New Jersey to Mexico City, where the site is presently maintained on a remote server at an unspecified location. Incorporating a series of interviews (that together form an oral history of the repository) and documents (such as cease and desist letters, correspondence, and files related to a series of hard drives that were part of UbuWeb's various migrations), I take up a number of issues and approaches – from discussions of affective labour to the geopolitics of server locations, from analysis of intellectual property to media forensics – to detail the site's twenty-year history, its range of media, and its perpetually precarious existence. In articulating the aesthetics, technics, and cultural politics of the site's

production, I present the many ways that UbuWeb has informed many elements of the EPC and PennSound, and also its greater impact upon networked digital culture at large.

PennSound is an online repository of MP3 and MP4 audio recordings dedicated to poetry and poetics. Founded by Charles Bernstein and Al Filreis at the University of Pennsylvania in 2003, PennSound has significantly altered the status of sound as a “material and materializing dimension of poetry”⁴² by collecting, organizing, disseminating and making available thousands of poetry-related recordings, and by anchoring the repository to a variety of interfaces on- and offline that allow users to explore the phonotextual elements of poetic practice.⁴³ Assembled from numerous personal and institutional collections of poetry audio recordings – ones, generally, that prior to PennSound did not have their recordings in any kind of publicly accessible form for circulation – the repository has established a new set of standards for archiving literary audio recordings. Like the EPC and UbuWeb, PennSound emphasizes the importance of accessibility and distribution in its design. One of the site’s core credos is “Make it free,”⁴⁴ intoning Ezra Pound’s modernist dictum to “Make it new”⁴⁵ so as to apply to the poetics of the text in the digital era. Though there are several substantial collections of poetry audio recordings in North America,⁴⁶ none have a mandate as focused on accessibility and distribution as PennSound. As the first item in the “PennSound Manifesto” states: “It must be free and downloadable.”⁴⁷ The remaining five points of the manifesto further emphasize PennSound’s commitment to accessibility and distribution in that they stress the use of non-proprietary formats, the highest quality of sound available as indexed to the relative ease of circulating files, and the incorporation of relevant bibliographic information in the file itself so as to optimize cataloguing and searchability.⁴⁸

PennSound’s commitment to access and distribution is one reason for the repository’s impact; the development of the site’s interface and its integration on other platforms on- and offline is another. PennSound functions as an online site that collects and makes available thousands of audio recordings. Yet the repository can not be separated from its many spaces of production and use that also inform the conception of the site’s interface. Here, I approach interface as a technical object and shared boundary between electronic media and human users,⁴⁹ and as a zone of activity, of processes that transform the material states of media.⁵⁰ Assessing the relations between these two aspects of PennSound’s interface – as a technical object and its effects – is important for understanding how the repository’s texts and contexts mutually inform

one another in the overall articulation of the site. As a technical object, PennSound's interface derives from a series of models and versions developed in order to organize phonotextual materials. As a zone of activity, it emerges out of Filreis and Bernstein's shared pedagogical visions as well as their engagement with and commitment to the modes of collective literary production developed within small press literary communities.

In the commitment to developing the repository's interface online and off, PennSound is significantly different than its affiliated repositories, the EPC and UbuWeb. Whereas the latter two repositories operate primarily (or nearly completely) in the virtual space of the Web, the offline place of social interactions where PennSound is produced is a crucial element of the site. Housed at the Kelly Writers House, "a superwired 1851 Tudor-style cottage on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania,"⁵¹ PennSound operates as part of an network that includes the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW) and much of its programming, as well as a number of digital publishing projects such as PoemTalk, MediaLinks, and *Jacket2* magazine. The physical space of the Writers House encompasses a set of classrooms, a recording studio, a space to hold readings and talks, a publications room, a reception parlor and gallery, and a fully operating communal kitchen – all of which contribute to making the Writers House function as a "semi-autonomous space" at the University of Pennsylvania,⁵² one dedicated to a collective production of media and events focused on poetry and poetics. More recently, PennSound has become a central resource for students to encounter modern and contemporary poetry by means of the sound file as part of Filreis's massive open online course, or MOOC, on modernist poetry. Through the articulation of these various sites, spaces, collections, activities, and publications, PennSound has developed a unique repositorial interface, a mode of exchange that Filreis describes as "our format."⁵³

The third case study of this work assembles a number of resources – essays, correspondence, archival documents, interview transcripts, paratextual remarks, and phonotexts – in order to map the media history of PennSound's development as a repository, to trace out the impact it has had on engaging the sonic elements of poetic composition (or phonopoetics), and, finally, to imagine the future of PennSound recordings and their circulation. First, in reviewing the literature on PennSound, I detail how PennSound has significantly shifted the terms of phonotextual criticism, by facilitating practices of more in-depth close listening, by emphasizing material difference in recording techniques and formats, and by charting out an entire social field

of phonopoetic activity in which many (different) versions of individual poems exist. Next, I shift to the figure of Charles Bernstein, who occupies a central role throughout this dissertation, to consider his extensive history working with poetry audio materials and theorizing their relation to poetry and poetics. This historical overview leads to a close-up of Bernstein's correspondence with Filreis from their initial days plotting out the possibility of PennSound to the site's launch in 2005. This correspondence primarily concerns developing the protocols of PennSound with regard to format and interface. Following that, in detailing the use of the repository following its launch, I shift into a detailed discussion of the technical and social components of its interface. Finally, in confronting the material back-end of the site, the numerous collections of poetry recordings – from reel-to-reel to tape cassette, compact disc to DAT tape – that have been brought together in the production of the repository, I imagine possible future iterations of PennSound in order to consider the horizon of the repository and its relation to poetry and poetics more generally.

In their interrelation and interdependence, the three case studies exemplify an important quality that gives the digital repository its unique form. Because its organizational protocols are more open than that of an archive – meaning that it functions on a more *ad hoc* basis and is dependent upon the desires of its editors and the specific materials they choose to include – and because the impulse behind it is more expansive in terms of the media and formats included than, for example, a periodical, the repository is able to grow in new directions and be of use for purposes not envisioned in its initial design. Each one emerges from a distinct, different source, yet they rely one another for the materials they share, their networked infrastructure, and the significant labour it takes to digitize, structure, and maintain the materials. The narrative of their construction and development, then, will describe how the creators and editors of these repositories have attempted to apply them to meet the needs of the intermedial and iterative poetics with which they engage.

Toward a Media Historical Poetics

Poetics exists in an ambiguous state amid the institutions of North American literary critical and creative praxis. On one hand, the term signifies a long arc of study from Aristotle through structuralist accounts of the twentieth-century, where scholars aims to decipher and taxonomize the narratological and syntactical elements of literary works, or to examine the abstract and

general structures embedded within works and the means by which those structures become legible. Hence, we have definitions that claim poetics to be a “scientific” and “systematic study of literature as literature,”⁵⁴ or a questioning of “the properties of that particular discourse that is literary discourse.”⁵⁵ On the other hand, poetics is “something altogether more changeable, porous, and unpredictable,” as Brian Reed writes with particular regard to the field of study as it has developed in the early twenty-first century, “namely, the compositional principles that poets themselves discover and apply during the writing process.”⁵⁶ Throughout the present work, I approach this dual sense of poetics – as a branch of literary criticism focused on structure and form, as the principles of poetic composition – through a unifying framework: poetics is the exploration and articulation of difference in modes of literary production.

Here, *literary production* takes into account both the chains of linguistic significations or codes that produce an individual work’s contents,⁵⁷ as well as the material apparatus, technological infrastructures, and social relations that produce a literary artifact.⁵⁸ The two elements are inseparable from one another. No text is a singularly stable or autonomous document. It, instead, bears the traces of its production, circulation, and relation with other documents and media within an array of historical, cultural, and philological contexts.⁵⁹ A text’s linguistic meaning is always produced simultaneously with and by means of the articulation of its specific medial form; their intertwining establish the ground or condition of possibility for any particular work.⁶⁰

In *Poetics*, to take as an example one of the discourse’s foundational documents, Aristotle begins his treatise with an overview of the work. The text, he states, concerns itself with the craft of poetic composition [*poiētikē (tekhnē)*] and its various forms, their characteristics in general, their components in the particular. All forms of poetic composition, he writes – though, in the extant text of the *Poetics*, he addresses primarily tragic poetry, and mentions epic, comedic, and dithyrambic poetries – are species of imitation or reenactment, *mīmēsis*. Imitations, he outlines, differ in three respects: the *media* of an imitation, the *object* of an imitation, and the *mode* (or *manner*) of imitation. Here, it is useful to note the three uses of the adjective *héteros* [different] that Aristotle uses to create this tripartite classification. For the *media* – or, to use the Butcher translation (1895), the “material vehicle” – of imitation, Aristotle writes *héteros genos* [different kinds], employing the dative of means (*dativus instrumenti*). For the *object* of imitation, he uses the plural substantive of *héteros* so as to make it a noun – different “things.”⁶¹ And, finally,

héteros trópos [a different mode] – using the accusative so as to mark it as a prepositional phrase [in or with a mode that is different than other modes] – for the *mode* or *manner* of imitation.

Following the overview and formal classification of imitations, Aristotle devotes the rest of the first section of the *Poetics* to a discussion of the media of poetic practice. For Aristotle, the different media are constituted by particular articulations (and non-articulations) of cultural techniques that poets utilize to enact imitations.⁶² He mentions a remarkable variety of media: rhythm and language and harmony, song, flute playing and lyre playing, dancing or rhythmical movement, prose (“bare language” [*psilos* + *logos*]) and in meter (such as hexameter, iambic trimeters, elegiac couplets), dithyramb, verbal arts without meter such as miming and Socratic dialogue, and other possible combinations of verse forms.

The breadth and inclusivity in Aristotle’s conception of poetic media is pertinent to the consideration of the intermedial aspects of contemporary poetics that are the subject of this work. Yet, the absence of historical inquiry in the *Poetics* deserves further scrutiny. Throughout the *Poetics*, Aristotle organizes and describes the various qualities of the modes of poetic composition, but never their histories. He offers no remarks on the contexts, social forms, and circulations these modes engage with over time. Instead, for Aristotle, the media or means of poetic practice are all equally and simultaneously present and available.⁶³ One can derive or develop, then, following the example of Aristotle, a media-centered approach that engages specific articulations of the material means and modes of composition. The same can not be said, it seems, for developing a media historical approach that addresses the cultural and technological forms via which poetic works emerge, perform, and circulate. For this, one is in need of a *Hilfsmittel*, to take up Scherer’s term in the epigraph to this introduction: a device for orientation.

Though the contents of Aristotle’s *Poetics* provide no historicizing engagement with the media of poetic composition, the object of the text does. Consult any available version of the *Poetics* – be it an edition in the “original” Greek of Aristotle, or any of the numerous languages into which the work has been translated. Each one shares an important feature. Every edition of Aristotle’s *Poetics* available today is an assemblage of hundreds of manuscripts, editions, versions, translations, copies, paratexts, and commentaries all regarding a text for which there is no extant original. Here, it is worthwhile to detour briefly through aspects of the work’s transmission histories.

The *Poetics* was authored in the fourth century BCE, at some point between the death of

Plato (c. 347 BCE) and Aristotle's own passing at Chalcis (322 BCE).⁶⁴ Here, the use of the passive voice – the text “was authored” – is intentional, since the *Poetics* is one of Aristotle's “esoteric” writings (meaning that it was a technical work specifically intended for advanced students at the Lyceum and not necessarily meant to be distributed beyond that space), and since it is also one of his “acroamatic” works (meaning that Aristotle orally communicated the work to his students). This means there is an ambiguity at the work's inception as to whether an “original” text – one that is no longer extant – could have been Aristotle's own lecture notes, or the notes taken down by one of his students. It's for these reasons that commentaries note the work's “short allusive and elusive sentences” mixed with sections that are “verbose, prolix, and even somewhat repetitious,”⁶⁵ he “not infrequently omits to indicate the connexion of ideas in his sentences and paragraphs, so that the logical relation between them is left for us to perceive as best we can”⁶⁶ and that, even compared to the other acroamatic works, the *Poetics* is especially “abrupt, elliptical, [and] sometimes incoherent.”⁶⁷ “Surely,” Tarán and Gutas write, “most of his Athenian contemporaries would have found his technical treatises practically unintelligible.” The work “presents difficulties to a reader unfamiliar with Aristotle's philosophical thought and technical vocabulary.”⁶⁸ Yet, its esoteric and acroamatic qualities are likely the reason why we have versions of the *Poetics* today, since none of Aristotle's exoteric (public) works exist – the ones, for instance, that Cicero described as a “*flumen orationis aureum*” [a “golden stream of eloquence”].⁶⁹ Due to the esoteric and acroamatic works' status of being the core of Aristotelian thought – whether because they were the private written records of Aristotle's thoughts and researches meant for his closest students, or because the works were, as earlier commentators believed, his secret or mystical doctrines – scholars from the Hellenistic to Renaissance periods privileged the esoteric works over the exoteric ones, thereby continuing their storage and transmission.

Yet, Aristotle's treatise on the poetic arts, as Malette writes, “barely survived antiquity.”⁷⁰ No commentary on the *Poetics* is known to have been written in ancient times. In fact, in manuscripts of the works of Aristotle from the second and third centuries CE – a time of renewed interest in his writings – “the tradition of the *Poetics* is independent from that of his main philosophical works such as *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, etc.,”⁷¹ meaning the work was either unavailable and/or not of interest. Tarán and Gutas do exceptional work tracing out possible textual testimonies of the *Poetics*, inferring from them a transmission history. Their history

moves forward from Aristotle's own collection of his writings on papyrus rolls; to copies of these rolls in the possession of Eudemus, Theophrastus, and then Neleus after Aristotle's death; to stories of their movement between individuals, libraries, and being hidden in a moist and mothy trench in Strabo, Plutarch, and Athenaeus; to their likely migration into codex form during the second century CE; and, finally, to a discussion of a no longer extant archetype likely dated to the sixth century CE – one written in majuscule letters and in *scripto continua*, meaning “without word separation, accents, breathings, and practically with no punctuation”⁷² – that is the likely source manuscript for the primary witnesses of the *Poetics* we possess today. Though pieced together out of an impressive assemblage of citations and commentaries, much of this history is conjectural. The closest views, chronologically speaking, we have of the *Poetics* are dated from the ninth and tenth centuries CE, over 1200 years after the work's initial composition.

There exists, presently, four primary witnesses – an “extant manuscript or translation that does not depend on any other extant manuscript or translation”⁷³ – of Aristotle's *Poetics*.⁷⁴ Two of the primary witnesses are Greek manuscripts: the first, *codex Parisinus Graecus* 1741, is dated from the second half of the tenth century; the second, *codex Riccardianus* 46, is dated, at the earliest, the middle of the twelfth century. The third primary witness is a Medieval Latin translation completed by William of Moerbeke in 1278, found in two anonymous manuscripts – *Etonensis* 129 (written around 1300) and *Toletanus*, bibl. Capituli 47–10 (written about 1280) – and not published as a critical edition until 1953. The fourth is Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus's mid-tenth century Arabic translation of a ninth century Syriac version (no longer extant) of the Greek, preserved in *Parisinus Arabus* 2346 from the eleventh century. Each one of these primary witnesses was produced in different contexts of inscription. Each refers to, or emerges out of, different sets of lost manuscripts and archetypes. Each features different contents or versions of the text, and is “complete” or “incomplete” in different ways. Their texts were written using different linguistic, grammatical, and syntactical systems. Their manuscripts were articulated in different modes – or formats – of publication, dissemination, and storage.

For example, the version of the *Poetics* in the manuscript *Parsinus Graecus* 1741 was published on parchment over 15 folios, collected in a kind of compendium, or codexical repository, of Hellenistic writings that included twenty other works (three of which are no longer extant), including Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Statements on the folios indicate various historical particularities: a note indicating that the manuscript was a gift from Byzantine nobleman Manuel

Angelos to cleric Theodoros Skoutariotes in the late thirteenth century; Italian Francesco Filefo copied the text and included it in another codex (*Laurentianus* 60.21) in the early fifteenth century; someone transported the manuscript from Constantinople to Italy at some point most likely during the mid-fifteenth century where it was kept in the possession of the Greek scholar Basilios Bessarion. Additional marks on the folios bear further traces of its history as a medial object: there is the work of four different scribes in the *Parisinus Graecus* 1741, and that samples of the written text have clear similarities with other manuscripts dated between 922 and 988; some folios are older than others, and, therefore, the quire (or bundle of folios) has been articulated in different ways at different points in time; the folios, as we presently have the manuscript, were not bound until 1603 as they moved from the possession of the Catherine de Medici to the king's library to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.⁷⁵ This example of the *Parisinus Graecus* 1741 begins to illustrate the various versions of the *Poetics* in varying formats at different historical moments, as well as the numerous actors and sites involved in the text's production, preservation, and transmission.

As a second example, consider the *Parisinus Arabus* 2346 manuscript that includes Abu-Bishr Matta's translation of the *Poetics*. One of the great translators of Abbasid Baghdad, Matta based his Arabic translation of the *Poetics* from a no longer extant Syriac translation made from the Greek before the start of the tenth century. Thus, his translation, entitled *On the Poets*, is the earliest witness we have to the Greek text. Matta's translation underwent at least two revisions,⁷⁶ the first version of which served as the basis for both Ibn Sīnā's (Avicenna) summary and Ibn Rushd (Averroës) commentaries on the *Poetics*.⁷⁷ The *Parisinus Arabus* 2346, an eleventh century manuscript copied by different hands from among the member of the Baghdad school, preserves the first revision of Matta's translation, as well as all eight treatises of the Aristotelian Organon. The manuscript has numerous copying errors and omissions, and, as Gutas notes,

it is obvious that the exemplar from which it was copied must have been heavily annotated in the margins or interlinearly, so that in a number of places in the Paris manuscript version, the same text appears twice. The passages containing such doublets manifestly represent an original form of the text as written by Abu-Bishr and a revised version of the same sentence or phrase originally written in the margin or interlinearly, both of which were then incorporated in the text consecutively by the scribe of the Paris manuscript.⁷⁸

For these reasons, and on account of the Syro-Arabic translators' and scribes' lack of acquaintance with Greek poetry and theatre, Lucas notes that the Matta translation is "a halting

one.”⁷⁹ Taran and Gutas see the haltingness of the translation as being helpful in tracking the content of the *Poetics* in transmission. They demonstrate how the Syriac and Arabic translators of the period attempted to provide very literal renderings of the Greek, to the point of preserving word order and sentence structure even when it did not function properly in their own languages. “They may have made mistakes,” they note, “but they did not invent.”⁸⁰ Yet, gaps persist. The *Poetics* of *Parisinus Arabus* 2346 is missing two pages (one folio) near the end of the work, and also the work’s final page. The former lacuna is present because of a missing folio in the exemplar from which *Parisinus Arabus* 2346 was copied, the second due to a missing folio in the Paris manuscript itself.⁸¹ Material gaps work hand in hand with socio-linguistic lacunae to alter a work in transmission. As the Matta translation is taken up in the commentaries of Averroës – commentaries that would travel from Abbasid Baghdad to Renaissance Florence, and become the central points of access to the *Poetics* for scholars in the late Medieval and early Modern eras via their Latin translation made by Hermannus – one detects a number of inventions. For instance, since Averroës was not familiar with the Greek concepts of “tragedy” and “comedy,” he translates the former as *madīh*, or “praise,” and the latter as *hijā*, or “vituperation.” “Yet this is neither the most penetrating nor the most significant of the changes,” Mallette writes, “wrought by the medieval translations and commentaries.”⁸² She continues:

Averroës and Hermannus followed an established tradition by reading the *Poetics* as part of the organon and hence as a work of logic. And because they understood it as a manual for those who intended to use words to effect change in the world, they viewed it in a continuum with ethics; thus the injunction upon the poet – iterated in both the Arabic and Latin versions of Averroës’s commentary – to use encomium and vituperation to praise the good and blame the base. Aristotle’s interrogation of *mimēsis* (μίμησις), the backbone of his *Poetics*, had long fallen by the wayside. This is scarcely remarkable; as Earl Miner has pointed out, the notion of a literary tradition grounded in mimicry or dramatic imitation – in the narrative representation of an individual human life – is unique to ancient Greece.⁸³

Additionally, Mallette outlines a number of textual transfigurations Averroës (and Hermannus, following Averroës) made in the *Poetics*. These transfigurations include: Averroës adding citations from poetry – Arab poets, pre-Islamic to modern, as well as citations from the Koran – to the text so as to illustrate specific arguments, as there is a notable absence of poetic examples in Aristotle’s text; and altering Aristotle’s critique of poetic eloquence – his statements that poets achieve eloquence through clarity and through avoiding rhetorical ornament, and that an overdependence in poetry upon languages other than Attic Greek is “barbaric” – into a section

that praises “the linguistic showboating so prized in the Arabic tradition” and the “exhilarating brilliance of linguistic play [made] possible by the Arabic language.”⁸⁴

This is to say, then, that in order to construct a comprehensive analysis of what the *Poetics* is and how it means, a poetics of the *Poetics*, it is necessary to take into account the witnesses, testimonies, and derivative works – that is, the texts themselves and the contexts of their production, circulation, and use – in transmission from Aristotle’s time to our own. I detour through this example in order to emphasize the ways in which a work’s dissemination informs the work itself. The process I have described here, as I will show, maps surprisingly well on to the transmission of texts in digital milieus and is an integral component of the case studies that follow. What this historical sketch of Aristotle’s *Poetics* in transmission points to is the need for an analysis that accounts for the sites where and techniques by which texts are reshaped, reformatted, and integrated into different contexts and conditions of consumption. Or, to echo the definition of literary production above, it demonstrates the extent to which the second element of literary production I describe above – the material apparati, technological infrastructures, and social relations that produce a literary artifact – are always already a part of a work.

I detour through this textual history of the *Poetics* because, as I will discuss throughout this dissertation, texts in digital milieus endure homologous conditions of fragility, instability, amalgamation, fragmentation, and transformation as they circulate. Therefore, in order to adequately address the textual condition of the digital repositories, of their materials and the techniques of their construction, I pursue a poetics that draws upon media-historical methods and perspectives. As disparate as they might be, the theoretical touchstones of contemporary media history – from Marshall McLuhan’s aphorism “the medium is the message” to the discursive analysis of Michel Foucault, from the varied writings of the German “materialities of communication” scholars to actor-network theory, format studies, media archaeology, and the contemporary media-historiographical methodologies of scholars like Lisa Gitelman – all have at least one thing in common. That is, they situate and subtend the analysis of content rooted in modes of textual interpretation within a more expansive framework that investigates the various aspects of cultural form. Therefore, I approach the textual, aesthetic, and discursive issues central to these repositories by tracing out and examining the constellation of sites, actors, routes, venues, and operations involved in their construction, use, and ongoing development.

Here, “the task of criticism,” to echo Terry Eagleton, “is to analyze the complex historical *articulations* of these structures which produce text[s].”⁸⁵ In the case studies that follow, I trace out the production and transmission of the variously inscribed works – texts, audio recordings, and other media that preserve performances – so as to study the ways in which they impact how the editors assemble them in the repositories and also how their transmission affects the structuring of the repositories themselves. To this extent, we will come to see the digital repository as a unique archival genre for the way it affords iteration and recomposition. It is simultaneously a textual platform (one underwritten in code, the parts of which can be reintegrated into other similar textual spaces), a gathering platform (one that articulates and stores materials from an array of sources), and, finally, a publishing platform.

Of the Repository

In *Le goût de l’archive*, Arlette Farge writes that the archive “est difficile dans sa matérialité.”⁸⁶ *The material form of the archive is difficult to grasp.*⁸⁷ Farge describes particular archives: the French National Archives, the Library of the Arsenal, and the National Library, the collections upon which she founded her histories of the eighteenth century. Having spent years at these sites “combing through the archives,” she meditates upon how their specific materials, organization, and rules of operation impact the construction of historical knowledge.⁸⁸ For Farge, the progression from “the event to history” takes place not only through the content printed upon the array of archival documents; it occurs via the modes of inscription and processes to organize, store, and access those inscriptions over time.⁸⁹ In these archives, the material forms, formats, and methods to preserve information allows for an expansive view into the cultural logics and regulative techniques of prior moments. They shape what data is relevant and what actions might be possible as a result of their accumulation and organization.

In depicting the materiality of the archives, Farge attempts to present an “organized topography” that underlies the “captured speech” of the documents.⁹⁰ She begins by describing the physical spaces themselves and the sensual experience of being a body in their midst. They are frigid places, she writes, unaffected by outside weather and the change of seasons. One’s bones become stiffened from the cold while sifting through piles of pages. She notes the touch and feel of parchment and rag paper. She wonders if these documents, supposedly prepared for future use, have once been consulted since their initial gathering and organization over two

centuries ago. She regards the stain on her finger from their dust. The handwriting is “barely legible to untrained eyes.” She notes the “raw form” in which many of the documents have been collected: transcriptions of witness accounts and interrogations written without punctuation, loose sheets unbound and without folders, while others, their “corners eaten away by time and rodents,” remain piled high, tied by a string as though they were bales of hay.⁹¹ For Farge, the dust of the archives is fundamental, the fine layer that covers every millimetre of its myriad surfaces, a threshold one must cross in order to research.⁹²

Farge’s engagement with the material articulation of archival spaces expands on the theorizing of the archive put forward by her interlocutor and collaborator Michel Foucault. At the exact center of *L’archaeologie du savoir* (1969), Foucault conceives of the “archive” as being a repository of *énoncés* (statements, the most basic unit of Foucauldian analysis), as well as the rules that allow for their conditions of existence. “The archive is first the law of what can be said.”⁹³ As Geoffrey Bennington writes, “[t]he archive in Foucault’s sense is neither simply a *corpus* ... nor a language system or *langue* ... but something in between the two.”⁹⁴ Foucault writes:

Between *langue* that defines the system of construction of possible sentences, and the *corpus* that passively gathers up things spoken, the archive defines a particular level: that of a practice that makes a multiplicity of statements emerge as so many regular events, as so many things offered up to treatment and manipulation. It does not have the heaviness of tradition; and it does not constitute the timeless and placeless library of all libraries; but nor is it the welcoming oblivion that opens to each new thing said the field in which it can exercise its freedom; between tradition and oblivion, it makes appear the rules of a practice that allows statements both to subsist and to modify themselves regularly. It is the general system of formation and transformation of statements.⁹⁵

Here, the archive exists between the construction of sentences and the cultural techniques of collecting and organizing them. The archive is both praxis and form. It mediates various modes of praxes and inscriptions, ones in perpetual transformation or rearticulation.⁹⁶ To Foucault’s conceptual overview of the archive, Farge asserts material context. Archives, according to Farge, organize access via various regulative systems and techniques. Her investigation begins by situating her own body amidst the archive, sensing and questioning what takes place there so as to comprehend the traces, systems, and techniques by which the space is organized. Farge questions: What are the material media present in the space, what are their formats, and how are they inscribed? What are the processes of inscription that lead from event to document? How are

the various documents stored and used? Who is involved in these processes, and where is power located and enacted?

Here, Farge's exploration of the archives resonates with the material-semiotic analysis that Bruno Latour and Stephen Woolgar present in *Laboratory Life*, in which the authors examine the processes, assemblages, people, and instruments – the “series of discriminations”⁹⁷ – that are responsible for and integral to the production of knowledge in scientific laboratories, and therefore the construction of knowledges. In materializing the archive, in surveying the particular physical contexts of their production, Farge opens up the space of the archive to important and necessary scrutiny – one that emphasizes the specificity of its articulated materials and techne – and establishes an important methodology for approaching how information is produced, preserved, and circulated. In the case studies that follow, I pursue Farge's example in the archives in order to understand what and how the digital repositories assemble materially, as well as discursively. This means that, in certain instances, I examine the spaces where they are built and maintained, factoring in the the people and materials involved in these processes; in other instances, I examine the exchanges in which they are imagined and designed; in others, still, I investigate their broader reception and integration within new platforms for use.

Latour and Woolgar's ability to explore the spaces and junctures of a particular milieu, following numerous traces, actors, and tools within and out of that milieu, describing the various articulations of humans, techniques and technologies, while keeping in mind the various minutiae that might be generally overlooked in field research, are crucial for the charting out of the diverse actors, infrastructures and relations I will discuss in this dissertation. Setting their inquiry on the production of scientific knowledge within the site of the Salk Laboratory, Latour and Woolgar examine and describe the processes, assemblages, people, and instruments that are responsible for this production. Their example provides a methodology to examine discursive formations exactly at the points in which there is some kind of rupture between what is written (if not coined as a kind of institutional tenet or supposed function) and what is practiced, therefore allowing one to properly *reassemble* (to use Latour's term) an object of study.⁹⁸

Of particular importance for this research is Latour and Woolgar's conception of *inscription devices*: “an inscription device is any item of apparatus or particular configuration of such items which can transform a material substance into a figure or a diagram which is directly usable by one of the members of the office space.”⁹⁹ Law gives the example of an inscription

device that begins with rats; these rats are killed to produce an extract that's placed in small test tubes; those test tubes are placed in a machine; the machine produces an array of figures or inscription on a sheet of paper for the scientists to read. Law notes: "These inscriptions would be said – or assumed – to have a direct relation to the 'original substance.'"¹⁰⁰ In the machine's report sheet, Law notes, the materiality of the process gets deleted. What becomes the object of study is no longer the rats but the text. The next aspect of this apparatus is the analysis or "series of discriminations" that is applied to that text, and these discriminations are compared and contrasted with a number of other texts that have been produced in like experiments (Latour and Woolgar, 60). In being able to isolate specific qualities in the textual results, the scientists have located a "substance," some independently given entity. The materials that have been involved in the process are what have constituted the construction of the substance; they are inseparable from that construction. Without the materials, as Latour and Woolgar write, "a substance could not be said to exist." More to the point: "the phenomena *are thoroughly constituted* by the material setting of the laboratory. The artificial reality, which participants describe in terms of an objective reality, has in fact been constructed by the use of inscription devices."¹⁰¹ In summation, Law states: "*realities* are being *constructed*. Not by people. But in the practices made possible by networks of elements that make up the inscription device – and the networks of elements within which that inscription device resides."¹⁰² The realities, Latour and Woolgar are saying, simply don't exist without their matching inscription devices.

This material-semiotic analysis provides a general framework for the methodology I take up to trace out the various actors that produce the repositories. Like the example set by Latour and Woolgar, this methodology requires a number of different strategies. Description is, clearly, at the core of such a project, as are interviews, textual and bibliographic consultation, archival consultation, forms of close reading, forensic analysis, analysis of single objects in relation to other materials and actors, analysis of multiple objects in relation to other materials and actors, spatial and durational analysis, and circulation analysis. These various strategies and modes are either part of or implied by the example set by Woolgar and Latour. Overall, such an approach is pragmatic: one has an object, one scrutinizes that object to understand what it is and how it is composed and who composes it and who does what with it and where those acts are done, et cetera, and in order to address such questions, one must utilize an array of methodological modes.

This investigation, firstly, leads to a consideration of the digital repository as distinct from an archives or digital archive as it is properly designated. In “Archives in Context and as Context,” Kate Theimer writes on the proliferate usage of the term “archive” in the field of the digital humanities. She remarks that practitioners of the digital humanities, many of whom have experience working with archives as traditionally defined, often refer to “things we archivists would not call archives.”¹⁰³ Theimer argues that, although archivists can not of course control the use of the word “archives,” there is “value and context in the way way archives professionals have defined this term,” and that their definition “is more specific and therefore ... conveys greater meaning.” The digital “archives” she surveys – the Shakespeare Quartos Archive, the Rosetti Archive, and the William Blake Archive, for example – are, similar to the ones I discuss in this research, “primarily online groupings of digital copies of non-digital original materials, often comprised of materials (many of which are publications), located in different physical repositories or collections, purposefully selected and arranged in order to support a scholarly goal.”¹⁰⁴

Here, Theimer pauses to note that the selection and arrangement of materials in order to be studied and made accessible, in and of itself, does not constitute an *archive*. To establish a clear sense of “archives,” Theimer looks to formal definitions endorsed by archivists themselves. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) defines an “archives” as follows:

Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control.¹⁰⁵

Theimer notes that there is nothing in this definition that references a selection activity on the part of the archivist. She continues: “If an archivist is perceived to be one who creates an “archives,” i.e. a place in which valuable materials are collected, then the selection function emphasized by the digital humanists makes more sense. An archivist in this sense is one who selects things for preservation and makes them accessible.”¹⁰⁶ Yet, even here, there is an important difference in terms of the scale of the objects included in archives and how they are selected. Theimer writes:

Archivists select and preserve “archives” as defined in the primary definition, which is to say aggregates of materials with an organic relationship, rather than items that may be similar in some manner, but otherwise unrelated. The archival selection

activity, known as “appraisal,” generally takes place at this aggregate level, and it is whole collections, donations, or records series which are being selected. These aggregates are “maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control.” These principles constitute the primary differences between archives and other kinds of collections.¹⁰⁷

Since the objects Theimer surveys that purport themselves to be digital “archives” all are based upon a scholar or group of scholars’ selection of individual items, and the organization of these materials is not based upon the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control, she designates the objects as *collections*. Each collection is articulated by materials brought together with regard to a specific subject, not by aggregates of a specific provenance according to the source of the aggregates. *Repository*, then, refers to the physical structure in which the materials of a collection or collections are deposited for storage and to be accessed by others. It is the context of the collection(s). In the chapters that follow, I show how the repository is specifically organized, and detail the protocols by which materials are deposited, stored, accessed, and used.

I include extensive passages of Theimer’s discussion so as to initiate a format-centred description and analysis at the level of the digital repository, and at the level of the texts therein. Again, I draw from Farge, her description and analysis of the physical contexts of archives. Farge’s attention to the ways in which the distinct spaces of archives are produced and organized allows for a consideration of format at a structural level, where an archives itself is understood as a media object. The framework of *format* serves as an important moment of agreement between poetics and media history. Jonathan Sterne states that format “denotes a whole range of decisions that affect the look, feel, experience, and workings of a medium. It also names a set of rules according to which a technology can operate.”¹⁰⁸ To approach a media object with a sense of format-specificity, then, will require an understanding of the protocols that individuals develop in order to organize the object. Therefore, in studying the development of such protocols, I focus on the material apparati, technological infrastructures, and social relations that are articulated in the production of the three digital repositories of poetics-related materials. Bernstein distinguishes format as a “middle term” between *medium* and *genre*.¹⁰⁹ Whereas Sterne’s sense of format is useful for addressing the contexts of the repositories themselves, I take up Bernstein’s sense of the term in order to discuss the texts compiled within them. Each repository (as a medial object) stores and makes them accessible in numerous formats. These formats

capture and depict the linguistic, phonemic, visual, and durational elements (in the genre) of poetic composition.

Such an approach to the digital repository in particular, and the discourse of poetics in general, contributes to numerous, ongoing dialogues in the humanities and social sciences, specifically within the fields of literary studies, media and communications studies, archival and information studies, and editorial theory. I believe my approach to the digital repository will be a useful addition to the voluminous literature on archives and the archival turn for the way this work describes the material formation of digital repositories. Factoring in archival and information science perspectives regarding the specific features of repositories and collections, while drawing upon the wealth of writings on the archive, will open up an interesting space to consider their difference. This consideration offers up certain practical implications, such as providing an example for scholars to better engage the actual object of their research. It also has important theoretical implications, such as in the question of how the (dis)organization of the repository, when compared to the archive, might alter one's sense of what is documented there.

Furthermore, one of the main goals of this dissertation is to offer a detailed account of the sites and actors involved in three of the most important spaces for engaging poetry and poetics at the end of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first century. Here, I hope this work will contribute to a trajectory most thoroughly defined by the works of Michael Davidson, a poet-scholar who is unique among literary historians for *not* privileging a single poet or poetic work, and who instead focuses upon depicting expansive contexts of sites of literary production, factoring in the aesthetic, socio-cultural, technological, and institutional milieus out of which large swathes of literary works emerge.¹¹⁰ In extending Davidson's model for literary history to thinking about the developments of the EPC, UbuWeb, and PennSound, I believe this dissertation will be a notable contribution for thinking about contemporary North American poetry and poetics, in particular Language-centred and global Conceptual writing movements.¹¹¹

Finally, in addressing the sonic and phonotextual elements of literary production throughout this work—most explicitly in my study of PennSound, but also in my studies of the EPC and UbuWeb—I believe that this dissertation makes an original contribution to the field of sound studies. Over the course of the last decade, the practice and performance of poetry has been largely ignored within the field of sound studies. There are, of course, exceptions (which I discuss in the chapters that follow), yet these exceptions amid a rapidly expanding body of

literature only highlight the field's overall lack of engagement with one of the oldest forms of the verbal arts. I will take up a number of phonopoetical issues in this chapter – the varieties of listening practices, the relationship of sound to text, inscription, the migration of sounds across formats, and the cultural techniques of recording, preserving, and circulating performed poetry.

Overview of the Work

I have prepared this dissertation in its current format to function as a preliminary draft for a work I intend to develop for a scholarly publishing digital initiative and platform. I have designed its construction – its chapters and sections, its media objects, its convolutes, and excerpts from the exchanges on which I have based the details of many of the historical sketches regarding the development of these projects – to ideally function in a hypertextual environment that features interlinking, integration of digitally transferred and borne-digital materials, embedded media, bibliographic metadata, and the ability to download specific components of each repository as well as its entirety. To this extent, I have assembled this work with the intention that it can function as a repository in and of itself.

In this mirroring of form and object, in the poetics of this work's composition, I aim to emphasize the unique type of reading, use, and engagement the digital repository fosters. It is one, I argue, that creates access to specific points of readers' interest, provides historical commentary and analysis, while curating materials so that others can make use of those materials for their own research and creative endeavours. Additionally, a primary motivation behind this work has been to provide its readers with as developed a sense as possible of the three digital repositories – their overall design, their methods of access, their media, the contexts and ecosystems of their use – that are its case studies, and to do so, perhaps, long after their existence or continued cultivation as digital objects online. In this sense, the present work is partially a historical-philological effort to transmit the specific textual forms and conditions these digital repositories articulate. It is my hope, then, that the work's "vocation," to echo Jeremy Braddock, "is not simply to preserve a vanishing past, but to make the fragments of that past as well as the records of those fragments' historical and present mediations available to the condition unforeseeable futures."

In this introduction, I have aimed to introduce the digital repository as a unique archival genre, introduce the three specific repositories that I focus on as case studies, and to frame my

approach to researching these objects through the fields of archival studies and poetics. In the following chapters, each case study involves the following elements: an in-depth introduction to the object and my approach to analyzing and framing its impact and importance; a literature review of scholarly writing on that object; a discussion of the combined influences, contexts, models, and prehistories that informed the object's construction; a breakdown of the object's materials, protocols, interfaces, and uses over the course of its developments; an analysis of the object's relationship to the institutional settings of its development; archival documents, media, and correspondence that relay the processes and positions of its construction; a convolute – the Benjaminian organizational unit, meaning a “folder” or “file,” employed for montaging the fragmentary citations included in his *Passagen* – that opens up on to the social reception of the object; and, finally, a series of my own remarks and ruminations on the researching of the object, its materials and their material traces. I have constructed the sections and materials of each case study to function in relation to one another, yet also to be discrete objects in and of themselves. In the postscript to this work, I provide an overview of how I have designed the work so as to move toward that future iteration, enumerate the materials I plan to involve in this iteration, and outline the textual, editorial, and scholarly implications for constructing the work in such a manner.

Chapter One

The Electronic Poetry Center

Comme les peuples lointains se touchent ! Comme les distances se rapprochent ! ... Avant peu, l'homme parcourra la terre comme les dieux d'Homère parcouraient le ciel, en trois pas. Encore quelques années, et le fil électrique de la concorde entourera le globe et étreindra le monde.

[How peoples touch each other! How distances are growing shorter! ... In a short time, man will travel the Earth just as the gods of Homer traveled the sky, in three steps. Just a few more years, and the electric wire of concord will embrace the whole world.]

–Victor Hugo¹¹²

“The making of poetry has established itself on a matrix of new shores ... there is a tangible feel of arrival in the spelled air.”¹¹³ Loss Pequeño Glazier begins his *Digital Poetics: The Making of E-Poetries* (2002) with the urgent declaration of a manifesto. He saw the present moment of poetic composition – one in which poets can produce, publish, circulate, archive, and access works via the Internet – to be a fundamental paradigmatic shift, a fundamental change in the basic concepts and experimental practices for the writing of poetry.¹¹⁴ Composed in various iterations throughout the 1990s, *Digital Poetics* is a technologically comprehensive assessment of the state of writing at the millennium’s dawn, and a technically meticulous forecasting of the horizon of creative composition. “But arrival where?” Glazier asks. His many roles – as a poet and publisher, as a librarian and bibliographer, as a scholar and computing programmer – inform his response. “I argue,” he writes, “that we have not arrived at a place but at an awareness of the *conditions* of texts.”¹¹⁵ Here, Glazier argues that the rising primacy of the new networked digital substrate upon which poets can compose, publish, circulate, and access works allows for one to reflect anew on the material circumstances of texts. He writes:

Such an arrival includes recognizing that the conditions that have characterized the making of innovative poetry in the twentieth century have a powerful relevance to such works in twenty-first-century media. That is, poets are making poetry with the same focus on method, visual dynamics, and materiality; what has expanded are the materials with which one can work. Such materials not only make multiple possible forms of writing but also, in the digital medium, contribute to a re-definition of writing itself.¹¹⁶

Though a paradigmatic shift in terms of the conditions of texts and writing, it is one that has several structural affinities with the way poets utilized certain technological innovations during the previous century in order to compose and distribute their works.

Glazier sees the small press publication as crucial for thinking about the possibilities for the production of poetry in electronic space.¹¹⁷ “Indeed,” he writes, “the rise of the little magazine and small presses, from hand presses of the fifties through the mimeo, Xerox, and offset production of the following decades, exemplifies not only poetry’s engagement with making, its mode of production, but also its means of dissemination.”¹¹⁸ Each one of his examples from the previous century presents a case in which poets attempted to overcome the mode of traditional poetry publishing: the book. In particular, Glazier focuses on way the poets sought to alter the costs incurred and extended duration of its publishing and circulation, as well as their reliance upon the numerous arbiters (publishers and editors) who controlled the overall process. Each example represents an effort to forge new and urgent communities through writing. Still, as Glazier writes, “paper-based dissemination has its limits” in terms of its costs and ability to be transported.¹¹⁹ With the Web, Glazier envisions a way to radically overcome what he calls “poetry’s distribution problem,”¹²⁰ a means by which poets themselves will be able to affordably and immediately produce, circulate, and access works, as well as engage in direct dialogue with other poets.

Central to the formation of this digital environment for poetry is what Glazier calls a “subject village,” which he defines as an electronic gathering place, “a site for the access, collection, and dissemination of poetry and related material.”¹²¹ Here, the immediate resonance to Marshall McLuhan’s “global village” is certainly an intended component of Glazier’s envisioning of a “subject village;” Glazier certainly shares McLuhan’s techno-utopian affirmations on the extent to which new communicational models alter the rudiments of society. As Eric McLuhan writes, “Marshall McLuhan came up with the phrase ‘the global village’ as a way to describe the effect of radio in the 1920s in bringing us in faster and more intimate contact with each other than ever before inhuman experience.”¹²² Glazier’s “subject village” shares this idea of intimate contact of great distances, yet – as opposed to the many oriented around a single hub of listening that the radio permits in the “global village” – he has premised the “subject village” upon the distributed peer-to-peer or many-to-many model for exchange that electronic computer networks afford.

Glazier advocates that poets create curated sites devoted to poetry and poetics, individual hubs in the network of the Web. A subject village, according to Glazier, should function in the follow ways:

- It collects materials according to an editorial policy. Its contributions to the Web lie in its provision of a focused collection of texts.
- It facilitates the dissemination of print publications (resulting ultimately in royalties for authors) through the maintenance of bibliographic and promotional vehicles. It also makes possible other types of publications that may have been unprofitable in the print medium.
- It serves as a gateway to relevant, externally available electronic resources.
- The circulation of texts becomes its primary mission.
- It exists in the context of the Web. That is, it not only delivers texts but also offers slow connect times, error messages, misgivings, and is interwoven with the megabytes of misinformation that typify a largely undisciplined textual space.
- Most important, the creation of a poetry archive of this order rests on the realization that the Web is itself an instance of writing.¹²³

A subject village is not meant to collect everything, but, instead, curates sets of specific objects decided upon by its editors. It is more like a gallery, in that the tastes and selection methods of its creators define what is included therein, than an archives. The electronic site is not meant to replace the print objects it makes digitally available, nor is it meant to diminish the status of the analog. Instead, Glazier intends for the site to work in relation to the print object, directing attention (and possibly funds) to it, as well as contextualizing the object within a more broadly conceived culture of poetic production. Also, those print objects that no longer circulate due to their rarity and/or the short-lived existence of its publisher, it is possible for them to circulate again in new forms and contexts on the Web.

In his statement above that the subject village exists as a “gateway” that leads to other available electronic resources, Glazier stresses the site’s interoperability and communication with other sites, other practices, and other modes of collecting and organizing materials related to poetry and poetics. With the concept of the “gateway,” he also signals a pedagogy of self-navigation. Glazier intends for such a model to be antithetical to the gate-keeping of traditional institutions of higher education. Once one crosses the portal of the subject village, they may select how they move amidst and use the resources, those collected on the site and those external to it. The bibliographic data and related paratextual information on the site underscores one’s ability to seek out further information and materials via numerous channels online and off. Finally, in stating the subject village is itself an instance of writing, Glazier foregrounds that

code is a form of poetry and has a poetics in and of itself.¹²⁴ The design, functionality, and use of a site depends upon one's fluency and creative capability in writing code. It underwrites all of the writing that one accesses on the Web.

Glazier's "subject village" is best exemplified by the Electronic Poetry Center, a "central gateway to resources in electronic poetry and poetics" that Glazier founded in 1995.¹²⁵ Hosted at the State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) and located on the Web at <http://epc.buffalo.edu>, the Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) is one of the earliest digital repositories of contemporary poetry and poetics-related materials in the English language. Initiated as a means to confront "poetry's distribution problem" that Glazier describes above, the EPC developed into a hub for late-20th century anglophone poetry that includes author pages, digital editions of works, biographical entries, newsletters, live events, and links to numerous other materials and relevant information hosted on the site and elsewhere, such as the Poetics listserv, digital editions of literary journals, and poetry sound recordings. "Our aim is simple," the EPC's About page states, "to make available a wide range of resources centered on digital and contemporary formally innovative poetries, new media writing, and literary programming."¹²⁶ Like UB's Poetry Collection, a prominent library of resources related to English language poetry and poetics founded in 1937 by Charles Abbott, the EPC functions as a hub where individuals can encounter many of the most important and often difficult-to-access materials in the field. Yet unlike the Poetry Collection, it is not necessary for one to voyage all the way to Buffalo to view the first editions, little literary magazines, broadsides, and manuscript archives inside the UB library during the Collection's opening hours. Instead, having access to such materials from any location via the Web at all times is the mission of the EPC.

Initiated as a pre-Web Internet site using TelNet and Gopher protocols, then redesigned as a Web site during the early days of the World Wide Web, Glazier sought to establish a meeting ground for poets and for poetry in the connected space of the Internet. To this extent, he envisioned the EPC as a kind of utopian project. Glazier's "subject village" for poetry would be a place where anyone from any location (given the right technological set-up) could freely discuss the poetry and poetics that occupied them.¹²⁷ Poet, professor, student, and individuals outside of any institution of higher education could converse there on equal ground. Importantly for Glazier, it was meeting place free from commercial interests. "I saw it almost as a space age center," Glazier admits in conversation, "like a mothership that people could come to and dock

and have interchanges and connect and then float off.”¹²⁸ Though this statement blends his utopian sensibility with a futurist twist, one certainly continuous with early Internet technohippie communities emerging out of the Whole Earth Review and WELL (Whole Earth ‘Electronic Link),¹²⁹ Glazier cites a different important historical example as the model for such exchange:

I saw it as a way to create a space of interchange similar to the Vancouver Poetry Festival [in 1963] ... and the Berkeley Poetry Conference [in 1965]. Those were my models. There were spaces where minds came together, exchanged ideas, and entire new ways of making things were realized. Everyone came away richer – not monetarily – and there was this sense of celebration on the side of it, too, in coming together. That was the idea. I created the EPC in the tradition of those festival spirits. I wanted to do that in an online environment.¹³⁰

As in the proceedings of the conferences, the EPC features both formal and informal spaces for exchange. On the EPC’s more formal side are pages – ones similar to materials passed out at the earlier conventions (see see figs. 1.07-9) – constructed to accumulate information and links concerning a specific topic, such as the author pages and biographical entries. These pages function as major nodes in the constellation of the EPC by drawing together and linking to materials all over the site. He constructed them so as to prioritize their stable access over time, meaning that users know that they can return to the page to access the array of materials gathered there, from single poems to complete editions, as well as interviews and critical writings by and about the author. On the EPC’s more informal side are the newsletters, electronic mailing list exchanges, and live event broadcasts and open discussions. Such outlets prioritize an in-the-moment activity of exchange and the circulation of information over its more stable existence on unique pages.

In creating a single platform that combines stable hubs of edited and archived information together with venues that prioritized live exchange, the EPC initiated a precedent for countless digital objects related to literature and the arts more generally that would follow its example. In establishing a new general form for the publication, organization, and dissemination of poetry and poetics-related materials – the digital repository – the EPC also redefined what the term “accessibility” means in the greater literary landscape. In the decades prior to the EPC, the “accessibility” of a poetic text primarily referred to a work’s specific internal stylistic, often premised upon notions of “direct speech” and “self-expression” that a supposed “general reader” would comprehend rather immediately upon the encounter of reading.¹³¹ In contrast to the Language poetry, which strove to challenge such claims to universality and generality while

opening up meaning-making to a radically open network of social associations and disjunctions, “accessibility” came under attack as being an over simplification of both language and experience, and “at worst socially naïve and politically irresponsible.”¹³² With the EPC, “accessible” becomes a term to describe the materials (ones often out of general circulation and difficult to track down) made locatable and available to readers via the digital repository. In making available key documents of radical modernist poetic traditions – ones often deemed *not accessible* in the earlier use of the term – Glazier and Bernstein’s work with the EPC initiated an important pedagogical shift in terms of the canonical materials of twentieth-century poetry that would resonate throughout the 1990s into the new millennium.

In this chapter, I explore the theoretical and material infrastructure responsible for this shift from the level of content to a matter of form in the discourse on accessibility. In it, I articulate a media history of the Electronic Poetry Center from the site’s inception to the various stages of its development, its ongoing “centrality in the margins of poetic practice,”¹³³ as Glazier terms it to its uncertain future as a digital object, and situate Glazier’s utopian vision of a “subject village” for poetry to a sustained effort to construct a commons for poetry and poetics in a networked digital environment. There are several components to this sustained effort. Perhaps most important among them is Glazier’s own experience as a librarian and bibliographer, as a scholar of poetics and media, and as a practicing poet. His proximity to UB’s Poetry Collection and involvement with the Poetics Program are also integral parts to the conceptualization and materialization of such a digital commons. In his professional relationship with Charles Bernstein, Glazier found an important partner for realizing and sustaining his vision. The breadth of Bernstein’s activity as a poet, theorist, and pedagogue serve as an underlying force for integrating the EPC into its various poetry communities and institutional infrastructures. Together, Glazier and Bernstein charted out the relationship between the digital to poetry and poetics, exploring how the interconnectivity of the web and its existence “as a bearer of multiple practices and diverse cultural engagements” could change the nature of writing.¹³⁴

Fig. 1.01: Electronic Poetry Center home page, 1 January 1997.

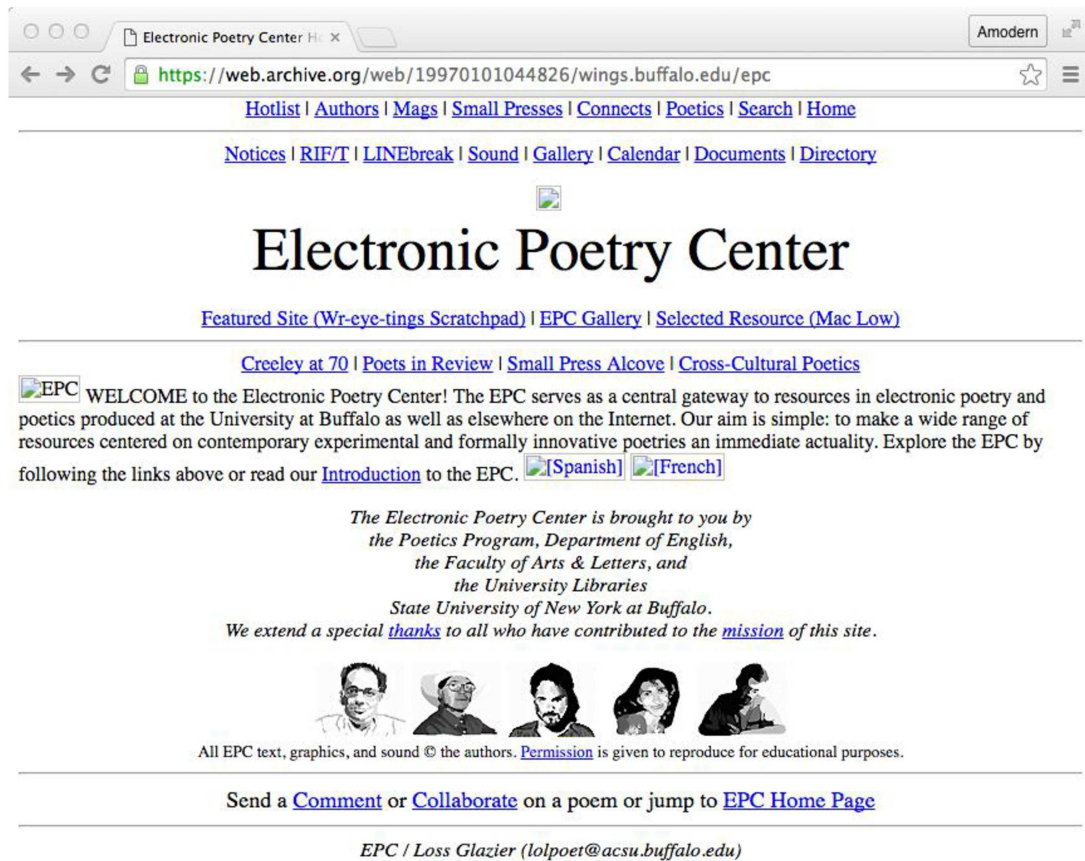


Fig. 1.02: Electronic Poetry Center home page, 4 November 1999.

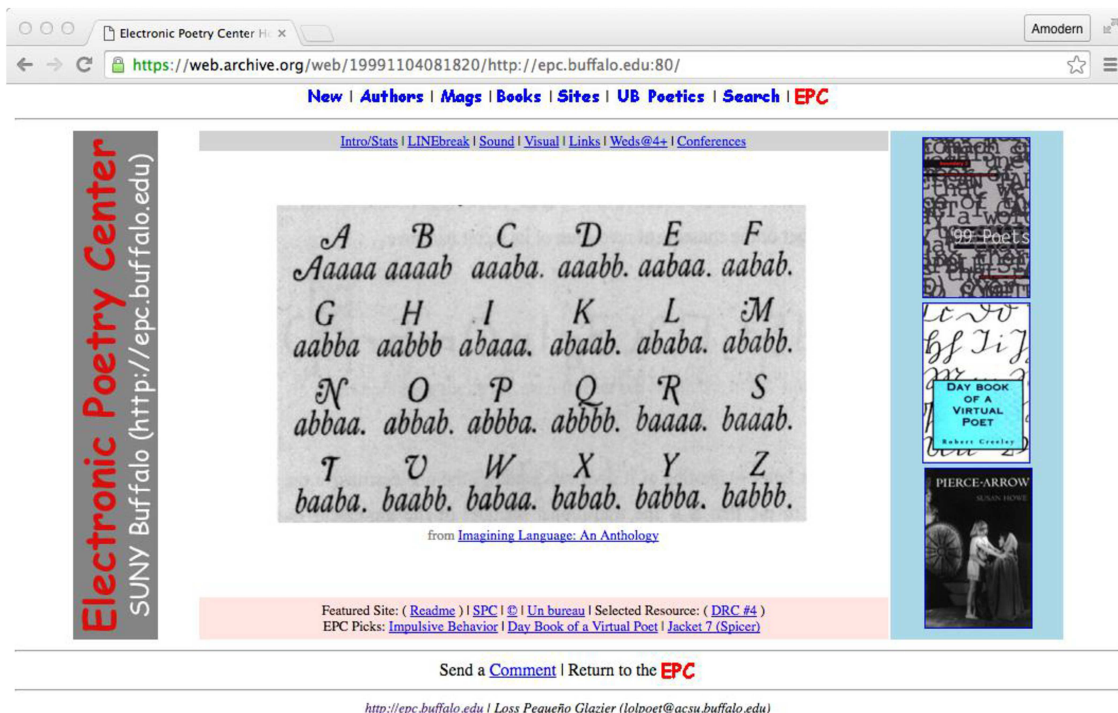


Fig. 1.03: Electronic Poetry Center home page, 1 December 2001.



Fig. 1.04: Electronic Poetry Center home page, 9 July 2010.

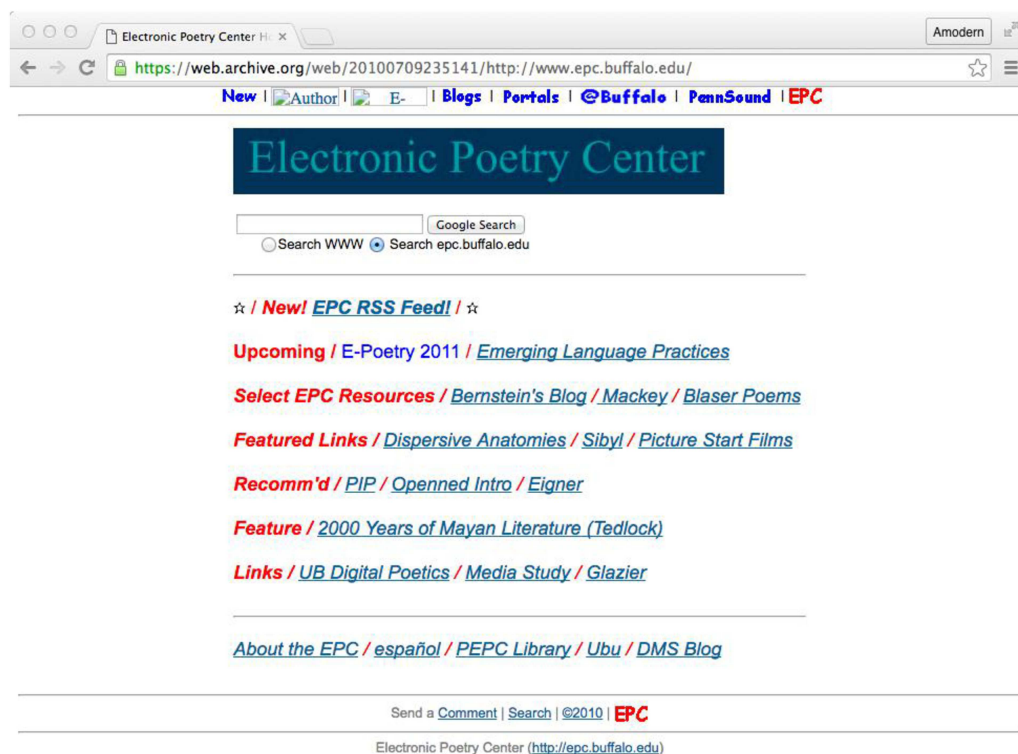


Fig. 1.05: Electronic Poetry Center home page, 1 August 2011.

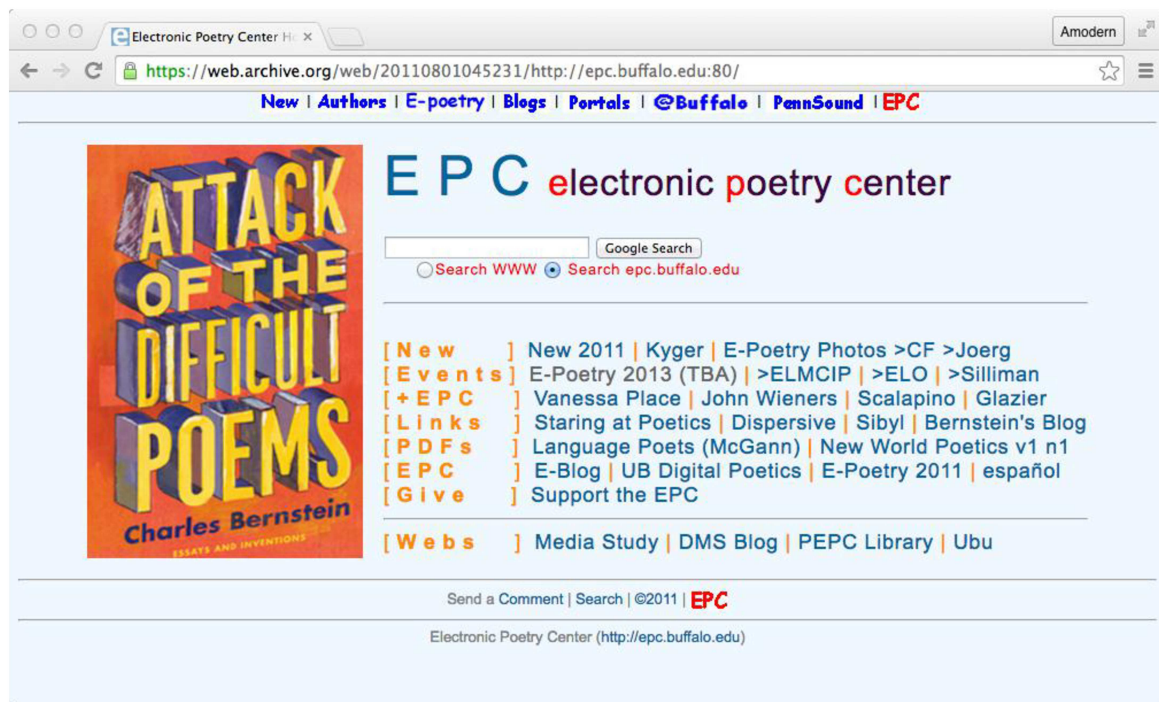
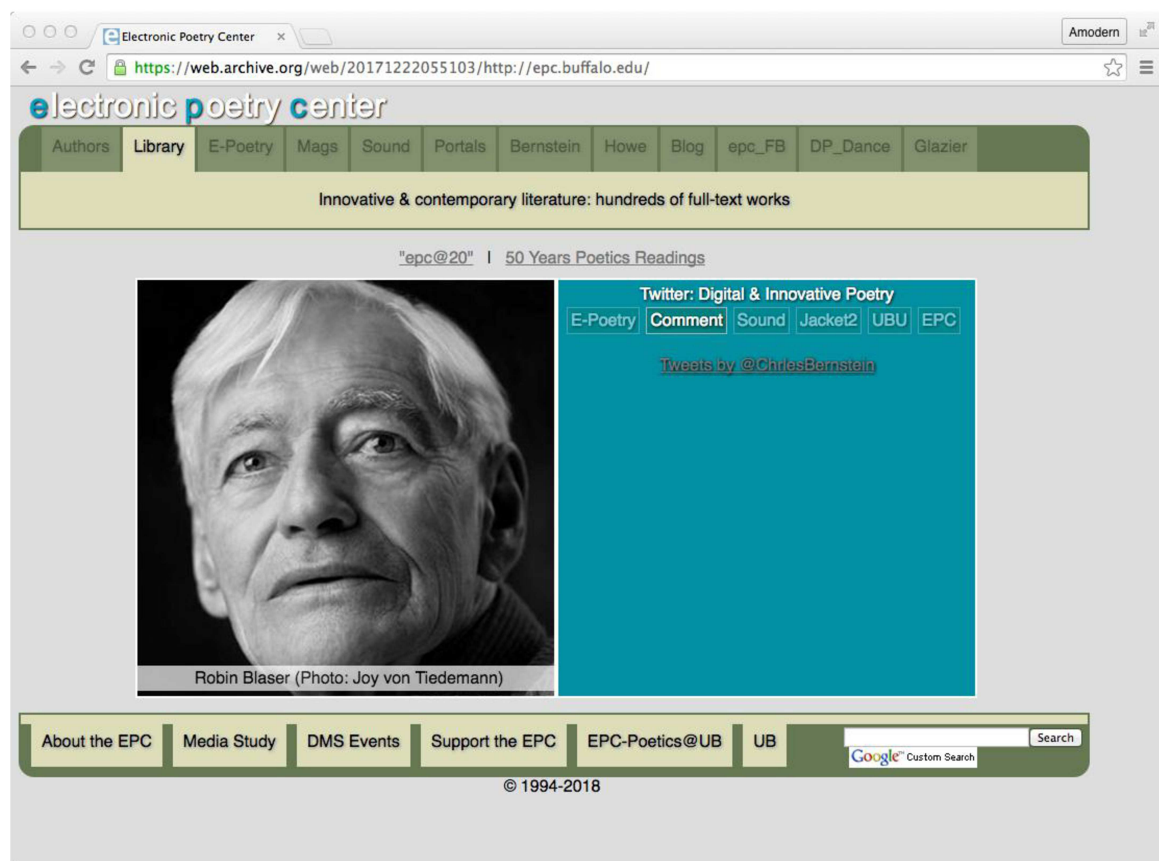


Fig. 1.06: Electronic Poetry Center home page, 22 November 2017.



Literature on the Electronic Poetry Center

Of the numerous writings citing the importance of the EPC, few sources have engaged with the digital repository beyond noting its impact on contemporary cultures of poetry and poetics. Before addressing the more substantial critical writings concerning the repository, I will include here a brief collection of statements on the EPC since they frame the initial intrigue with the project and mark its continued contributions over two decades. Liz McMillen's article on the pedagogy of the Poetics Program for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* describes the EPC as "a working site for active poets," one featuring texts by and about authors, an electronic journal (*RIF/T*), the poetics discussion listserv, and a collection of other electronic journals and out-of-print works. "It's important for small presses to use this technology," Bernstein says in the article, "otherwise they become more marginal."¹³⁵ In a *Publisher's Weekly* piece soon after the start of the project, Michael Reid cites the EPC as a primary example to illustrate how the Web offers a "vast literary space" for poets and publishers to "bypass the consequences of the art form's marginal commercial returns."¹³⁶ Bernstein, in dialogue with the article's author, develops this aspect of the EPC functioning outside of traditional economies further. Describing the EPC as "a switchboard for poetry resources," Bernstein states: "We tried to create a strong noncommercial space for poetry. It isn't particularly profitable, it thrives in a low production-cost environment like the Web, just as it has with past changes in publishing technology."¹³⁷ Here, Bernstein refers to prior existing technologies that poets have taken up to more affordably circulate their works in the past – such as the mimeograph, the tape cassette, and the photocopy machine – and situates the EPC as a new iteration within that lineage.

In Pamela Lu's overview of poetry resources on the World Wide Web, the first resource she lists is the EPC, which she describes as "[p]erhaps the single largest and most eclectic resource site for experimental poetry."¹³⁸ She emphasizes that the site is updated regularly, and that it is a hub to go to in order "to keep abreast of the latest news, events, publications, and even reading performances in the experimental poetry community."¹³⁹ In another piece concerning online resources for poetry, the site poets.org compares visiting the EPC to "digging around for treasures in an attic," and describes it as "a great starting point for those interested in the possibilities beyond the printed page," noting that is "web space used to its best advantage – the collection one finds here couldn't exist in a physical building."¹⁴⁰ Adelaide Morris and Thomas Swiss's *New Media Poetics* cites the EPC's importance for articulating a multi-medial approach

to poetry and poetics.¹⁴¹ In the introduction to the edited collection, Morris writes that the most “robust and enduring connection between poetics and hypertext is not hypertext poetry but the documents made available through networked hypertext archives” like the EPC.¹⁴² She puts additional emphasis on the EPC’s impact for making sound materials accessible.¹⁴³ Finally, in two articles acknowledging the 20th anniversary of the EPC in the University at Buffalo student newspaper *The Spectrum*, Tori Roseman describes the repository as “vintage internet” and “an epicenter of poetic evolution and teaching.”¹⁴⁴ In one of the articles, Steve McCaffery, the present Gray chair of Poetry and Letters at UB, states that the EPC is “extremely significant,” not only for “disseminating archival material, but also for being a hub of ‘living poetics.’”¹⁴⁵ Together, these comments emphasize several things regarding the EPC: its centrality as a resource for poetry on the Web; the importance of it being regularly updated and functioning as an active hub for finding out what’s happening in contemporary poetry communities; the value of its multi-media approach to documenting cultures of poetry; and, finally, the EPC’s utilization of the Web as a material space for the publication of poetry and poetry-related materials.

Taking up Glazier’s impetus for making the EPC a “subject village,” Al Filreis considers how digital poetics might contribute to developing new pedagogical models in university settings. He imagines a “lectureless poetics – poetics at the end of the lecture” in which students collectively navigate through and respond to poetry and poetics-related materials collected in digital repositories.¹⁴⁶ A core component of this new pedagogical model is the production of new media – recorded dialogues, written responses, and webcast discussions – that teachers add to the digital repositories and use for future iterations of teaching the materials. Such production and archival activity opens up the materials of the digital repository to students in new ways over time, while allowing for those materials to migrate outside the confines of the classroom. Additionally, this activity impresses upon students (and users outside the classroom) a *poesis* Filreis understands to be synonymous with, quoting Glazier, poetry’s own “engagement with making, its mode of production, but also its means of dissemination” in the digital age.¹⁴⁷ For Filreis, this *poesis* implicates a shift in pedagogy, as well as a material reorganization of the institution and its resources. Writing at a moment in which universities began to allocate millions of dollars to their digital presence, Filreis advocates shifting a substantial portion of that funding from “Web development” and “content innovation” to using the institution’s networked infrastructure to develop

truly different modes of reading, teaching, learning, responding, and discussion, and a consciously altered sense of who the learners are – that is, modes that break the rules of time and space that have long governed the medieval-agrarian “semester” durational legacies of the I know/you don’t, I have/you want, I give/you receive, I write/you read structural technologies characteristic of the era of the book, print being similar to the lecture.¹⁴⁸

I discuss at length in the third chapter Filreis’s restructuring of the institution to create his own gathering ground – on and off the Web – for poetry and poetics. Here, I simply want to emphasize that the seed for Filreis’s radical shift in and opening up of the university’s resources is premised upon Glazier’s conceptualization of a subject village and the precedent established by the EPC.

Manuel Brito examines the organization of the EPC in relation to the form of the poetry anthology, and then begins to map some of the overall impact the digital repository as a form has had on contemporary poetry.¹⁴⁹ Surveying the electronic landscape of poetry resources, Brito singles out the EPC as the “most crucial” site that recognizes the “new mode of production and distribution” of poetic works, one that allows for a “cheaper and more accessible mode of participation.”¹⁵⁰ Similar to an anthology in the range of authors as well as poetic styles and praxes drawn together therein, the EPC, according to Brito, has “expanded the concept of anthologization” by including texts, hypertexts, hypermedia (sound and video), as well as being as a host for dialogues in the form of the live events, newsletters, and the Poetics List.¹⁵¹ Yet Brito, notably, does not address the editorial practices and sensibility of constructing and managing such an object. The precedent of EPC, its “multivoiced dialogues and creation,” exemplify for Brito how the electronic landscape fosters “not a delimited space but rather a great opening in all directions” in terms of aesthetic possibility.¹⁵² Here, again, Brito accepts the idea of “openness” without question, as opposed to seeking to understand how such terms are part and parcel with constructing the mythology of the Internet as, for example, Vincent Mosco has shown.¹⁵³ Later, in noting how “digital repositories replace the traditional production, presentation, and storage of literary texts,” Brito states the example of the EPC and Glazier’s concept of the “subject village” force one to “breakdown the concept of the ‘archive.’”¹⁵⁴ Though activities central to archiving – such as the storage of and access to difficult-to-find materials – are primary functions of the digital repository, the figure who maintains the digital repository does not solely practice traditional archival tasks in terms of overall organization of

the materials, not even remotely. Instead, as Brito points out, this person assumes an editorial role – selecting materials according to their own interests, providing useful context to the materials selected, and even publishing works that have previously not been circulated in any other format. The figure who maintains the “subject village,” then, acts not as an archivist, but as a host, one who shapes the space of the digital repository to function as an “active” and “accessible” – terms I intend to interrogate throughout this chapter – hub to meet the various needs of current and future inquiries into poetry and poetics.

Fig. 1.07: Mimeographed handouts of poems by David Bromige and Clark Coolidge for their instructors Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, and Robert Creeley at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference. Image by Larry Goodell.

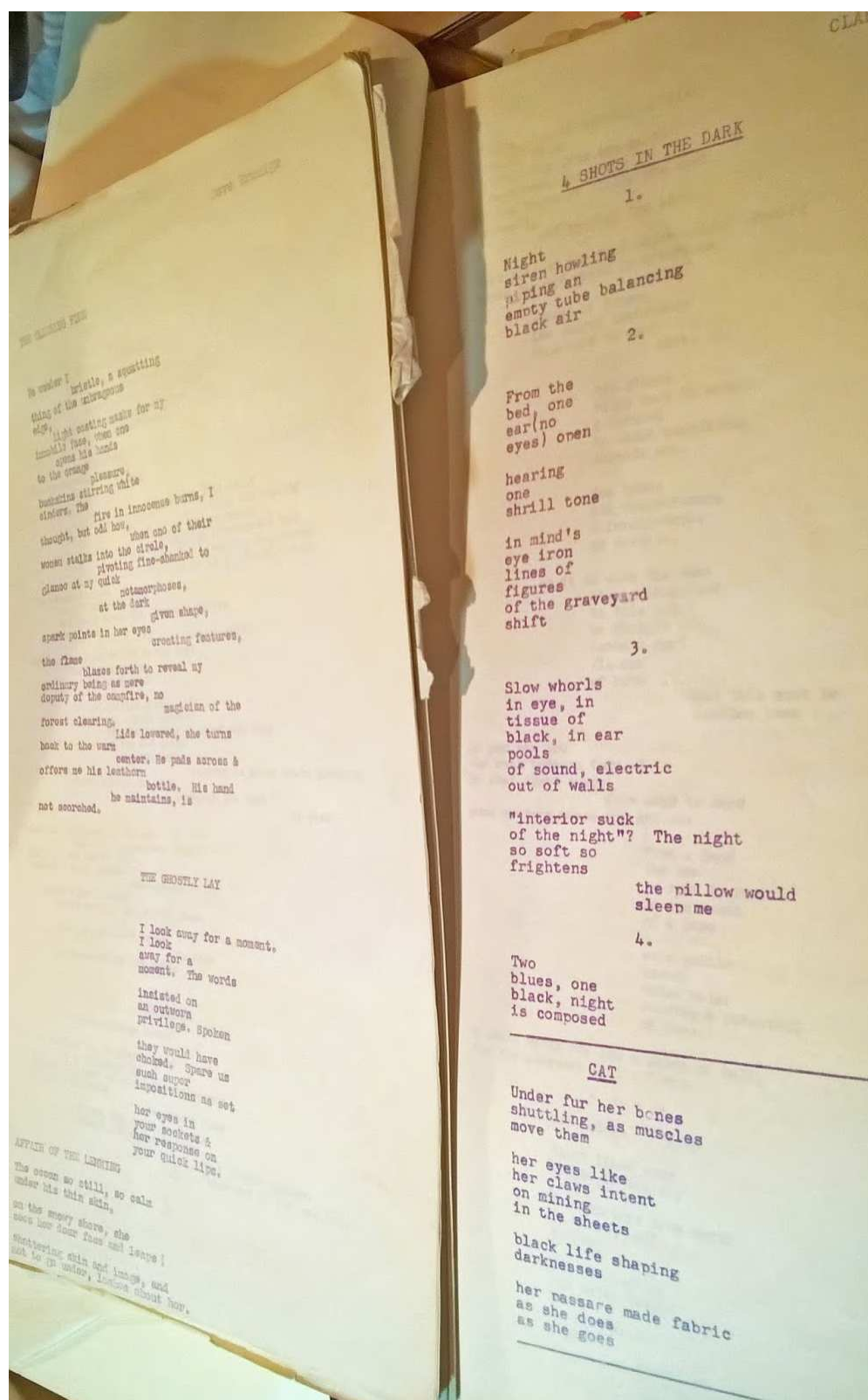


Fig. 1.08: Page 1 of Charles Olson's bibliography for his "Poetry and Mythology" seminars at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 1965.

<p>UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY</p>	<p>LETTERS AND SCIENCE EXTENSION</p>
<p>BERKELEY POETRY CONFERENCE, 1965 BIBLIOGRAPHY</p>	
<p>OLSON'S POETRY AND MYTHOLOGY SEMINARS</p>	
<p>Havelock, Preface to Plato Whorf, Language, Thought & Reality Snell, Discovery of the Mind Whitehead, Process & Reality Harrison, Themis, Prolegomena Jung, Aion, Alchemy, Psy. Types Webster, From Mycenae to Homer Knight, The Worship of Priapus Jung & Kerenyi, Essays on a Science of Mythology Thompson, The Art of Logos Jonas, The Gnostics Craves, The Greek Myths Kramer, Mythologies of the Ancient World Smith, The Origin of the Semites Allen, N.A.P. DeVoto, The Year of Decision Rank, Art and Artist DeSitter, Kosmos Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconsc. ---Mornings in Mexico ---Studies in Classic Am. Lit. Pritchard, Ancient Near East. Texts Gordon, Before the Bible Brown, Hermes the Thief Olson, Call Me Ishmael ---Grammar--a "book" ---Mayan Letters (Divers) ---Bib. on the State of Knowledge for Chas. Doris (Coyote's J.1) ---Poem in Psychedelic Review 3 ---Projective Verse essay (& Feinstein letter, Totem press) ---The Distances; Maximus poems ---Bib. on America for Ed Dorn ---Pieces of Time (Kulchur, Spr.'60) ---Origin #1; Niagra Fronteir Review Al Araby, Meccan Revelation Norse Eddas; Celtic & Irish Myths Rig-Veda Tantric Texts; (Moslem Texts) Hittite Myths Grosatesti, Physics of Light (Gilson tr., in Pound's Make It New) Williams, Desert Music; & Stories ---Paterson, et all al. Pound. Mathews, Dakota (Wakontah) Weyl, Phil. of Math. & Nat. Science Eranos Yearbooks (esp. on Man & Time) Heraclitus, Fragments Brakhage, Metaphorson Vision (Matter 2) ---in Film Quarterly #30 (Fall '63)</p>	<p>Herodotus, Histories Jones, The Moderns Rumaker, in Prose 1 (City Lights) --- The Butterfly (Scribners) Melville, Moby Dick, Pierre, Confidence Man, Mardi Also at that time: Israel Potter, The Marble Faun, Redburn, Lightning Rod Man Hesiod, Theogony (Loeb Classical Series, HUP) Frobenius, Childhood of Man, African Genesis Keats, Letters (on negative capability) Shelly, The Cenci, Defence of Poetry, Stendhal, Les Cenci Creeley, The New Universe (Yugen) --- The Island (Scrib.) --- For Love --- in Origin #2, esp. The Fate Tales Webster's Dictionary International (2nd) Scott's Dictionary of Greek Century Cyclopedia Stein's Three Lives Chaucer, Nun's, Priest's Tale, House of Fame, Troilus & Cres. Homer, The Iliad; Odyssey, tr. Berard Aristotle, Poetics Wieners, The Ace of Pentacles, Hotel Wentley Poems Sanders, Fuck You (all), Peace Eye Fenollosa, The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry (City Lights) Yeats, A Vision Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception Plutarch, Theosophical Essays Zelinski, (on Sybil, etc. in Edge) Chadwick, Decipherment of Linear 'B' Cambridge Ancient History Series (esp. Chadwick, Elegen, Stubbings, Desborough, Caskey, Kirk, Cook, Matz McClure, Poisoned Wheat, The Death of 1000 Whales, Unto Caesar Jung, Symbols of Transformation Neumann, The Origins and History of Conscious. Parkman, Journals Sauer, Land and Life Michaux, Light Through Darkness (Orion) Duncan, all Memphite Theology. The Review, number 10 (Black Mountain Issue) Kulchur, Black Mountain Review, Wild Dog, Origin, Floating Bear, Trobar, Measure, Combustion, Four Winds, Coyote's Journal, Matter, Sum, Poetry (Chi.)</p>

Fig. 1.09: Page 2 of Charles Olson's bibliography for his "Poetry and Mythology" seminars at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 1965.

Havelock, Preface to Plato	Herodotus, Histories
Whorf, Language, Thought & Reality	Jones, The Moderns
Snell, Discovery of the Mind	Rumaker, in Prose 1 (City Lights)
Whitehead, Process & Reality	--- The Butterfly (Scribners)
Harrison, Themis, Prolegomena	Melville, Moby Dick, Pierre, Confidence
Jung, Aion, Alchemy, Psy. Types	Man, Mardi
Webster, From Mycenae to Homer	Also at that time: Israel Potter, The
Knight, The Worship of Priapus	Marble Faun, Redburn, Lightning
Jung & Kerenyi, Essays on a Science	Rod Man
of Mythology	Hesiod, Theogony (Loeb Classical Series, HUP)
Thompson, The Art of Logos	Frobenius, Childhood of Man, African Genesis
Jonas, The Gnostics	Keats, Letters (on negative capability)
Graves, The Greek Myths	Shelly, The Cenci, Defence of Poetry, Stendhal,
Kramer, Mythologies of the Ancient	Les Cenci
World	Creeley, The New Universe (Yugen)
Smith, The Origin of the Semites	--- The Island (Scrib.)
Allen, N.A.P.	--- For Love
DeVoto, The Year of Decision	--- in Origin #2, esp. The Fate Tales
Rank, Art and Artist	Webster's Dictionary International (2nd)
DeSitter, Kosmos	Scott's Dictionary of Greek
Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconsc.	Century Cyclopedic
---Mornings in Mexico	Stein's Three Lives
---Studies in Classic Am. Lit.	Chaucer, Nun's, Priest's Tale, House of Fame,
Pritchard, Ancient Near East. Texts	Troilus & Cres.
Gordon, Before the Bible	Homer, The Iliad; Odyssey, tr. Berard
Brown, Hermes the Thief	Aristotle, Poetics
Olson, Call Me Ishmael	Wieners, The Ace of Pentacles, Hotel
---Grammar---a "book"	Wentley Poems
---Mayan Letters (Divers)	Sanders, Fuck You (all), Peace Eye
---Bib. on the State of Knowledge	Fenollosa, The Chinese Written Character
for Chas. Doris (Coyote's J.1)	as a Medium for Poetry (City Lights)
---Poem in Psychedelic Review 3	Yeats, A Vision
---Projective Verse essay (& Feinstein	Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception
letter, Totem press)	Plutarch, Theosophical Essays
---The Distances; Maximus poems	Zelinski, (on Sybil, etc. in Edge)
---Bib. on America for Ed Dorn	Chadwick, Decipherment of Linear 'B'
---Pieces of Time (Kulchur, Spr.'60)	Cambridge Ancient History Series (esp. Chadwick,
---Origin #1; Niagra Fronteir Review	Blegen, Stubbings, Desborough, Caskey, Kirk,
Al Araby, Meccan Revelation	Cook, Matz
Norse Eddas; Celtic & Irish Myths	McClure, Poisoned Wheat, The Death of 1000
Rig-Veda	Whales, Unto Caesar
Tantric Texts; (Moslem Texts)	Jung, Symbols of Transformation
Hittite Myths	Neumann, The Origins and History of Conscious.
Grosatesti, Physics of Light	Parkman, Journals
(Gilson tr., in Pound's Make It New)	Sauer, Land and Life
Williams, Desert Music; & Stories	Michaux, Light Through Darkness (Orion)
---Paterson, et all al.	Duncan, all
Pound.	Memphite Theology.
Mathews, Dakota (Wakontah)	The Review, number 10 (Black Mountain Issue)
Weyl, Phil. of Math. & Nat. Science	Kulchur, Black Mountain Review, Wild Dog,
Eranos Yearbooks (esp. on Man & Time)	Origin, Floating Bear, Trobar, Measure,
Heraclitus, Fragments	Combustion, Four Winds, Coyote's Journal,
Brakhage, Metaphorson Vision (Matter 2)	Matter, Sum, Poetry (Chi.)
---in Film Quarterly #30 (Fall '63)	

(If this doesn't work, try the Tarot)

This note & The Bibliography- The work of J. Clarke Buffalo

Trails of Influence

Long before the initial articulation of the EPC, a composite of personal, technological, and literary sources informed Glazier's plotting out of and modeling for such a "subject village." These sources range from Glazier's bibliographical works to his numerous programming and coding-based projects, the texts he created as a publisher of experimental writing to his own research and scholarship on electronic poetry. Tracing an arc through these sources – from the time of Glazier's studies at Berkeley (as an undergraduate during the mid-1970s and a graduate student in the mid-1980s) until the first years of his position as a librarian at UB (in the late 1980s) – provides a valuable prehistory for understanding the formulation of the EPC. Through this background history, one begins to see Glazier's approach to the "subject village" as a fine exemplar of the anti-corporate, pro-"virtual community" perspective that Harold Rheingold exuberantly saw as having the "potential to bring enormous leverage to ordinary citizens at relatively little cost – intellectual leverage, social leverage, commercial leverage, and most important, political leverage."¹⁵⁵ It is the same sensibility that Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron have more critically described as the "Californian ideology," a mix of "cybernetics, free market economics and counter-culture libertarianism" that foresees the "convergence of media, computing, and telecommunications" as bringing about "an electronic direct democracy – the electronic agora – in which everyone would be able to express their opinions without fear of censorship."¹⁵⁶ For Glazier, as I present here, such a perspective is routed through his love of code, his arrival in California at the height of late-1960s counterculture, and his passion for documenting the activities of the small-scale, non-commercial publishing that were important venues for the poets, writers, and artists involved in what would become the major movements of post-war Anglophone literature.

Glazier cites the specific dynamics of his bilingual household as what initiated his interests in code.¹⁵⁷ His father, who was in the military and stationed in south Texas, prohibited Glazier's Mexican-American mother from speaking Spanish in their home. "But I secretly took it in from my mother," Glazier states. "There were certain things my mother would say to me in Spanish when my father was around because it was more safe."¹⁵⁸ In this environment, he learned through trial and error that there were specific situations in which certain words were effectively communicated, and other situations in which they were not. This code-switching between language and contexts, for Glazier, became a kind of translating, a creative act. "You

can't say anything the same way in another language," he states.¹⁵⁹ Years later, this experience from his upbringing resonated throughout his initial studies of computer programming languages as a librarian. "When you mark things up [in a computer programming language], you can't transfer anything. It's not black and white. You're always twisting and turning and shifting and inverting language. That, for me, is writing. Code has always been for me a form of writing."¹⁶⁰

As a teenager, the idea of code as a means of communication across cultures combined with the ideas of community and free expression Glazier witnessed in San Francisco's music scene. In the late 1960s, the Army re-stationed his family to the Bay Area. The "exploratory social space" of the free concerts – "before the music industry showed up," he notes – struck Glazier as being a kind of utopia. In our dialogues, Glazier compared these exploratory social spaces to the "state of pureness that [he] saw the EPC beginning."¹⁶¹ Harold Rheingold, writing in 1993, saw a similar "state of pureness" in virtual communities, and urged the people involved in these communities to not let "big power and big money" to take control of that space: "The Net is still out of control in fundamental ways, but it might not stay that way for long. What we know and do now is important because it is still possible for people around the world to make sure this new sphere of vital human discourse remains open to the citizens of the planet before the political and economic big boys seize it, censor it, meter it, and sell it back to us."¹⁶² In the text-only Gopher then HTML EPC sites, a reader was able to access poetry materials that were free. "You could talk freely and there were no commercials, no commercial interests there," he states, discussing the EPC live events he held on the site, comparing them to the musical performances he experienced in his youth. In this latter instance, the "freedom" was premised upon having the proper technological set-up to the network as opposed to being physically located at the specific site of the gatherings.¹⁶³ In Glazier's view, the literary industry – which, as he points out, was being shaped at the time of the EPC's launch by mega-bookstores such as Barnes & Noble and Borders – did its best to capitalize on the efforts of artists, just as the music industry had done for so long.¹⁶⁴ The EPC, like the free concerts of San Francisco's hippie culture, was a means to create a live engagement and free exchange between artists and their communities outside of such mainstream commerciality.

Upon completing his undergraduate studies at Berkeley, Glazier set off for a number of years to travel the world, from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s. The premise of these travels was a literary one: "I took ten years off to travel because [I wanted to be a writer and] I didn't know

what I was going to write about if I had only been in college.”¹⁶⁵ In our dialogues, the importance of his travels in South Asia – specifically in northern India and in the Himalayas, as well as his studies of Hindu-Brahmanic and Buddhist philosophies were points he returned to often in order to discuss aspects of the EPC.¹⁶⁶ In discussing the model of exchange and reciprocity he believed to be central to a “subject village,” he brought up the concept of *karma*, that the offering up of one’s concentration, activity, and materials to others will be reciprocated in turn. While discussing the mutability of digital text in his electronic poems, he invoked the concept of *maya*, the illusory nature of the world, and the Buddha’s first noble truth – *duhkha* – that all things suffer or undergo change.¹⁶⁷ Our dialogues were permeated with the acknowledgment of Glazier’s mortality, an important Buddhist meditation. Throughout, he referred to the fact that he would not be able to do the EPC forever, and at some point, most likely soon, the digital object would need to be archived so that it could be preserved for others after his passing.¹⁶⁸

Upon returning from his travels throughout South Asia and the Himalayas in the early 1980s, Glazier began working in “what was going to be Silicon Valley”¹⁶⁹ setting up computer systems, a shift from counterculture to cyberculture not atypical to the time.¹⁷⁰ Learning basic computer programming skills through this work, Glazier began to apply them in the creation of his own poetry little magazine, *Oro Madre*, which he began publishing in 1980. The expression for “mother lode” in Spanish, the principal vein in which gold or silver can be found in abundance, *Oro Madre* also intones the coded language he learned from his mother, literally a “mother tongue.” In constructing the poetry journal, formatting the kinds of poems Glazier was interested in – ones following in the open and projective verse traditions of the New American Poetry he first encountered as an undergrad at Berkeley – proved to be a significant challenge on the text-only computer platforms that were available at the time. His attention to properly formatting the poems for *Oro Madre* served as an important experience for his later use of Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) and Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) to disseminate poems on the EPC.

In the mid-1980s, Glazier returned to UC-Berkeley to study for a Masters degree in Library and Information Studies (MLIS). It was at this time where he began to study computer sciences in depth by programming the punch cards for one of the mainframe computer and learning PL/I, what Glazier describes as “the mother of all programming languages.”¹⁷¹ At a

certain point at the start of his studies, he narrates, he had written a program and then dropped the punch cards upon entering the classroom. “Since it was an assignment that was due, I just picked up the cards and put them into the computer and it actually broke Berkeley’s mainframe. It melted it down!”¹⁷² He then jokingly noted that he liked to consider this his first work of electronic poetry. Together, the training as a librarian and as a programmer supplied Glazier with the valuable skills he would later apply to his specific field of interest, poetry and poetics.

Throughout his time back at Berkeley, Glazier mixed the library and information studies side of his education with his interest in the history of 20th century experimental poetry. He began to focus his work on bibliographic studies, charting the publishing history of small press poetry throughout the century, and even simultaneously enrolled in the English department’s Masters program, studying under the direction of the poet Robert Pinsky. Citing Robert Creeley’s Divers press and the mimeo revolution of the 1960s as the subjects that initially drew him into this field, Glazier began to compose an annotated bibliography of 20th century Anglophone small press poetry.¹⁷³ He considered bibliography to be “like archaeology,” a “practical engagement with the history of literary production,” an excavation of the materials themselves that map “the trails of influence.”¹⁷⁴ Again, Glazier’s phrasing reveals, in part, his own influences in the way that, in this instance, he alludes directly to Vannevar Bush’s meditation in “As We May Think” (1945) on “the future of compiling and consulting the huge mass of accumulated knowledge, which Bush variously calls ‘the great record,’ ‘the total record,’ and ‘the common record’ of humankind.”¹⁷⁵ Lisa Gitelman succinctly describes Bush’s essay and the means for confronting a future “bibliomeric crisis” it proposes:

Bush’s formulation is famous because he describes a futuristic solution to the problem [of how to navigate the massive accumulation of knowledge]: a method of storing and sorting information that is modeled on human consciousness rather than bureaucratic filing systems. It is an imagined hypertext, before the term *hypertext* was coined and any of the relevant digital technology existed. He suggests that documents might be best organized not by “artificial” indexing systems with their rigid “paths” and cumbersome rules but by a more natural form of “associative indexing,” working in the manner of the “*intricate web of trails*” that connects related thoughts in the brain. To this end, Bush posits a device, “a sort of mechanized private file and library” to serve as an intimate supplement” to its user’s memory. Dubbing it the *memex*, Bush envisions “a desk [that can be] operated at a distance,” with screens on the top and microfilm contents inside to be somehow selected, consulted, annotated, and then joined or tied at will into multiple associative “trails” for future reference.¹⁷⁶

Bush's futuristic vision not only serves as a clear model for Glazier's articulation of the EPC has a virtual hub and hypertextual gateway, it also establishes a precedent for the kind of infrastructure and scholarship those engaged in literary studies ought to contribute. Glazier opposed this bibliographic endeavour to the more interpretive veins of literary scholarship, which he saw as concentrating too much on obscure details of literary history, such as "how the three moles on Milton's left index finger impact the narrative of *Paradise Lost*."¹⁷⁷ He elaborates this distinction in terms of his own work: "I'm not so much interested in when Creeley met Dorn and what might have changed in his work. I'm in it to find this quality of exuberance and this fragile moment when two or three things meet. I like tracing the history of these confluences."¹⁷⁸ For Glazier, writing a bibliography and tracking down each variant or alternative edition is premised on a certain precision and care for detail that he equates with writing code, "where one comma could make all the difference between something functioning and not functioning."¹⁷⁹

After finishing his MLIS, Glazier began his first job as a curator of a literary collection at the University of Southern California (USC). Dedicated to authors from Los Angeles, the collection was especially known for its holdings from screenwriters. Glazier admits the collection itself wasn't particularly suited to his own interests.¹⁸⁰ During his first months there, a job announcement came up for a librarian at the University at Buffalo (UB). Glazier knew that Creeley – one of his favourite poets and an inspiration behind his bibliographic work – was a professor at UB. This fact alone motivated him to apply for the job and, once offered it, make the move to Buffalo.

Glazier's arrival at Buffalo in 1988 occurs at a particular juncture in which the university began a concentrated effort to integrate expanded arts practices in its curricula and develop the institution's networked digital infrastructure. Glazier immediately became involved in both of these endeavours.¹⁸¹ By the late 1980s, Buffalo became known as a place for experimental video, performance, and sound with figures such as Tony Conrad, Hollis Frampton, Steina and Woody Vasulka, and Peter Weibel all involved in the city's arts scene while teaching in UB's Media Studies department.¹⁸² Their avant-garde approaches to intermedial art making began to have an affinity with the creative and critical pedagogies of their colleagues in the English department. With the creation of the Poetics Program – formulated in the late 1980s and initiated in 1991 – UB's English department underwent a significant shift toward recognizing and incorporating a variety of media and materials as constitutive of poetic composition. The university's Poetry

Collection facilitated this shift. In providing an array of historical and contemporary examples of the manuscripts and ephemera that charted poets' compositions as a processual activity, the Poetry Collection provided ample precedent for scholars and poets to engage the material, intermedial, and iterative aspects of *poiesis*.¹⁸³ The university's development of its digital infrastructure – which Glazier would play a part in, initially for the university's library system and then, afterwards, for the Poetics Program – would only facilitate this merging together of historical precedent and contemporary interactivity to a greater degree. As I detail below, the confluence at UB of its critical-creative pedagogies, institutional collections, and digital infrastructures serve as the foundation from which Glazier would construct the EPC.

Though Charles Abbott focused at first solely on collecting manuscripts from living writers, once he procured a home for his collection at UB's Lockwood Library, he began a second stage of acquisitions in order to make it “piece by piece, a collection of books which would include every text by a twentieth-century poet writing in English.”¹⁸⁴ As Jeremy Braddock notes:

With remarkable foresight, Abbott also actively sought to acquire more ephemeral poetic materials, which were not yet the objects of speculation and investment in the book trade. This resulted in the library's enviable collection of broadsides and little magazines, as well as an unequalled collection of anthologies, a genre that rarely finds a place in rare book rooms even today.¹⁸⁵

For Glazier, by the time of his arrival in the late 1980s, this meant his new workplace housed one of the most robust archives of small press poetry publishing. As the English and American Literature Librarian for Lockwood Library, he began to write a bibliographical work he would publish in 1992 entitled *Small Press: An Annotated Guide*.¹⁸⁶ In this work, Glazier documents “small press publishing since 1960, the ‘Mimeo Revolution,’ when small presses in the United States began to flourish in unprecedented numbers.”¹⁸⁷ As a bibliographical work, Glazier approaches the subject by selecting, listing, and detailing hundreds of writings on the culture of small press publishing between 1960 and 1992. The book functions as both a directory and commentary on the discourse on small press publishing, its sites and modes of production and circulation prior to the Web.

One can, in fact, easily imagine *Small Press: An Annotated Guide* as a digital repository. Glazier wrote and edited the work as an analog precursor of the “subject village” that he would later envision in digital milieus. *Small Press* documents an entire field of cultural activity.

Though expansive or seemingly exhaustive in terms of its scope, it is highly edited – Glazier curates, or mediates, the field. Readers experience the field of small press publishing through his selection and idiosyncratic commentary on the selected sources. Each bibliographic entry could easily transition into its own Web page. *Small Press* “serves as a gateway,” as Glazier writes of the subject village, “to relevant, externally available” resources.¹⁸⁸ The book presents its subject as a living cultural activity, blending in “current information” such as directories, indexes, guides and trade journals, as well as detailing sites such as the presses themselves, libraries, and bookstores where one can directly access the activity and materials discussed throughout the work. Implicit to the project is that the book function as a portal that facilitates further exploration of the small press field for others.

The bibliography applies specifically to the Poetry Collection. Though Glazier was not directly affiliated with the collection as Lockwood Library’s English and American literature librarian, his book establishes the historical context and critical reception of the small press works in the Poetry Collection’s holdings. It serves as an important mediation between the works and their audience, emphasizing how, in Pierre Bourdieu’s terms, “the entire structure of the [cultural] field interposes itself between the producers and their work.”¹⁸⁹ *Small Press* also functions in the more formal sense of mediation that Bourdieu specifies as having an impact on the work itself as a work of art.¹⁹⁰ In assembling a compendium that details how writers and scholars have engaged with small press objects, Glazier makes a case that these “more ephemeral poetic materials” are a crucial site of literary production in the twentieth-century.¹⁹¹ Here, Glazier intends to impact the status of such materials in terms of critical scholarship. He also means to encourage new generations of poet-producers to take up and continue the “indomitable spirit” of small press publishing.¹⁹²

This intervention – at once citing the historical precedent and robustness of traditions outside of more mainstream literary discourse, while also providing a field guide to catalyze new traditions aligned with such precedents – is important for considering the role of small press with regard to the Poetics Program and its relation to the development of the EPC. Formed in 1991, the University at Buffalo’s Poetics Program takes as its principle that “literary artists should teach not only the art of writing but also the theory of writing practice.”¹⁹³ Founded by Robert Creeley, Susan Howe, Dennis Tedlock, Charles Bernstein, and Raymond Federman, the program is situated in UB’s English department and is committed to “methods of analysis that open up

poetry and other forms of writing for inspection. It regards 'poetics' as the sum of the theoretical languages that define and inform the term poesis as construction and making."¹⁹⁴ Charles Bernstein discusses the emergence of the program with particular emphasis on the contexts of its institutional development:

The program has its roots in the formation of the English Department at Buffalo in the early 1960s by Albert Cook. Cook had the idea that you could hire literary artists to teach not creative writing but literature classes, and in particular literature classes in a PhD program. It was with this in mind that he hired Creeley, Charles Olson, and others; it marked a decisively other path from far more prevalent graduate (usually MA and MFA) "creative writing" programs that emerged at the same time.

By formulating this concept in the early nineties, shortly after Howe and I came to UB, we were suggesting an alternative model for poets teaching in graduate, but also undergraduate, programs. The Poetics faculty teaches in the English Department's doctoral program, supervising orals and directing scholarly/critical dissertations, even if our license to this is more poetic than formal. A frequent question I get from students applying to the program is whether they can write a creative dissertation. I always do a double take: "I hope it will be creative, but it can't be a collection of poems or a novel." For the fact is that Poetics students have the same requirements as all other graduate students and are admitted by the same departmental committee. And while we encourage active questioning of the conventions of critical and scholarly writing, we remain committed to the practice of poetics as distinct from, even though intersecting with, the practice of poetry. The implications of this perspective are perhaps more pragmatic, not to say programmatic, than theoretical: while the "creative writing" approach at universities often debunks the significance of critical reflection, sometimes pitting creativity against conceptual thinking, the Poetics Program insists that scholarship, historical research, and critical writings are at the core of graduate education.¹⁹⁵

Bernstein later discusses the particular dynamics of the program in terms of its local institutional setting and the context of literary studies more generally. In dialogue with Marjorie Perloff, Bernstein states:

As to the Poetics Program: university English departments typically separate poetry writing courses from poetry reading courses and we all know that the former are on the rise while the latter are on the wane. The Poetics Program, as we formed it in the early 1990s in Buffalo, rejected this dichotomy, not just in an informal, or class-by-class, basis, but as a matter of policy; and not just at an undergraduate or master's level, but also, and even primarily, in the PhD program. The poets teaching in our graduate Poetics Program – Susan Howe, Robert Creeley, Myung Mi Kim, Loss Pequeño Glazier, Dennis Tedlock – teach not creative writing but rather doctoral seminars; the students don't submit poems or manuscripts, but essays and dissertations. The Poetics Program students are often poets, and we support the activity of writing poetry as a positive contribution to teaching literature classes, writing criticism, and doing scholarship. This is not to say that all the Poetics

students are poets, but lots of them are, and they have formed their own immediate local context of exchanging work, publishing magazines and books, and organizing reading series.

No poetry community is without troubles, and ours has its share, but it is vital and sizeable and even formidable, since our program, having surprising little competition among PhD programs, has attracted (in early and not-so-early stages) some great poets, scholars, critics, and editors over the years. Because we have some funds available, we are able to provide a small amount of money to any of the students who want to have a series or press – and that little bit of money goes a long way. This approach to funding – giving to a highly decentered not to say idiosyncratic set of projects can lead, as Joel Kuszai put it a while back, to a place with “all leaders and no followers”; but at least it avoids the committee-driven decision making of many official university magazines and reading series, where money is centralized and consensus is emphasized. Anyway, this has been my philosophy. We also have lots and lots of visitors, who meet with students in seminars as well as giving readings or lectures. So its all very poetry-intense, with lots of fellow poetry devotees and lots of activities. And also a strong web presence, with the Electronic Poetry Centre and also the Poetics List.

Looking back, I think the Poetics Program was an intervention particularly relevant for the 1990s and so one that now needs to undergo some serious and necessary transformations, and I think all institutions do, less they become stagnant, victims of their own successes or preoccupied with their own failures.

There is always a lot of concern expressed among poets about the relation of poetry to the academy. (I wish I could say there was a comparable concern in the literary academy for this topic.) Without jumping into the quicksand of this topic, I would say that my own commitment has been to find ways to use the university and its resources to support poets and poetry, especially poets outside the academy.¹⁹⁶

In quoting these extended passages, I want to highlight two things. First, the Program emphasizes the practice of poetics as an activity that is both creative (artist- or praxis-centred) and critical (theoretical-historical). This is distinct break from the activity of creative writing programs and English departments, which prioritized one of these aspects while more generally neglecting the other.¹⁹⁷ One of primary interventions of the Poetics Program is its attempt to recognize within educational institutions a specific mode of writing – the theorization and exploration of writing produced by literary artists. It is also an attempt to legitimize the figure or role of the poet-scholar.¹⁹⁸

This intervention relates directly to the second point I want to highlight about the Program: its use of the university and its resources to support poets and poetry. Bernstein locates this model for a decentered, distributed funding model inside the Program itself, but it is one that has implications that extend far beyond that specific site. Rather than devoting their energies and


funds to one or two official organons, the Program founders chose to support, as Bernstein puts it, an entire “ecosystem” of poetic activity.¹⁹⁹ Here, Bernstein’s view notably resonates with the kind of cultural formations that Harold Rheingold asserts as being substantive of virtual communities: “There is no such thing as single, monolithic, online subculture; it’s more like an ecosystem of subcultures.”²⁰⁰ For Bernstein, such a structure materializes the concept of poetics the Program proposes: an engagement with writing that moves amid and incorporates facets of literary, theoretical, and historical modes, writing that takes up a number of genres, formats, and platforms – from poem to essay, journal to book, talk to dialogue, reading series to exhibition, collection to archive and so on. All of these publication methods were emergent out of the Poetics Program and circulated through numerous communities far outside of Buffalo, and even the United States.²⁰¹ The Program’s model for support is relevant to the EPC beyond the fact the initial funding for the project originated in this system. The distributed funding model encouraged projects that explored numerous formats and an array of poetic styles or tendencies, a broad field of activity of formally innovative writing and its various media that the EPC would attempt to collect, document, and represent as a whole.

Fig. 1.10: *RIF/T*, issue 1, originally located on a Gopher page, Fall 1993.

RIF/T 01

writing.upenn.edu/epc/rift/rift01/rift0101.html#bernstein

[*Hotlist](#) [*Authors](#) [*Journals](#) [*Connects](#) [*Small Press](#) [*Poetics](#) [*Search](#)



RIF/T: An Electronic Space for Poetry, Prose, and Poetics
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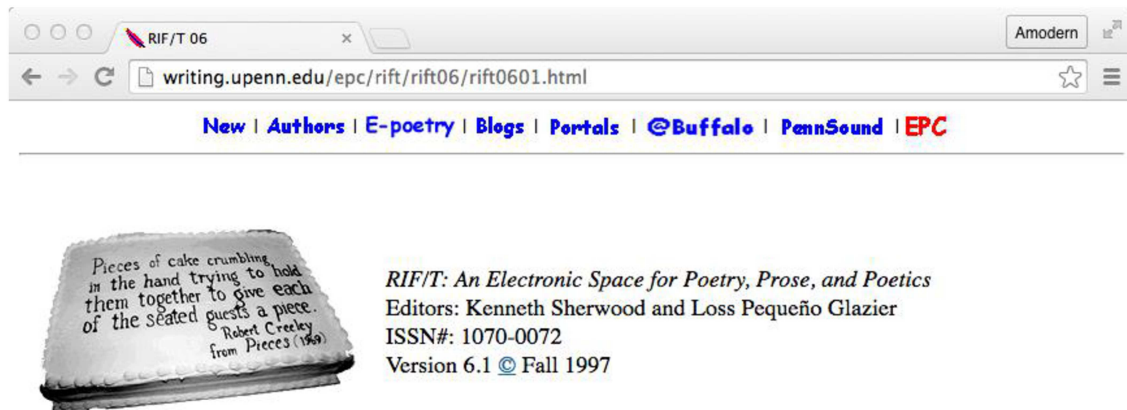
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Fig. 1.11: *RIF/T*, issue 6, with incorporation of multimedia, Fall 1997.



Local Effects For Robert Creeley @ 70

Special Issue of RIF/T Version 6.1 from Buffalo

See Also: [Creeley at 70 in Buffalo](#) | [Robert Creeley](#) author home page

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Creeley Festival, Buffalo, 1996

Charting out the Relation of the Digital to Poetry and Poetics

To return to Glazier, to a time before the EPC would become one of the main fronts for the Program's "strong web presence," I want to pause again on the extended moment from Glazier's arrival at Buffalo (1988) to the year following the publication of his *Small Press* book (1992) in order to plot out the series of events – re-emphasizing some and introducing others – that set the stage for the founding and development of the EPC.

1988-1992: Following his arrival at UB, Glazier begins working on *Small Press: An Annotated Bibliography* as the American and British literature bibliographer at Lockwood Library. He assembles the book primarily from materials located at the library, while maintaining consistent consultation with the materials in its Poetry Collection. Published in 1992, *Small Press* would help Glazier attain tenure as a librarian that same year.

1989-1991: Charles Bernstein arrives at UB as a visiting professor at the invitation of Robert Creeley to teach in the English Department for the 1989-1990 academic year, and they begin to develop ideas for what will become the Poetics Program. In order to establish the program, they later work with Susan Howe (who came to UB as a visiting professor in 1990-1991 to take up the same position Bernstein had the previous year), Dennis Tedlock and Raymond Federman (both professors in the English department) as founding faculty, and with Robert Bertholf, the curator of the Poetry Collection, as a primary interlocutor and liaison with the Program's development. From its Program's inception (1991), it is closely allied with one of the major collections of poetry and poetics materials (the Collection), and by its very structuring, the Program aims to support with the production and dissemination of new small press publications like the ones Glazier focused on in his bibliography and like a substantial portion of the materials maintained in the Collection.

1990: As a librarian, Glazier is able to attend classes at UB that lead to the fulfillment of PhD, taking one course per semester. He admits that this was also one of the main attractors to taking the position at UB.²⁰² He begins in the English Department and, with the founding of the Poetics Program, becomes one of the first students to take part in it, under the direction of Charles Bernstein.

1990-1996: Glazier's interests in computing, initiated during his years at Berkeley, lead him toward attending workshops and learning how to do the Internet with TelNet, Gopher, and FTP programs. Because of this expertise, he then takes up a position in the Head Librarian's

office, and begins giving courses on these issues to other librarians. He is then transferred to the Dean's Office at the College of Arts and Science in order to assist in developing the College's computing infrastructure.

1992: While working at the Lockwood Library, Glazier meets Kenneth Sherwood, a graduate student in the English department and part of the first generation of the Poetics Program. Sherwood had come to Glazier's office to request the librarian's help for a research project, and the two began discussing their many common poetic interests.²⁰³ From that initial discussion, Glazier and Sherwood formulate the creation of an "electronic space for poetry, prose and poetics" that they would call *RIF/T*.²⁰⁴ Wanting to explore the possibilities of electronic space for publishing poetry, they decided to publish the first issue via mailing list software that would distribute to subscribers in a text-only format. They posted the first issue of *RIF/T* on 28 September 1993 to approximately 200 subscribers. Made up of a cluster of mailable Ascii files, the journal had a "magazine section" that featured poems by individual authors and a series of "chapbook extensions" of longer works, assemblages, and collaborations.²⁰⁵

1993: Glazier programs the University at Buffalo POETICS list, the first mailing list devoted to the discussion of contemporary poetry and poetics, for Charles Bernstein, the publisher and founder of the List. The first messages to this List are posted by Bernstein and Glazier at the start of the fall semester in 1993.²⁰⁶ Those exchanging the first messages on the List were mainly those involved in the Poetics Program, and then opened up to a wider community of friends of the Program across North American and in the United Kingdom. In December 1993 and January 1994, the List was then opened up to people from outside the Program and then to international subscribers.²⁰⁷ Initiated at a time when few members of the poetry community would have email addresses, the List had less than 100 subscribers initially and grew to over 1500 subscribers by the mid-2000s.²⁰⁸ The Poetics List created a new social environment for "live" exchanges concerning poetry and poetics – a place where news, announcements, reviews, discussions, and (as it became more common for poets commonly to publish on the Web) links could circulate amid an engaged readership.

Before discussing further the latter two events – the publishing of *RIF/T* and the establishing of the Poetics List, both in relation to activity of the Poetics Program – I want to emphasize three important aspects of this timeline that are relevant to historicizing the development of the EPC in its technological, aesthetic, and institutional contexts. First of all, it is

necessary to consider both Glazier's conception of the "subject village" and the organization of the EPC as connected to his engagement with bibliography. In discussing the construction of the EPC, Glazier states the "archival-bibliographic" element of the EPC was one of the three main reasons why he found the project to be such an interesting one to pursue.²⁰⁹ (The other two reasons were the EPC's overall engagement with the field of poetics, and his interest in publishing such content on the Web.) Designed to function as a "gateway" to numerous collections of cultural materials, the EPC is fundamentally a bibliographic endeavour in the way it provides and organizes all of the relevant information in order to access each (linked, digitized) object.

Secondly, Glazier's various roles at UB – librarian, bibliographer, computer systems technician and adviser, publisher teacher, and graduate student – inform the overall construction and intended use of the EPC. It takes a knowledgeable librarian to select and curate the materials, a bibliographer to organize and annotate them, a programmer to develop the technological infrastructure, a publisher to recognize what materials and modes of publication are relevant, a teacher and student to imagine and put to use the repository's materials. It is the combined articulation of these various roles and practices that make the digital repository a unique object, one different, for example, than an archive, index, collection, database, publication, or class website while at the same time combining elements of each of these forms.

Thirdly, and finally, the conception of poetics as articulated by the Poetics Program structures the EPC in several important ways. Glazier adopts the Program's emphasis on supporting numerous modes and lines of inquiry into poetry and poetics as an overall curatorial approach to what he collects for the EPC. Both the Program and the EPC assert that their engagements are with a total or comprehensive field of poetic activity.²¹⁰ Glazier does not replicate the decentered funding system that supports this activity since he does not have funding to offer, but he does have Web space to include these various practices and practitioners on the EPC. He intends to support numerous poets and their works by offering them a hub where their works and information about the works can be published, stored, and circulated. Like the Program, that support is not limited only to the production of poetry, though that does remain central to the project, but instead includes poetics statements and essays, dialogues, interviews, readings (sound recordings), and other genres, forms, and media. In creating such a virtual hub,

Glazier aims to create a community for poets on the Web, one that runs parallel to the Program and its numerous publications, readings, and events.

RIF/T and the Poetics List are important precursors to the EPC for the fact that they are two attempts to publish and circulate information relevant to those engaged with poetics on the Internet before popular use of the World Wide Web. They are both attempts at creating new networks for poetic works and related discourse in electronic space. Ken Sherwood, co-editor of *RIF/T*, states that for him the “crucial contexts” for these projects include “an awareness of the role that publication networks (i.e. *Others*, *The Dial*, *Contact*, *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* etc.) had played in poetry we valued [in previous] decades, [and] the importance of circulation or dialogue among writers (the Olson/Creeley correspondence as a prime example).”²¹¹ An early announcement in January 1994 for the listserv related to *RIF/T* on *Postmodern Culture* further emphasizes the importance of creating these new circulatory networks:

This list was formed to serve as a vehicle for (1) distribution of an interactive literary journal: *RIF/T* and related exchange, and (2) collection of any information related to contemporary poetics.

RIF/T provides a forum for poets that are conversant with the media to explore the full potential of a true electronic journal.

Dynamic—not static, *RIF/T* shifts and riffs with the diction of “trad” poetry investigating a new, flexible, fluid poetry of exchange.²¹²

The Poetics List, though focused on dialogue and announcements as opposed to functioning as a journal, is founded in the same spirit of establishing new publication networks and exchange. In the creation of these networks, Bernstein notes that those involved on the List began to establish a new mode of critical writing. In “taking up the constitution of [a new] social space” on the Internet,²¹³ Bernstein writes that the poets involved on the List “inaugurated a new genre of writing that is cross between letters and essays”²¹⁴ and produced a valuable collective document in their exchanges. This form of writing, as Barrett Watten argues, continues in electronic media the “forms of multi-authorship in early Language School publications [that] united authorship and genre in suprasubjective forms of discourse: there was participation in an order larger than individual authors and poems.”²¹⁵ The List served as a venue where the radical strategies of the avant-garde could continue in a form of intersubjective dialogue, and continue the questioning of authorship, genre, and community that was a primary theme in Language poetics.

In developing these new circulatory networks and modes of writing, a significant problem emerges: How does one preserve – collect and store – these texts for further access? In his doctoral dissertation, *The Electronic Poetry Center: A Poetics of the Web* (1996), Glazier addresses this problem with particular attention to the technical composition of *RIF/T*. (As the writing is published as a dissertation accessible only to UB students through the library's digital portal or to non-UB guests who visit the library's offsite storage facility, I quote extensive passages from the work in the following pages.) Addressing the development of the EPC from *RIF/T*, Glazier writes:

The EPC was a natural extension of *RIF/T*, an electronic poetry and poetics journal which published its first issue at the State University of New York at Buffalo in Fall, 1993. The publication *RIF/T* marked a significant step in the electronic publications history of the Poetics Program and the Department of English at Buffalo. It was not only the first electronic publication of the program, but, as a poetry publication, reinforced the institution's position as a leader in the field of poetry and poetics. The effort for the publication of the first issue of the journal was shared by two editors, Kenneth Sherwood and Loss Pequeño Glazier. The editors weighed a number of options before deciding to publish the journal via listserv software. The software would be configured so that it not function as a discussion group, only as an automated mailing list. In the normal fashion, contributions were collected, edited, and formatted. The vision of *RIF/T* was to have it appear as a cluster of mailable ascii files; it would have a magazine section as well as separate "chapbook" type files to address specific authors or investigations relevant to an individual issue. The first issue of *RIF/T* was posted on September 28, 1993 and mailed to approximately 200 subscribers.

Once *RIF/T* was published, however, it became apparent that the archival possibilities for *RIF/T* were extremely limited. Of the two archives then extant, CICNet and the Michigan Etext Archives, numerous requests to archive were unanswered. When *RIF/T* was finally archived, it was done so with incorrect files configurations and issue information. It was also classified under the category of "Zines" and not "Poetry." Numerous requests over nine months did little to remedy this situation. While trying to get *RIF/T* correctly archived, it became apparent that other electronic poetry and poetics journals, such as *TREE* (TapRoot Electronic Edition) were suffering the same lack of attention.²¹⁶ It then occurred to me, in June of 1994, that it would be easier to maintain an archive locally than to rely on others to do this.²¹⁷

This issue of properly collecting and archiving electronic files was an issue for the Poetics List as well. As Glazier writes:

I realized that the Poetics [List] archive was not being automatically maintained, as it should have been. Bernstein immediately responded with a series of communications to the [UB] Computing Center, and this problem was corrected. His personal

collection of early Poetics messages enabled us to reconstitute the early record of the Poetics list. At the time, however, obtaining Poetics back files was laborious and somewhat unpleasant for many casual Internet users (involving the use of FTP or requesting large files from the listserv). It seemed a natural need to develop an archive that would be much easier to use and to develop it in conjunction with the *RIF/T* archive.²¹⁸

For Glazier, the need became clear for an electronic space to bring together the constellations of new writing taking place on the Internet so as to open them up further to communities of writers and readers.

“When I first thought of creating such an archive,” Glazier writes, “it struck me that such a poetics archive could provide an umbrella for not only *RIF/T* and the Poetics List, but other Internet-related poetry interests, indeed that a virtual poetry center was in order.”²¹⁹ The virtual center he imagined would aggregate all kinds of electronic poetry activity, yet he imagined its design as if it were a physical poetry center:

Thus it would offer what one would expect from a physical center including components such as a library, a room for poetry readings, an exhibit area, an announcements board, and a gallery for visual works. My thought was to create a useful facility but also to consciously claim a space for poetry and poets in the emerging electronic space of the Internet.²²⁰

Here, in the first traces of what will be the EPC’s organization structure – many of the keywords and main menu listings by which users will navigate the site: *RIF/T*, Poetics List, Journals, Library, Readings, Announcements; Gallery – and in imagining an archival umbrella or hub that aggregates and connects to numerous electronic resources, we see a first figuring of Glazier’s concept of an electronic “subject village.”

Fig. 1.12: EPC announcement newsletter to the UB Poetics List, 10 July 1994.

```
=====
Date:      Sun, 10 Jul 1994 19:14:05 -0400
Reply-To:   UB Poetics discussion group
<POETICS@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU>
Sender:     UB Poetics discussion group
<POETICS@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU>
From:       Loss Glazier <lolpoet@ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU>
Subject:    Announcement: Electronic Poetry Center (Buffalo)
```

The Electronic Poetry Center (Buffalo) 7-10-94

Announcement

THE ELECTRONIC POETRY CENTER (BUFFALO). The mission of this World-Wide Web based electronic poetry center is to serve as a hypertextual gateway to the extraordinary range of activity in formally innovative writing in the United States and the world. The Center will provide access to numerous electronic resources in the new poetics including RIF/T and other electronic poetry journals, the Poetics List archives, a library of poetic texts, news of related print sources, and direct connections to numerous related poetic projects.

The Center's first phase of implementation is scheduled for August 1, 1994. A subscription to the E-Poetry list provides a subscription to the electronic journal RIF/T and E-Poetry Center announcements. Subscriptions to E-Poetry to listserv@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu Inquiries, suggestions for Center resources, submissions to RIF/T, and other mail may be directed to e-poetry@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu The Center is located at <gopher://wings.buffalo.edu/11/internet/library/e-journals/ub/rift> (Presently, the prototype is under construction but operational.)

Gopher Access:

For those who have access to gopher, type
 [gopher wings.buffalo.edu](gopher:wings.buffalo.edu)
(or, if you are on a UB mainframe, simply type wings)
at your system prompt. First choose Libraries &
Library Resources, then Electronic Journals, then E-
Journals/Resources Produced Here At UB, then The
Electronic Poetry Center. (Note: Connections to some
Poetry Center resources require Web access, though most
are presently available through gopher).

World-Wide Web Access:

For those with World-Wide Web or lynx access, type www
or lynx at your system prompt. Choose the go to URL
option then go to (type as one continuous string)
 [gopher://wings.buffalo.edu/11/internet/
library/e-journals/ub/rift](gopher://wings.buffalo.edu/11/internet/library/e-journals/ub/rift)

Participation in the Electronic Poetry Center (Buffalo)

For those interested in helping us build the Center, our goal is to provide a single Internet site that offers a doorway into the different poetic projects out there in the electronic (and paper) poetics world. We would like to offer access to information about poetics and poetry activities, electronic poetry journals, texts in progress, etc.

We are currently developing a library of electronic poetry/poetics texts (submissions to e-poetry@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu). The Center has other exciting possibilities:

1. Circulation of electronic journals with an emphasis on direct links to those of relevance to Center concerns;
2. Reviews of recent print and electronic publications. (Brief reviews may also be submitted electronically to e-poetry@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu);
3. Direct links to other related electronic sites;
4. Multimedia resources. Sound and graphics relating to poetry.
5. Building our Small Press Alcove, a place for little magazine and book announcements. The point of including announcements of paper resources is to provide a listing of interesting work for people to look at; they can then write or e-mail the publisher to obtain publications.
(Send announcements to lolpoet@acsu.buffalo.edu or magazines/books to Loss Glazier, E-Poetry, P.O. Box 143, Getzville, NY 14068-0143);
6. Ultimately, the Center could also offer collaborative projects (perhaps for specific groups of writers), lists and/or archives of other lists, and texts-in-progress, as things develop.

The "Buffalo" in the title of the Center is not meant to suggest that this activity is limited to Buffalo, only to give the "visitor" a sense of place, i.e., where the mainframe that's providing this service is "located." Vigorous writing wants to "circulate." On this new electronic terrain, the Electronic Poetry Center will serve as a gathering place or point of entry for a range of poetic efforts.

How to Contact Us

Please contact us with your suggestions, texts, sound files, and graphics files to submit, or if you have expertise in these areas. LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK (this is meant to be a Center that grows with your ideas) by posting to this list, sending mail to E-Poetry, or to Loss Glazier (lolpoet@acsu.buffalo.edu) or Kenneth Sherwood (v001pxfu.ubvms.cc.buffalo.edu) privately.

The Archive is administered in Buffalo by E-Poetry and RIF/T in coordination with the Poetics List.

Loss Pequeno Glazier
for Kenneth Sherwood and Loss Glazier
in collaboration with Charles Bernstein

Interchanges: A Dialogue with Loss Pequeño Glazier

Michael Nardone: *Going back to your Digital Poetics book, I find it incredible how relevant it still is, how the book charts out so much that has become central to various discourses on the digital, literature, archival activity, pedagogy, and what has become since then the digital humanities in general.*

Loss Glazier: Yes, I find it interesting, too, all the things that didn't happen. Or maybe have not yet happened. Some days I find myself more positive than other days. I guess I tend to be an optimist. I saw a clear trajectory from Black Mountain and pre-Black Mountain and the practices of Cage and Duncan and Creeley – you probably know that I arrived here when Creeley was here. I guess from there I moved to Language poetry. Charles was here. That was when I started working independently and without any peer in the world on the Electronic Poetry Center. Then, I felt that the natural movement would be from poetry into technology and beyond. I'd like to speak openly and honestly about all of this. I feel like your interest merits the utmost directness. I also feel like we're at a major turning point...

Will you say more about this “turning point”? I ask because I feel like there is a big shift happening too, and I am curious about your sense of it.

Well, on the aesthetic level, it may have been a great missed opportunity that poetry didn't meld with computing. There are people I can name and you can find them in little magazines of the period when Charles was here. Charles was a transformative figure here. So was Bob Creeley...

Who had a deep interest in technology and computing, which is something that is rarely discussed in terms of Creeley's work.

Yes, he did have that interest, and he was totally behind the EPC. [...]

What drew you toward bibliographic studies?

It's a very specific kind of bibliography that I did with this book on small press. I was interested in the role of the little magazine and small presses – for example, Creeley's Divers press – and the mimeo revolution of the 1960s where people could publish books that were non-corporate

and not subject to review. [...] For me, it's like archaeology. I focused on bibliography because I love the precision and I love the detail of doing that kind of work. This ties into my love of code, too. In code, one comma could make all the difference between something functioning and not functioning. I love this kind of detail. [...] One thing about bibliography is variant editions and alternative editions, and this is something that has fascinated me with digital poetry – how you can code a single poem so that it can be composed in a different way each time you go to the Web page where it's published. Each time you get a variant version. Making poems using computation in such a way is one direction I thought poetry would go. I mean, there are a million ways it can go. This is just what I do.

Yet poets kept on producing little books from presses called Rot Dog Press or Mutt's Ear Chowder or something like that. That's good and all, but I'm not sure what it's for. I actually have read a few books from more major presses like Wesleyan, and I have to admit that it's very good poetry. But nobody reads it!

I'm half-Mexican, and I spend a lot of time in Spanish-speaking areas. I was in Buenos Aires last year, and in Costa Rica, and I was just in Mexico last week. And, for seven years, I was in Cuba often, and I've also spent a lot of time in southern Spain. One thing I learned by being in all of these places is that poets were very important people and poetry was a very important cultural activity! A public cultural activity.

One thing I know that relates to poetry in a lot of these locations is how widely the works of poets were circulated.

Right, that's the other issue. Who reads it? When did people stop reading poetry? Maybe it happens with the rise of consumer culture?

What happened with the computing end of things for me was that I saw this as an open platform. I would allow no advertising. I would use no proprietary software. It was all open-source software. Which, by the way, a lot of digital work that people are attempting to reconstruct now from previous programs that are no longer profitable, most of them are impossible to reconstruct. Everything I've ever written and coded works because it's all vanilla.

There's something important to using the open source software that allows for the formats to be continuous or have a greater longevity with changes to a site, correct?

Yes, that's true. Everything on the EPC that ever worked works still. As long as you have the link, the target of the link is still there. Everything still works. I have maybe 30,000 files. [...]

When you speak about the EPC as a specific object, what do you call it? Do you call it an archive? Or a repository? A collection? Or is it simply site?

I like the idea of a centre. I say that keeping in mind that everything has multiple centres.

I'm interested in what this medial object is called from a library sciences perspective. People always refer to UbuWeb and PennSound as "archives," but I don't think that's what they are as specific objects. One can call it an archive – they do archival work – but the object itself is something else.

I think you would call them collections, because an archive would, strictly speaking, have very specific parameters, which is good and bad. An archive, if you had strict parameters, might ask: Do we collect things that have sound? And it may have strict parameters interpreted to not focus on sound and therefore an object might not be in the best interest to collect.

Talking with Filreis about PennSound and the important of it being situated through the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, and also at the Kelly Writers House, the concept of a "centre" is very important to him too. The centre as a site for interaction.

I like the idea of the centre, of centres that overlap. To bring it back to politics for a moment, these fringe areas where there is disagreement over if this is mine, is this yours, and we need to know that this is ours, and to learn how to make it ours. [...] [The EPC] really was, without a doubt, the first digital literary project. And now we have this whole thing called the Digital Humanities and Digital Literature, which all happened afterwards. And the EPC did nurture the biggest projects in their nascent states – PennSound and UbuWeb. Then, I consulted other sites like the Poetry Center website, because of my work on the EPC. In not wanting to lose an important part of literary history, I think it's absolutely essential that the project be cared for in

an appropriate manner. [...] If you think about it, it's kind of like the first printing press used for literature in the digital era. [...] We know that the means of production and dissemination are reader reception all tied in together.

Those are really strong concepts right at the start of your work. Right from the start of Digital Poetics, and even reading your dissertation yesterday, you are focused on the material production and dissemination of poetic works. They are central concepts to the way that you were thinking at that time.

Yes, they are. And I would say that's important from the librarian point of view as opposed to various post-structuralist literary theoretical perspectives. In other words, production is a whole issue that you could get into through a Marxist analysis, but maybe I'm interested in it in more of an Emersonian way, in that you make things and then you give them out. You pretty much give them away. I don't really think about this activity through an economic model or structure. But I do think of the exchange – here's my work, here's your work, and so on. I mentioned Creeley and Divers press earlier, and he knew he wasn't going to make money from it. I saw what I was doing, I came to it as an innocent. I saw the Internet as a new way to make works happen. Not so much collectively, because I haven't really been personally involved in collaboration, but in terms of having more spontaneity and exchange, as well as cutting down the costs. Even before, in doing small press projects, you have to pay the printer, you have to pay the postage, et cetera. If you send manuscripts somewhere, you have to pay the return postage. [...]

Do you keep permissions from authors that are on the EPC? I ask because Charles is fastidious about this with PennSound, but I get the sense that you only put things up that you collaborate with the authors on and therefore permission is implicit.

That's right. I guess I'm in the middle ground, between Charles's acquiring of permissions and Kenny's disinterest in permissions. Though we do know Kenny hasn't put up any of Zukofsky's books.

He did at one point. I believe it was on the Poetry Foundation blog, but then it was taken down, I'm guessing after Paul Zukofsky contacted the Poetry Foundation...

We had this guy Harvey... I can't remember his last name, but he was famous in Buffalo for publishing editions of books without permission. Frontier Press it was called. He published Duncan's HD book. This happened years or maybe decades before Berlthof – who was a hoarder, he would not let anyone see certain things. I mean, you should talk to Lisa Jarnot, who was working on Duncan. There were people whose entire research depended on accessing specific materials that Berlthof had in the Collection, and if he didn't like them he would say that the documents they were looking for didn't exist. That's probably him at his worst. Normally, he was just not very helpful.

He didn't like Lisa Jarnot?

I don't believe so.

She does fantastic work... I know that her Duncan project got extended for many years.

My impression was that she did not get on well with Berlthof, and, because of that, doing the research she wanted to do was very difficult. Berlthof controlled all the permissions to the work. I mean, the point is – it's Robert Duncan. He died and we love Robert Duncan. We have much to learn from Robert Duncan. Give us Robert Duncan. Why did Robert Duncan exist? He existed to give us this stuff. And Robert Berlthof as a curator is blocking our access to that stuff. Because he could and because he liked the power!

It's interesting to think about how Charles's precedent of doing quite a lot to make sure the materials he works with are able to move outside the confines of the university setting. In having worked over this last year with his papers and archives and even through his email correspondence, two things struck me: his kind of mania for organizing and archiving his own materials, and for creating ways for those materials to be disseminated in whatever way possible into as many different contexts as possible. I know the EPC is founded in a similar spirit in terms of both collecting and dissemination. And it's interesting to frame this up against the proprietary nature over the materials in the Poetry Collection at the time you and Charles are working on the EPC.

Yes, I'd say our interest and development of these things was certainly symbiotic. The beautiful thing about the development of the EPC it is that the more people give, the more there was, and the more there was, the more people would give. [...] To come back to your question about the EPC as a centre, I saw it almost as a space age centre, like a mothership that people could come to and dock and have interchanges and connect and then float off. I saw it as a way to create a space of interchange similar to the Vancouver Poetry Festival--

In 1963?

Yes, and the Berkeley Poetry Conference--

1965.

Those were my models. There were spaces where minds came together, exchanged ideas, and entire new ways of making things were realized. Everyone came away richer – not monetarily. And there was this sense of celebration on the side of it, too, in coming together. That was the idea. I created the EPC in the tradition of those festival spirits. I wanted to do that in an online environment.

This is great to know, to hear from you. I mean, it makes absolute sense, but to hear it from you is another thing.

And so, to come back again to your question about its relation to the Poetics Program, I'd say there was a great symbiosis between the Program and the EPC. Of course, there is Charles's benevolence to me and the project of the EPC. His open-mindedness toward the project was certainly a part of it as much as my vision of code.

Fig. 1.13: Loss Glazier's call for papers for the EPC, 19 December 1994.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "LISTSERV 16.0 - POETICS Arc x" and a secure URL "https://listserv.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9412&L=POE...". The page title is "POETICS@LISTSERV.BUFFALO.EDU".

On the left, a navigation menu includes links for "View: Message", "By Topic", "By Author", and "Font", each with sub-links for "First", "Previous", "Next", and "Last".

The main content area displays the following message details:

- Subject:** Electronic Poetry Center Call for Essays / Papers
- From:** Loss Glazier <[log in to unmask]>
- Reply-To:** UB Poetics discussion group <[log in to unmask]>
- Date:** Mon, 19 Dec 1994 14:35:48 -0500
- Content-Type:** text/plain
- Parts/Attachments:** text/plain (46 lines)

The body of the message is as follows:

 Electronic Poetry Center

 Call for Papers / Essays

The ELECTRONIC POETRY CENTER is interested in receiving papers, essays on poetics, specific postmodern poets, or movements, etc.

The EPC contains an author library where we would consider placing these papers. How would this work? Papers will bear a copyright statement in your name. The idea is to make information available to readers who are interested in these topics, and allow them an accessible source to receive them.

For papers on specific authors, a subject library will also be created.

Our idea is that papers presented at conferences, for example, often contain timely information that might be shared. Regardless of whether these papers are being revised or otherwise prepared for print publication, you might wish to submit them for placement into the EPC Library for others to read, view, even comment on if you wish.

Another possibility here might be your own essays that you use for classroom use (and which you own the copyright to). Students may receive them from the Center at no cost and from any telephone outlet they may choose.

Placement of papers on the EPC would not in any way preclude their publication in print, in a collection of essays, etc. Our idea is to allow them to circulate while the ideas are fresh.

There has been quite a bit of traffic in the Electronic Poetry Center. This is a way of helping your material to circulate and also of providing interesting material for our visitors.

If you are interested in submitting work to this project, send them in the body of an e-mail message to Loss Glazier, [log in to unmask]

We are most interested in hearing from you!

Loss Glazier
 for Loss Glazier and Kenneth Sherwood
 in collaboration with Charles Bernstein

At the bottom of the message body are links: "Top of Message | Previous Page | Permalink".

On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar with the following sections:

- LISTSERV Archives**
 - POETICS Home
 - POETICS December 1994
- Search Archives**
 - Advanced Options
 - Search
- Options**
 - Log In
 - Get Password
 - Search Archives
 - Subscribe or Unsubscribe
- Archives**
 - January 2018
 - December 2017
 - January 2014
 - December 2013
 - November 2013
 - October 2013
 - September 2013
 - August 2013
 - July 2013
 - June 2013
 - May 2013
 - April 2013
 - March 2013
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 - May 2012
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 - March 2012
 - February 2012
 - January 2012
 - December 2011
 - November 2011
 - October 2011
 - September 2011
 - August 2011
 - July 2011
 - June 2011
 - May 2011

Fig. 1.14: EPC newsletter on UB Poetics List, 22 March 1995.

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=====
Date:      Wed, 22 Mar 1995 08:48:14 -0400
From:      Loss Glazier <loloet@ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU>
Reply-To:  UB Poetics discussion group
<POETICS@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU>
Subject:   EPCNEWS, No. 2

      / / / / / /
      EEEE PPPPP CCCCC
      EE / PP PP CC C/
      EEE PPPPP CC /
      EE / PP | CC C
/ EEEE/ PP/ CCCCC/ /
/-----/
| Electronic Poetry Center | /
|-----| /
... that the idea of an electronic
forum for emerging poetries not
only possible but present

```

URL=<http://wings.buffalo.edu/internet/library/e-journals/ub/rift>

E P C . N E W S

No. 2 (March, 1995)

Contents

1.0	Intro:	Some Dynamics
2.0	Projects:	Author "Home Page" Project
3.0	What's New:	News of the EPC
4.0	RIF/T:	RIF/T Notes
5.0	Stats:	Poetry and the Electronic Place
6.0	FAQ:	About the EPC
7.0	Access:	How to Connect

1.0 Intro: Some Dynamics

How does an electronic resource differ from an electronic list? Importantly, the information is there, but YOU HAVE TO SEEK IT. This active participation on your part is an important aspect to the workings of the Center. Enter the web, follow links, send comments. Wouldn't it be more convenient to have material mailed to your e-mail account? In some cases this is preferable, but given the large amount of material at the Center, your account would soon overload. There is also so much material here that few people could store it in their accounts. It's available 24 hours a day, 365 days a week (except for system "down" time), an electronic all-night literary bookstore? Also, unlike material that may be sent to your account, EPC material is loaded with **hyperlinks**, i.e., connections to other places, other

times, other texts. Aren't books preferable? In some cases, this is true, however, the book is a fixed object, i.e., electronic documents can be changed, updated, move in time to what is actually happening.

The EPC makes available a wide variety of material. The description of Internet information provided by the Internet Services Frequently Asked Questions And Answers (Version 1.7 - 4 February, 1994) states:

>The type of information you're likely to find on the Internet is
>free information, such as government documents, works with expired
>copyrights, works that are in the public domain, and works that
>authors are making available to the Internet community on an
>experimental basis. Conversely, some types of information you are
>not likely to find on the Internet, most notably, commercial works
>which are protected by copyright law.

The EPC is testament to the fact that Internet resources do not have to be "throw-away" information. As a working site for active poets, the material here is a good faith exchange of original and current texts (along with literary "classics") provided to you as part of the current conversation that makes poetry and poetics immediate and interactive. These texts, in many cases, are more current than available through any other source. No one in the Center is waiving any copyrights but has trusted you with these emerging texts in the spirit of free exchange that defines our efforts.

2.0 Projects: Author "Home Page" Project

One of the newest developments at the Electronic Poetry Center is the development of the author library. The goal of this project is to provide authors related to or of interest to the EPC with a "home page," that is a single access point to electronic texts by and about the author.

These author home pages offer access to electronic files by and about the author, bibliographical information about the author, as well as, where available, photographs and other "documentary" information about the author.

We welcome inquiries from authors about allowing us to host your home page. For authors who maintain their own home pages, do let us know so that we might possibly provide a link to your own site.

3.0 What's New: News of the EPC

3.1 News

Congratulations to Luigi Bob Drake, editor of TREE: TapRoot Electronic Edition, which was listed in an article on ten select electronic

journals on the Net in the February, 1995 issue of Online Access.

Also to Michael Joyce, a RIF/T and EPC contributor. Joyce's photo appears in "Of Texts and Hypertexts," a Feb. 27 Newsweek article on "Computers and Creativity."

3.2 New Additions

Many recent additions have been made to the EPC. These include:

- * A "what's new" feature that links directly to new resources
 - * A facility for EPC visitors to send comments or a contribution to a collaborative poem in progress directly from the Center
 - * Hypertextual versions of RIF/T (in progress) with "literary" links!
 - * Information on the Basil Bunting Poetry Centre / Durham, England
 - * Peter Quartermain's review of Charles Olson's Selected Poems
 - * Charles Bernstein's paper, "Warning Poetry Area: Publics Under Construction"
 - * New graphics for the EPC, RIF/T, and other "pages"
 - * New graphical page for Bernstein and Glazier (others forthcoming)
 - * NEW ELECTRONIC JOURNAL (Albany): Passages: A Technopoetics Journal
-

4.0 RIF/T: RIF/T Notes

RIF/T's Transpoeisis issue, a multi-faceted and multi-format approach to the presentation of translations, has been edited and will be released shortly.

RIFT especially seeks reviews, as well as creative material and essays. These may be submitted to [\[log in to unmask\]](#)

5.0 Stats: Poetry and the Electronic Place

> Current RIF/T subscribers: 1000

> Recent activity at the EPC:

Month	Root Connects	Total Connects

Feb 1995	1283	8083
Jan 1995	1079	6798

Dec 1994	746	
Nov 1994	573	
Oct 1994	429	
Sep 1994	367	
Aug 1994	348	
Jul 1994	614	

Jun 1994	110	

> EPC Directories with the most traffic for February, 1995:

Connects/Directory

1283 rift (EPC Home Page)
304 rift/authors
298 rift/rift
217 rift/documents
203 rift/.epc.gif
197 rift/journals
189 rift/.hotlist
183 rift/poetics
178 rift/resources
168 rift/journals/selected
141 rift/about
126 rift/about/about
117 rift/rift/rift01
115 rift/sound
111 rift/documents/conversations
110 rift/rift/rift03
102 rift/authors/more
101 rift/documents/documents

6.0 FAQ: About the EPC

The Electronic Poetry Center seeks to provide a central _place_ for Internet resources for poetry and poetics.

The Center continues to provide access to the electronic poetry and poetics journal, RIF/T, and the archives of the POETICS List. Needless to say, the EPC provides quality archival materials for these resources, including search features to allow keyword searching of the Center.

The EPC AUTHOR library offers texts and/or information about contemporary poets in a variety of formats.

A number of electronic JOURNALS are archived and distributed by the EPC. Journals distributed through the EPC differ from other e-journal archives in a significant way: the texts presented here have been checked and verified by their issuing agency thus at least getting to you versions of electronic journals in collaboration with their source.

These journals include:

DIU / Albany
Experioggi(cyber)cist / Florence, AL
Inter\face / Albany
Passages: A Technopoetics Journal / Albany
Poemata - Canadian Poetry Assoc. / London, Ontario (Info)/

RIF/T: Electronic Space for New Poetry, Prose, & Poetics
Segue Foundation/Roof Book News / New York
TREE: TapRoot Electronic Edition / Lakewood, Ohio
We Magazine / Santa Cruz
Witz / Toluca Lake, CA / via Syntax

For RESOURCES outside the EPC, we have written links to make seamless connections to these resources.

The Center also provides information about contemporary print little magazines and SMALL PRESSES engaged in poetry and poetics. Look here also for Selby's List of Experimental Magazines.

The Poetry & Poetics DOCUMENT Archive provides access to a number of documents of use to poets, teachers, and researchers. Here you will find essay material and recent obituaries.

The EPC also presently offers GALLERY, SOUND, EXHIBITS, and an ANNOUNCEMENTS area.

7.0 Access: How to Connect

The Center is located at

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/internet/library/e-journals/ub/rift>

(Alternatively, you may gopher to wings.buffalo.edu. And use the "Search Wings" feature to locate the EPC. Web access is, however, recommended.)

Check with your system administrator if you have problems with access. Also ask about setting a "bookmark" through your system for quick and easy access to the Center when you log on.

If you have comments or suggestions about sites to be added to the Center, do not hesitate to contact Loss Pequeno Glazier, [\[log in to unmask\]](#) or Kenneth Sherwood, [\[log in to unmask\]](#) buffalo.edu

The Electronic Poetry Center is administered in Buffalo by E-Poetry and RIF/T in coordination with the Poetics List.

Loss Pequeno Glazier
for Kenneth Sherwood and Loss Glazier
in collaboration with Charles Bernstein

Convolute: Media@Poetics

The Poetics List functioned as primary means for circulating the EPC's materials, directing users to its materials, compelling them to contribute to its ongoing development. The List also served as a vital staging ground for its users to reflect on the forms of textual practice its writers were creating in its midst. For this chapter's convolute, I have selected three brief essays, unpublished outside of their initial posting on the Poetics List, that address strategies for negotiating the kinds of discourse and participation the new modes of publication and dissemination allowed.

Subject: Hans Enzensberger's "Constituents of a theory of media"
From: Martin Spinelli
Date: Sun, 27 Feb 1994 16:30:22 -0500
Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group

the utopia in Enzensberger's article is made possible through "mass participation in the social and socialized productive process." the Vision is this: everyone a participant. that is a participation in the media -- in its production. he says at once that media can produce the Social and production can control the media.

more interestingly for us Enze says the social power is in response.
response is power shutting down response is domination.

in spite of the optimistic rhetoric, Enze himself gives us examples of media's failed potential (which he never sufficiently recuperates). in the hands of his "masses" short wave radio is pathetically impotent, badly imitating bad examples from commercial radio. the goal of his idealized liberated media is "mobilization" (vague throughout). whatever it is, radio hams don't have it. they are isolated and remain so. somehow mobilization for Eze must be physical. an intellectual mobilization, a mobilization of response seems possible both on radio and on the Net. Community needs dialog.

the Net, the medium with the potential for response, can't equal Eze's imagination. initially and in places there is a vocalization in unison at places if not an "organization" or "mobilization". but looking further it is lacking: there are only prolific and pervasive fragments, all their own centers or all speaking equally comfortably from the margins. can a greater Social exist without interaction tween the frags, without impetus towards the improvement of the Whole? (yet there is this impetus around the hardware -- everyone wants to improve the medium itself.)

where is the revolution?

there is the opportunity to exercise power -- to say something. like a baudrillard essay nothing is heard before [EOB] or after the last

footnote. containment. what would the virtual revolution look like?
erev? control cannot be taken of anything on the Inside -- for the
first time the Inside is the place bereft of power and imagination,
bereft of agency with the simulation of agency.... curiously
supervised

scrutinized
Clipped
surreptitiously censored
evaluated
categorized
and
fast

(it posits a new class.sys: the technobourgeoisie over the
infobourgeoisie.)

again Eze: media's power is its mobilization of the masses. but real
mobilization coming from media would presume at most three channels
(three access points, three meanings all referring to eachother).
mobilization is an anomaly on the Net because of the infinity of
channels and the infinity of messages...is it enough to be united
around a medium? to have a vested interest in the medium, to be
dependent on it? there is a kind of mobilization around this but it
can only ever be mustered _in support_ of the medium. with an
infinity of channels, consumption and production don't just get
blurred. production *becomes* consumption. supporting a right to
production is only like good advertizing... teaching us we're not
really happy. we didn't know how unhappy we were. responding erodes.
the mic is too close to the amp.

feedback... the repetition of what has already been transmitted
fading and distorted but essentially the same as what has already been
said. the difference between feedback and response is the difference
between a system of simulations and a system of meaning? Badrill is
great on this in his "The Masses": public opinion polls dictate the
limits of public experience.

in his media strategy which seeks to end isolation (read "alienation")
COMMUNITY IS MANDATORY

Eze is aware that a sys in which everyone produces/expresses will
yield only noise. noise which does not hold one's interest like
nonsense but is only irritating -- distressing. here he says that the
masses must be taught to be better producers if the utopian
mobilization is to be realized. in this way they could record their
daily experiences and learn from them. again organization is
liberating not the tech that
provides it.

on the net you can respond to the message, and only indirectly,
inadvertently about the medium. you use the Net yet you cannot have a
dialog with the Net.

there is a danger when the link between community and medium becomes too perfect (seemless, transparent as tech pretends it can make it) *as obvious intrusions of the media begin to disappear more completely the less there will be to say* the connection is the only viable issue, source and site of discourse. as it evaporates so must communication.

the resistance of the medium, the time spent in the friction of translation/communication allows for rumination, for contemplation, for thought (even if it is only an examination of its deployment). when this space disappears all we will be able to do is sit and stare.

the eze short term solution: authors and producers must work as agents for the masses and only when the masses learn to cut tape and mix music can the producer "lose himself". This is how he ultimately solves the noise problem.

as media are currently constituted (one-directionally), *response* is anti-media. the ideal response that Eze is after must go beyond the limits he sets for it. it must be outside like spray paint on the monitor. Badrill claims there exists "a possible subversion of the code of the media [in the] possibility of alternative speech and a radical reciprocity of symbolic exchange."

exchange is the radical thing... but exchange of what... a change must happen in the exchange -- reworking it into what is an anti-aesthetic -- (anti- to the aesthetic of the professional media and the OED) -- upset the hegemony, don't believe the authority and its structure with implied orthography. Signify without rules. ignore Expectations.

the Net is not often used in the way say Bill or Ben or Jonathan (Howe, Freidlander, Fernandez, three that came first to mind) use language in their poetry. the

materiality of the Net is not often tinkered with --thought about -- addressed as something other than a transparent medium of representing (thought or something).

the hegemony of these lingos is not exposed or disrupted by toying with, or even showing, the structure. it is believed in. we must lose/loose our faith.

Subject: The Impulse to Stock Things
From: cris cheek
Date: Sat, 15 Apr 1995 22:353:02 +0000
Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group

Seems as if we in England share your distribution problem. Approximately 15 years ago the number of bookshops prepared to stock little or small press books (particularly if not perfect bound) dramatically declined. The financial imperative as described re SPD dominated the market dry.

The problems of product placement -- if and under what circumstances at all -- sale or return -- deteriorating or damaged goods -- sliverish profit margins -- shrinking risk -- author-subsidized publishing -- thresholds of marketability ossifying into unfortunate and ultimately divisive 'star' status if not outright hierarchies of self-perpetuating (sometimes at the least colluded in) hit names of given generations or 'movements' -- regressive cultural 'cold war' hegemonies freezing out the awkward -- and more, have all been discussed or somehow raised over the past few weeks.

The situation impinged so drastically onto poetry publishing here that the number of active book series and small magazines collapsed. Books were being produced, often although not exclusively, in tiny xerox editions (50-100) circulated directly amongst friends and peers as social gifts.

One result has been to render much of the most interesting writing done here in the past fifteen years all but invisible. The New Curious (not necessarily but often young) find it close to impossible to get hold of any of the work. Even libraries and archives must have a strange shelf reading 'vacant pending' for British poetries circa 1979-93 (these dates are by no means brittle). That situation is only recently beginning to change. By the same token how many US poets have been published much here in that time frame and vice versa compared to in the previous decade and a half.

There is one shop (Compendium) in London with a very small selection of contemporary poetry of any significance. Current US writers are represented by a nominal 'hard-core' who sell.

A recent overview article on English poetry by Charles Bernstein in Sulfur attests to the 'power' of the published book as being seen to signify presence and activity for a poet. An interesting enough provocative criteria. You might be reading and performing widely for example and yet not considered - unless a published artefact identifiable as being authored by you could be objectified. Now I find this very intriguing. Especially in the light of Rae's recent post about the unavailability of her most recent book, especially when that book is a Sun & Moon / SPD distributed product. (yes I've noticed the doubts cast onto those validations too).

There is a need to break out of the reductive cycles and circumstances into which we continue to buy. As several have suggested right here.

Ron is right when he says that direct mail works. It does so primarily for those with the money to pursue their interest and/or for they who know what they want and pretty much know what they're going to get. Sheila's also right when she wants the possibility, at least, of someone who doesn't already know what they're looking for to just pick up her book or Rae's or anybody's on this list and others beyond in a bookstore - be excited or intrigued enough to buy it and the rest, as is said, is herstory.

I don't have any answers but I do have a simple suggestion which this list can further facilitate. Books are already advertised for direct purchase on the list and the work quoted from here (yes I know it's rudimentary and unsatisfying for a lot of work for many reasons but we should stick with it and work on making the environment here as flexible and accessible as possible (I'm just as e-literate as many others here I would guess and I'd love to learn quickly or have someone else do the slog for me but - I had to learn to write and here I go again). Books are already archived in the EPC (as offered) and the relevant order information can be appended. It's my sense that a constructive inter-relationship is to be encouraged between electronic publishing and printed matter.

Given all of that how about product exchange? Now I realise right away that this only makes any kind of sense when distances between presses and / or distribution 'territories' are large. On suitable negotiated bases both books and CDs, at least, could be simply SWAPPED to equivalent value. Instead of me selling 300 copies of a chap I'd sell 200 and then swap 100 for chaps by others and sell those. (amounts could be small - like anything from 3 - 25 copies). I know many will throw up their hands in horror (but then how will they catch them when they drop) seriously -

Advantages:

- each our books are made available / accessible to a wider audience
- sometimes it's easier to push someone else's book than your own
- the range of books on a stall at a reading / performance series (or whatever) can feel very much like a celebration of strength and depth without competition (solidarity) and dare I say (sorry Lisa) more 'groovy'
- problem of buying sight unseen via direct mail is obviated, people can see the poems
- we several all have a wider stock
- reactivates those attic box fulls. and others I haven't time to articulate right now.

I'm naive enough to feel that a small version of such a scheme is worth trying. I'm also experienced enough to know that this way pratfalls lurch BUT - It's how the Recommended network of record

labels operated for best part of 10 years in western europe. I know because I helped out. Such schemes are bound to have a life length appropriate to their usefulness.

Or to translate Spencer:

To accept the world is to be changed and to thereby change the world. This process is a generative discourse. Exchange at all levels and for all purposes is part of this process.

any thoughts? yours - the space cadet for tonight and before everyone reaches for their hot response key / I'm aware that much of these issues skirt into some of the questions being raised re - this space and it's potential and how each reads here and so on and I'm going to try to post something on that tomorrow

Subject: Distribution or Bust
From: Charles Bernstein
Date: Mon, 18 Sep 1995 22:30:45 -0400
Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group

One of the few rules on Poetics@UBVM is that participants (lurkers and not) are requested to post news of their recent publications, together with information on how best to get these items. It has come to my attention that some of you are out-of-compliance with this "don't balk/must tell" rule. The fuller the listings (table of contents, etc) the better. If you are a publisher and editor and have new material on the EPC, it is still useful to post it on Poetics as well, since many of the subscribers either don't have Web access, don't use it, or don't check new listings. This is may also be a way to compensate for the recurring distribution and bookstore problems discussed here.

On Bookstores: Problem with the New York bookstores discussed here is that even if they carry a new poetry book they rarely re-order, or re-order so erratically that you can never count on finding a book, even a recent book, in stock. This is why the sales rep system is so crucial, since the initial order of a new book is ultimately the one that will determine if the book gets any bookstore life in New York at all. So if you don't find a book, it's possible that it was ordered and sold out; the books in stock are often the ones that didn't sell. In the 70s and 80s, when I used to pester these stores to carry specific books and magazines, I always felt getting shelf space was like getting a gallery show; "naturally" places like Gotham and Books & Co. felt having the books in the store was enough, they certainly didn't have to pay you for what they sold too! (In my experience, St. Mark's always paid. But they were the exception.) At the same time, the real estate costs in New York are so high that it is probably not possible to survive with the sort of commitments to poetry many of us look for in a bookstore; I say probably because people do manage to figure out how to do improbable things, as any number of our alternative poetry institutions show.

I don't buy books in New York, preferring to buy direct from the publishers, or from SPD, but most often from Talking Leaves Books (which in turn buys them from SPD). Talking Leaves remains my favorite poetry bookshop and I have been talking with the coop owners there about working directly with the Poetics list and EPC: setting up accounts, taking order via e-mail, and so on. So you should be hearing more about that soon (though as they are understaffed and have limited access to computer technology that this is taking longer than they would like). (In the meantime, they are happy to take orders by phone or mail: 3158 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214; 716-837-8554; fax--837-3861.) As has been noted by others on this list and off, bookstores like Talking Leaves and Woodland Pattern are always in danger and need the same sort of support we give to small presses and SPD and indeed other poets: we are all in it together.

The Internet and the Web are becoming increasingly central for poetry distribution, even if as yet many of the readers of the books often discussed on this list are not on-line. At this point, I see one of the primary values of the EPC and the Poetics List as facilitating the distribution of print books and magazines rather than (not as opposed to) making work available electronically. I see many parallels with the work I did on Segue's distribution catalog in the 70s and 80s and the work on the EPC now. We can't afford to have the Net "replacing" bookstores, publishers and distributors that support new and "alternative" poetry: that would be a net loss, indeed. We have to find way to use the Net to help these institutions survive. To this end, listings and short reviews/discussions on Poetics of new work become a mode of distribution.

About 15 years ago my continually new friend Cris Cheek prepared, on his manual typewriter, an extensive list of UK small press publications, carefully annotated with prices and address, issued as supplement #2 of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E. I'm reminded of that because the EPC and this list seem such a good place for the sort of exchange of information and ideas among the UK, US, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. And while we talk about the lack of information between N. American poets and U.K. poets, it's been my sense that at least in the particular world represented by those of us "here" that, in a small way, this is beginning to take care of itself just as we talk about it.

Fig. 1.15: Kenneth Sherwood's announcement for an EPCLIVE event, 4 December 1995.

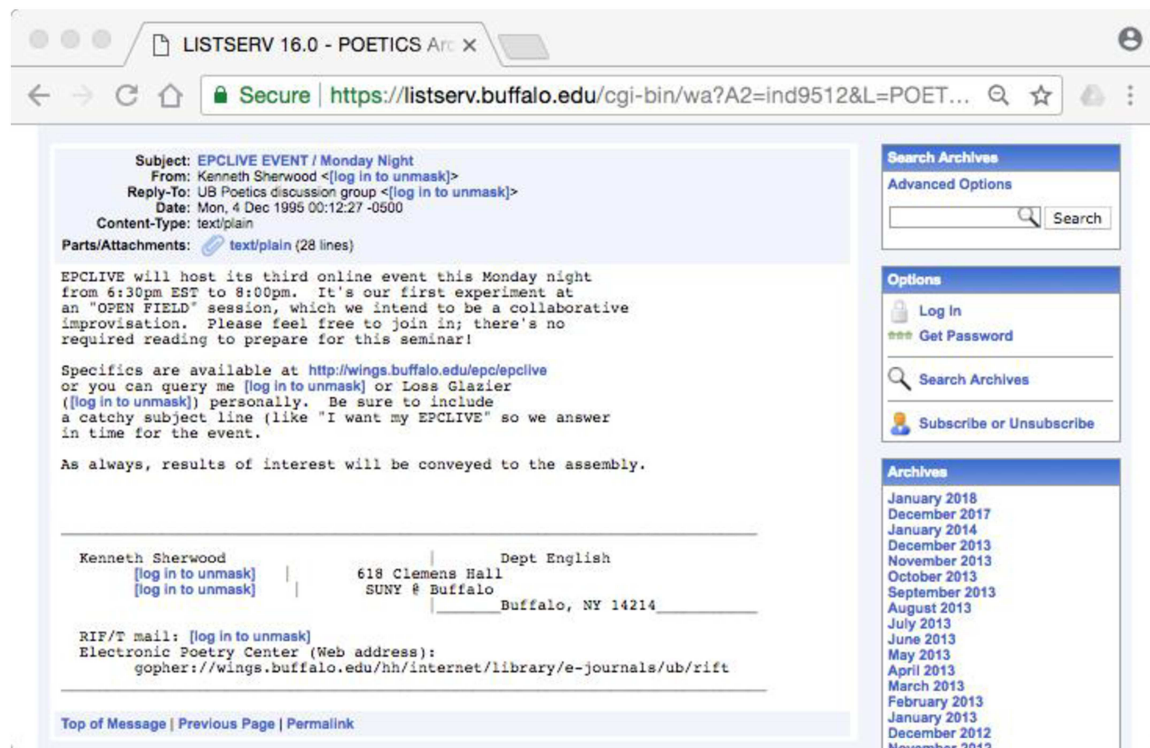


Fig. 1.16: Martin Spinelli's announcement of The Sound Room at the EPC, 17 June 1997.

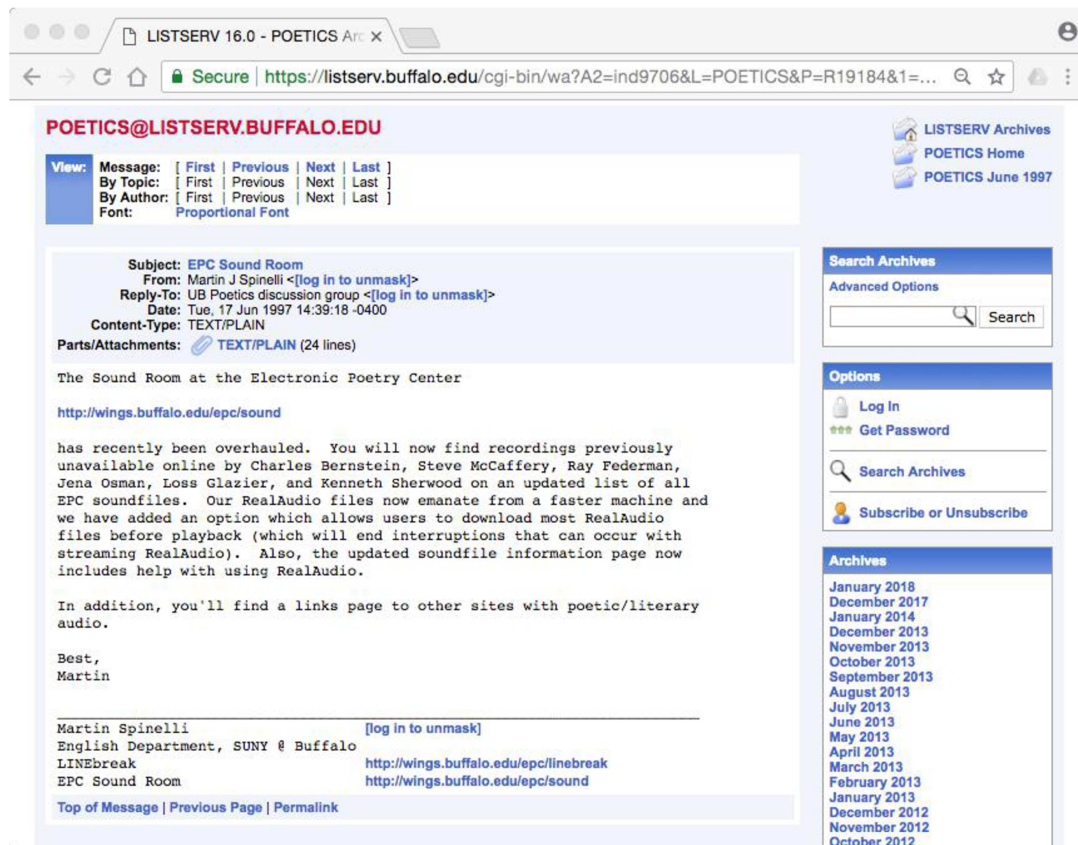


Fig. 1.17: Electronic Poetry Center page for the Poetics Program, 23 February 2001.

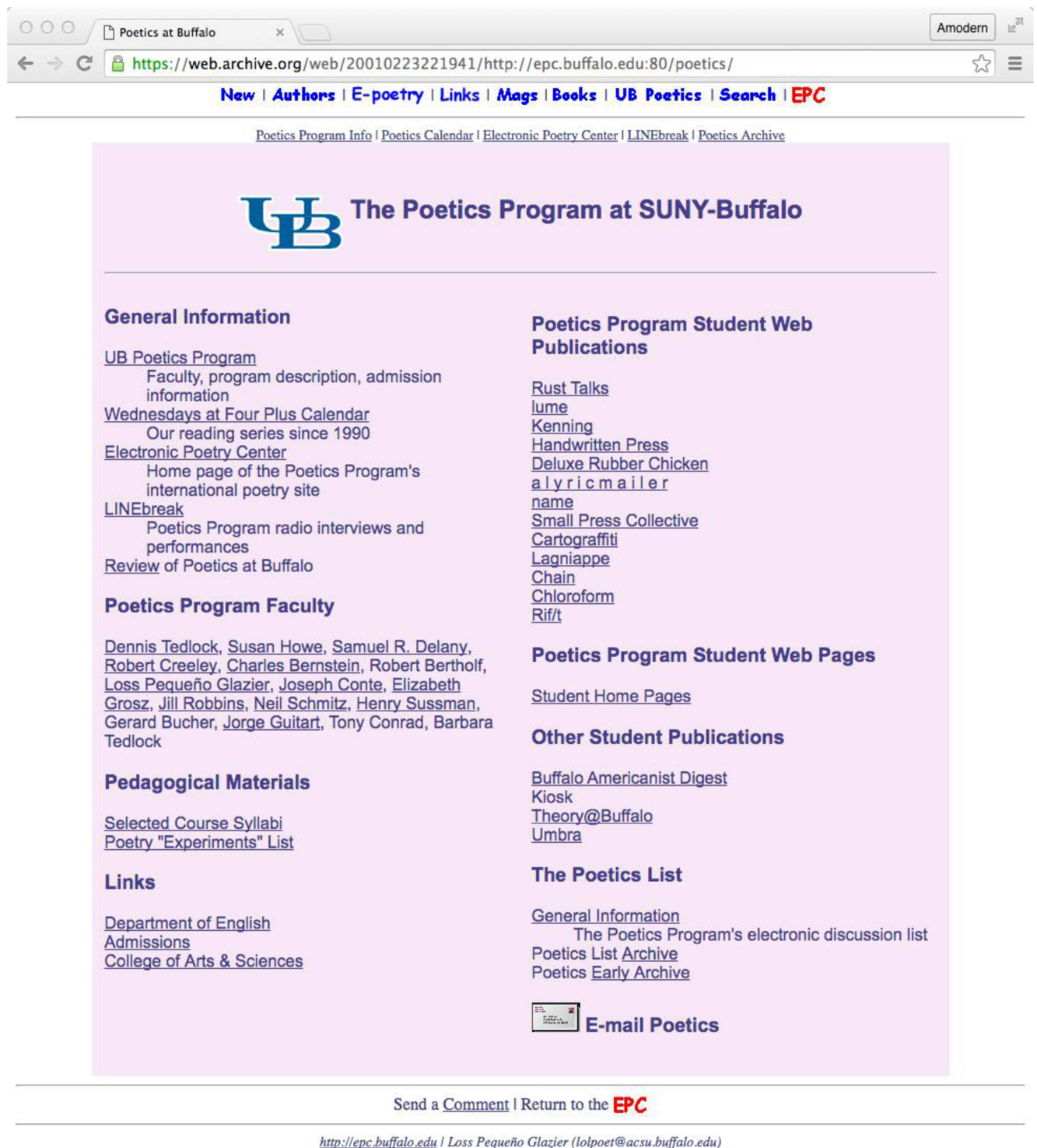


Fig. 1.18: Glazier's announcement of new resources on the EPC, 14 May 2002.

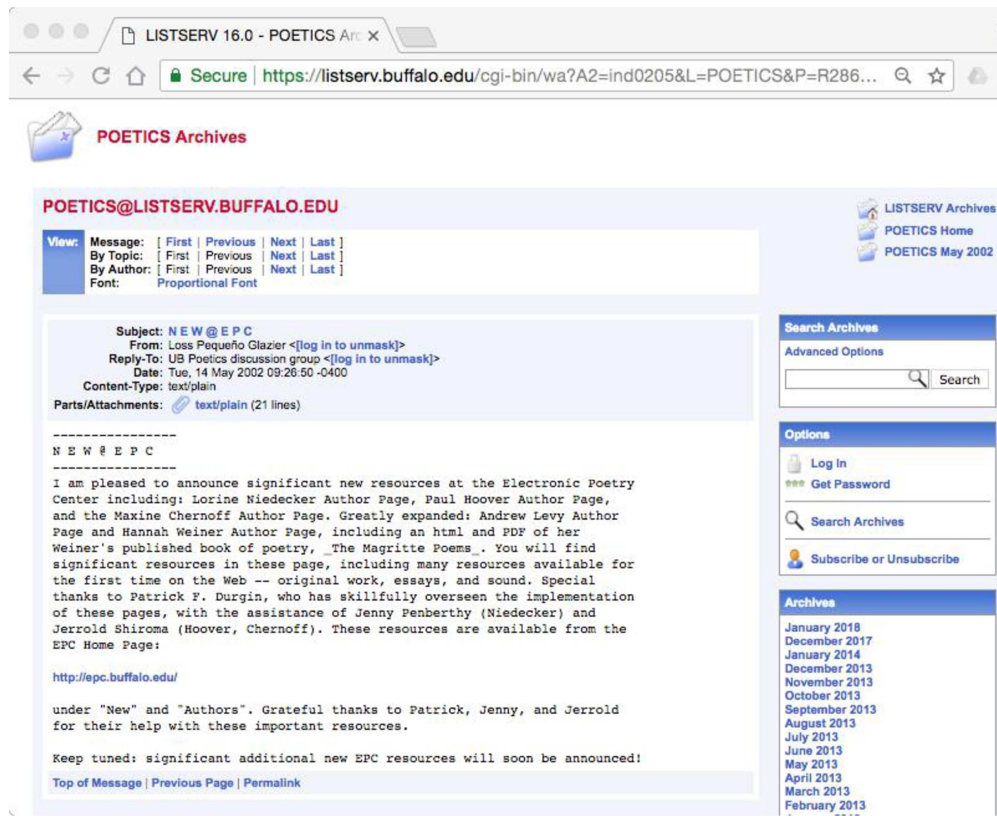
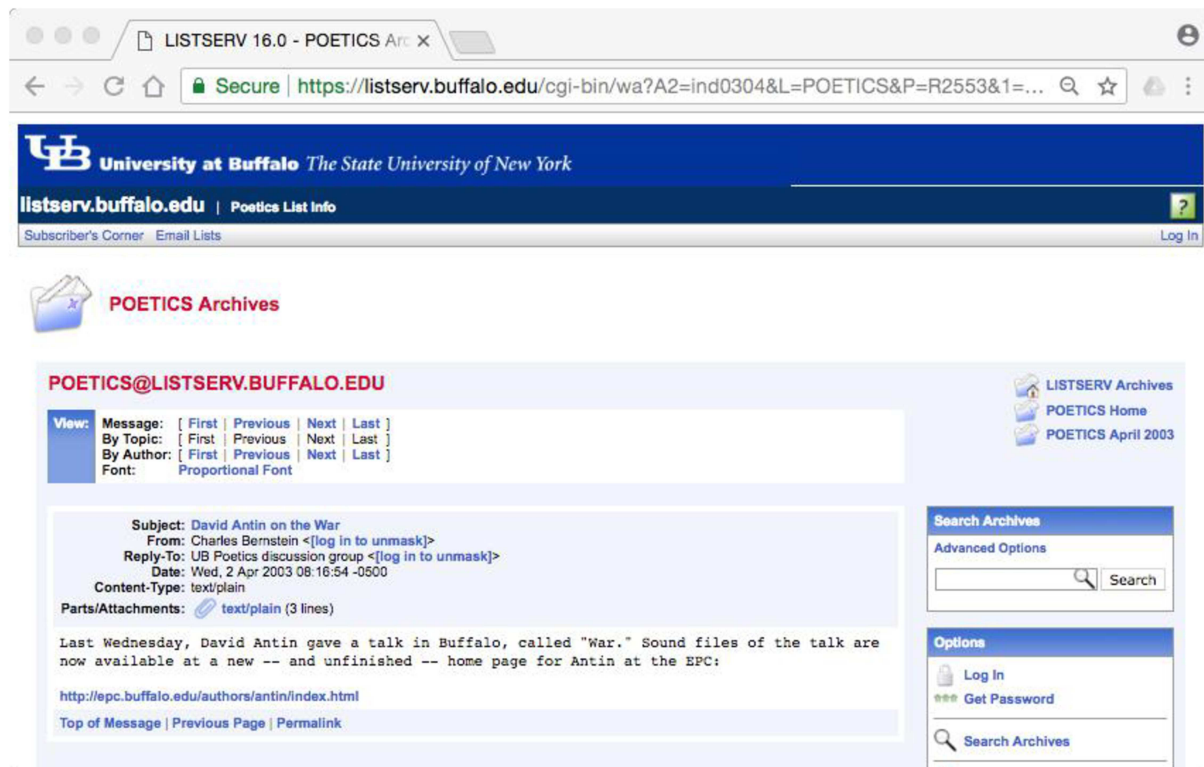


Fig. 1.19: Bernstein's announcement of recent Antin talk recording on the EPC, 2 April 2003.



Programming Poetics

“My interest in UNIX and the Internet were, at this time, considered eccentricities and not appropriate interests for a librarian.”²²¹ Glazier’s reflection on the status of his programming efforts as he began to work on the EPC might seem perplexing from the standpoint of the present writing of this work. At a time when libraries invest a large portion of their resources toward developing digital infrastructures and concerns with the digital have become a dominant component of humanities discourses more generally,²²² the novelty of such an endeavour as the EPC in 1994 ought not be neglected. The possibility of creating information science and literary resources on the Internet excited many.²²³ Yet, many others regarded it with skepticism, or were simply uninterested. Perhaps this skepticism was rooted to the technical expertise that was required to participate in Internet culture at the time, or because the standards for what one could do with the technology were only then beginning to be culturally defined.²²⁴ Again, it is important to underline that the “freedom” or liberatory potential that Glazier saw in electronic networks was something that appealed mainly to those with the expertise and means to invest in acquiring the proper technological to participate in such a space. Glazier himself admits that “the EPC at its outset was barely tolerated in my own specific institution.”²²⁵

Despite being “barely tolerated” as a project, Glazier cites the development of the EPC at his institution as being situated “at the conjunction of two technological possibilities: the UNIX mainframe environment and the Internet protocol of gopher.”²²⁶ At UB’s Computing Center, Glazier began learning UNIX, which he stated has “no control characters and is all raw text. [...]. It’s possibly the hardest computing language in the world. You start with a blank screen. There’s nothing there. You type something and, little by little, you build something.”²²⁷ Because he had experience working with the PL/I computing language while at Berkeley, Glazier admits he was able to become fluent in the language quickly and put that knowledge to use on the UB computing system.²²⁸ Gopher, a TCP/IP application layer protocol designed at the University of Minnesota in the early 1990s, functioned so as to distribute, search, and retrieve documents over the Internet. It is often regarded as the effective predecessor of the World Wide Web.²²⁹ Glazier writes:

Gopher started a revolution in the expansion of the Internet because it was the first umbrella protocol. Unlike the frustrating worlds of telnet and FTP that preceded it, gopher allowed for the integration of a number of operations within a single protocol. The Internet user would no longer have to remember the syntax and address

information necessary to separate operations. [...] a user could simply go to one site, then select from menus. The details of these transactions were encoded in the menus themselves, and users were able to move much more rapidly through reams of information.²³⁰

Operating in a UNIX environment, Gopher offered one the ability to create stable and dedicated pages that users could access through browsing and searching. The Gopher system's extensive menu structure meant that users would be able to move fluidly from link to link, page to page to locate information for which they might be looking.

As Glazier states above, he came up with the idea of creating a locally-hosted electronic archive of poetry and poetics materials in June 1994. By the next month, he had prepared an operating gopher site called the "Electronic Poetry Center (Buffalo)" (Glazier 1996, 78). This project, though evolving out of *RIF/T*, marks a different entity altogether, one Glazier will claim primarily to himself.²³¹ Though Sherwood will remain a close interlocutor during the first years of the EPC, Glazier undertook the initial work on programming and launching the site while Sherwood spent the summer writing and studying in Seville, Spain. On 10 July, Glazier posted an announcement for the EPC (Fig. 1.12) to the Poetics List:

THE ELECTRONIC POETRY CENTER (BUFFALO). The mission of this World-Wide Web based electronic poetry center is to serve as a hypertextual gateway to the extraordinary range of activity in formally innovative writing in the United States and the world. The Center will provide access to numerous electronic resources in the new poetics including *RIF/T* and other electronic poetry journals, the Poetics List archives, a library of poetic texts, news of related print sources, and direct connections to numerous related poetic projects.

Though under development, users could begin to access the contents located on the EPC and, with some understanding of what was being collected and hosted there, begin offering additional materials to the site.

The first version of the EPC depended on the creation of gopher menus that directed users to pages on the EPC and elsewhere on the Internet. Users who went to the EPC – at this time, located at <gopher://wings/buffalo.edu/11/internet/library/e-journals/ub/rift> – would see this menu:

```
1.___Welcome      : About the Electronic Poetry Center & FAQ's (About)/
2.___RIF/T        : RIF/T / New Poetry, Prose, & Poetics (Texts)/
3.___Poetics      : Calendar & Poetics List Archives (Texts)/
4.___Authors      : Electronic Poetry Center Library (Texts)/
5.___E-Journals   : Poetry & Poetics Electronic Journals (Texts)/
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- 6. __E-Resources : Gateway to Electronic Poetry Resources (Connects)/
- 7. __Small Press : Small Press & Little Magazine Alcove (Cites)/
- 8. __Gallery : Electronic Poetry Center Gallery (Visuals)/
- 9. __Sound : Electronic Poetry Center Sound Files (Sound)/
- 10. __Documents : Poetry and Poetics Documents (Texts)/
- 11. __Exhibits : Poetry & Poetics Document Archive (Texts)/
- 12. __Notices : Electronic Poetry Center Announcements (Info)/²³²

In this first articulation of the EPC, it is clear that intermedial poetic works are crucial to the site's composition. Here, poetry is an art that is textual, visual, spatial, performative, and sonic. This is a matter of poetics, yet it also a condition of the technological possibility of the digital repository. Though these elements of poetic practice have histories that, of course, long pre-date the EPC, the site's capacity to collect and circulate works that are informed by all of these various elements is previously unparalleled.²³³ A second important quality of this early version of the EPC is the various information genres or formats it brings together: library, collection, archive, reading room, bulletin board, calendar, mailing list, listening room, gallery, information desk, bibliographic catalogue, and publication studio. As Glazier states above, he was compelled to make an electronic model of a physical centre for poetry. In doing so, to a remarkable degree he creates a virtual version of that physical centre, one that would require significant amounts of financial and institutional support if it were to be materialized. It is one that will have a direct impact on the formulation of physical centres of poetry and poetics in the future.²³⁴

This basic conception of the EPC will continue through its many iterations and developments. On the site, locally produced information – such as *RIF/T*, the Poetics List, Small Press, and Documents – merges together with externally produced information that the site links to elsewhere on the Internet. The remaining categories – Authors, Gallery, Sound, Exhibits – become fields that Glazier develops by means of a number of production partnerships that evolve out of the community that comes together through the EPC. As Glazier continues to collaborate with Sherwood on *RIF/T* and Bernstein on the Poetics List, he also begins to work with Martin Spinelli, a fellow graduate student in the Poetics Program, to host the LINEbreak radio shows he produced with Bernstein on the EPC.

The menu-document design of a Gopher site created a hierarchical structure that allowed for the first large-scale electronic library connections.²³⁵ The protocol's benefits were that it facilitated the creation of directories for organizing materials in online environments. Yet the advantages of collecting and disseminating such materials by means of the Gopher system would

soon dwindle in comparison to the possibilities offered by the World Wide Web. “Though [G]opher offered the ability to combine a number of operations in a single site (a tremendous advantage that made possible early Internet homesteading for poetry)” – one that supported the concentration of resources under a single menu and allowed for traffic to begin circulating at the EPC – “the [G]opher system is very rigid, strictly linear, and hypotactic in the most literal sense.”²³⁶ In a Gopher system, information could appear in two places at once, meaning that a poem could be found under the author’s name in the Authors menu and also found under other menus such as Documents or in *RIF/T*. Yet, as Glazier writes:

The disadvantage of gopher was not a lack of ability to represent documents in multiple locations, but that *documents could only be represented as entire documents*. The revolution brought about by the World-Wide Web was that, in HTML, the language of the Web, documents could be represented *by individual words or even a single character*. As a result of the Web, systems of linked information on the Internet moved away from Menus and into the medium of narrative. In addition, the Web also allowed for graphics to be embedded in documents (an embedded document is simply a link to a different kind of file). Internet screens not only appeared more like writing but like published documents. (Glazier 1996, 84)

In the movement from Gopher to the World Wide Web, the capacity to interconnect the materials on the EPC expanded. “The greatest period of growth for the EPC,” as Glazier writes, “occurred when Web technology became widely available: the language of HTML seemed to be the perfect means of building the resources of the Center.”²³⁷

At this point, I want to put a placeholder here for an extended discussion – curtailed at the present moment in order to meet the timeline of submissions – on the way that the EPC, as a Web site, becomes an instrumental part of the Poetics Program. Such a discussion will outline the development of the Poetics Program within and against the framework outlined by the writings of Mark McGurl, who has outlined the ways in which the writing workshop became a standardized laboratory for producing creative writers and teachers of creative writing.²³⁸


Although the Poetics Program also has similar goals in terms of creating a specific type of poet-scholar, much of the ideology that shapes its construction is done in direct counter-distinction to the specific kind of analysis of poem’s contents that are part of the creative writing program regime, and is, instead, more closely modeled to the forms of small press production, conviviality, and interpersonal relations through which post-war experimental or avant-garde North American poetry thrived. In this future extended discussion, I aim to discuss three

elements of the EPC's relation to the Poetics program: 1.) its emphasis on *access to tools* for poets and poetry communities, which extends a particular discursive element of the technohippie culture that Glazier came up amidst in California, expressed most prominently in the *Whole Earth Review*, the WELL, Howard Rheingold's *The Virtual Community*; 2.) then, I will address the Program's and the EPC's intention to produce, by means of this access to tools, a distinct kind of subject, the "poetics scholar," in distinction to the "creative writer" as discussed above, and the creation of an institutional formation or "ecology," to use Bernstein's words cited above, for this new kind of subject, with a particular focus on depicting the EPC's relation to the Poetics Program through the lens of Raymond's *Cathedral and the Bazaar*; and, finally, 3.) the dependency of the creation of such an ecology on the specific interpersonal and institutional relations that support, and how, if even one key actor in such assemblage drops out, such an ecology can quickly desiccate. To this extent, I plan to discuss the slow dissolution of the EPC due to its lack of support, even while it became a fundamental model for considering the creation of literary archival and production spaces on the Internet.

Fig. 1.20: EPC's Authors page, A–D, 15 November 2001.

Web browser window showing the Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) Authors page, archived from the original URL <http://epc.buffalo.edu:80/autho...> on 20011115010700.

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A list of authors containing poets, critics, and writers in innovative literature and electronic media.

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- [Basil Bunting](#)
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-- C --

- [John Cage](#)
- [John Cayley](#)
- [Cydney Chadwick](#)
- [cris cheek](#)
- [Bob Cobbing](#)
- [Robert Creeley](#)

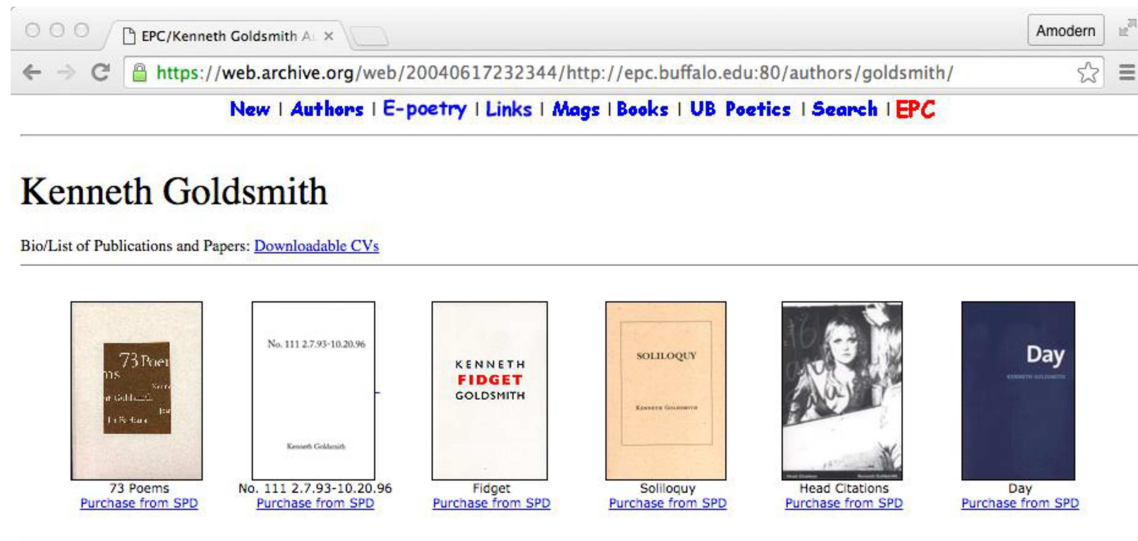
-- D --

- [Samuel Delany](#)
- [Edward Dorn](#)
- [Johanna Drucker](#)
- [Robert Duncan](#)
- [Rachel Blau DuPlessis](#)

Fig. 1.21: EPC Digital Library page, 16 June 2018.



Fig. 1.22: Author Page for Kenneth Goldsmith, 17 June 2004.



Online Works

Poems/Writings:

Books

- ["Spring" from YEAR](#) [PDF] (forthcoming, 2004)
- [Head Citations](#) (The Figures, 2002)
- [Soliloquy](#) (Granary Books, 2001)
- [Fidget](#) (Coach House Books, 2000)
- [No. 111 2.7.93-10.20.96](#) (The Figures, 1997)
- [73 Poems](#) (collaboration with Joan La Barbara), (Permanent Press, 1994)
- [6799](#) (zingmagazine, 2000) [PDF, 400k]

Chapbooks

- [Gertrude Stein on Punctuation](#) (Abaton Books, 2000) [PDF, 25k]
- [No. 109 2.7.93-12.15.93](#) (Bravin Post Lee, 1994), [PDF, 278k]
- [No. 110 10.4.93-10.7.93](#) (Artists Museum, Lodz, Poland, 1993), [PDF, 36k]

CDs

- [Nothing Special](#), Solielmoon Records / Mess Media (with People Like Us)
- [73 Poems](#), Lovely Music (with Joan La Barbara)

Writings About Kenneth Goldsmith:

- ["What's It For?" The Gig on Day](#)
- [BOMB on Day](#)
- [Publishers Weekly on Day](#)
- [Brian Kim Stefans "Little Review of Day"](#)
- [Doug Nufer on Day: "The Creativity Racket"](#)
- [Brad Ford: A Provincial Reiview of Day](#)
- Marjorie Perloff: A Conversation with Kenneth Goldsmith ([Jacket 21, Feb. 2003, \[English\]](#)) and ([Sibila, Brazil, 2002, \[Portugese\]](#))
- [The Poetics of Click and Drag: Screening the New Poetries](#) [PDF], Marjorie Perloff, (Discussion of Goldsmith's Soliloquy)
- [The New York Times on Goldsmith, UbuWeb, and Aspen Magazine](#)
- [New York Press on Head Citations](#)
- [Christian Bök on No. 111 2.7.93-10.20.96](#)
- [Rain Taxi on Soliloquy](#)
- [The New York Times on Broken New York](#)
- [Brian Kim Stefans on Fidget](#)
- [The Wire on Goldsmith and UbuWeb](#)
- [The New Art Examiner on Soliloquy](#)
- [Publishers Weekly on Soliloquy](#)
- [The Boston Review on Fidget](#)

Fig. 1.23: Author page for Juliana Spahr, 27 March 2010.

EPC/Juliana Spahr Home P: x Amodern

← → ↺ <https://web.archive.org/web/20100327195228/http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/spahr/> 🔍 ☆ ☰

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Photo credit: candace ah nee

Juliana Spahr

[Mills College author page](#)

[PennSound page](#)

New Books:

The Transformation (Berkeley: Atelos, 2007)

This Connection of Everyone with Lungs (Berkeley: U. of California, 2005)

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

Fuck You-Aloha-I Love You.
[Middletown: Wesleyan U P, 2001.](#)

["Switching"](#)

Everybody's Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity.
[Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2001.](#)

[introduction](#)
["Postmodernism, Readers, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*"](#) (early version of chapter in book; you must subscribe to literature online to access)

review:
[by Curt Leitz](#), *Electronic Poetry Review* 1 (2001).

Spiderwasp or Literary Criticism.
[New York: Explosive Books, 1998.](#)

reviews:
[by Brenda Hillman](#), "Energizing the Reading Process: Juliana Spahr's New Nest," *How2* 1:3 (2000).
by Rob Wilson, "Pacific Postmodern: from the Sublime to the Devious, Writing the Experimental/Local Pacific in Hawai'i in *boundary 2* 28:1 (2001) and in *Jacket* 12 (2000).
[by Jack Kimball](#), "Plain Luxe: Lederer, Spahr, Celona and Corless-Smith," *Jacket* 8 (1999).
[by Geoffrey Treacle](#), *Chicago Review* 45:2 (1999).
[by Ben Friedlander](#), *Lagniappe* 1:3 (1999).
[by Sally Evans](#), *New Hope International* (1999).

Response.
[Los Angeles: Sun & Moon P, 1996.](#)

National Poetry Series Award, 1995.
["Response."](#) *Vico Acitillo* 124, 1997.
["Witness."](#) *The Little Magazine*, 1996.
[excerpt from "Response."](#) *Where Literature Lives* 1 (1997).

review:
[by Mark Wallace](#), *Washington Review* 12.6 (1997) 29.

[Nuclear.](#)
Buffalo: Leave Books, 1994. Available from durationpress.com

A Certain Model for Exchange: A Dialogue with Charles Bernstein

Michael Nardone: *Can you tell me about the relationship between the EPC and the UB library and the Poetry Collection? I'm curious about the degree to which there was or wasn't support between them.*

Charles Bernstein: The library didn't really support Loss for the EPC at all. This was before the library itself became digital and had its own online system. It was not interested in the digital kind of stuff that we were doing. So, we supported the EPC through the funding we had with my chair. This goes back to the question you asked before about funding of the Buffalo stuff. Loss will be able to tell you about this in detail, but it was ironic that the head of the libraries wouldn't support the EPC at all. It was completely uninterested in the EPC, even though Loss was the pioneering person at that university in terms of making things available digitally and digitizing resources.

It was frustrating. Ultimately, he moved to media studies. He had a job and I had a job. Even as it became a very prominent thing at the university – it was noticed, there were articles written about it – there was still no money from the library to fund it, or from the deans to give us any extra support. In my division, in the English department, we had more resources than other parts of the humanities, but Loss was in media studies and couldn't even get a research assistant or a work study or even the most basic support. I had a work study student that I used from my funds to help me – not directly with the EPC but who helped me with my tapes. That was always a problem, the lack of personnel to help with the EPC. Maybe it was also an advantage, you could say, because everything on the EPC was originally done by Loss or me, then subsequently Jack Krick, and then a few other individuals helped upgrade pages. Yet it all had to be uploaded by one of the three of us, basically. The site maintained a local, small character.

The Poetry Collection is not the library. Loss worked for the main library. He was the humanities specialist. The Poetry Collection was run by Robert Berlthof at that time, and there was no real connection between what we were doing and the Poetry Collection, in the sense that there was no overlap. They were involved with digitizing some Joyce stuff and so on, but it was not something that had anything to do with our project. It really never came up. After, when Basinski took over, there was still no real support from the library. Loss might have more details about the EPC's

connection to the Poetry Collection and the library. The Poetry Collection tended to be quite proprietary with their materials, especially under Robert Berlthof. He was not a person whose primary focus was opening things up and making things accessible. Most librarians nowadays are interested in information technology and making things accessible digitally, but certain kinds of curators with special collections focus on collecting objects that are in vaults. It's a very different conception. So, we never managed to have – Loss even tried several times – to get some technology, like a digital camera, from the Special Collection, but there was never any rapport between what we were doing and the special collections.

The other thing about the funding of the Poetics Program is that when I came there I had a specific amount of money that was tied to my chair, the Grey Chair – Creeley had a certain amount of money with his Capen Chair, Tedlock had a certain amount of money in his McNulty Chair, then later, Federman in his Jones Chair, Raymond Federman – who was also part of the original founding group. There were five of us who founded the poetics program, with Susan Howe. Tedlock, me, Creeley, Howe, Federman, with Berlthof being a co-conspirator from the library. A lot of people use those research monies for a number of projects – publication, travel, research, equipment, secretarial support. I thought why not try and use that money collectively to support the poetics program. I was able to pool money from time to time so that different chairs would match money or each would contribute something. The concept that I had was, rather than have anything official, which I don't like, but what I was interested in was what Joel Kuszai said one time during a talk – “many Indians, but no chief.” Rather than having an official publication and you could become the editor of that, starting something that people could contribute to – the radical decentralization was that Dennis, Bob and I would each contribute a certain amount to the poetics program for publications, let's say. There was a set amount and it wasn't that much money. It was 5000 dollars or something like that. Each of us would contribute fifteen hundred dollars from our budget, or something like that. Then anyone who applied would get some money, five hundred dollars maybe. If we had 5000 dollars we would give out 10 five-hundred-dollar grants, which was more than we needed. We weren't like, “So, what do you plan to do with this money?” I don't like proposals.

If somebody wanted to do a magazine, then we would pay the bills up to that specific point, and tried to give about the same amount to each person based on their project. Some people spent

less, some people spent more. There were some things that were slightly more expensive, and in those cases Bob or Dennis probably funded the sort of more expensive ones. There were a couple of glossy things done. They paid for that because they liked the idea of having more expensive stuff. Like *Chloroform*, that was probably paid for by one of my colleagues there. I tended to just give the maximum amount to everyone equally. Everybody was free to do whatever they wanted, but they both were very supportive of this base level funding, then they could fund something more or something else if they wanted. Same thing with speakers.

That's really what allowed the proliferation of stuff. It's amazing how little money was involved. We did a number of other things that cost us somewhat more money in terms of having resident scholars for a semester, such as Arkady Dragomoszenko and Wystan Curnow. That was too much trouble. We were amazed – we each pooled maybe like five thousand dollars each, so we had 6 people and each one of us were going to give five thousand dollars to someone – we thought it would be someone like [a young scholar doing research], but then we had Arkady D apply, Wystan Curnow from New Zealand. The people who applied for these residencies were so astounding. They just wanted to be in Buffalo. There was really insufficient money to support them to come – [poets from Belgrade] ... It suggested to me an enormous need. It's far easier to arrange and support this kind of thing at Penn. But there, well, we never did it again because it took hundreds of hours of work to get the visas, the work permits. It was very difficult, but it was fantastic to have those people come. So, that was another way where we pooled resources to make things happen. We also paid Steve McCaffery's graduate stipend – he was admitted, but the graduate program didn't want to support him because he was “special.” So, again, Federman, Creeley and I – they gave him a tuition waiver and we came up with what he would have gotten as a graduate fellow. That was only for a couple of years. This was Federman's actual initiative.

EPC never really required a lot of money, but once again, when I left, there was no money given to Loss for the EPC. Now it's been 10 years, because he couldn't get money from anyone, as we weren't around. He does not get money from current people who are working there. He doesn't get support from them at all. They don't see the value of it, and they've cut it out of the whole poetics program. That's been difficult to say the least.

Michael Nardone: *I'll admit that part of my interest in doing research on the EPC is to help it find support for its proper archival afterlife, as it's such a foundational digital object.*

Creeley and I were big supporters of the EPC. When I left in 2003, it was very hard. The person who came in after us, Steve McCaffery, it's fair to say, had no interest in the EPC. He had his own research thing. Though the EPC did have a page for him, and PennSound has huge McCaffery resources, it was never something that he was in any way committed to. I was there at the same time as him. He and Loss were not able to develop a working relationship. Loss can tell you the story. I always like to be polite about it. Loss could discuss this in his way, because it was a disappointment to him. He requested support for this and that, but it was not forthcoming. You know, somebody coming in could spend their money the way that they wanted. The fact is that this money that I'm talking about – the holder of the chair doesn't have to spend it on anything other than their own research and travel and secretarial or clerical support. They don't have to give it to something else. If they choose to support something, then that's fine. In the case of the poetics program, when I was there – 1990-2003 – in order to have that program be what it is, to me, it seemed necessary to use that money to generate the kinds of stuff that we did. And Creeley was enormously supportive of that. In fact, in many ways, Creeley was a visionary in his own Black Mountain way, and had it in his mind that we should secede from the English Department. He was much more radical than me. I wanted to be in the English Department, but he would have done something that was completely independent. I don't think it would have been as good for the students, not to get English PhDs. But he was into it. Bob loved the EPC. So that was great.

When we all left, Loss didn't have those relationships. What was the EPC in 2003? I'm not in any way sympathetic to the lack of funding by the way – I'm just trying to give you a sense of how it could be looked. You work at a university too. When the people are not there who are supporting it – Loss had no benefactors anymore. So it fell apart and there wasn't that sense after Bob and I left that the EPC was a significant part of what the people there wanted to do or were interested in. A lot of things changed then. You didn't see the same magazines either.

It was such a moment there, and you see this whole field of different poetic practices emerging out of what was taking place. It's something that resonates still very strongly, and I think about it often as being foundational to the creation of the contemporary poet-critic. I sometimes write to Juliana Spahr and other people who were part of that generation to ask them about the dynamics of the program at that time. I'm always curious to find out who was conspiring with whom and what they were thinking about and making during that time.

You're quite right to mention Juliana and her company who created that atmosphere. It was that group of people. That sense of collective activity also migrated elsewhere. There was a kind of diasporic Poetics Program, the Poetics Program was picked up in many different places by other people doing other kinds of things over time – so, you can see Lori Emerson, Darren Wershler, Christian Bök as being a part of that. There were a number of ways in which people were involved. But, yes, in Buffalo, Peter Gizzi and Juliana Spahr and Ben Friedlander were all here. Martha Werner, too, actually doing her Dickinson stuff. All this was happening then. I think by 2003 something else was happening. You could say that PennSound comes right out of that moment and extends aspects of that activity.

I want to think about that statement you said earlier about “distribution not being separate from content.” That's a rich idea to consider further in terms of the poetics of creating these infrastructures. And it extends a particular line of thinking, again via Creeley, working off his dictum concerning the relation of form and content. The distribution is part of the form of a work external to the text, the social form of a work. And I think it's always fascinating to consider a work's content in relation to this sense of form.

Things that occur in excessive singularity and are outside any kind of circulation don't exist at a certain level in the contemporary. It's when they enter the social space of exchange that allows people to hear things and participate in things and find out. The individual poem, as significant as it is, is no more important than many other kinds of echoes of that poem that somebody hears even in their own perception. You may say that those individual poems that are great are part of the constellation, but it's really how people apprehend them and interact with them that creates

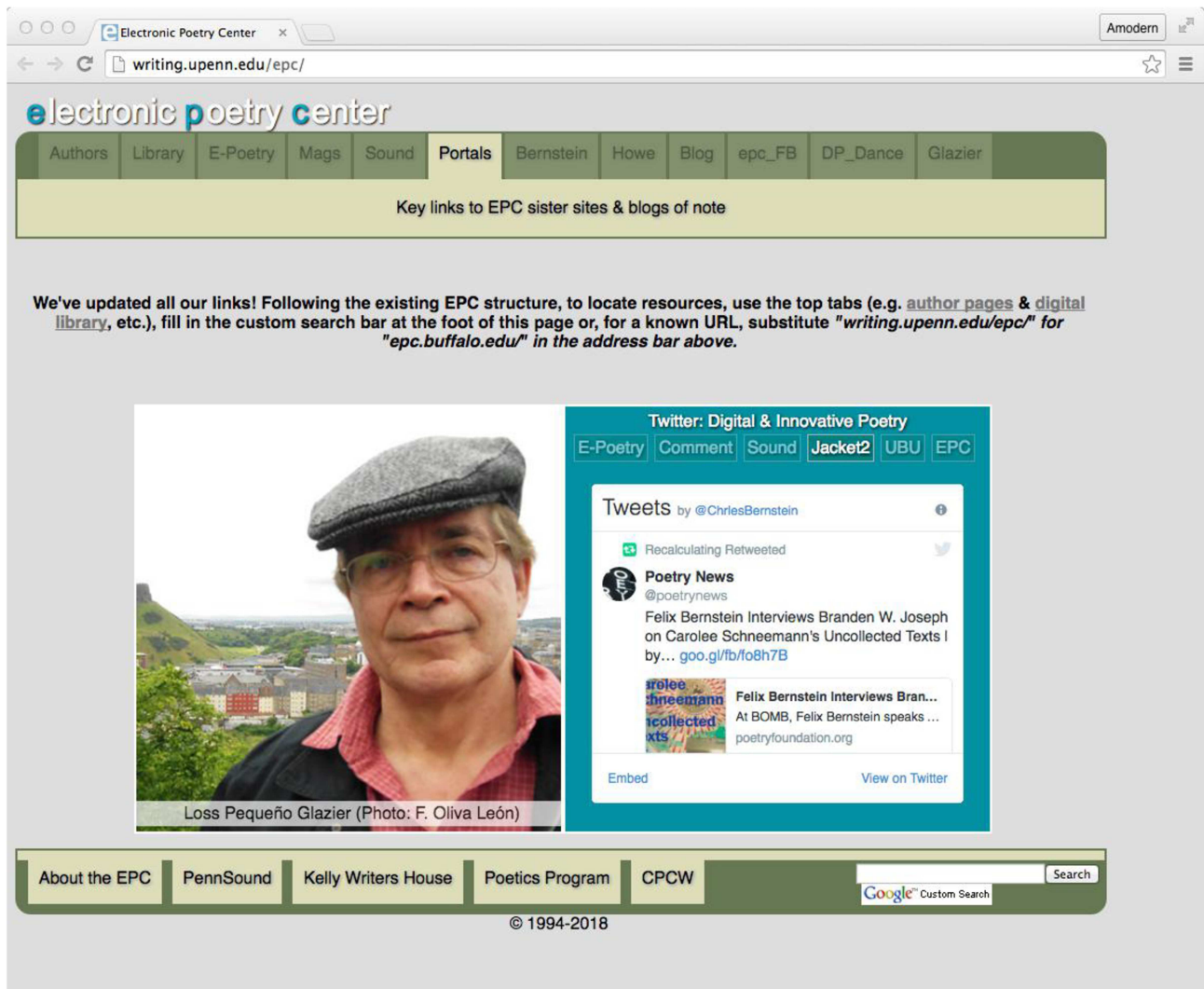
the work. That's why imitation or, even, an imitation of an imitation of something can be just as great for someone coming into it, because then they enter into it there and they see the dialogue and the context and so on. People don't always understand the context of what poetry is. Poetry is not singular. It's actually constant collective formations and productions. If you begin from that position, then you can go back to consider individual poets and their work.

Joel Kuszai is another interesting person to consider in this context, too. He's still here in New York, teaching at Queens College. His interests are certainly focused on distribution, production, process within a very specific radical education and anarchist context. When Joel came to New York, I'm not sure he was even interested in the poetry community here, but it was because of the Buffalo community and people like Juliana, who had more radical political anarchist interest that he got involved. Also, Martin Spinelli is another person who got pulled in, as he was interested in radio and production and distribution. People like Joel and Martin became interested in poetry because of what we're talking about, because of the elements of utopian distribution and the implications of the Web, and not because they were interested in creating individual poems. It's not that they were not interested in creating individual poems, but that wasn't what galvanized them. It's that they were able to pull in a number of people who would not have been involved in something with respect to poetry. I think that was what created the great moment in Buffalo too. I think that's true also at Penn.

People get interested in it because of the social context that we can create through the work. It's not necessarily the way people imagine it will be – that they read some great individual poet, they love Wallace Stevens and so they know Al Filreis through his work on Wallace Stevens. That's actually not the way it often works. In fact, Al's work on Wallace Stevens is to resocialize Wallace Stevens into a political context, too. It goes throughout. It's creating that synergy among different people to pull them in that creates the difference between that phase of the Buffalo poetics program that we were involved in. This also fits into Creeley's interests as well in terms of what he wanted for Buffalo when Susan and I came. It also explains what is interesting in terms of the sites that you are talking about – the EPC, UbuWeb, and PennSound. The EPC itself really set up for people globally. It founded a certain model for how you could make stuff available for exchange.

The EPC was an object of attention wherever I went in the world. In Finland, for instance, they were interested in it because it had Robert Creeley poems. But that wasn't primarily what they were interested in it. It's not simply because it has the poems – it has to have good stuff to make it valuable – but that was not the main point. It was the fact that the site made available a certain kind of possibility of noncommercial exchange between people and works, that it made the work available – that was crucial element. That's what I mean by distribution. Distribution is a different way of saying, in a more traditional sense, exchange. It has to do with exchange. Exchange is what makes poetry possible.²³⁹

Fig. 1.24: EPC homepage notifying of shift of URL to “writing.upenn.edu/epc/,” 10 June 2018.



A Subject Village in Migration

On a quiet June afternoon, I meet Loss Pequeño Glazier outside the Department of Media Study at the State University of New York at Buffalo. It is a humid, breezeless day. The surrounding series of parking lots are empty, as are the broad walkways in between the campus's row of looming brutalist concrete buildings. (They are a style that – after seeing Boston's City Hall, Oxford University's Wolfson College, and Montreal's Habitat 67 – knowledgeable friends have explained to me as being an attempt to articulate a kind of functional, utopian social vision.) I had spent the previous hours reading Glazier's doctoral thesis at an off-site library storage area, and am excited to get right into our exchange. Yet, from the start, as I follow Glazier into the dark hallways inside, and as we settle into his office, something in our dialogue is out-of-synch: we talk at the same time, or there are long silences between us, question and reply seem unable to connect, or, as we begin to approach something in detail, there's an interruption of some kind and we end up returning to a different subject altogether. I can't tell if there are points I should try to avoid. Glazier obviously sees the EPC as a project that has been slowly dissipating for some time, is still saddened by Bernstein's departure from the university and the shift to having no support whatsoever by his successor, and he is also still frustrated by the lack of recognition the EPC has had even as it inspired and set a precedent for numerous digital humanities projects that followed in its wake. I spend much of it trying to read between the lines of his speech, treading carefully about what subjects feel right to try and proceed with more depth. Much of our first day proceeds in this way.

There are moments, though, that feel like a sincere points of connection: discussing the range of small press and mimeo journals that we both love, discussing Glazier's time in the Himalayas and studies of Buddhism that underlie many of his conceptions about offering and exchanging the poetic materials on the site, and those moments when we come back to the early construction and first documentations of the EPC as a site. When we discuss the recent celebration and conference to honour the EPC's twentieth year on the Internet, Glazier becomes animated and his eyes light up. It was obviously a special event for him. Yet, with the talk of this *festschrift*, there comes the more urgent, pressing question: What will be the future of the EPC? How might it be preserved in some way as a site that explored the archiving, publishing, and circulation of poetry materials in the early days of the Web? It is a pressing question for Glazier. Several times during our exchange, he refers to his own approaching mortality, and states that

finding “a home” for it to live on is an imperative: “Part of my responsibility as the person who created [the EPC] is not to die and leave the project hanging.”²⁴⁰ I tell him that part of the impetus behind this work I’m doing is to try and find ways these materials and their infrastructure can be preserved into the future. From that point, our exchange becomes easier, more open, intimate, and continues to be so for the following two days.

As I prepare to submit this chapter, a year after our meeting, I return to the EPC site to review some of the materials Glazier had brought up during our discussions. When I type in a particular address, I do not end up on the page I had expected. Instead, it is a photo of Glazier’s face, above it a text stating why I have come upon this page and not the one I had hoped for: “We’ve updated all our links! Following the existing EPC structure, to locate resources or, for a known URL, substitute ‘*writing.upenn.edu/epc*’ for ‘*epc.buffalo.edu*’ in the address bar above” (Fig. 1.25). I’m surprised to see it. “Everything on the EPC that ever worked, works still,” I recall Glazier, with sincere satisfaction, telling me during our dialogues.²⁴¹ It’s part of what has made the EPC such an exemplary digital archival object, the fact that Glazier hand-coded everything, and that every single one of its pages (even ones left incomplete) were still available online through their address or through the site’s directory, even if they weren’t directly linked by a live page on the site. So, to see that the pages were not addressed as Glazier had composed them, to see the EPC was no longer on the SUNY-Buffalo servers, to try and navigate from page to page while one error after another popped up, and to have received no notice from Glazier or anyone else involved in the project that such a significant shift had happened, this situation seemed alarming. I write Glazier. My e-mail is a third follow up to check in with him, to send him a draft of the chapter’s materials, and for him to review our transcribed and edited dialogue. Like the previous two messages, sent six months and three months ago, I receive no reply.

What happens to a subject village when its subject departs, or gives up, moves on? Several times during our exchange, Glazier brought up his fascination for thinking of the EPC as a space station hub traveling to some unforeseen, unmapped destination. Although this metaphor dates Glazier to a particular set of generations, I like to think with it, imagining the EPC as a decommissioned spacecraft that has supplied us with such valuable information that could not be collected by any other means, and that, due to its distant orbit, can not be refueled. It remains, therefore, for unforeseen others to use it, re-platform it and make sense of its signals. Here, too, I like to think again with Jameson, how Glazier’s liberatory gesture in creating, in his eyes, such a

utopian space for accessing the work of poets, how it necessarily had to end in failure, one that – in its example, in its material articulation, use, and impact on communities – has opened up the possibility for other gestures, acts, infrastructures to thrive.

Chapter Two

UbuWeb

Nur was schaltbar ist, ist überhaupt.

[Only that which is networkable or switchable exists at all.]

–Friedrich Kittler²⁴²

“Ubu’s not an underground network,” Kenneth Goldsmith declares, sitting in front of a flatbed scanner and laptop in his Manhattan apartment. “Ubu is an open website for all,” he continues.²⁴³ He is sifting through a stack of street posters and flyers he’s collected “whilst out on casual strolls” throughout the city over the course of thirty years.²⁴⁴ “You don’t need a membership,” he continues. “You don’t need to go to the DarkNet. You don’t need to use a Tor browser. I could have put the whole thing onto an Onion. But I’m not into that. I’m into being open.”²⁴⁵ In one hand is a wrinkled piece of paper that reads: “ARE YOU / FREE ON / SATURDAY / FROM / 4-7 P.M.?” On the page’s bottom are several pull tabs – placed there so as to connote a bulletin board classified listing, where interested individuals can take away the poster’s contact information – yet instead of including information that could connect author and potential recipient, they simply state “YES” or “NO.”²⁴⁶ Goldsmith pauses his talk to hold up the sheet of paper. He laughs, then continues sorting through the stack of documents, picking back up on his line of thought. “There’s no password protection, and that’s the radical politic behind UbuWeb.” He drops the pile on the floor beside his feet and reaches for another one. Before picking it up, he interrupts his movement and jolts back upright.

All of these people are telling me my politics are fucked around the Michael Brown thing, that I’m a racist, that I’m right wing. I’m like, People, I have been fucking beyond copyleft for 20 years. For decades! I have been doing this community work and you don’t know anything about me. It’s so narrow and so stupid. I’ve been radically left, giving away culture to people with no money for twenty years at great risk to myself. I’m astonished. After all I’ve done, you’re going to tell me that I have no politics.²⁴⁷

I’m not sure how or if I should respond. I have thoughts on the subject, but in this situation, at this moment, I realize any reply I might offer is less valuable than documenting Goldsmith’s

perspective on the situation, which, in more official media responses, has been notably polished.²⁴⁸ I glance at my audio recorder to make sure it's still rolling. Gesturing to the stacks of materials piled across the desk and floor that, over time, Goldsmith will digitally reproduce and add to UbuWeb, he says: "I won't put this under Creative Commons because Creative Commons is another form of copyright. I'm beyond anarchy with this. I don't even want money. I want to give culture to people for free that don't have access to culture. I can't imagine a more politically radical position than that."²⁴⁹ When he stands up and walks into the adjacent room, I am uncertain if I should follow. Perhaps that was the end of our interview? When he resumes his soliloquy, I take it as a sign that I should keep up and continue to listen.

These minutes of our hours-long exchange stand out for several reasons. First of all, I am in the space where Goldsmith constructs UbuWeb, amid the accumulation of papers, books, artists' editions, chapbooks, documents, CDs, hard drives, file cabinets and laptop that are, no doubt, full of items. The labour that goes into sifting through these things, maintaining them, transforming them into a curated digital collection is present in the room. A few times in our conversation, Goldsmith mentions the fact that UbuWeb is something he works on a little bit each day, coding the site by hand a few hours in the morning or when he can't sleep. So, while it is a site of accumulation and labour, it is also a refuge, a place and project toward which he can direct his attention and cultivate over time.

That he momentarily singles out amid the constellations of retrieved things the comical bulletin board listing seems fitting given that Goldsmith's poetic works have primarily focused on recirculating in new contexts the language and forms of varying information genres, from newspapers to radio broadcasts to internet pages.²⁵⁰ In the pleasure that washes over him in seeing again the flyer, the version of Goldsmith that is present in that moment is less the self-styled avant-gardist and provocateur, and more the humble figure of the collector that Walter Benjamin describes:

It must be kept in mind that, for the collector, the world is present, and indeed ordered, in each of his objects. Ordered, however, according to a surprising and, for the profane understanding, incomprehensible connection. This connections stands to the customary ordering and schematization of things something as their arrangement in the dictionary stands to a natural arrangement. We need only recall what importance a particular collector attaches not only to his object but also to its entire past, whether this concerns the origin and objective characteristics of the thing or the details of its ostensibly external history: previous wonders, price of purchase, current value, and so on. All of these – the "objective" data together with the other – come

together, for the true collector, in every single one of his possessions, to form a whole magic encyclopaedia, a world order, whose outline is the *fate* of his object.²⁵¹

“I’ve been a collector my whole life,” he had told me earlier in our exchange as we stood before a wall of records and books, “and all that collectors want to do is to be able to share their collection.”²⁵² One could easily imagine this anonymous detoured flyer, one that signals a specific act of communication at the same time it aesthetically refuses it, as one example of the kind of quotidian objects that signifies a whole expansive range of urban living and conditions that have been an underlying source of inspiration for his works.

Then there’s Goldsmith’s language and the shift in tones in our exchange, which require contextualization. Our encounter takes place in May of 2015, two months after the performance and ensuing controversy around Goldsmith’s reading of Michael Brown’s autopsy report as a work of his poetry at Brown University.²⁵³ There has been much written on the subject of the reading,²⁵⁴ it’s a path that’s unnecessary for me to travel in this work except for tracing out one particular point that is relevant to UbuWeb. Given the many criticisms of Goldsmith following the reading (ones regarding his morality, political awareness, and cultural sensitivity that he refers to above), one thing I’ve taken note of in the event’s aftermath is a curious occurrence where even those who are most critical of Goldsmith and his poetics continue to cite UbuWeb as a valuable resource and important contribution to culture.²⁵⁵ Such critics, it seems, view UbuWeb as an exception among his works, even while Goldsmith (among others) regard it as an apotheosis of his poetics.²⁵⁶ More to this point, Goldsmith himself seems aware of this discursive occurrence, as on several occasions (such as in our exchange) he references UbuWeb as proof of his social engagement, as a way to rehabilitate his public image after vocal outcries condemning him. As he states in an interview in the weeks following the Brown reading: UbuWeb is “my community, my service, my activism, my politics. It makes the world a better place.”²⁵⁷

These three aspects from our exchange – the office hub where Goldsmith accumulates materials he intends to redistribute online, the mock classified ad he resituates in a repository of materials related to avant-garde art, and the contested terrain and politics of texts in their movement from site to site, body to body – highlight the importance of circulation as a framework for approaching UbuWeb and the contexts of its production. Previous commentators have addressed the conceptual,²⁵⁸ intervallic,²⁵⁹ transcriptive,²⁶⁰ non-visual or non-retinal²⁶¹ components of Goldsmith’s works, yet their circulatory aspects remain understudied. UbuWeb,

which Goldsmith refers to as “distribution center,”²⁶² underlines the need for such an approach, as a fundamental aspect of the repository is the creation of new circulatory channels for textual objects of all types and genres.

In this chapter, I address the construction of UbuWeb – its poetics and material media history – through the thematic of circulation, a process, as David Novak notes, that does not merely happen *between* cultures but, instead, *constitutes* culture.²⁶³ “UbuWeb,” writes Goldsmith, “is as much about the legal and social ramifications of its self-created distribution and archiving system as it is about the content hosted on the site.”²⁶⁴ This is to say that Goldsmith locates equal importance in the materials that he circulates as he does with the fact of their circulation. In tracing out the repository’s development, I focus on three distinct components: UbuWeb’s ethics regarding the circulation of materials; the shifting status of the materials as they circulate through and by means of the repository; and, finally, and the shifting status of the repository itself, by which I mean the various sites of its material infrastructure in terms of where its drives, servers, and labour are located. These three components, as I show, are variously interrelated and impact one another thoroughly.

UbuWeb is remarkable for the number of transformations it has undergone during its twenty-two year history on the Web. Not long after its founding in 1996, the site grew to include historical papers on visual poetry, then sound poetry, followed by ethnopoetics, before expanding to include experimental music, outsider art, film and video, and, more recently, dance. To this extent, Goldsmith has framed UbuWeb to be, as the site’s by-line states, “All avant-garde. All the time.” Referring to the repository as a “distribution center,”²⁶⁵ Goldsmith underscores the importance of establishing access through the creation of new circulatory matrixes for media. Although a small portion of the materials on UbuWeb are produced specifically for the site – for example, the /ubu Editions, which attempt to “publish the unpublishable” – most items found on UbuWeb are rare materials that Goldsmith himself has digitized, or ones he has tracked down on file sharing sites. As UbuWeb is merely one stop in the these items’ greater circulation, Goldsmith does not request permission from creator to post materials, nor does he encode provenance information, such as “courtesy of UbuWeb,” on any of the site’s files.²⁶⁶ Goldsmith has described his approach:

If it’s out of print, we feel it’s fair game. Or if something is in print, yet absurdly priced or insanely hard to procure, we’ll take a chance on it. [...] Should something return to print, we will remove it from our site immediately. Also, should an artist

find their material posted on UbuWeb without permission and wants it removed, please let us know. However, most of the time, we find artists are thrilled to find their work cared for and displayed in a sympathetic context.²⁶⁷

To much scorn and praise, Goldsmith has privileged the circulatory component of UbuWeb above every other consideration – for example, above *quality* (of a work's reproduction compared to its original) and *permission* (from the work's creator in order to host and circulate it). To this extent, as Darren Wershler notes, "UbuWeb's candid digitization of unavailable (as opposed to public domain) works has been remarkably effective."²⁶⁸ With UbuWeb, Goldsmith has created one of the most important sites to study avant-garde writing amid its intermedial affinities. In addition to this, the site has been and continues to be instrumental precedent for shaping open online culture and media commons for cultural information and educational resources today.

In this chapter, I trace out the development of UbuWeb from prior to its initial organization to its many ad hoc transformations. Reviewing the literature on UbuWeb, I root through the volume of statements on Goldsmith in order to focus on the writings that address the digital repository's media poetics in relation to Goldsmith's poetic works, the archiving and dissemination of texts, archival interfaces, and concerns the reproduction of rich media on the Web. In the following section, I detail the prehistory of UbuWeb by discussing the various contexts that inform UbuWeb's initial organization: Goldsmith's career as a sculptor, his interest in concrete and visual poetry, his engagement with Language poetry, and his fluency with developing digital networks. In "An Experiment in Radical Distribution," I discuss Goldsmith's unwavering dedication to circulating works of the historical and present-day avant-garde traditions, and assess what this has meant in terms of his shifting relationships with the institutional sponsors who support UbuWeb's material infrastructure and day-to-day maintenance on the Web. In detailing the repository's often-shifting institutional relationships, I then attempt to closely read two external hard drives – the means by which Goldsmith has been able to move his materials from site to site and assure the repository's ongoing presence on the Internet – that contain UbuWeb's complete materials. The following three sections attempt to bring in other voices to share their perspective on the digital repository: first, Goldsmith's own as he discusses the array of cease-and-desist letters he has received over the years; then, I discuss the reception of UbuWeb through its communities of users as they discuss an apparent hacking

of UbuWeb in 2010; then, I return to Goldsmith's voice as he discusses why UbuWeb is a more important contemporary resource than New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). I then return to the narrative of UbuWeb's shifts, following the repository to Mexico City, where it has been maintained by a small, private university focused on design and film called CENTRO. Finally, in "Poetics at the Edge of Circulation," I address a series of more recent shifts in UbuWeb's existence so as to imagine its possible future on the Web and to reflect on how the repository's model informs the existence of other archive- and publication-based objects on the Web.

Throughout, this chapter aims to present the assemblage of materials, individuals, modes of conviviality, and institutions that support UbuWeb's forms of circulation. In his correspondence, Goldsmith often assumes the figure of a "we" when writing on behalf of UbuWeb (see, for examples, figs. 2.14, 2.16-7, 2.19-20, 2.23-5). Though this "we" could potentially be a kind of incorporated "we," one which figures in the various labourers and sites of production involved in the constellation of UbuWeb, it is, instead, a royal "we" figured for Goldsmith himself, as grandiose, cavalier, and, occasionally, offensive as the character of the site's regal namesake. One of the primary tensions this chapter will trace out concerns this figuring: the ways in which Goldsmith has sought out and been able to construct various corporate formations in order to continue the site's ongoing existence, as he simultaneously masks that network of labour and support so as to assert his own primacy as the site's central figure – its lead-avantgardist, designer, and provocateur. As critical as that assertion sounds, such a positioning, as we shall see, has its benefits in that it affords forms of circulation impossible elsewhere. So, in discussing the files and infrastructures that are central to this chapter, I aim to underline throughout the particular interpersonal relations upon which their continued development depends.

Fig. 2.01: Goldsmith's screenshot of UbuWeb's home page, 9 July 2012.

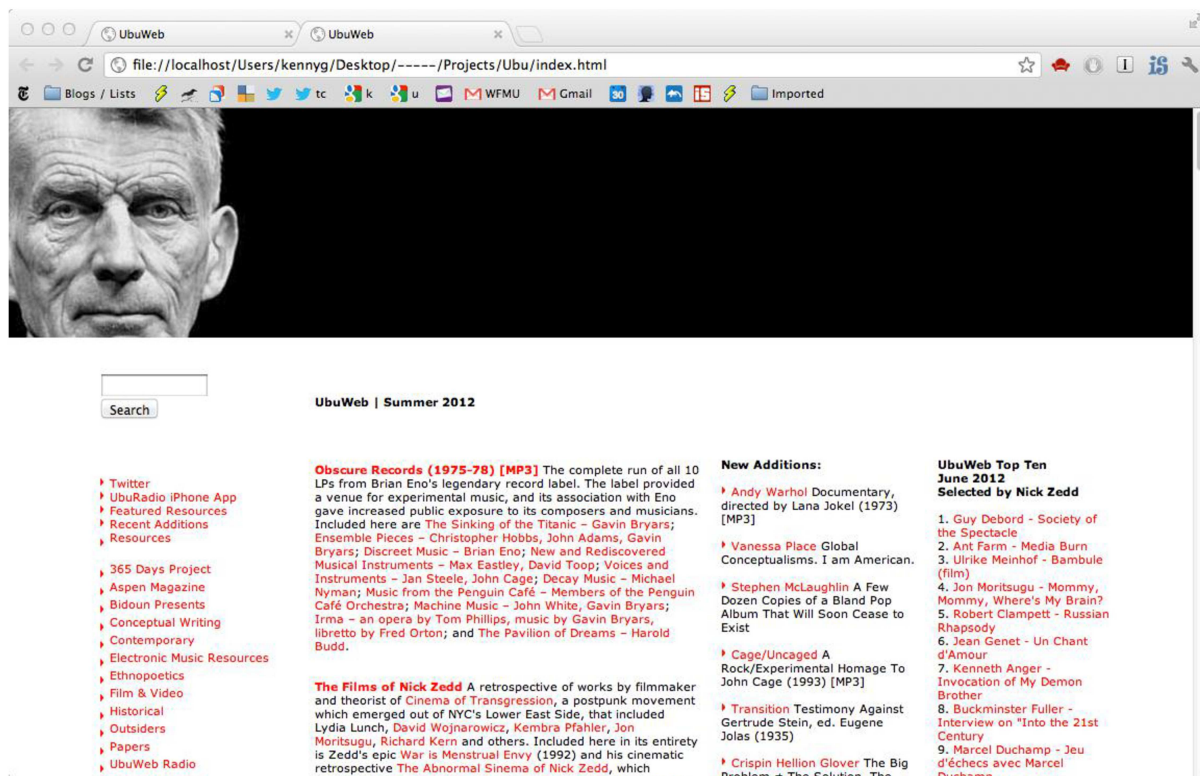


Fig. 2.02: Goldsmith's screenshot of UbuWeb's sound page, 9 July 2012.

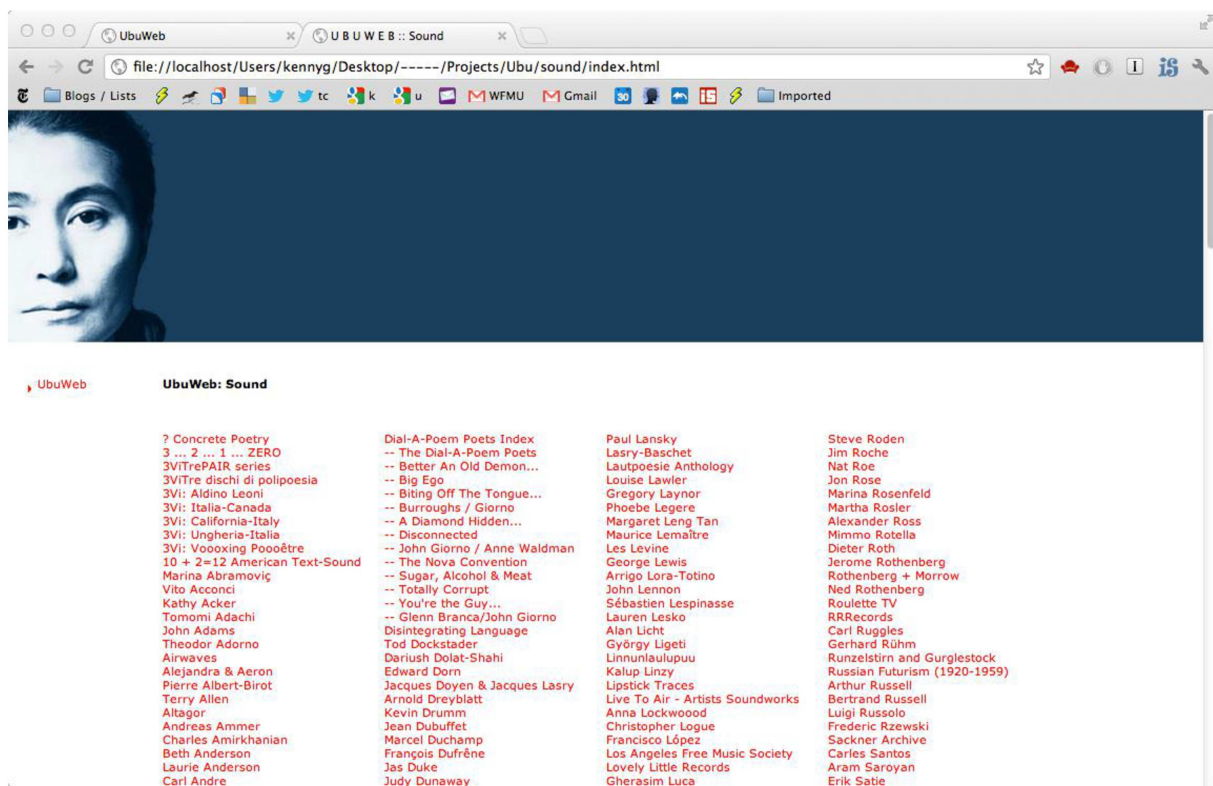


Fig. 2.03: Example of UbuWeb's sound interface, 8 June 2018.

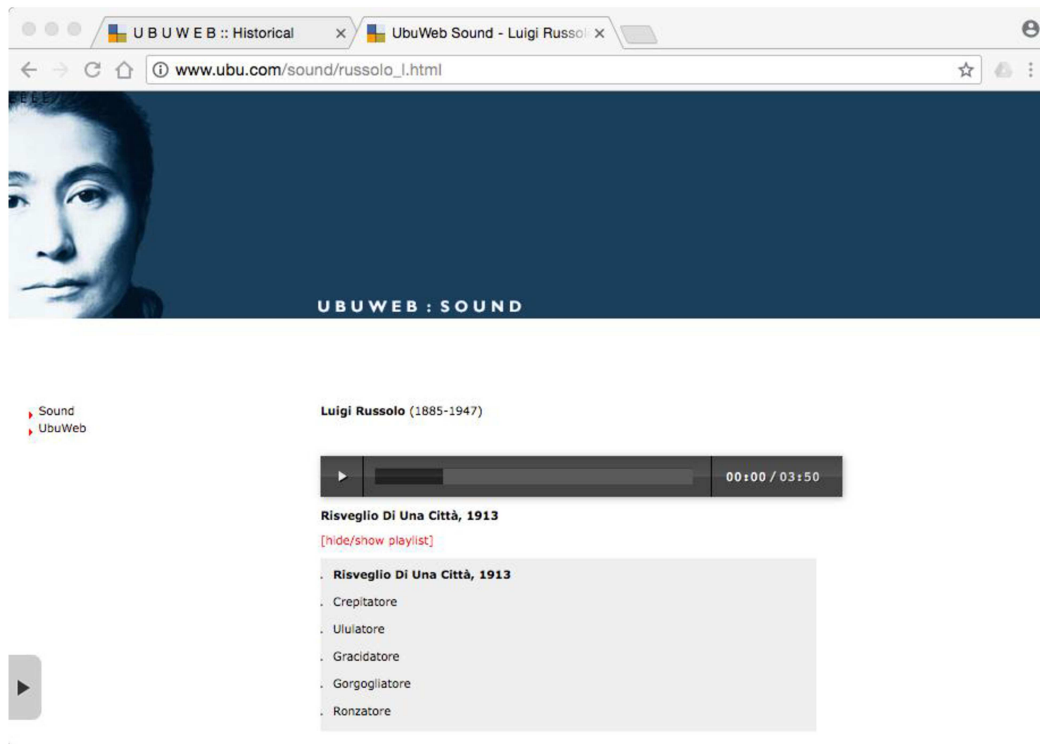
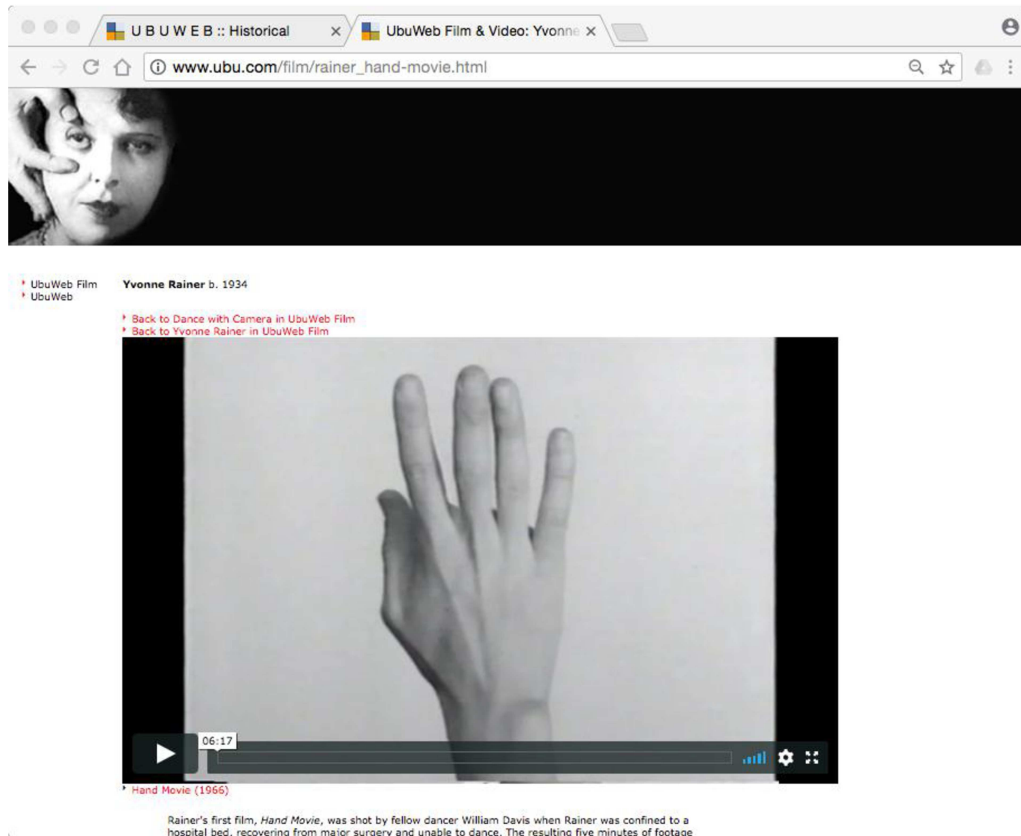


Fig. 2.04: Example of UbuWeb's video interface, 8 June 2018.



Literature on UbuWeb

Of the three repositories I discuss in this dissertation, UbuWeb is the most extensively noted in scholarly and cultural writings, as, notably, Goldsmith has been the subject of a significant body of criticism and reportage. The repository is often cited as a project that exists parallel to Goldsmith's poetic production, a way of framing what Goldsmith does in addition to his labour-intensive poetic works. Yet numerous cultural institutions have acknowledged the repository's importance. For example, the website for the American Academy of Poets describes UbuWeb as "arguably the most comprehensive online repository of experimental and avant-garde documents,"²⁶⁹ and the London *Sunday Times*, comparing the site to an art gallery, states that "UbuWeb somehow creates its own distinctive space, and one perfectly suited to its brilliant collection."²⁷⁰ These kinds of brief statements on UbuWeb are remarkable for the fact of the varied contexts they appear in, from open culture and technology magazines to film quarterlies, libraries and information studies journals to fandom blogs, published in Portugal, Sweden, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, and France, amongst others. Beyond such anecdotal reflections, there exists an important body of literature that I draw from for the writing of this chapter.

The 2005 issues of the journal *Open Letter* entitled "Kenneth Goldsmith and Conceptual Poetics," edited by Lori Emerson and Barbara Cole, is one of the earliest and most in-depth portrayals into the work and figure of Goldsmith. To this extent, many of the issue's articles serve as important sources for contextualizing the reception of Goldsmith's earlier works and the immediate discursive impact they had. Throughout the issue, UbuWeb is only occasionally acknowledged and – unlike his books *Fidget* (2000), *Soliloquy* (2001), *Day* (2003), and *Weather* (2005) – is not considered a primary work deserving of in-depth analysis. Contributions such as Geoffrey Young's "Kenny" and Caroline Bergvall's "Stepping out with Kenneth Goldsmith: A New York Interview" do a great service of providing in-depth context on Goldsmith at the time he began to work on UbuWeb. Craig Dworkin's "Zero Kerning" and Darren Wershler's "Uncreative is the New Creative: Kenneth Goldsmith Not Typing" provide valuable critical frameworks – Dworkin on the spatialization and regulation of language in its movements, and Wershler on "the uneasy question of the economics of writing subjects in a networked world: who writes, who controls, who pays, and who benefits?"²⁷¹ Here, I take up such approaches to Goldsmith's poetic works and apply them to the dynamics of UbuWeb's development.

Marjorie Perloff, reflecting on the materials that UbuWeb circulates and the way in which it does it, asks the most important question in all the critical writings concerning the repository: “How will the dissemination of such rich and varied materials affect the poetry-reading public?”²⁷² This, indeed, is the guiding question of this dissertation. Perloff frames her question within an essay that argues the “new techniques” of digital or e-poetries have had little impact on altering poetic practice more generally, with few exceptions.²⁷³ Yet, she states, the “real revolution that is taking place right before our eyes” is the “new dissemination of poetry and poetics that is occurring on the Internet.”²⁷⁴ For Perloff, UbuWeb is the chief example, a site where “one can access an astonishing variety of avant-garde poetries from the early twentieth century to the present: from Russian Futurism and Dada and Fluxus and Ethnopoetics to contemporary movements in visual and sound poetry.” There, one can find such rarities, like the entire archive of the avant-garde “magazine in a box *Aspen* (1965-1971), that are unavailable even in leading research libraries.”²⁷⁵ Perloff then notes briefly two additional aspects – related to the economics of circulation, and the formatting of the texts – as to how UbuWeb’s dissemination of materials is having a profound and public impact. In the first, she recognizes the service UbuWeb is doing by making materials accessible that had previously been expensive to reproduce and print, such as books of concrete poetry or rare recordings of sound poetry, which, among other things, facilitates teachers in being able to now integrate such materials into an academic curriculum. Corresponding with this final point, UbuWeb’s mode of reproduction allows students to access “electronic texts [that] are more likely to be truer to the original than the usual reprints and anthology versions,” for example the commonplace North anthologies that “often adjust the visual format of a given poem so as to save space and hence money.”²⁷⁶ In sum, Perloff’s observations establish a terrain this chapter seeks to explore and expand upon in depth.

Two unpublished writings, initially given as conference papers, by Darren Wershler – “Digital Draft Dodging: UbuWeb and Aggressive Fair Dealing” (2008) and “UbuWeb and Aggressive Fair Dealing 2: The Sushi and the Coelacanth” (2009) – inform my approach to the number of copyright and intellectual property issues related to UbuWeb. In portraying the degree to which UbuWeb “candidly and enthusiastically breaks copyright law,” yet does so in a “radically ethical manner,” Wershler argues that it “clears the way for a digital fair dealing culture to emerge.”²⁷⁷ Here, Wershler is discussing UbuWeb specifically within the frame of legal analysis concerning the Canadian Copyright Act, since the repository’s servers were,

between 2008 and 2011, located at York University. Yet the implications of Wershler's assertions concerning UbuWeb extend into open (access's) culture movements globally. In Goldsmith's "aggressive" or "dynamic" approach to distributing works through UbuWeb without permission, Wershler shows, Goldsmith helps shape an overall atmosphere where individual users test and define the limits of what permitted for the circulation of digital objects, as opposed to it merely being defined by governmental and legal institutions. Wershler's assessment of UbuWeb's approach to intellectual property provides the basis for the section of this chapter, "An Experiment in Radical Distribution."

Sean Dockray's 2012 review of UbuWeb in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* points to the fact that, after 15 years, the repository had become an object of attention to a wide array of intellectual communities and practices. Comparing the repository to file-sharing sites, he notes that UbuWeb is "generally praised rather than prosecuted" and, due to the context for the materials it has created, it "complicates the decision of right holders to pursue property claims" against it.²⁷⁸ The reasons for this are twofold: the limited distribution channels of the original materials, which often relied on "volunteer labour, donations, and increasingly scarce state funding"; and the fact that "the rights holders [of the original works that are digitized and made available on UbuWeb] often do not have the time or money to litigate their work's appearance on UbuWeb" and the fact that, often, "artists are often reluctant to treat their work as a commodity if that would be inconsistent with their avant-garde practice."²⁷⁹ Dockray then hits upon a point I will discuss at length later in this chapter:

When Goldsmith writes "if we had to ask for permission we wouldn't exist," he succinctly distills the nature of UbuWeb. It articulates itself, neither for nor against, but at a distance from established institutions. It knows that institutions tend toward self-preservation, and that any permission requested to host and disseminate digital copies of artworks would be met first by disinterest, and then obstinate bureaucracy. The statement goes even farther, though. Not simply an obstacle, permission has perversely become the only that that these institutions have to offer. [...] Within this kind of economy, centred on intellectual property, permission is absolutely not given away. UbuWeb stands as a challenge to this role of the art institution as licensor.²⁸⁰

In this effort, UbuWeb definitively "politicizes appropriation," extending the territory of artistic intervention "beyond the page or the frame and into the systems of distribution and reception."²⁸¹

In "Spoken, Word: Audio-Textual Relations in UbuWeb, PennSound and Spoken Web" (2014), Deanna Fong focuses on the organization of audio recordings in online collections and

repositories of sounded poetry. Fong, at first, centres on the ethos of UbuWeb's archival practice, noting that it is specifically an outcome of its emphasis on circulation: "if we're persuaded by the LOCKSS mantra, 'Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe,' then Goldsmith's call for radical forms of distribution is equally a call for radical forms of preservation."²⁸² Then, describing UbuWeb as a "modular audio archive," where "the audio artefact, in playback, is often divorced (in both streaming and downloaded formats) from any fixed textual components and there is no consistent format for the presentation of text and in playback," she analyzes the interface relationship between user and audio materials. Fong sees in UbuWeb a "non-hierarchical structure" where "no single medium or genre is privileged over another," and the "flat, cool, minimal qualities" of its pages that strips away "the distinctness of each artefact."²⁸³ Fong describes this process as a "dematerialization" of the digital files, and, similarly, another commentator has noted the "contextlessness" in which these files appear.²⁸⁴ She views this curatorial approach as highlighting the status of digital objects in general on the Web. In this chapter, I intend to unpack these idea of absent materialization and context in order to show how both function in Goldsmith specific design protocols for the repository.

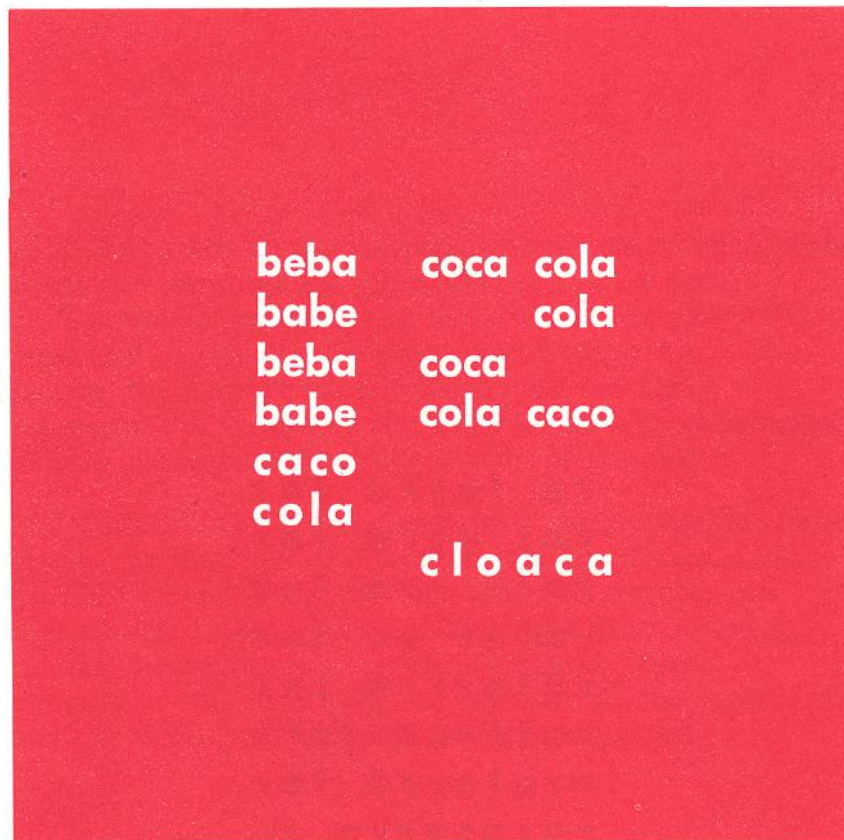
In her Masters dissertation University of Paris 3–Sorbonne Nouvelle entitled "Kenneth Goldsmith's *UbuWeb*: An Artist's Contribution to the Digital Humanities," Agnès Peller approaches UbuWeb as a "publishing portal" that has had an impact on the "Digital Humanities movement."²⁸⁵ Peller's research draws together Goldsmith's scattered statements on the repository and its development, and in this it is a significant contribution, even if it remains at the level of a general overview throughout. She thoroughly breaks down all of the components of UbuWeb, from the specific types of files included on the site to the taxonomies that Goldsmith has used to organize them. Peller's sense of the digital humanities suffers from the fact that she uncritically upholds the discourse as a formed and distinct terrain, with little regard to how and under what conditions it has been produced. To this extent, also, Peller pays little attention to the contexts and cultural dynamics of UbuWeb's production.

Danny Snelson's "'Ever the Avant-Garde of the Avant-Garde till Heaven and After': *UbuWeb* from Film to Database," a chapter from Snelson's 2015 doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, is significant for its attention to format and the shifting status of digital objects in their mediation from analogue to digital objects of various kinds. Focusing primarily on the film and video files collected on UbuWeb, Snelson's chapter considers the

movement of works from their initial context to their embeddedness on the repository, so as to trace out a media poetics that attends to the format-specific shifts in a work's constitution as it circulates. In his detailed analyses of specific works on the site, Snelson addresses a number of important issues for critically considering the status and composition of works in digital milieus. To this extent, Snelson's work serves as a valuable companion to the history of the overall repository and its developments that I trace out here.

In addition to Goldsmith's own extensive critical writings, which I engage throughout the chapter, a number of additional sources inform aspects of this chapter: an extensive dialogue with Goldsmith from May of 2015, included in full as Appendix 3;²⁸⁶ a series of interviews from February and March with the individuals involved with bringing UbuWeb to Mexico City, included in full as Appendix 4; three hard drives of materials that chart the complete files and configuration of UbuWeb, one from 2005, another from 2010, and the third one from 2015. To this extent, these additional sources open the narrative on UbuWeb beyond Goldsmith's telling to an engagement with the materials themselves and the various people who have laboured on the site's production during the course of its history.

Fig. 2.05: Décio Pignatari's "beba coca cola," 1957.



drink coca cola
drool glue
drink coca(ine)
drool glue shard
shard
glue

cesspool

Fig. 2.06: My screenshot of UbuWeb's FAQ, 12 June 2018.

What is your policy concerning posting copyrighted material?

If it's out of print, we feel it's fair game. Or if something is in print, yet absurdly priced or insanely hard to procure, we'll take a chance on it. But if it's in print and available to all, we won't touch it. The last thing we'd want to do is to take the meager amount of money out of the pockets of those releasing generally poorly-selling materials of the avant-garde. UbuWeb functions as a distribution center for hard-to-find, out-of-print and obscure materials, transferred digitally to the web. Our scanning, say, an historical concrete poem in no way detracts from the physical value of that object in the real world; in fact, it probably enhances it. Either way, we don't care: Ebay is full of wonderful physical artifacts, most of them worth a lot of money.

Should something return to print, we will remove it from our site immediately. Also, should an artist find their material posted on UbuWeb without permission and wants it removed, please let us know. However, most of the time, we find artists are thrilled to find their work cared for and displayed in a sympathetic context. As always, we welcome more work from existing artists on site.

Let's face it, if we had to get permission from everyone on UbuWeb, there would be no UbuWeb.

Fig. 2.07: My screenshot of UbuWeb's FAQ, 12 June 2018.

Why is your media often poor quality?

We like poor quality because we believe that an institution or an individual wishing to have the "real" thing should purchase it from those who publish and distribute such materials. Believe me, they're not in it for the money. That said, however, most everything on UbuWeb is pretty much out of print and was never hi-fi to begin with. On top of that, the crappy, say, VHS rips floating around file-sharing site -- where we get much of our material from -- is gorgeously primitive, made by fans. UbuWeb is like seeing a photograph of a painting. If you really want to see the way Van Gogh applied the paint, you need to see the damn thing in person. Until you can get there, you're stuck with us.

Are you affiliated with a university?

No. UbuWeb is a completely independent site. However, several universities and partners have generously offered us server space and bandwidth, with no restrictions or input regarding our content. We have gratefully accepted their offers.

Fig. 2.08: My screenshot of UbuWeb's FAQ, 12 June 2018.

What system do you design UbuWeb on?

Ubu is built the same way that it's been since 1996: coded by hand in BBEdit, all html 1.0. There's no fancy database or back-end. It's simple, and simply works

Portrait of the Poet as Information Manager

Before I address the contexts in which UbuWeb circulates its materials, I want to chart out the various trajectories – from the New York intermedial arts scenes to several generations of modernist literary movements, from fabricating three-dimensional objects to data-sculpting on the early Web – that inform the specific materials he began to include on UbuWeb, its interface, and the philosophy behind its mode of distribution. In noting Goldsmith's interest in creating a life for works beyond the specific contexts in which only a few people may have encountered them, I want to draw attention to the kind of works he was drawn to collect and create a space for on UbuWeb. They are works, primarily, that explore the boundaries of established media practices and formats. Many function, for example, at the limits or meeting points of, variously, text and design, sculpture and sound, performance and publication, film and dance. Their radicality is, at least partly, a function of being between or outside of such designated parameters. In establishing UbuWeb, Goldsmith explores a means of creating new contexts for and disseminating the obscure and ephemeral materials that such aesthetic practices generally produce.

Goldsmith's immediate environs in New York serve a kind of living repository of such practices. In his dialogue-walk through lower Manhattan with poet Caroline Bergvall, Goldsmith relays a personal anecdote concerning the 1998 funeral for Dick Higgins²⁸⁷ – the poet, publisher, and Fluxus artist who coined the term “intermedia,” and who, as a poet, publisher, collaborator, and theorist-practitioner of art and its expanded media, stood as an important figure and precedent for the work Goldsmith would assemble through UbuWeb:

Here we are at Judson Church of course when it was in its heyday I was just being born but subsequently over the years I befriended many of [the artists involved with the space] to the point where Alison Knowles asked me to speak at Dick Higgins memorial service which was held right here in the church and I remember giving this speech which was an obit he had written for himself in the foreword of [his] book *foew&ombwhnw*²⁸⁸ and I said it word for word and afterwards people came up to me and said that was such a moving tribute to Dick but I didn't write a word of it and it made me realise how unfamiliar everybody in that room were with his own writings it's a book that everybodys got on their shelves but of course its a difficult book to read and no one has ever read it all that was such a strange thing but I looked over the audience and saw all my heroes from the 60s out there it was an amazing crowd Meredith Monk and all the Conceptual artists great film-makers the whole avant garde world was there²⁸⁹

Higgins, as a poet, publisher, collaborator, and theorist-practitioner of art and its expanded media, stood as an important figure and precedent for the work Goldsmith would assemble through UbuWeb. Aside from the fact of his assimilation within a generation of prominent New York artists who worked across media and genres that Goldsmith clearly emulates and sought to be among, there is an underlying story that is pertinent to contextualizing UbuWeb. The reading of Higgins' self-authored obituary is one of Goldsmith's earliest performances of an "unoriginal" text as a work of his own.²⁹⁰ That it takes place concerning the death of an individual not only prefigures much of Goldsmith's later work, it also establishes a frame for unoriginal writing that situates it in a context where one is, perhaps, incapable of writing. Goldsmith's surprise that few, if any, in attending the funeral recognized the text as originating from Higgins' book – one, he claims, that many of those in attendance possessed in their own libraries – points to the effectiveness of recirculating a previously-authored text in a new context could be. This realization anticipates the poetics of Goldsmith's works such as *Day* (2003), *Weather* (2005), *Traffic* (2007), *Sports* (2008), and *Seven American Deaths and Disasters* (2013). In creating a new context for and attention to a work that he views to be of interest and of use to others, ones perhaps already in their very midst, it is also indicative of the editorial and pedagogical impulse that would become foundational to developing UbuWeb.

Goldsmith's overall engagement with texts and textuality in general emerges out of several interrelated facets – a profound shift in his artistic production, his initial engagement with formally innovative twentieth-century literature, and his work in the then-emergent dot-com industry – all dating to the early- and mid-1990s. Following his training in sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Goldsmith worked in the New York art world as an artist in his own right and as a for-hire plaster mould and casting assistant for other artists, such as Allan McCollum, under the banner of "Ubu Plastering."²⁹¹ On naming his business after the titular character of the French playwright Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896), Goldsmith states: "The many businesses I had have all been called Ubu."²⁹² Many of the artists Goldsmith associated with at the time participated in expanded literary communities and practices, and it compelled Goldsmith's self-directed readings into the sources that had been their inspiration. As he describes to Bergvall:

Where we are now [in Washington Square Park] used to be a dog run where dogs can go and be free I had a dog in the early 90s late 80s when I had an office in the Cable Building²⁹³ [located nearby at the corner of Broadway and Houston Street] and its in

this dog run that I read all the works of Modernism most specifically I remember reading *Ulysses* in this part of the dog run I completely educated myself to everything Modernist I'd never paid much attention to it before but now I read everything I could get my hands on and also the complete works of Henry James and *Washington Square* of course I read [Gertrude Stein's] *The Making of Americans* here I read [E.E.] Cummings here I read [Ezra Pound's] *Cantos* right in this dog run it was insanely important for my Modernist education I just sat down and read everything²⁹⁴

He would later come to view the way these modernist authors “fractured” and “shattered” language, making it “multiple” across a singular plane – an aesthetic in dialogue with the Cubist, Futurist, and Surrealist art he was more familiar with – as the “DNA of the Internet,” a prefiguring of how one confronts flows of language across digital platforms and interfaces.²⁹⁵

At this time, Goldsmith's own artistic production began to explore a compositional space that combined sculpture, text, drawing, architecture, and the book arts. Geoffrey Young, a gallery owner and the publisher of the literary small press *The Figures*,²⁹⁶ describes his first impressions of Goldsmith when the two met during the early 1990s, noting that Goldsmith was “a devotee already of the computer,” one making “his own anxious transformation from object-producing artist in studio in a system of galleries and collectors, to a text-producing writer with a laptop in a world where money didn't play any role at all.”²⁹⁷ Young describes the works of Goldsmith's he first encountered, ones that left such an impression that he sought to track their maker down in order to present the works at his gallery:

The works were a hybrid form of sculpture (six feet tall, three feet wide, in shallow box frames, leaning against a wall), and text (white fields with top-to-bottom thin columns of machine-printed words, or fragments of words). I began to read them – to sound them – trying to figure out what their organizing principles were. Some time later, I saw two graphite drawings [also by Goldsmith] in a Soho Gallery. Like the sculpture, they used words, or symbols from language, as well as repetition, but unlike the sculptural works, they were carefully executed by hand.²⁹⁸

He then describes a number of later works “whose shapes for the most part were derived from books, including one on the floor made of solid lead, called ‘Steal This,’ after the Abbie Hoffman book of the same title.”²⁹⁹ And in yet another work from the period, he “papered a gallery floor to ceiling with large sheets of gridded text.”³⁰⁰ Such works seem to draw on the density and play that was a dominant feature of the early-twentieth century Modernism that Goldsmith had been absorbing, as much as the intermediality and immersiveness of the prior generations of New York-based artists he so greatly admired.

Another important radical modernist tradition, that of the mid-twentieth century international concrete poetry movement, is also legible in such work. Goldsmith first encountered concrete poetry when he visited the Ruth and Marvin Sackner collection of concrete and visual poetry in Miami during the late 1980s.³⁰¹ The works he saw there not only inspired a fundamental change in his sculptural work to include textual aspects, it also prompted him to become a collector of works of that movement of poetry. Concrete poetry, according to Goldsmith, had “an agenda of creating a transnational, panlinguistic way of writing that anyone – regardless of where they lived or what their mother tongue was – could understand.”³⁰² In this, the movement both borrowed from and sought to create an alternative to the expanding culture of global advertising. As Goldsmith notes, the poets involved in this movement

produced poems that didn’t look like poems: nothing was versified or lineated, there was no meter and very little metric rhythm. They often looked more like corporate logos than they did poems: clusters of letters atop one another, sitting in the middle of the page. These were poems that bore more relation to the visual arts or to graphic design, which, in fact, they were often mistaken for.³⁰³

Yet Goldsmith also sees concrete poetry responding to a different global phenomenon: the rise of computer networks in the 1960s. In manifesto declarations from the movement – such as Eugen Gomringer’s “Our languages are on the road to formal simplification, abbreviated, restricted forms of language are emerging”³⁰⁴ and Mary Ellen Solt’s “Uses of language in poetry of the traditional type are not keeping pace with the live processes of language and rapid methods of communication at work in our contemporary world”³⁰⁵ – he saw concrete poetry as trying to incorporate the features of computational language in its progression from command line to icon.³⁰⁶ To this extent, concrete poetry, according to Goldsmith, envisioned “the page as a screen” and “anticipated the way we would work with language in the digital world half a century later.”³⁰⁷

When a friend introduced Goldsmith to the newly launched Netscape web browser in January 1996, he would immediately relate the interface to concrete poetry:

The first image I saw appear on the screen was a slowly unfurling interlaced gif [of the Netscape “N” placed at the earth’s horizon amid shooting and shining stars]. And as the text and image filled in with alternating lines, it reminded me of sequential movement poems such as Jean François Bory’s “The worldWordis...,” which, when printed across several pages, resembles a flipbook.³⁰⁸ Over the next few months, the proliferation of slick graphic images on the Web – most often used for advertising – also reminded me of concrete works such as bpNichol’s “eyes”³⁰⁹ from the mid-

1960s and Décio Pignatari's "beba coca cola"³¹⁰ from the late 1950s. [...] There was something formally astonishing about the way that the computer screen and concrete poetry seemed to work naturally together. It seemed a fulfilment of concrete poetry's original premise.³¹¹

In this encounter lies, perhaps, the first flickering of UbuWeb. Here, it's worth noting that though internationalist and interlingual in its scope, works of concrete poetry could only circulate within limited channels due to the exceptional costs of producing and disseminating such works.³¹² Goldsmith's personal collection of difficult-to-acquire concrete poetry books, which he began hunting down and accumulating in the late 1980s, would come to serve as the foundational collection featured on UbuWeb:

It felt right to move my collection to the Web: scanning the images and seeing them backlit by the computer screen made everything seem fresh [...]. Freed from the dusty bookstores and flea markets, sprung from their yellowing pages, these images were revitalized; concrete poetry was once again in dialogue with contemporary culture.³¹³

In seeing the computer screen as a fulfilment of concrete poetry's original premise, he also envisioned the networked infrastructure of the Web as a realization of its possible ultimate context. Goldsmith would model UbuWeb's interface after "the same flat, cool, and minimal qualities" that he admired so much in concrete poetry.³¹⁴ In comparing Pignatari's "bebe coca cola" (fig. 2.05) to the design of the site, one can see the extent to which Goldsmith adapted the work's font, juxtaposed blocs of colour, and even its particular shade of orange for UbuWeb's interface. In the many movements, shifts, and changes to UbuWeb's infrastructure since its inception, it's notable how the site's external template and interface have remained the same.

There is another important radical modernist tradition of poetry Goldsmith encountered prior to UbuWeb that would have an important impact on the repository's initial development: Language poetry. His awareness in this tradition emerges out of his first meetings with Geoffrey Young, as Goldsmith recounts:

[Young] said I'm a publisher of Language poetry I'd never heard of that this was in 1992 and he gave me a stack of books Silliman's *Tjanting* was one and I thought it was incredible [...] there was a package in the mail from somebody called Bruce Andrews and the manuscript was *Tizzy Boost* which I would go on doing drawing for I was stupefied I had never seen any work like this I had no idea who Bruce was and it wasn't mechanical like *Tjanting* I just ignored it but back on a train from Boston I had a few drinks and I thought I'd try and deal with the manuscript and finally by

Connecticut I started to ask what it wasn't and by negative definition I arrived at what it was and that was the only way I managed to understand Language Poetry³¹⁵

In Language poetry's experimentations with voice, perspective, and structures of meaning making, Goldsmith saw a living tradition, one connected in various ways to the lineages and arts milieus with which he himself was engaged. The fact that several of its core practitioners – for example, the editors of the journal *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein – also resided in New York, offered a proximity and opportunity for direct exchange that would come to impact UbuWeb. As Goldsmith recounts:

After having read all that modernism, I sort of assumed that it had pretty much died out by the time I arrived on the scene in the early 90s, when I was, by chance, introduced to Language Poetry, which was then on its last legs. Nonetheless, I was thrilled to find warm, living bodies in New York City who actually seemed to be interested in extending the modernist ethos. I honestly had no idea they existed.³¹⁶

Goldsmith would go on to illustrate Andrews's book *Tizzy Boost*, make him a subject in his book *Soliloquy*, and publish several of Andrews' works as *Ubu Editions*;³¹⁷ Bernstein would later become one of the chief advocates and institutional sponsors for UbuWeb as a board member and, later, a gateway figure for Goldsmith's hiring at the University of Pennsylvania.

In this dissertation's introduction, I discuss the dynamics of Language poetics, focusing specifically on its modes of production, dissemination, and emphases on archivization.³¹⁸ Here, I simply want to draw attention to a curious tension Goldsmith expresses with regard to his Language predecessors that served as both a model for establishing a poetics yet also as an agonistic example that he sought to overcome.³¹⁹ Goldsmith viewed Language poetry as a school or tendency that "got the last word in on Modernism," leaving little space for poets following in their wake to stake a ground in the field of radical poetic practice. "Fortunately," according to Goldsmith, "the digital came," thereby creating a new terrain for language and sets of techniques for manipulating and materializing it that had not been previously been available to the older generation.³²⁰ He describes this new scenario for language:

In the digital age, language is a shared resource. The mere cutting and pasting of another's words into your document makes them yours temporarily until someone else rescues them, claiming them as their own. The removal of oneself is essential to contemporary authorship. On the Web, ownership of concepts and language is an illusion. In such an environment, ethics need to be reconsidered. Here, stealing—or sharing—is not wrong; it is native to the environment.³²¹

If the conceptual poetics that Goldsmith would become a primary advocate of can be seen as both a continuation of and distinct break from the radical modernist poetics of Language poetry, an infrastructure like UbuWeb is rightly be understood as that new generation's mode of disseminating and archiving works, thereby serving as a primary infrastructure to constitute that new poetic movement.

Goldsmith's fluency in working with digital text extends out of his being "a devotee already to the computer" in the early 1990s, as Young notes above. His facility with such technology became a skill he was able to develop further in New York's emerging dot com industry. Goldsmith's initial Web work, as Wershler writes, was freelance, "under the name of Ubuweb Design. Along with the founders of another art website, Stadiumweb, Goldsmith later formed oo- ("double O dash"), a firm which built sites for New York City's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Dia Art Foundation, and other arts organizations."³²² In working with Stadiumweb, Goldsmith first came into contact with Zarcrom Industries, a multinational Internet Service Provider based in France that offered to host to not-for-profit arts organizations gratis.³²³ Later, in 1998, Goldsmith took a corporate Web development job with Method5, which was then bought by Exceed. There, according to Wershler, he worked on "high-profile websites including *The Economist* and a number of large shopping portals."³²⁴ Goldsmith admits he received an education working at the forefront of Web design in what he calls its "wild west" days, testing out the industry's uncertain protocols and standards.³²⁵ The employment also offered the time and means to work on UbuWeb. As he "surfed the heights of the dot-com era" as a creative director,³²⁶ he admits that he would

sit in the office all day and work on UbuWeb. I'd be like, Kids, make sure you're doing your work, and I was just sitting there with a fast web connection working on UbuWeb. So, I was being paid a good salary to sit at a desk in the mid 1990s, mid to late 90s, doing this stuff. I was trying to make beautiful things.³²⁷

Goldsmith, in a document from 2000 narrating the early history of UbuWeb, describes this time further:

Over the past year and a half, I had a job where I got paid very well to do nothing. I was placed in front of a very fast computer connected to the web on a very fast connection. All I did for 50 hours a week during the course of that year was to tweak and grow UbuWeb. In particular, the sound poetry section became an obsession of mine. Every day I'd bring in sound poetry CDs to work and spend the day ripping them into wav files, converting them to RealMedia, ftp'ing the files up to Ubu and

then scribbling the html. It was an amazingly time consuming process; god knows I had the time.³²⁸

Goldsmith would leave Exceed in 2001,³²⁹ but not before utilizing his time on the company's clock and its media infrastructure to do the basic groundwork to establish UbuWeb.

Fig. 2.09: UbuWeb's call for papers on UB Poetics List, 22 October 1996.



Fig. 2.10: Goldsmith's draft newsletter announcing addition of MP3s, 24 September 2001.

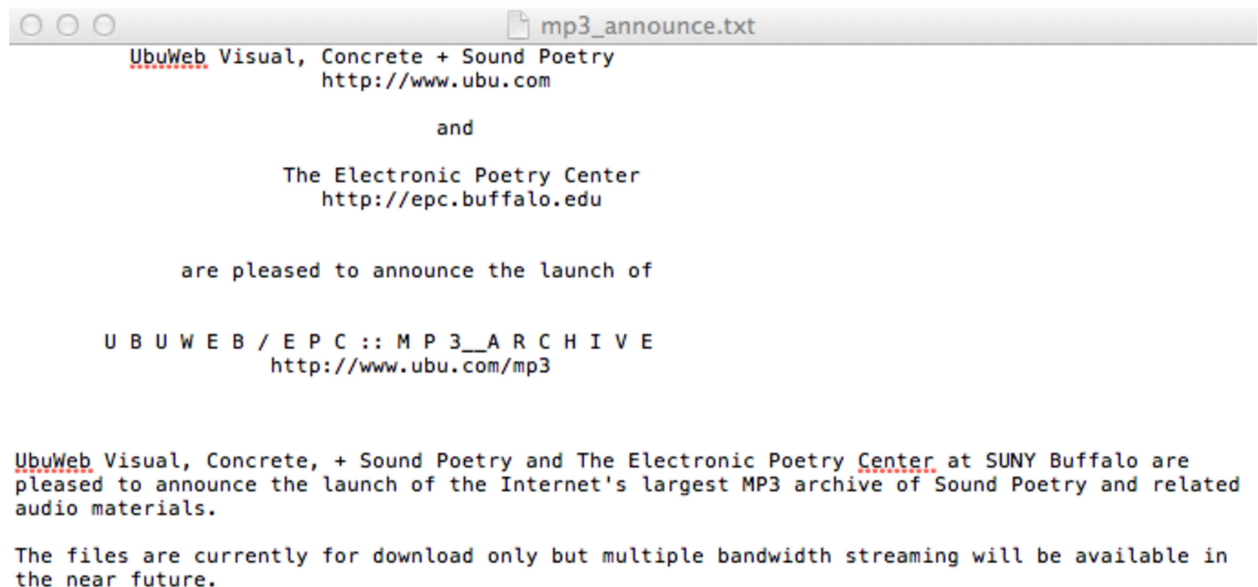


Fig. 2.11: Goldsmith's draft newsletter announcing UbuWeb's *Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, edited and introduced by Craig Dworkin, 7 April 2003.

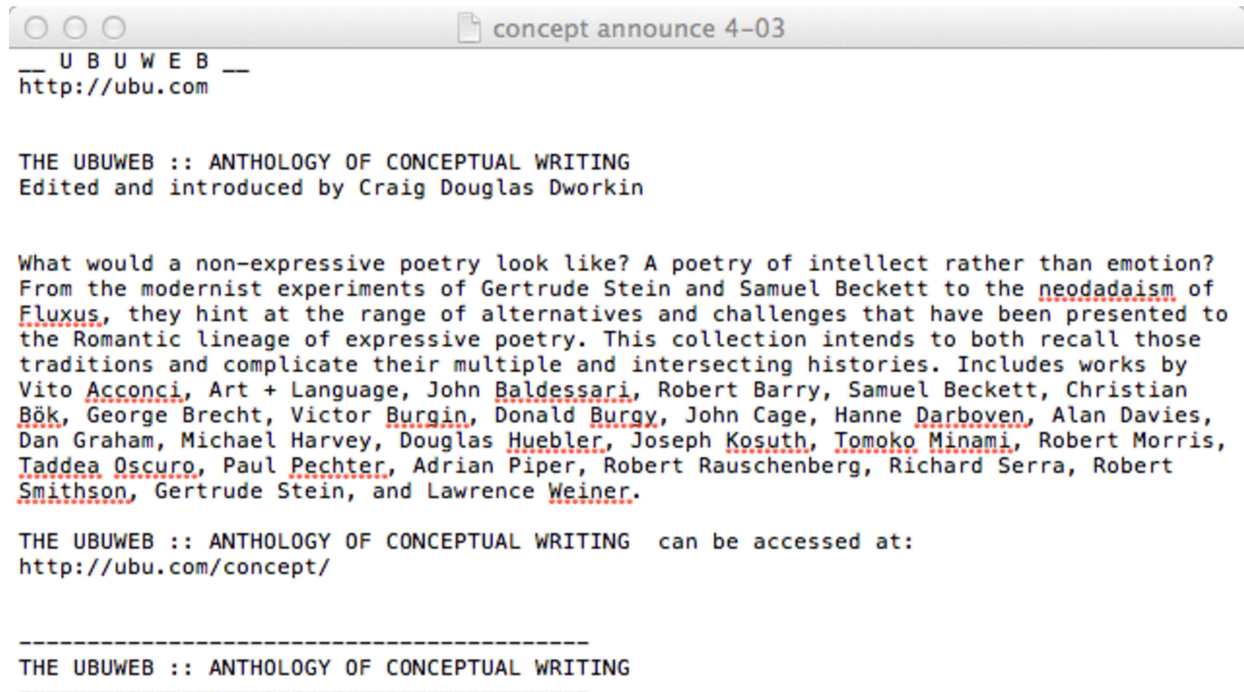


Fig. 2.12: Charles Baldwin's announcement of UbuWeb mirror, 9 January 2004.

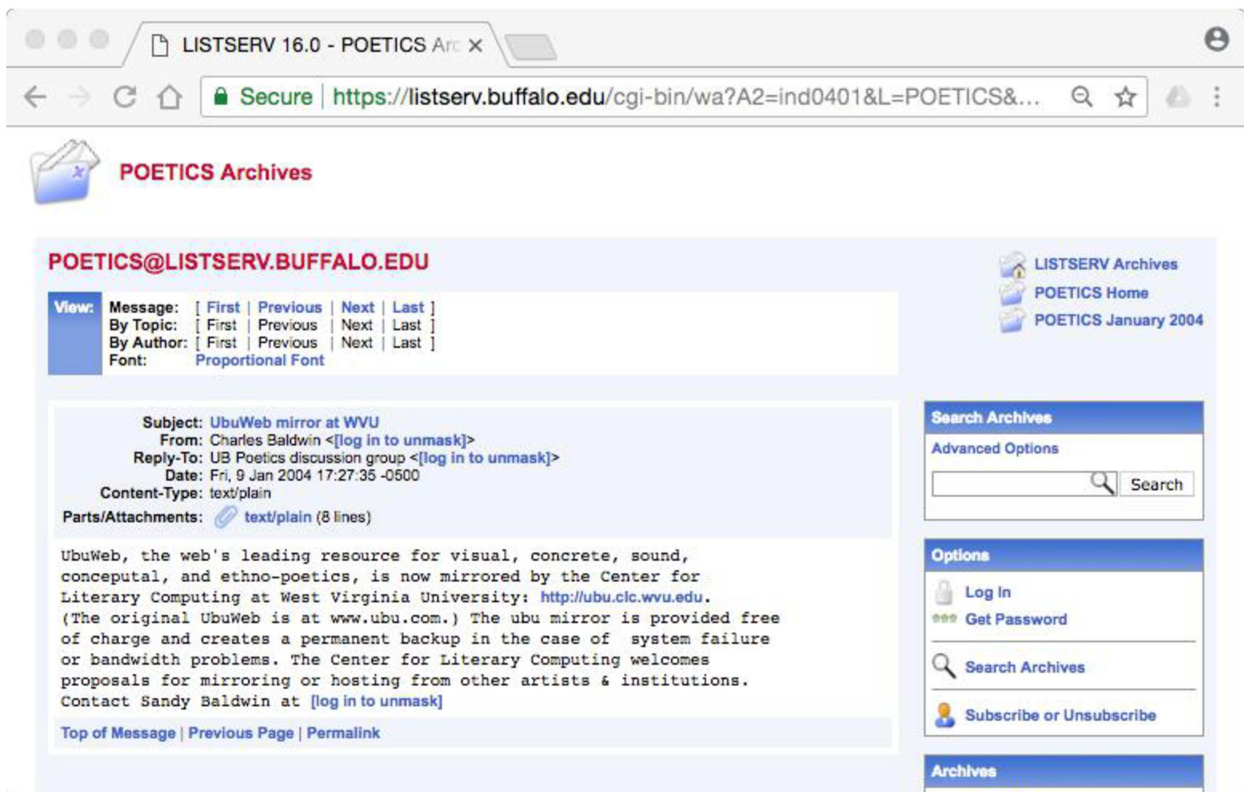


Fig. 2.13: Goldsmith's announcement of "the end of UbuWeb," 1 June, 2005.

From: UbuWeb
Date: June 1, 2005 8:29:02 PM CDT
To: UB Poetics discussion group
Subject: The End of UbuWeb

Friends,

Thanks to one and all for the kind comments about UbuWeb. It was a labor of love for the past decade and it was truly an experiment in radical distribution of materials that thrive on a gift economy. And it worked.

The finances and server complications are too dull to go into here, but suffice it to say, that after our university affiliation fell through, it quickly became clear that it wasn't salvageable in the Utopian form in which it existed. After seeing the full picture, I decided that UbuWeb should go out on a completely clean and composed note: it remained true to its vision from day one to the end. Anything else would have seemed to be a distasteful compromise.

The University of Pennsylvania will take good care of the site and archive it fully intact far into the future. Suffice it to say that it's in the best hands that it could possibly be in.

And really, my deepest hope is that UbuWeb will inspire others to create sites that surpass UbuWeb. We traffic in a privileged position of the gift economy, where intellectual materials travel widely and deeply, free of charge, available to all interested parties. UbuWeb is only the most recent incarnation of this tradition; history is rife with other examples. But the web remains the perfect place to realize our ideals without compromise. May a thousand flowers bloom.

Kenny Goldsmith

UbuWeb
<http://ubu.com>

Fig. 2.14: Goldsmith's draft newsletter announcing the re-launch, 13 September 2005.

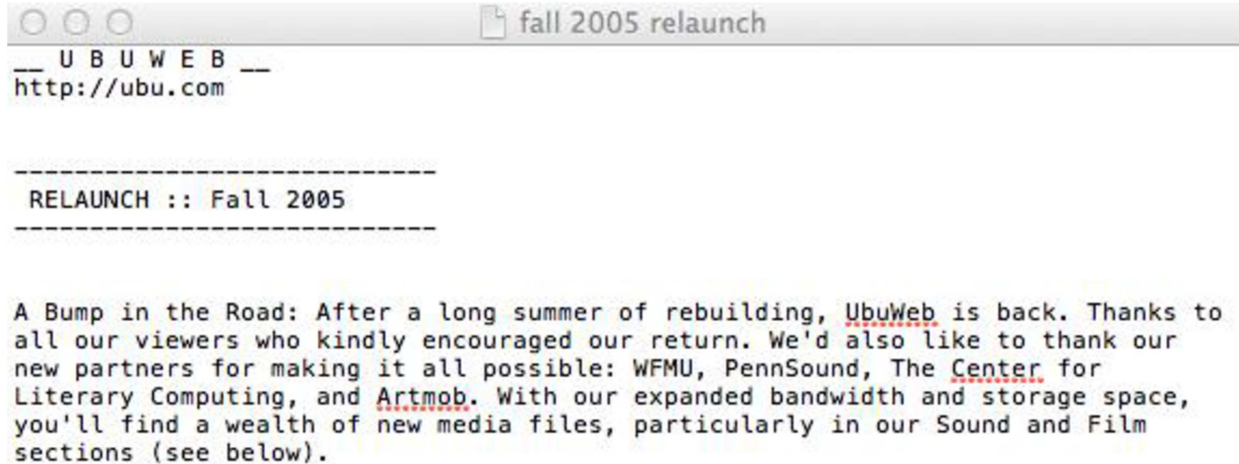
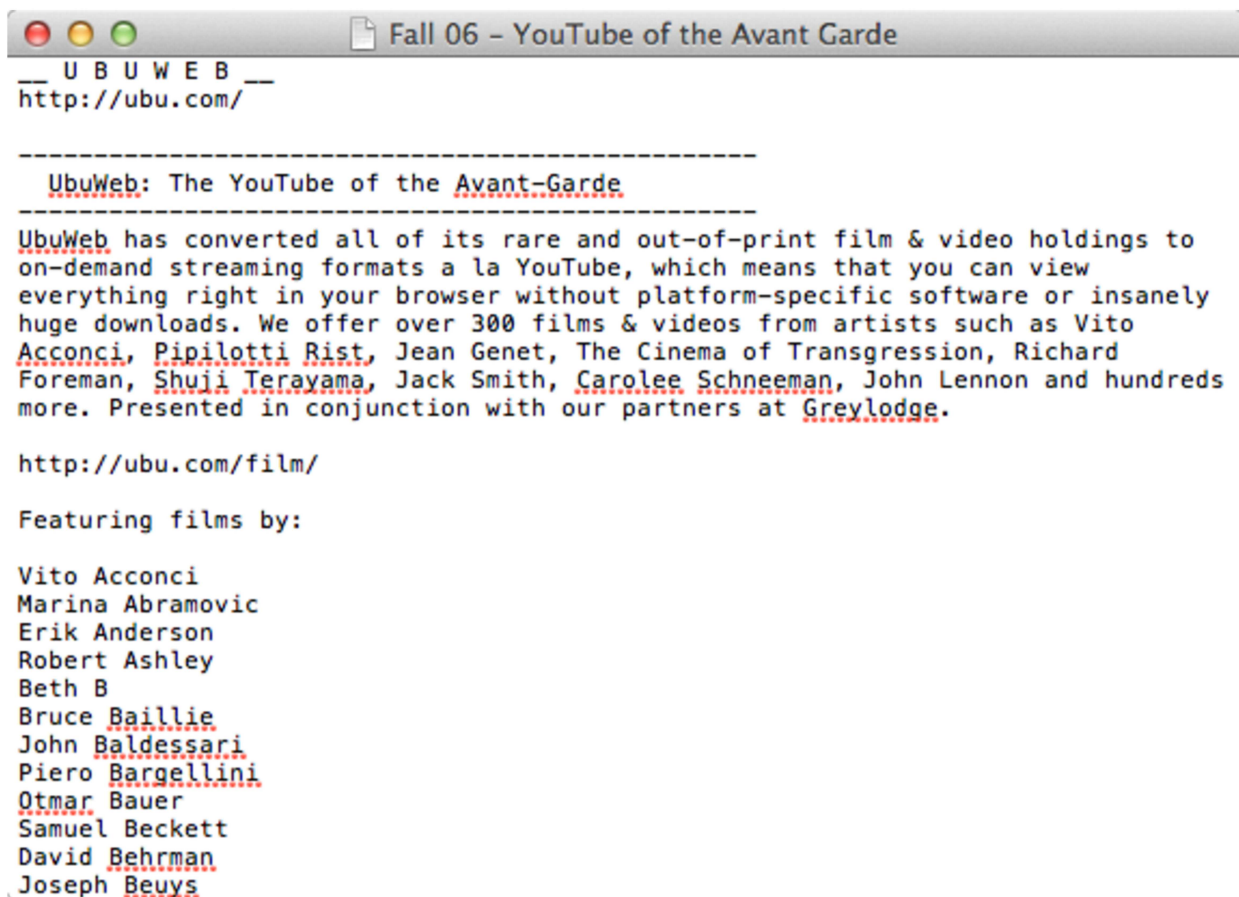


Fig. 2.15: Draft letter announcing transition of UbuWeb films to YouTube, 11 November 2006.



An Experiment in Radical Distribution

“[A]nalyzing the World Wide Web,” Lisa Gitelman writes, “curiously resembles making a Web page.”³³⁰ Here, Gitelman refers to the fact that depicting and assessing something as vast and various as the Web inevitably calls for selecting examples, quoting excerpts, and assembling links. In this chapter, I approach only a small but distinct node in the network of the Web. Perhaps UbuWeb is, categorically, an anomaly, in that it fits somewhere between an official institution and a pirate file-sharing site – it is both and neither like few sites in the early history of the Web. Here, though, Gitelman warns precisely against the anomalous case: “Selecting singular examples from the World Wide Web in order to support claims about the Web or digital culture as a whole is a lot like manufacturing one’s own evidence, minting one’s own coin.”³³¹ In providing an overview of the repository and in charting out its pre-history thus far in this chapter, a certain extent I have mirrored the narrative of UbuWeb that UbuWeb itself disseminates. Since this narrative exists in piecemeal, often in ad hoc writings and discussions directed at particular aspects of the repository, and is dispersed across dozens of sources, establishing, establishing that narrative is an important component of this chapter.

In this section, and elsewhere throughout this chapter, I take up a different tact: tracing out UbuWeb’s history by focusing on specific instances where the repository has been called into question, legally challenged, shutdown, or forced to change its composition. Though this approach is not exactly a history of “errors and errant results,” which Gitelman explores in order to overcome the anxiety of mirroring one’s research object, I believe that focusing on three specific occurrences of UbuWeb’s transformation – in 2000, 2005, and 2010 – opens up on to the perspectives of others who use and are affected by UbuWeb and the materials it circulates. It also brings more squarely into the frame those who have been involved in and laboured on behalf of the project in order to sustain it through its transition and infrastructural changes. It also, finally, brings to light particular features of the repository as an archival genre that differentiate it from others: that its forms of storage and access afford such internal shifts (for example, changes in format) and infrastructural changes (the specific space where and means how its artefacts are collected). In these shifts, one sees the extent to which the repository, as an archival mode, can support and preserve its materials amid the variability of networked infrastructures.

In early 2000, Goldsmith received the following email:

From: support@zarcrom.com

to: editor@ubu.com
subject: problem with your NT site
Date: Sun, 13 Feb 2000 15:55:45 -0500

Dear sir,

We have a dead drive on the NT server your site was hosted on. We are working to setup a new NT server to replace this box now. The IP for your site will be the same as the one you had.

We shall give you a ftp access with a login and a password as soon as the new box is online, within two hours.

You will have to upload your site to the new NT server.

We deeply apologize for this problem...

Best regards,
Zarcrom support.³³²

Yet there was no site to upload to the new server. In nearly four years of putting materials on the site – around 8000 files and several gigabytes of information from over 300 artists – Goldsmith hadn't backed any of it up.³³³ Since Zarcrom had donated gratis the server space, part of the arrangement he had worked out with them while still working with StadiumWeb, Goldsmith hadn't worked out any arrangement for them to back the materials up on a regular basis, knowing it would be an additional burden. These details show the degree to which – even as the site received half a million visits annually, even though Goldsmith spent a significant amount of time developing it³³⁴ – UbuWeb was still a kind of pet project with an uncertain future. In fact, in reflecting on the shutdown, Goldsmith notes how it inspired UbuWeb's next incarnation: The Ubu Center for Technologically Advanced Poetry, in conjunction with Coach House Books, then under the editorship of Darren Wershler. Though never realized as a project, this idea no doubt fed into developing the /ubu editions series that would later be published on UbuWeb.³³⁵

Yet, following this initial “death” of UbuWeb, Goldsmith would continue building it back up on stolen time while working in corporate Web design. In the summer of 2001, following Goldsmith's departure from Exceed and the use of the corporation's infrastructure was no longer available, Charles Bernstein and Loss Glazier offered Goldsmith use of the EPC's servers and bandwidth to run and support UbuWeb at the University at Buffalo (UB). For Goldsmith, at the time, it was an easy decision to make. As he states, “with the advent of MP3

and broadband, everything had changed. We could no longer afford either the server space or the bandwidth to host what, at the time, appeared to be huge files.”³³⁶ What had begun as a personal project amid numerous other professional and personal projects had grown beyond what Goldsmith as an individual could support. It was about to get much bigger.

Due to the technological support offered through the EPC, Goldsmith was able to grow the sound poetry collection of MP3s on UbuWeb, compiling what he would call in 2005, the largest collection of avant-garde and related materials on the Internet.³³⁷ (See Figure 2.9) Through music file sharing sites such as Napster, he was also able to build a collection of experimental and avant-garde music recordings that he began to put up on UbuWeb. During our meeting, he spoke of this moment of sharing and circulating such works with pure excitement:

I've been a collector my whole life. And all that collectors want to do is to be able to share their collection. So, when it became possible to go online and find a community of folks that are interested [in similar things] ... That's why I thought Napster was so great, because it connected all of us insane collectors and it was like, Oh, wow, you have all those rare John Cage records that I've been looking for forever. You should see my Xenakis folder ...

In 2004, he also began to include videos and films in a variety of formats, many of which he came upon in private file-sharing sites or had been sent by admirers of UbuWeb.³³⁸ To this extent, Goldsmith began to create a rich context for his collection of concrete, visual, and sound poetry, exhibiting them in the expansive intermedial ground with which those works were in dialogue. The inclusion of music and film materials, though, also drew the attention of people wanting to protect their copyrighted works.

Wershler describes in detail this first cease-and-desist notice of consequence that occurred in May 2005:

A person claiming to be a representative for filmmaker Bruce Conner sent a handwritten note to the President of SUNY Buffalo claiming that illegal materials (i.e. digital versions of some of Conner's films) were hosted on the SUNY servers, and threatened the university with lawsuits, requested reimbursement for each video downloaded, and so on. SUNY's system administrators immediately pulled UbuWeb offline and locked down FTP access to the site directory; Bernstein was contacted by the administration, and called Goldsmith in turn. Not only did this process bypass anything like the notice-and-takedown process described in the [US Digital Millennium Copyright Act]; the irony was palpable, because Conner is best known as the first filmmaker to produce work out of entirely appropriated footage.³³⁹

Bypassing all of the expected protocols for managing such a situation, the UB administrators would keep UbuWeb shut down for months. Again, as in 2001, Goldsmith had no systematic

back-up system for the site's media files, which the university blocked him from being able to access. (Portions of the files were salvaged through a mirror of the site by the University of West Virginia's Center for Literary Computing, discussed below.) The majority of the site's materials remained in limbo throughout the summer, until September, as Wershler writes, when Glazier opened a hole in the UB firewall on a Friday afternoon, which then allowed Goldsmith to copy all of the site's files.³⁴⁰

Yet, even before being shut down at SUNY Buffalo over the possibility of copyright infringement, Goldsmith had doubts about keeping UbuWeb hosted there. With Bernstein's move in the summer of 2003 to the University of Pennsylvania, Goldsmith had concerns about the support he would receive from Steve McCaffery, who took over Bernstein's professorship at UB. Months after Bernstein's departure, Goldsmith wrote to him on 5 May 2004 to say:

With the appointment of Steve [McCaffery] to the Grey chair, I'm now extremely nervous for the health of the EPC, specifically for the vast MP3 archive that I've accumulated there. It's more reason than ever to move the material to Penn. Did you ever get a full backup of the MP3 files from Loss on an external hard drive?³⁴¹ If not, can you please request it as soon as possible? I'm very worried that a lot of work will quickly go down the drain.³⁴²

As discussed in the previous chapter, Bernstein himself admits to McCaffery's disinterest in the EPC, which ultimately impacted UbuWeb. The shift in the Poetics Program had such an impact on Glazier that, as Goldsmith would later detail for Bernstein, he "simply stopped communicating with me – it was like drop dead stopped returning emails."³⁴³ The situation became so dire that, in October 2004, Goldsmith wrote to Bernstein: "Charles, UbuWeb will be shut down fairly soon. If you'd like it, I'd be happy to donate it to the EPC or PennSound as a finished archived project. If not, I'll just take it offline. The whole site itself is very small and can fit on a few CDs, which I can post you. Let me know if it's something you'd be interested in."³⁴⁴ In another email to Bernstein outlining his terms for UbuWeb's potential integration into the other two repositories, Goldsmith wrote: "The only thing I ask is that [UbuWeb] not be updated with fresh content. I wish for it to be an archive, an expression of a decade long experiment in radical distribution."³⁴⁵

This scenario points to the fragility of a project like UbuWeb and its dependence upon a particular alignment of people and institutional environments that are able to foster it. Although Goldsmith has been vocal about UbuWeb's dealings with copyright concerns, the total effect

these dealings have had on the overall site have been minimal. Certainly, Goldsmith has had to spend a great deal of time working through and negotiating such matters, as I show below. Goldsmith's perspective on permissions and the processes he undertakes to circulate works is an integral aspect of the project. Yet, aside from the situation with the Conner films at UB, UbuWeb's ethics in regard to posting materials without consent have only affected specific materials and never impacted the overall status of the site. Though the discussion of this "Robin Hood" aspect of UbuWeb does draw attention to the liminal state of the repository's existence, Goldsmith, has stated it over the more banal, but vital, issue of personal, institutional, and technological support that has largely determined the project's robustness. Indeed, UbuWeb's ongoing existence primarily relies upon Goldsmith's conviviality, interpersonal communications, and capacity to build relations, however temporary, that provide the fuel to keep the repository online.

At a time with the site down, its media files locked up, and Goldsmith ready to sign off from the project and sell its domains, a number of individuals rallied to UbuWeb's support. With the help of Ken Freedman at the radio station WFMU, Charles Bernstein and Al Filreis at PennSound, Charles "Sandy" Baldwin at the University of West Virginia Center for Literary Computing (CLC), and Darren Wershler and Rosemary Coombe through York University's Artmob initiative, Goldsmith laid out the plans for a new "redundant and distributed model" for the site.³⁴⁶ Each institution offered a valuable piece to the overall design of the repository.

Goldsmith, in an email written to all involved in June 2005, outlines the new schema:

MEDIA HOSTING: WFMU. Ken Freedman has generously offered tons of bandwidth and storage capacity for Ubu's large media materials. UbuWeb wants to remain outlaw, dedicated to radical distribution of avant-garde materials within the gift economy. In other words, Ken is happy to host non-permissioned materials so that the site can continue to expand quickly (including the hosting and distributing of non-permissioned films).

PERMISSIONED MATERIALS: PennSound. Charles and Al have offered to take on UbuWeb's permissioned materials as part of PennSound. In addition, he has expressed interest about helping to legitimize (i.e. permission) as much of the media materials as possible. This is an amazingly ambitious plan that could take years to accomplish. It's really crucial: the more permissions we acquire, the more power we have to combat cease and desists.

HTML and DOMAIN: ubu.com. Ken Freedman convinced me that it's worth keeping the ubu.com domain name. He suggested that the market for [it] is weak at

best and, more importantly, that so many places are already linked to it that removing it from the equation would fry a large part of the worldwide audience for the avant-garde that UbuWeb has already successfully built. We have discussed WFMU taking the domain name and paying the monthly bill on it. That could happen later, but for the time being, Ken has convinced me that it's worth paying for and holding onto.

HTML MIRRORING and RADIO STREAMING: CLC, U of West Virginia. For several years now, Sandy has been mirroring the weekly changes on UbuWeb so that should ubu.com go down (which it did in 2000), we'll still be up. Sandy salvaged UbuWeb by backing up most of our media files from Buffalo so that he could start hosting UbuRadio (which is up and running now).

MEDIA MIRRORING: York University. Darren is heading up an enormous new media initiative across two universities in Canada. He has generously offered redundancy for all our media files. As his project continues to grow, it looks like he'll take on more projects relating to UbuWeb.³⁴⁷

Taking form not long after Goldsmith's expressions of ending the project, UbuWeb's new arrangement represents a shift a more institutionalized and stable – even if partially “outlaw” – mode. More to this point, just prior to this shift, Goldsmith had been granted official 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status for the “UbuWeb Foundation,” which he could use in order to apply for financial support for developing its sections and digitizing materials.

The redundant and distributed model proved to be an effective way to create stability for UbuWeb. Dividing up the media files between three institutional servers created a structure in which no single location was overtaxed in terms of their donated support, even if UbuWeb's global use pushed each institution's bandwidth toward its limits. The mirroring through the CLC and Artmob created reliable and regularly updated back-ups. During the five-year period from the autumn of 2005 to autumn 2010, the site experienced a period of comparative stability. There was, still, some degree of variability and uncertainty with the site. For instance, WFMU's contribution to hosting faded significantly not long after this initial partnership. Yet, because of this alliance across institutions, Artmob became the *de facto* main site for UbuWeb.³⁴⁸

Goldsmith often experimented with finding new ways to circulate the site's larger files, in particular its videos, in order to adopt to the needs of the various institutions involved and the evolving technologies for disseminating the works online. (See, for example, fig. 2.12 for Goldsmith's announcement regarding the site moving, albeit temporary, its film and video section to YouTube.) Concurrent with this period, too, the discourse concerning Goldsmith's articulation of conceptual writing moved from being a minor tendency loosely affiliated with or

emergent from Language poetics to being a dominant literary stylistic.³⁴⁹ Since the early 2000s, UbuWeb functioned as a primary site for establishing and contextualizing his particular brand of conceptual writing, and that movement's absorption into journals, institutions, and broader aesthetic dialogues reinforced the prominence of the repository.

Yet the redundant and distributed model also had its shortfalls, in that, UbuWeb's existence depended on an even greater constellation of institutional and interpersonal relations than ever before. A shift at any one point in the network of support could have a rippling effect of repercussions throughout it, or making changes to the overall structure of the site depended on careful, collective communications. Whereas the prior structures depended on Goldsmith's concerns and desires solely, or those of Goldsmith and Glazier, the new distributed model on a number of institutional factors. Though Ken Freedman at WFMU came to Goldsmith's aid to support UbuWeb's non-permissioned files, he did not intend on keeping them located on the station's server permanently.³⁵⁰ It was uncertain on to whom at the University of Pennsylvania the considerable work would fall to attain permissions for some of UbuWeb's recordings, especially considering the fact that those already located on the Penn servers took up a significant share of their bandwidth.³⁵¹ The Artmob support depended on a multi-year grant structure for research tied to Toronto's York University that when it ran out, so would the group's ability to fund server space and maintenance.³⁵²

By the time of a hack that shut down the site for several days in October 2010, the majority of UbuWeb's files had been moved off the WFMU servers, the number of permissioned files hosted on PennSound had increased only slightly, the Artmob grant was near its completion and UbuWeb's chief proponent there, Darren Wershler had left York to take up a new position at Wilfrid Laurier University. Goldsmith found himself in a situation not too dissimilar from five years earlier when UB administrators took the site offline in that the future of UbuWeb looked uncertain. Yet, there were a few notable differences: the status and prestige of the repository made it a globally recognized, if controversial, arts resource; Goldsmith's provocative way of handling the issue of permissions had, after fourteen years of conducting his experiment in radical distribution, attained him the status of an expert on aesthetics and the ideas of authorship and ownership in the era of the Web, for which he became a frequently invited speaker; and the redundancies of the site in its mirrorings assured that the media files would not be lost, as in 2001, nor locked down, as in 2005. To this extent, UbuWeb had established a place for itself, on

the Web and beyond. What Goldsmith needed, more than anything else at the time, was another generous benefactor to come along who would offer him the means – server space, bandwidth, and maintenance, without asking anything else in return – so that he could continue to do UbuWeb the way he wanted to do it.

Fig. 2.16: Goldsmith's draft template letter to cease and desist requests, 13 September 2006.

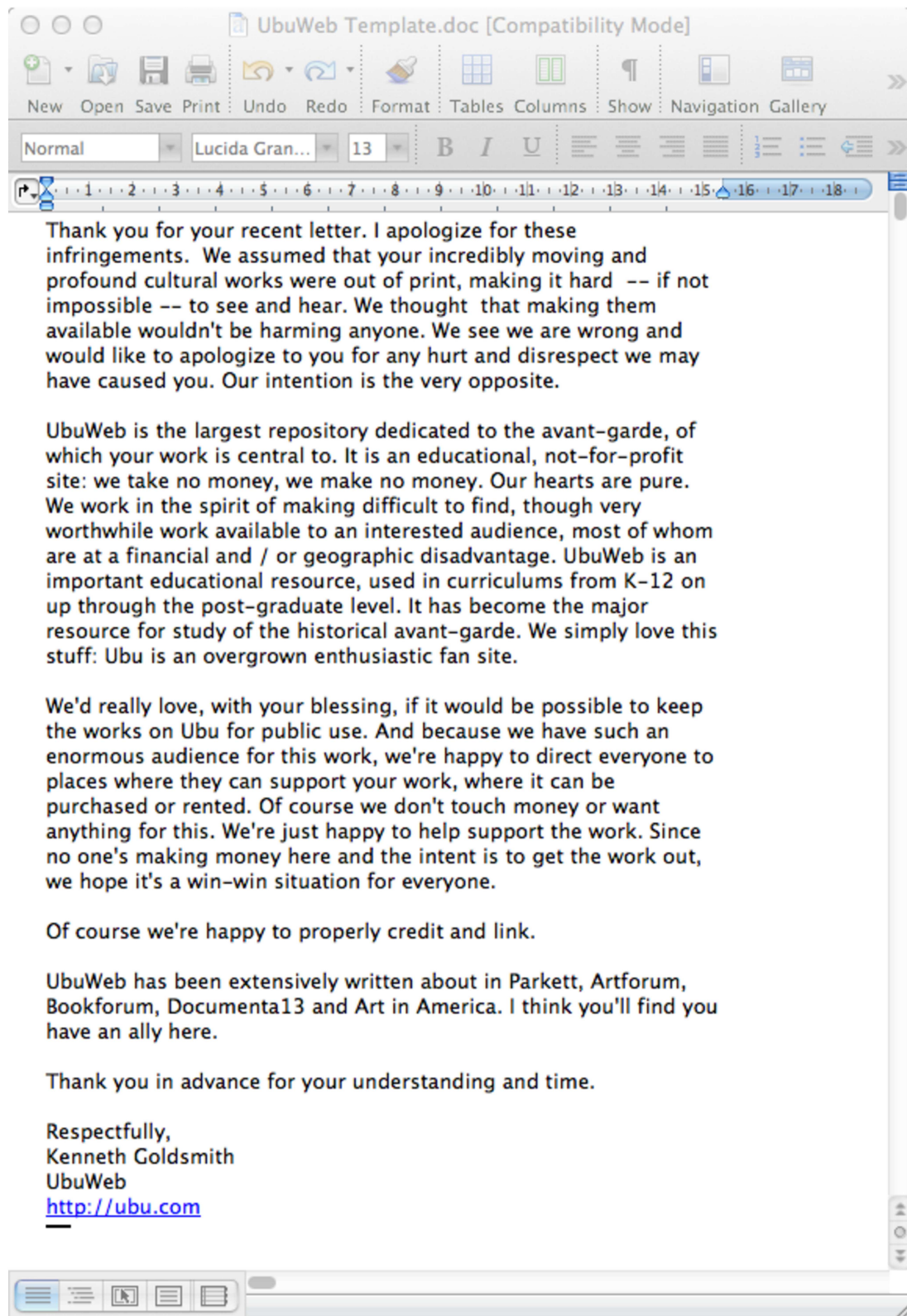
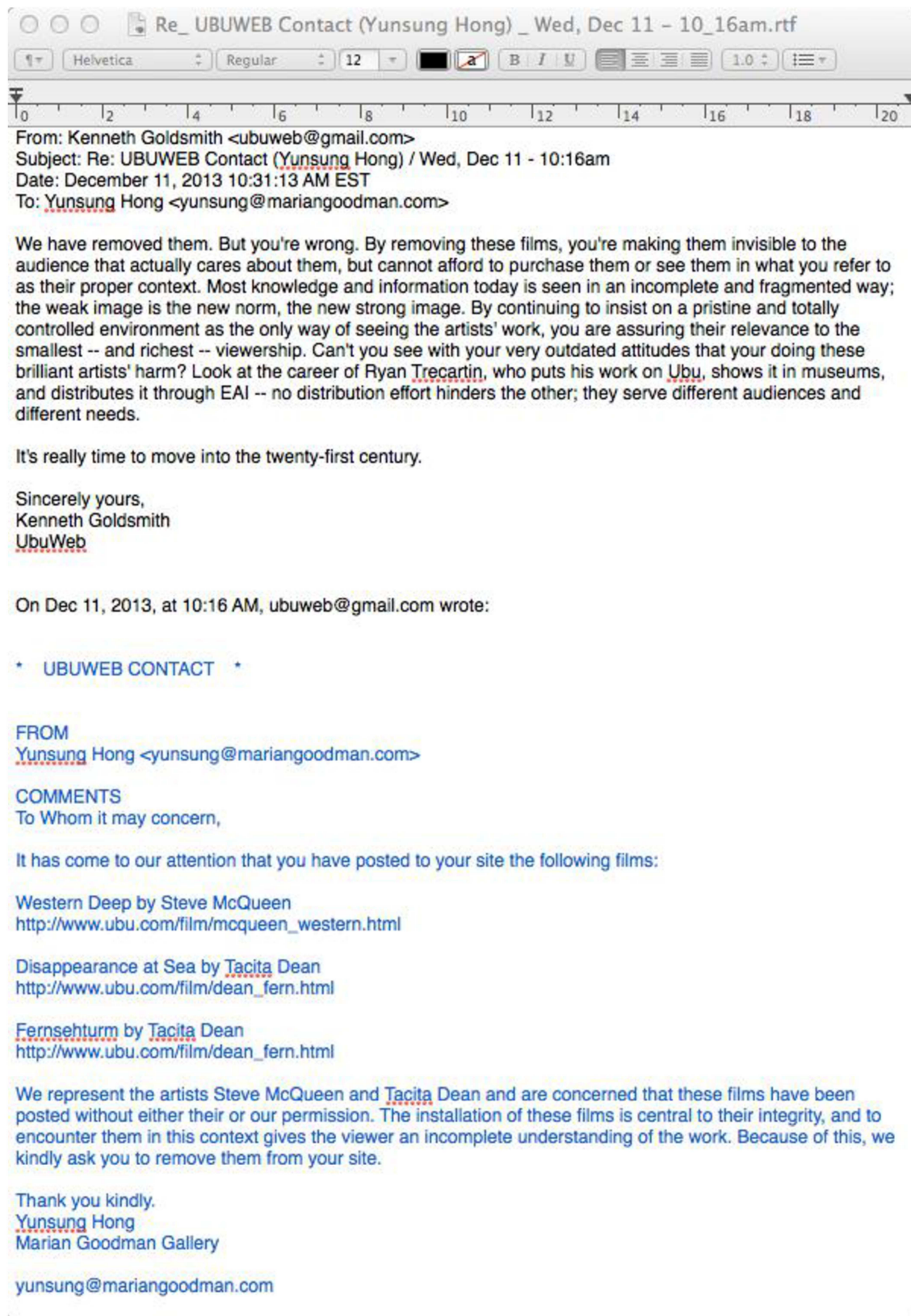


Fig. 2.17: Goldsmith's saved exchange with Marian Goodman Gallery, 11 December 2013.



Scenes of Textuality

“Information demands to be transmitted,” John Guillory writes, “because it has a shelf life, a momentary value that drives the development of our information technologies in their quest to speed up, economize, and maximize the effectiveness of transmission. Missing the right moment of transmission, information must be stored to await its next opportunity.”³⁵³ I roll these two sentences over in my mind as I open and close dozens of files contained in three external hard drives that hold three different iterations of UbuWeb – one from 2005, the second from 2010, and the third from 2015. Until this point, I’ve considered Goldsmith as the main driver behind the repository – and he is, definitively so, as the person who selects, converts, uploads, and codes the materials. Yet, Guillory’s statement opens up the possibility to consider for a moment the agency the materials themselves have on UbuWeb’s formation, as digitally-transferred objects that generate excitement in the pure fact of their new format, ones that inspire their collection and dissemination. Merely looking over the file names as I scroll through one of the hard drives’ folders – Acker, Baraka, Cage, DeCampos, cascading, impressively, onward – I am elated at having such a library at my finger tips, in my possession. Having been gifted such a wealth of materials, I understand clearly the impulse to share them with others.

Matthew Kirschenbaum, reflecting on this passage from Guillory as he writes on the material inscription of hard drives, states: “Storage, then, is a kind of suspended animation, a come or waking death, oddly inert yet irreducibly physically present.”³⁵⁴ Kirschenbaum’s analysis is focused on hard drives inside of personal computers, which he describes as “indispensable to the scene of textuality in which these very keystrokes are being recorded, yet remains a dim totem, lodged with the remote recesses” of its device.³⁵⁵ But what of the state of information on an external hard drive, one that a user can ship or carry elsewhere? How is the mutually exclusive relationship that Kirschenbaum delineates between transmission and storage shifted in such a circumstance? External hard drives, in the case of UbuWeb, represent one of the main means of sustaining the site. In each one of its shutdowns, mirrorings, and infrastructural shifts, Goldsmith has either mailed or personally delivered a hard drive to the location that would next host its files.³⁵⁶ There are or have been, perhaps, dozens of them in circulation over the course of UbuWeb’s twenty year history – each one a kind of black box that exhibits UbuWeb at the particular moment of its copying, and which therefore serve as a valuable site to document UbuWeb’s transmission.

The first two hard drives of the three, from 2005 and 2010, are exactly such black boxes of transmission. Following UbuWeb being shut down at the University of Buffalo, Goldsmith sent the copy of UbuWeb's entire files so that they could be mirrored on the ArtMob server at York University. My discussion of these first two hard drives will be abbreviated for the submission of this dissertation, as I plan to work on them with their own (and my dissertation supervisor) Darren Wershler following the submission of this dissertation on a co-authored paper that will be a media forensics analysis of the hard drives in relation to the history of UbuWeb (which will also include materials from the two unpublished papers by Wershler that I cite throughout this chapter). In this paper, one of the trajectories we plan to focus on is how the shift in file formats show something that is unique to the repository as an archival mode: that it assembles objects that shift in their format over time. They are similar in that they represent or have an affinity with a particular work, but their actual materiality changes.

The third external hard drive is my own, which I used in 2015 to copy all the materials related to UbuWeb on Goldsmith's laptop at the time of our meeting to discuss the history of the repository. Thus, in addition to the operational files needed to keep UbuWeb up and running as site, I have on the second drive a much greater variety of materials: nearly two decades of correspondence, draft and final statements on UbuWeb, legal documents including cease and desist letters and their resulting exchanges, 404 notifications, notes to volunteer labourers, receipts, and more. With the first two hard drives, one has a snapshot of UbuWeb as an object as it is constructed at a particular time; with the second, one has a portrait of its process, as a living collection in its entire rich context.

In Goldsmith's documents and correspondences concerning UbuWeb – included in the file "secretarial" in the 2015 hard drive – one can see the iterations in producing UbuWeb as an ideological stance and as an institution. Goldsmith, in exchanges, interview, in his drafts for talks, will hit upon certain phrases – for example, "If we had to ask permission, we wouldn't exist," or "Robin Hood of the avant-garde," or UbuWeb "doesn't touch money" and "nothing is for sale," and "By the time you read this, UbuWeb may be gone." If these phrases seem to strike a chord with their audience, if they establish and extend the project of UbuWeb as semi-legitimate digital institution in the era of the Web, Goldsmith integrates them into the assemblage of UbuWeb. They become themes or key points in his more official correspondence

with artists and lawyers. They function almost as slogans stamped on a document's letterhead as representative of a corporate body's ethos. They will also appear in his critical writings, as well as on UbuWeb's information pages.

One can view many of these uses and evolutions of phrases in the file on the 2015 hard drive entitled "Cease and Desist Letters." In writing on UbuWeb's "cavalier approach" to posting content without permission, Wershler notes "the dealing process in which Goldsmith scrupulously engages – *because* of the dubious provenance of his posted material – is entirely absent" from public view.³⁵⁷ It is a process, as Wershler argues, where a fair dealing culture is constituted in sides collectively coming to terms on what can be used, the ways in which it can be used, and what can't. The letters in this file (see, as examples, figs. 2.17 through 2.21) illustrate the underlying process of dealing – with all of the legalese, indignation, coolness, and negotiation it involves.

The scenarios often follow a similar process, but with various outcomes. Goldsmith will come upon something in a private file-sharing site – of which, because of his involvement with UbuWeb, he has been invited to many³⁵⁸ – or someone will send him something they expect will be of interest for the site. He prepares it for the site, hand writes the HTML for it in BBedit, then cuts and pastes whatever paratextual info might come with the file.³⁵⁹ As the correspondence often shows, this paratextual information is often missing important facts, such as co-creator, or factually wrong, such as naming the wrong co-creator. Yet, from the private file-sharing page to UbuWeb, both the work and its accompanying info go public. After the files are up, either the artist or someone representing the artist will write Goldsmith through the UbuWeb Contact page. The letters often range between a spectrum of two tones. They can be formal: "It has come to our attention that you have posted [title of work] without the artist's permission and we therefore request that you take the materials down at once. If you do not comply with this request we will be required to start a procedure for infringement of the artist's copyrights."³⁶⁰ They can be personal, if not personable: "We find it incredibly rude that you have posted this work without permission. We shouldn't have to tell you that when you steal work from small publishers and put it on the Web it hurts our ability for us to do what we do."³⁶¹ (See, also, Goldsmith's exchanges with artist Adrian Piper, figs. 2.18 and 2.19.) Goldsmith replies to these requests with the calm and impersonal tone of an institution, in most cases. (The reply to the Marian Goodman Gallery in fig. 2.17, above, is an exception.) The majority of these replies follow the template

Goldsmith prepared in 2006, with personalize additions included depending on the work. At this point, the dealing begins.

In the cases in which there is a representative who is not the creator claiming copyright over a work – an estate or corporate agency or a producer – Goldsmith will begin by verifying the materials' copyright. In some instances, as he narrates in the soliloquy following this section, he discovers the person claiming rights to a work does not, in fact, possess them. In most cases, he makes his case for the importance of having the work on UbuWeb, citing the numerous – and, perhaps, similar – artists who allow their works to be there, and the potential critical impact in having their work accessed in such a way could have. Often, the creator rejects this argument, often sympathetically, and the work is taken down. Sometimes, it is effective, and the artist gives permission. Occasionally, Goldsmith and the artist (or artist's representative) strike a deal: the specific works that presently generate income for the artist are to be removed, but the other, perhaps rarer or out-of-print ones, can stay for the time being (see, for example, figs. 2.20 and 2.21). As many, if not the majority of, the works that UbuWeb circulates are ones that pre-date creative commons attributions, Goldsmith's overall practice of making works publicly available and the exchanges on with the copyright owners illustrate the extent to which one doesn't know if a creative work belongs to a cultural commons until one tests it.

Fig. 2.18: Goldsmith's saved exchange with Adrian Piper, 29 April 2014.

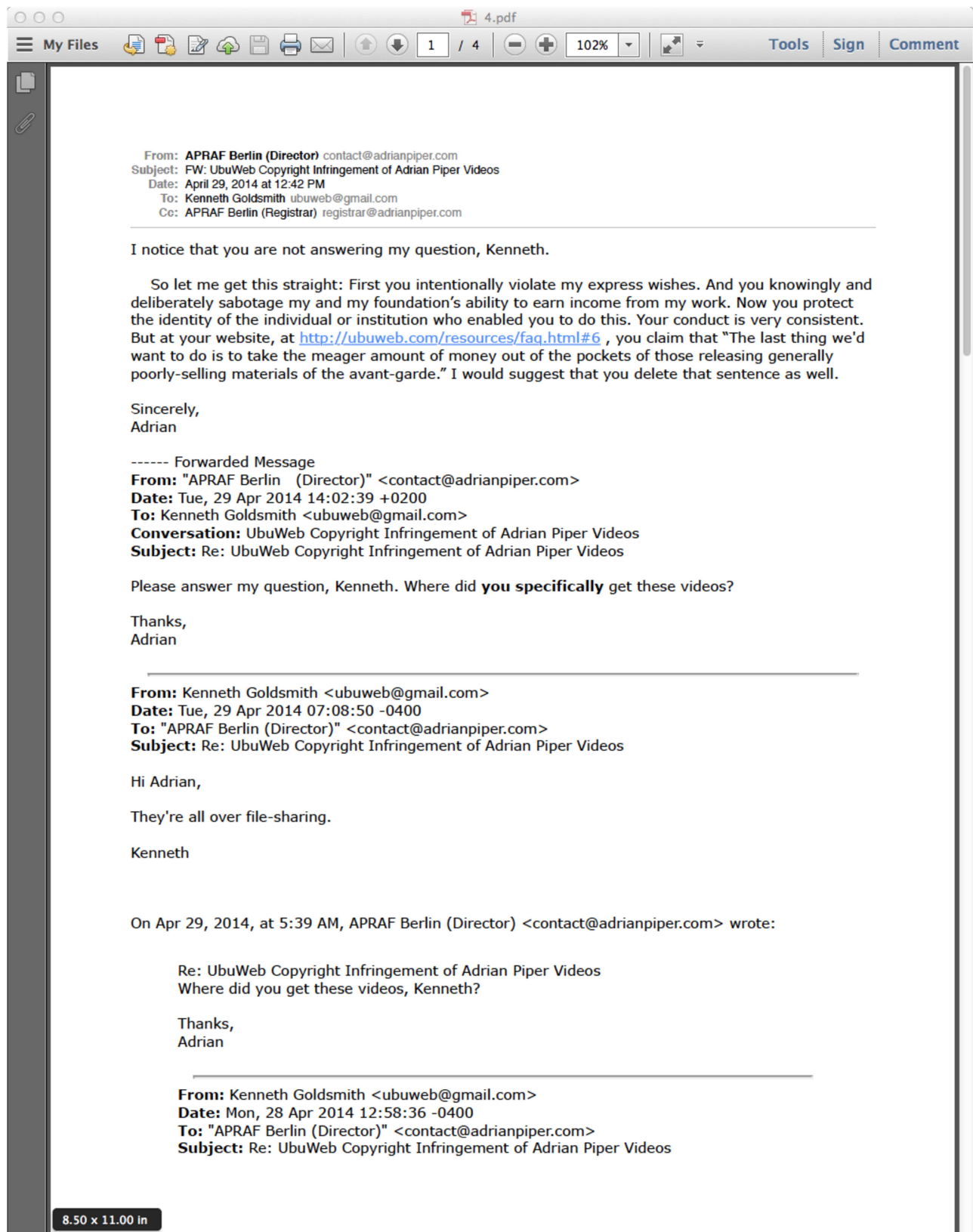


Fig. 2.19: Goldsmith's draft letter to artist Adrian Piper, 29 April 2014.

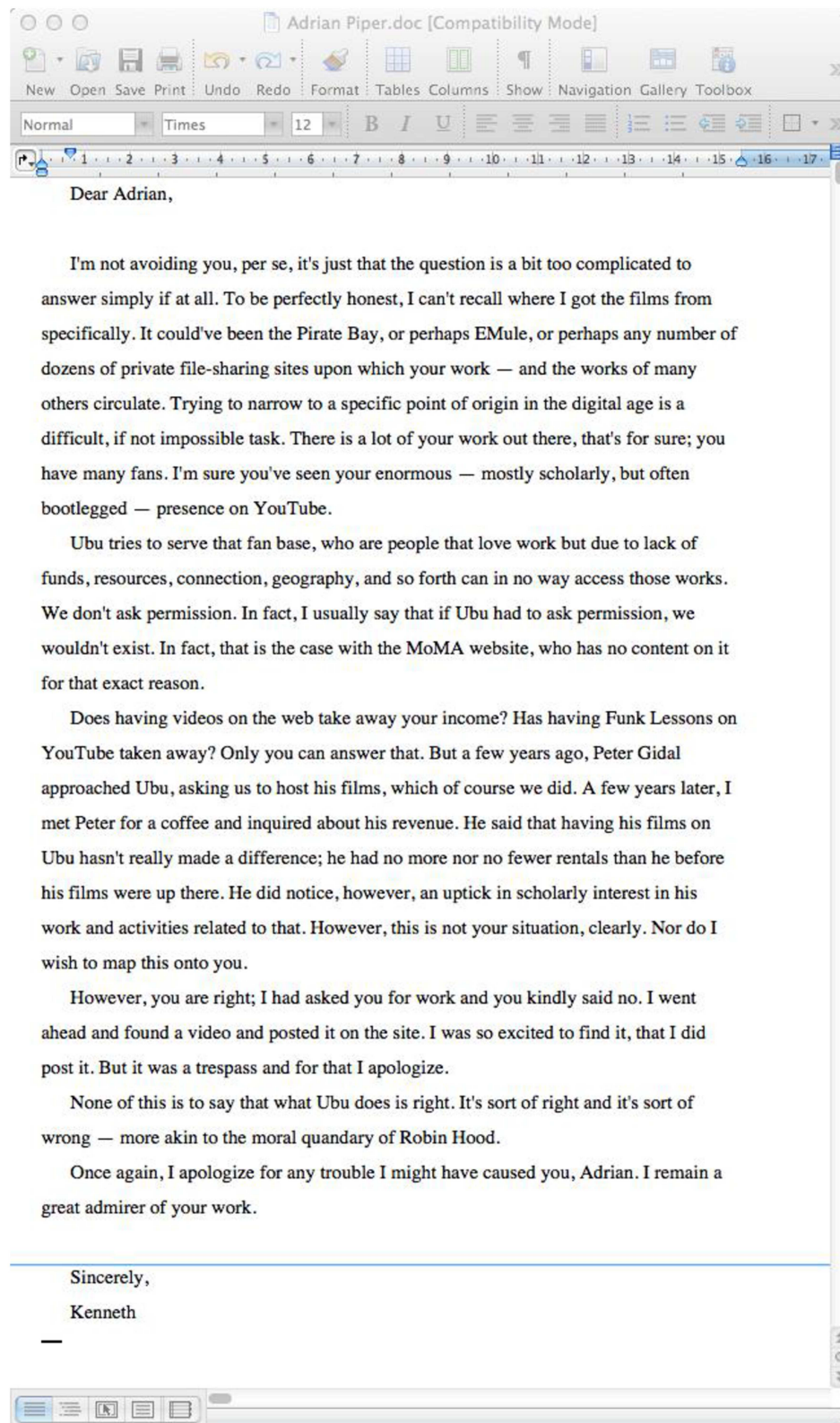


Fig. 2.20: Goldsmith's saved exchange with the John Cage Trust attorney, 27 March 2015.

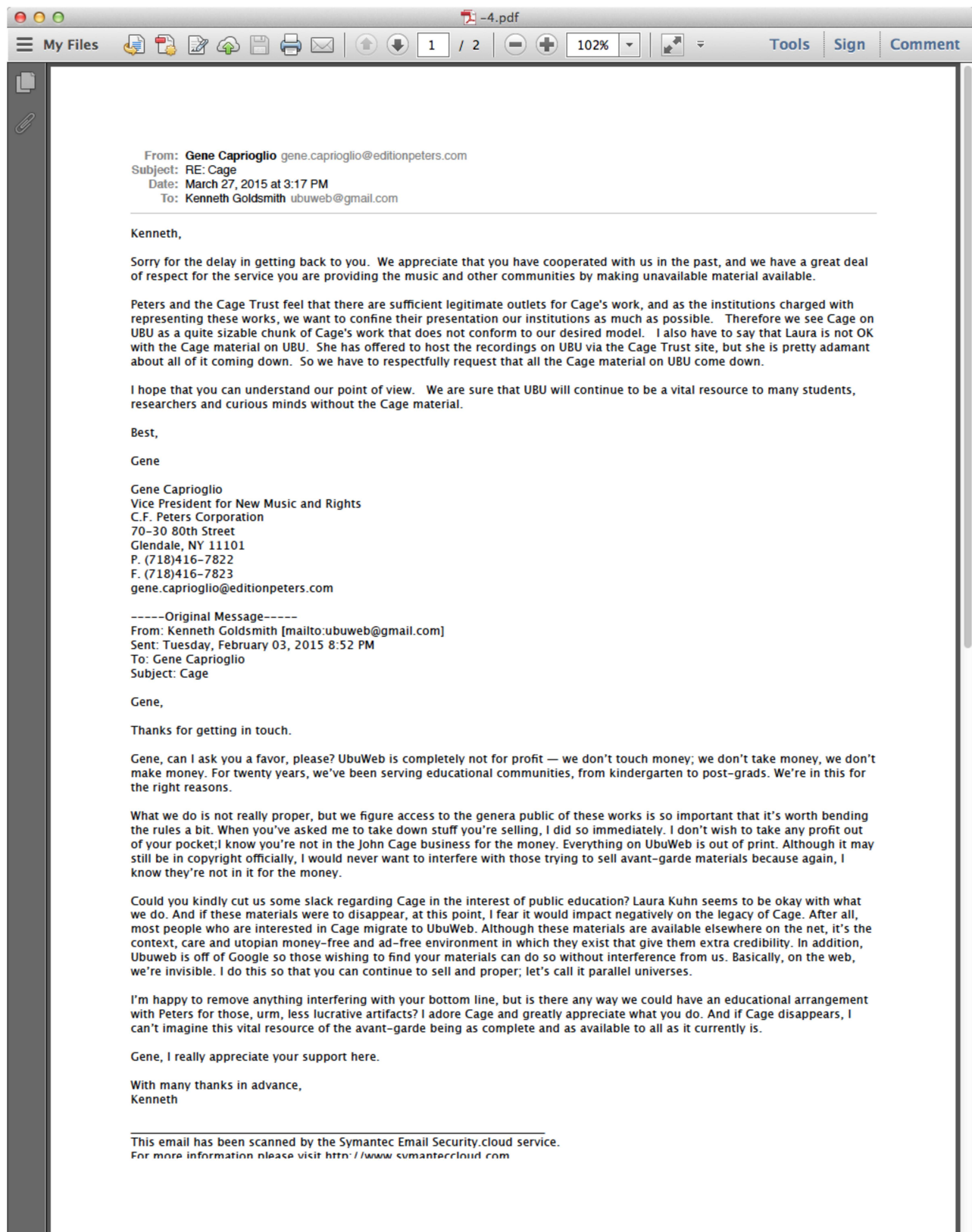
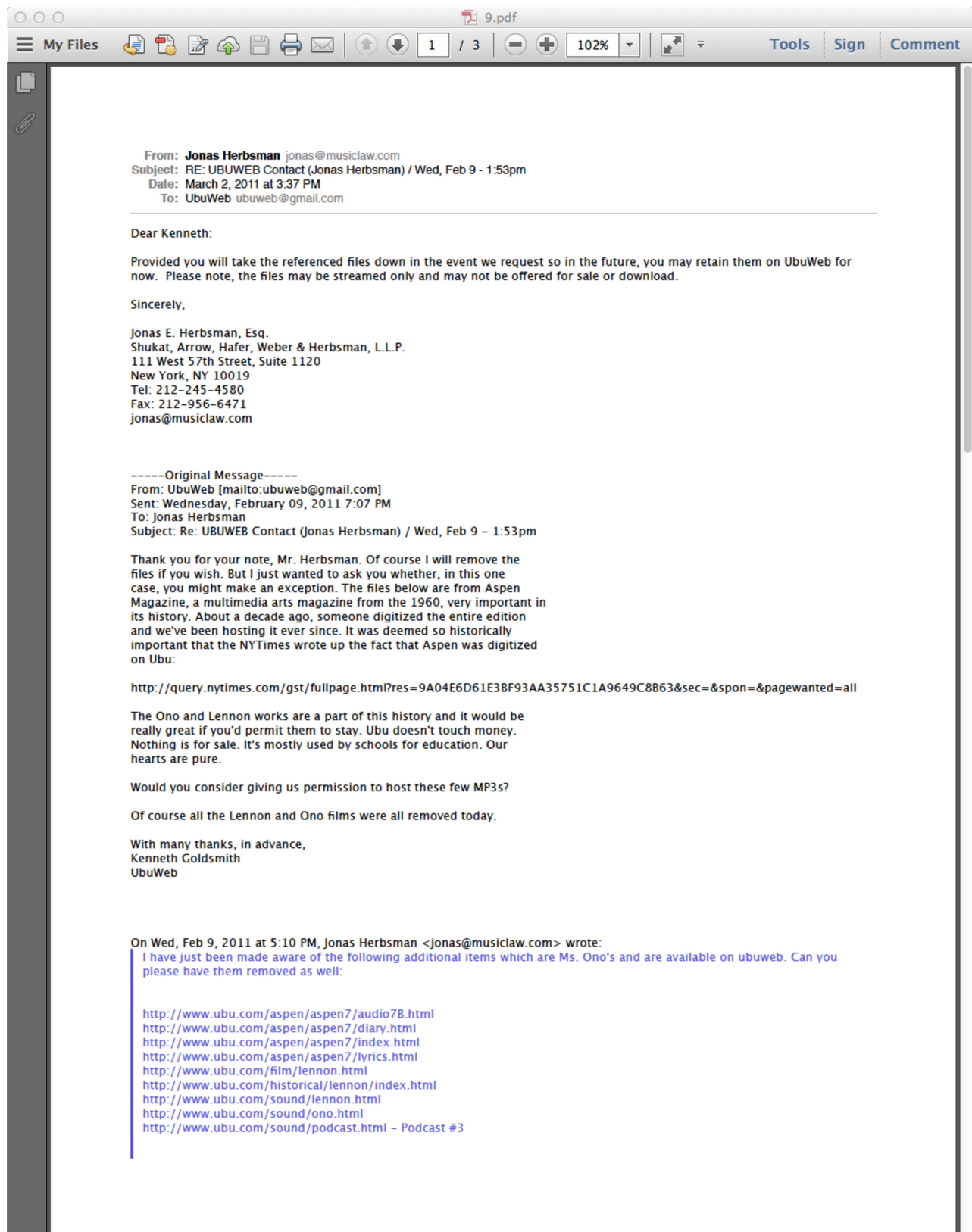


Fig. 2.21: Goldsmith's saved exchange with Yoko Ono's attorney, 2 March 2011.



Soliloquy: Cease and Desist

So, I was going to show you these cease and desist letters I have. I'll show you my favourite one. Hold on a second. Let's see where it is. Here it is. I'll send you this whole thread. Here, read that one. "Pursuant to 17 USC 513(c)(3)(A), this communication serves as a statement that 1. I write to you from the Wylie Agency LLC as the duly authorized representative of the exclusive rights holder for the William S. Burroughs Estate; 2. The following works to which the Williams S. Burroughs Estates hold exclusive rights are being violated by material available on www.ubu.com. I hereby request that you remove or disable access's to this material as it appears on your service in as expedient a fashion as possible." But the funny thing is, I'm looking at this and I'm like, Oh, okay, let's go to Raphael Rubenstein's papers, which they claim they own. Let's search that. One mention of Burroughs: "Talking about Kathy Acker's story of New York City in 1979, taking a cue from William Burroughs, whose books were patched together from his own cut-up mash-up..." They do not own the fucking quote. What they did was they threw the name William Burroughs into Ubu's search engine, and cut and paste every single thing. And then my favourite part of it is, "Please note that these works are protected by copyright." Maybe they are... Maybe you don't own the copyright. "I work with the copyright holder..." This is my favourite one. "Under penalty of perjury in the United States, I state that the information contained in this notification is accurate and that I am authorized..." Well, my dear, you've already just perjured yourself and I've got a counter-suit against you, right? But this is the way that people use copyright. Like a sledgehammer. And most people don't know that. They get this letter and they say, Oh, no! So, I wrote her back. Look, I'm not, I'm not going to get hostile with her. It's okay. I won't touch *Naked Lunch*. I will not republish that book because I know that's where your money is. But a reading of Burroughs from Saint Mark's Church? ... So, let's see what happened here. Then, she said, "Dear UbuWeb, thank you for your swift..." blah blah "...I was sent the links by a concerned party..." So she didn't even look! Then, "All the best, Lindsey." Now she starts to get friendly and it turns out that she's maybe a secretary or an intern at the fucking Wiley Agency. She doesn't know what she's doing, but she's making some big claims that are fucked up. I don't want to get her in trouble and I don't want to make enemies out of Wiley Agency. I like Burroughs. I think his estate should make millions of dollars on those properties that make millions of dollars. You see it goes on. Then she sent another one to me ... They were claiming rights over Burroughs's recordings on the Dial-a-Poem records. But the

problem with it is that, with the Giorno-Burroughs records, the copyright is with John Giorno. It's not with Burroughs. As a matter of fact, with just about everything they've listed, the copyright is with someone else. And so this is wrong too. People, you don't know what you're doing! You don't, you really have no clue here. Dial-a-Poem poets? No, no, no, no, no. This is John's. So, finally: "I hereby request that you move, disable, under penalty of perjury" – again. She's wrong again. This is when I finally send this. I wrote to Grauerholz. I said, "Dear Mr. Grauerholz...." Read it. And we never heard from them again. Never. [...] The other great story is that, so, when we hosted *Aspen* magazine way back when. [...] Do you know the story behind that? Oh. Uh, I get this email from this guy Andrew Stafford and it says, Hey, check out my Duchamp site, understandingduchamp.com. And I look at it and say, Oh, that's nice. Cool site. And he says, Well, I have something else, for you. And he sends me a password, and it's the whole Aspen magazine. Everything. I'm like, Why, why is this behind a password? He said because the estate of Duchamp sued him for including the word Duchamp in the URL. So, he was like, he was like, Wow, I got sued for one name in a URL? There's no way I'm putting this stuff out, but if you want it, you can have it. I said, Fuck yeah. I don't care. I deal with this shit all the time. I mean, I've given myself a degree in copyright law. I mean, not really, but I know enough to know that I can stop the Wiley Agency. I said, Look, I'll take it. I put it up and the *New York Times* wrote it up. I have it, but you can go find it in the *Times*: "3-D Magazine Comes Online," something like that. It was 2002 or something, I can't even remember when it was. It was a long time ago. And in it, they asked Merce Cunningham, or maybe the Merce Cunningham estate, something like, "What do you think, Mr. Cunningham, what do you think of the fact that your words are up there without your permission?" And Cunningham, or maybe his representative, says, "The educational value of having my words out there far outweighs any monetary value I get from having my words out there." And I was like, Well, that's a great, that's a great endorsement. Merce says, That's cool. So, I was really happy about that. And I've always told that story to brag about it. Well, after Merce dies, I get a very nasty letter from the Cunningham estate saying, Take those *Aspen* magazine things down! You don't own them! So, I'm like, well, I write them back and say, "In the *New York Times*, you guys said, Merce said... It's the same thing with Wiley Agency: William says... Merce says... Come on, folks! We're not making any kind of money. Then I get back the same kind of letter. No, no, no. Take them the fuck down! They start getting angry. So I call, I email Andrew Stafford, and say, Andrew, where

is the copyright on this record, and he sends me scans back, Copyright Aspen Magazine, 1967. And I send them that, and I think I was very mean, I think I just said FUCK YOU, you don't own this copyright. Go fuck yourself. I was very nasty about it because they were getting nasty with me. I don't like to be nasty, but I know I'm right, and you're getting aggressive with me. [...] But then I had a situation where Yoko Ono's people got in touch with me about her films being up on Ubu, and they said, We're not happy about that. And I notice that when I start to talk to these people back and forth a little bit, they get a little nicer, they get a little more human. You know, like, All the best, Lindsey. At first it's a wall, then they see I'm a person, then they're a person, and we start to talk, and it's nicer. And when I start talking with the lawyer from Studio One, I say, Look, I'll take the films down. I get it. She doesn't want them out. I'm not going to mess with Yoko's money machine. But, I say, we have these MP3s on *Aspen*, they're really part of a historical archive, and it would really rip the heart out of that archive to take them down. We don't make any money and they're not commercial things. I said, Would you ask, Ms. Ono, if it is okay that we keep them up? [...] And so, in the meantime, I ask Stafford, where does the copyright exist, not that I even want to start to go down that road with Yoko Ono's people, I don't want to with her lawyers, but I'm like, Andrew, what is it? And Andrew writes back with the scan and it's Copyright Yoko Ono and John Lennon. The copyright wasn't with *Aspen* magazine! John and Yoko were on this in 1966. They were on it. So, I had no recourse. Okay. But then Ono's lawyer wrote back and he said that he had spoken with Yoko, and she says that it's great to keep them up there as long as you can't download them. I was like, Oh, no problem! – but of course you can still download them – and I never heard from them again.³⁶²

Fig. 2.22: Screenshot of UbuWeb hacked home page, 12 October 2010.



**UbuWeb has been
been hacked. The site
is closed until further
notice.**

Convolute: [Frameworks] UbuWeb...HACKED!

Though Goldsmith stated that the 2010 hack was not related to a copyright infringement issue, he also admitted he did not know the cause of it, nor who did it.³⁶³ The commentary following down the site being shut down, in particular the discussion on the Frameworks mailing list, attest to the significant cultural space that UbuWeb had defined, even as it proved to be divisive. It serves to prove Wershler's 2008 statement that:

UbuWeb predates the development of public awareness of any IP concerns on the Internet in North America; it is one of the few large, persistent archives that date from the early years of the Web itself. It is therefore an important case study, because changing reactions to it reflect changes in the sensibility of the general public as well as of the academy to the issues that surround the digitization of cultural texts.³⁶⁴

In this section, I have excerpted portions of that commentary in order to offer up a portrait of the many positions and perspectives on UbuWeb and digital culture in general at the time.

Oct 11, 2010, at 8:01 PM, Shane Christian Eason wrote:
So...yeah...um apparently UBU is offline! Hacked!

Considering what has been discussed in the past regarding this website, does anyone want to comment on this? Additional information? Very odd, considering I was on the site this past weekend. Although, my iPhone App for WFMU UbuWeb Radio continues to work.

Oct 13, 2010, at 1:21 PM, Beverly O'Neill wrote:
Ah, this is such good news. I will refrain from posting a screed about that site. A Google search offers a number of condolences to Ken Goldsmith, UBU's founder. One writer wondered if the anniversary of John Lennon's death and the simultaneous hacking of UBU had anything in common.
So thrilled!

Oct 13, 2010, at 3:29 PM, Jack wrote:
"good news"?

not for anybody who wants to see one of these movies, read an essay or listen to some sound who doesn't live in a major urban centre or have access to a museum. Maybe the copyright is an issue, but they made work available that often isn't readily accessible, and that counts for something.

Bottom line is that regardless of anything, it's a resource and a library, and I've never been one for prohibiting access and closing libraries...

Oct 13, 2010, at 5:27 PM, Beverly O'Neill wrote:

Dear Jack, Your point is well taken. How do viewers get access to this kind of work? However, UBU simply pirated artists' films without asking permission, or paying a small fee to upload films onto their site. Two years ago this listserv spent considerable time arguing about the validity of Ken Goldsmith's (UBU's creator) tactics. If you backtrack in the Frameworks archive you can follow that thread. Everything that was said then still applies today. Many of the responses supported the case you are making now. Obviously I was opposed. Don't close the library, don't prohibit access but do buy the books.

Oct 13, 2010, at 6:50 PM, Marc Couroux wrote:

I hope those individuals grotesquely extolling the demise of ubu (either overtly or silently) realize how shortlived their "thrilling" celebration will be. These ventures, because they are predicated on exposure to unseen, unheard, untold wonders (insert 2 tablespoons of jejune repetitive comments on the lamentable quality of the files, combine with 2 cups of platitudes about copyright etc.), will be reconstituted elsewhere, sooner than later, and more comprehensive than ever. These things simply cannot be stopped, and thank goodness for those of us hungry for new/old ideas that such ventures exist.... Ubu is a portal, nothing more, nothing less - an introduction to potential trajectories, which will be carried out in a myriad of manners, by each individual forever transformed by the encounter...

Oct 13, 2010, at 7:15 PM, Jack wrote:

Allowing people to see things - people who live in, say, the developing world, not in New York or London or wherever - letting them know there's more to cinema than the latest blockbuster - can only be of value. Not everything is available on DVD. Many countries practice censorship. Ubuweb offers / offered a celebration of the possibilities in creative practice that otherwise people may never get to experience.

BTW there's also evidence that people who LIKE stuff they find online subsequently purchase it.

Oct 13, 2010, at 9:33 PM, Matt Helme wrote:

Sure, why not do it the right way? Would Canyon Cinema ever distribute a film without the maker's permission?

Oct 14, 2010, at 6:24 AM, Jason Halprin wrote:

Beth,

Despite the fact that Canyon is run as a for-profit company, no one there is getting rich either. My understanding is that from a book-keeping standpoint, the folks in SF have decided never to incorporate as a 501(c), though this might allow them to take donations - easier said than done. And remember, being a non-profit doesn't mean people aren't getting rich. Both you and I are affiliated with non-profit institutions that have highly paid executives running them.

The larger point that a number of people have brought up with ubuweb has to do with their method for acquiring materials. I don't know if it is still the case, but they used to live by the adage "It's better to ask forgiveness than to ask for permission." Ultimately I will always support the rights of an artist to determine the methods of distribution for their work. What irked me

initially with UW was their “wall of shame,” a page dedicated to an attempt at publicly flogging anyone who requested their work be removed. This page was removed, and I believe the administrator's of the site have since changed their position on this issue.

To people like Peter Rose, I commend them for contributing to the site. It's an amazing thing that I can go and watch Secondary Currents whenever I want. But he got to make that decision. He had a say in how, when, and where people accessed his work. This is one of the eternal and ongoing discussions whenever cultural artefacts are concerned: Do the rights and wants of the creator outweigh those of the public? My answer has always been that will the author of a work is still alive, they should maintain as much control as they desire.

I've had numerous students who have discovered ubuweb on their own, and I've gladly shown students the site in class to make them aware of its existence. It is an excellent resource, but it's administrator's behavior has been suspect in the past. Let's hope that any temporary shutdowns in the future are due to technical glitches, and not malicious attacks.

Oct 14, 2010, at 1:18 PM, Jeanne Liotta wrote:

I would offer a personal observation that Anthology Film Archives attendance in the post-UbuWeb age seems to have significantly increased.

Oct 14, 2010, at 2:01 PM, Warren Cockerham wrote:

The idea that someone wouldn't rent a print from Canon or attend a screening because they saw a low-res version of the work on Ubu (or any other website) is ridiculous. I'm glad to hear attendance at Anthology has risen in the post-Ubu era -- as I'm sure it has at other venues -- access to work tends to operate as a natural advertisement for the work. Of course, that's not what interests most of us; it's just a fortunate by-product of the real issue --- availability. For those 'artists' not willing to accept that their work will inevitably be available to the public for free (one way or another); they're going spend a lot of time and resources stopping access to it instead of producing more of it. Maybe they're in the wrong “business”...

Oct 14, 2010, at 2:07 PM, Beth Capper wrote:

Jason,

I think you know I wasn't implying that Canyon is making loads of money. However, is Ubu even a 501-c3?³⁶⁵ I have to say I don't know the answer to that. I still think it would be a stretch to imagine that they are putting these works out there for free to make money and I do think there is a clear difference between a completely free online resource and a distributor, and I don't see why both can't exist together - as I suggested by bringing up Doctorow, its just possible putting work out there on Ubu will lead to more rather than less rentals. I know from being able to watch films/videos on there I have encouraged my teachers to use their budgets to rent films/videos from distributors.

Let's deal with the notion of “it's better to ask for forgiveness than permission.” I agree that the way Ubu goes about getting content is not ideal. However, I'm not sure that Ubu would have quite the archive it does if they asked permission. The decision to copyright one's work, as opposed to use, for example, a creative commons license, is so ingrained in our culture that I think if Ubu were to ask permission, the automatic response would be to expect a fee. Also,

based on their content, I would imagine that they are also dealing mostly with estates and not with individual artists. Perhaps I am wrong about that.

When what you are trying to do is promote avant-garde film and sound work, make it more accessible and give it away completely for free, are the resources there to pay everyone 50-100 bucks or whatever, for posting their work online? Again, this goes back again to my original point.. why can't Ubu and distributors/archives exist together? You might just find that if you let people watch your work, download your writing, or whatever, that in fact, it gets more play, published more, etc etc.

Oct 14, 2010, at 3:24 PM, Jack wrote:

UbuWeb is a gateway, it enables people to view things, most who like things will go on and attend screenings if they are able, people are aware that viewing on a computer is different from attending an event.

As a film festival program director and somebody who has long toured and screened films I have noticed no decrease in audiences as a result of availability on DVD or online. At least one of the films I programmed for Sydney Biennale was on UbuWeb but this didn't effect audience attendance.

If you actually look at UbuWeb it even lists distributors and their websites.

Copyright is certainly an issue, but looking at creative commons may be better than looking at outdated copyright ideas, especially if embracing creative commons enables an artist's work to be more readily seen.

BTW Matt: if we were really serious about ownership surely that what prohibit all of those filmmakers who use 'found footage' and 'found' soundtracks?

Oct 14, 2010, at 3:32 PM, Beth Capper wrote:

OK.. do you even realize how difficult that is for some images as a found footage maker? Like, let's take Mickey Mouse, who will never be in the public domain because Disney ARE INSANE, and are the reason why the length of time before a work of art goes into the public domain is so high - like the artists life plus 90 years or something like that. I'm sure the rights to that are like, I dunno, a trillion dollars.. If you enforce the rights for everything you have high school kids plays getting shut down because they didn't obtain the rights (this happened recently to my boyfriend's little brother), or people getting busted for singing happy birthday. If you enforce the rights for everything, the only people who would be able to remix something and make an infinitely more creative product at the end of it would be rich people. And who wants their avant-garde art made by rich people?

Oct 14, 2010, at 3:41 PM, Jason Halprin wrote:

David,

Thank you for reminding me that without respectful difference of opinion, Frameworks would be a much less interesting place (space?). Perhaps I was again unclear it what I meant regarding Ubuweb and their practice. They are justified in "nudging art into the digital light." They should

be commended for this. However, the past practice (and I emphasize, past practice) of public shaming was disrespectful to the same people and work they champion. As you point out this is not their current behavior, and they seem to have struck a better balance.

Although I'm not well versed enough with Habermas' theory to contribute on your point of co-ownership, I have always assumed that at the moment one makes a work of art public, they are no longer the sole owner of that work. However, art is an attempt at communication, and is therefore individual and human. Upon sharing ones artwork, control of the meaning and interpretation of that work becomes shared with the audience. Authorial intent is indeed not privileged in this exchange. However, IMO, the artist should also have free will in deciding whether or not their work will continue to be presented publicly, and in the ways which it will be presented. To decide that it shall not continue to be viewed is as valid a choice as a creative commons license, a limited edition DVD, or free distribution online.

This is separate from what is in your head. That was done, as you put it, at the invitation of the creator. You can and should recount your viewing and reading, to yourself and others. But the obligation of the artist is not infinite once this exchange has been initiated, and I will support anyone's reasonable or unreasonable desire to withdraw work from view. Much as I will advocate that they share it in the first place.

Oct 14, 2010, at 5:53 PM, Jorge Amaro wrote:

If they don't want to be there they can just ask for the film to be removed, simple. But that doesn't prevent in any way for the work to be shared on other corners of the internet, UBU doesn't really 'pirate' anything, they just get files they find on p2p networks and put them there. So it is basically just one of the outlets.

I think it is better for bootlegs that are usually sold on eBay for 20 dollars to be shared freely over the Internet.

Oct 14, 2010, at 5:57 PM, Joseph Curran wrote:

I'm a student and I use UBU web occasionally to investigate artists I am unfamiliar with and I find it incredibly useful, the problem I suppose is not really to do with the UBU web but whether or not the people using the site are engaged enough with the art work to realize that in most cases what you are getting is at best a preview/incomplete experience. For example I have not had the privilege to be able to see one of Stan Brakhage's films shown projected but I have the digital copy of those films, which I consider to be like seeing photographs of paintings, previews that contain an essence of the actual work but not wholly.

Oct 14, 2010, at 6:49 PM, Tom McCormack wrote:

As far as Ubuweb being good or bad, the question is of course: good or bad *for whom*? Ubuweb is almost undoubtedly good for the public, good for avant-garde discourse, good for keeping art and ideas mobile and alive. Is it bad for certain artists? It's possibly bad for certain distribution models, but those models are constantly changing – the coops were for years one model, and an inspiring one, but they may not prove to be the most durable. One possible flaw was that Canyon apparently relied on the rentals of a single filmmaker to a degree where when that filmmaker found alternate modes of distribution Canyon faced closing down. I'm sure no

one was suggesting that Criterion should stop releasing DVDs of avant-garde work to protect the Coops, right? Or that Coops should be allowed a monopoly on the works they distribute?

I think it's obvious that Ubu makes mistakes – their wall of shame was tasteless, and I had trouble with the fact that they put out Treasures IV practically the day it was released, which seemed in poor form. But what gets my goat is this attitude – “Places like Ubu are responsible for the economic marginalization of experimental filmmakers. I have trouble paying rent and it's Ubu's fault.” This is an absurd case of transference. Overall, I think Ubu helps sustain experimental media. Experimental media makers are certainly going to have to come up with ingenious ways to sustain themselves economically in the next few decades – they always have had to do this, since the market value of experimental media is always precarious – but I imagine that in the final accounting Ubu will be seen as playing a positive role in this.

On the issue of poor quality - painters and sculptors have for more than 100 years dealt with the redistribution of their work thru un-ideal media. Now filmmakers have to deal with it. As was pointed out by Beth, for now it seems a good thing that most films are online in poor quality. It would be a lot tougher if everything on Ubu streamed in HD. That will probably be a reality someday, in which case we need newer forms of economic sustainability for alternative media makers. Instead of complaining about Ubu, we should be using this list to think up those forms!

Oct 14, 2010, at 8:52 PM, Beth Capper wrote:

As I suggested earlier, we are talking about work that for the most part is intrinsically bound to political ideas and moments, and not making those works and the ideas they contain accessible to those who don't live in cities to watch them at MOMA is like saying that only university kids should be allowed to read Adorno, or Foucault or Marx, or bell hooks or whoever. Actually, there is a similar issue with books, since Verso put out all these great political works and charge a fair whack for them, and are always trying to put the kibosh on those who give them out for free. As a friend of mine says, the ACTUP movement was made up of all kinds of people, many of whom had a copy of “History of Sexuality” in their back pocket. Perhaps those people now have a pdf. of it instead?

Oct 15, 2010, at 10:33 AM, Anna Biller wrote:

Almost all of these posts have been about the rights and experiences of viewers, when the issue from the very beginning has been the rights of the makers.

Oct 15, 2010, at 5:30 PM, Evan Meaney wrote:

Does any experimental media maker think their work will economically support them indefinitely? I didn't think that's why we got into this game. If I wanted a ton of money I would have done something else, but I chose this work for other reasons. The blame should not (cannot, really) go to UBU. This is the current climate of remediation and archiving. And the kicker is, it will only continue (legally, morally, or otherwise). Perhaps, as we point our fingers and gnash our teeth, we might also consider how our new work can cope with these new circumstances, not obstinately resist them. Perhaps UBU represents a challenge to modify our views on art objects and their lifespans. Perhaps it is not the enemy who steals our 'livelihood', but a friend asking us to evolve.

Oct 17, 2010, at 6:10 PM, David Tetzlaff wrote:

I wonder if anyone at UbuWeb is listening in to this discussion. I'd certainly agree that UbuWeb could be improved -- though I'd guess that, like many film fests and screening series, it's mainly a labor of love with limited resources and the creators are doing their best, aware of the flaws, and just very limited in being able to deal with them. Nevertheless, we might light the proverbial candle instead of cursing the cliched darkness, and try to generate some ideas about online versions of experimental work (not just Ubu, there's a lot of classic material on Google video as well) could be improved to better serve the artform, the community, and the artists whose continuing practice keeps the form alive.

Fig. 2.23: “To the Frameworks Community.docx,” page 1, 18 October 2010.

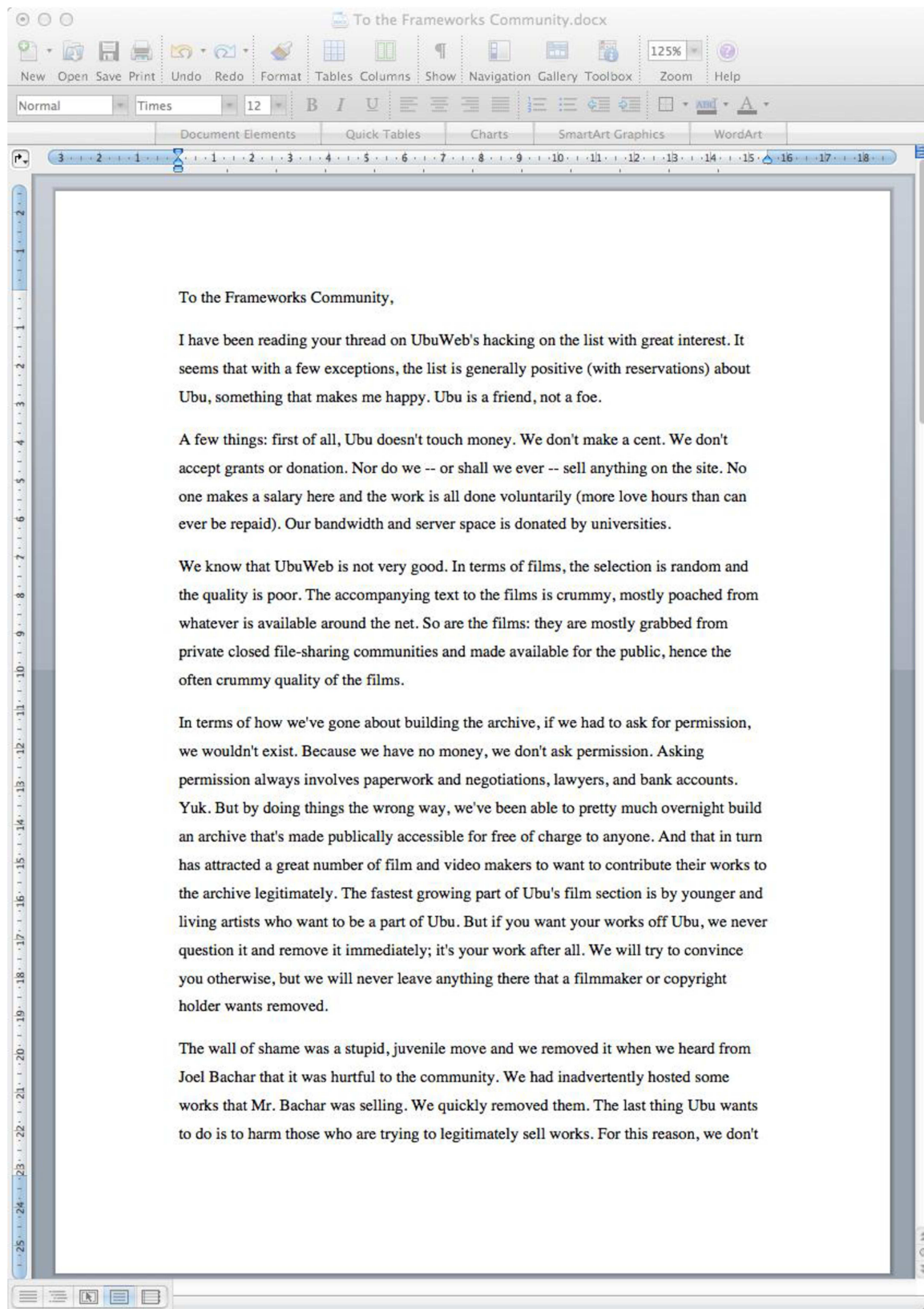


Fig. 2.24: “To the Frameworks Community.docx,” page 2, 18 October 2010.

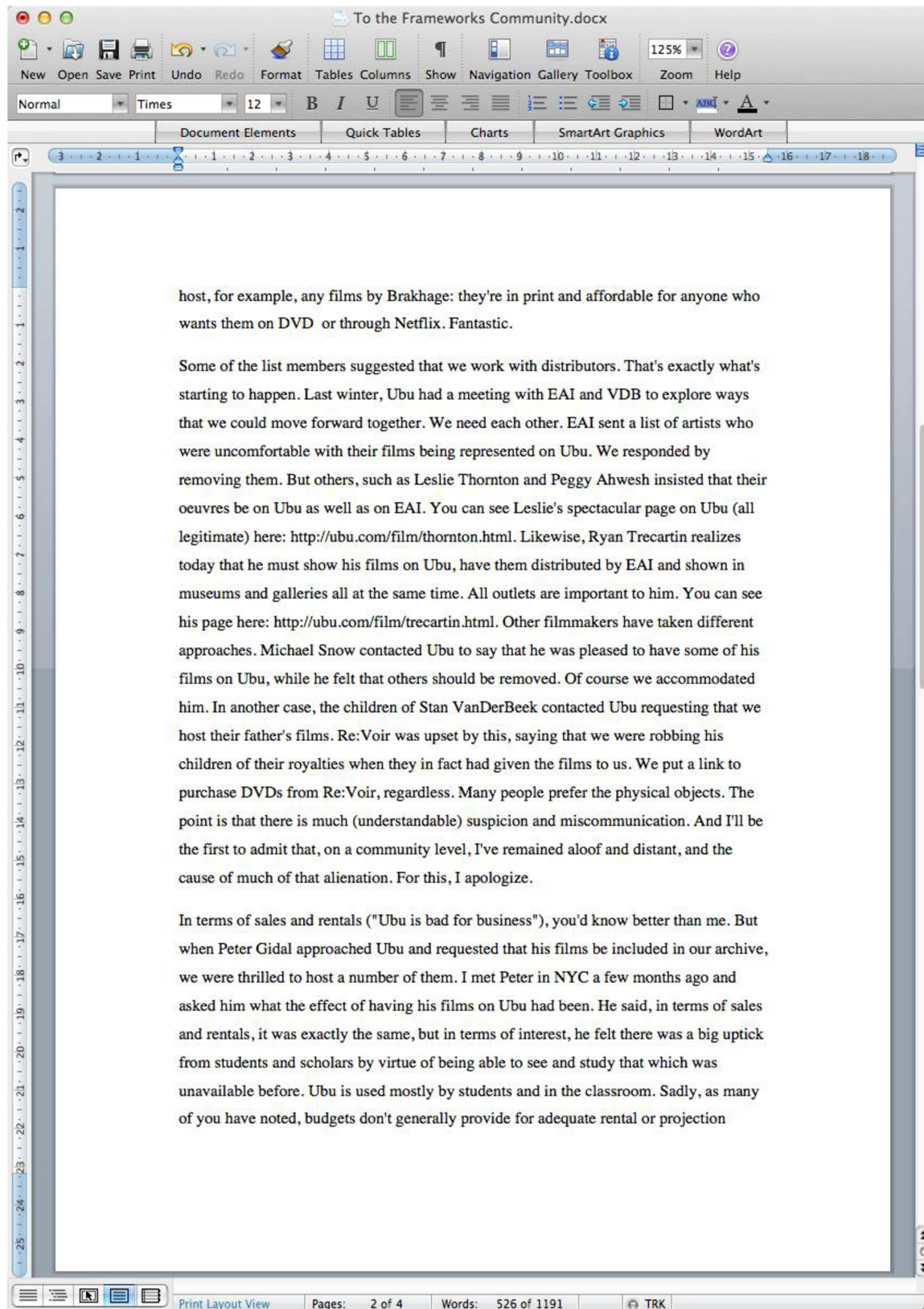
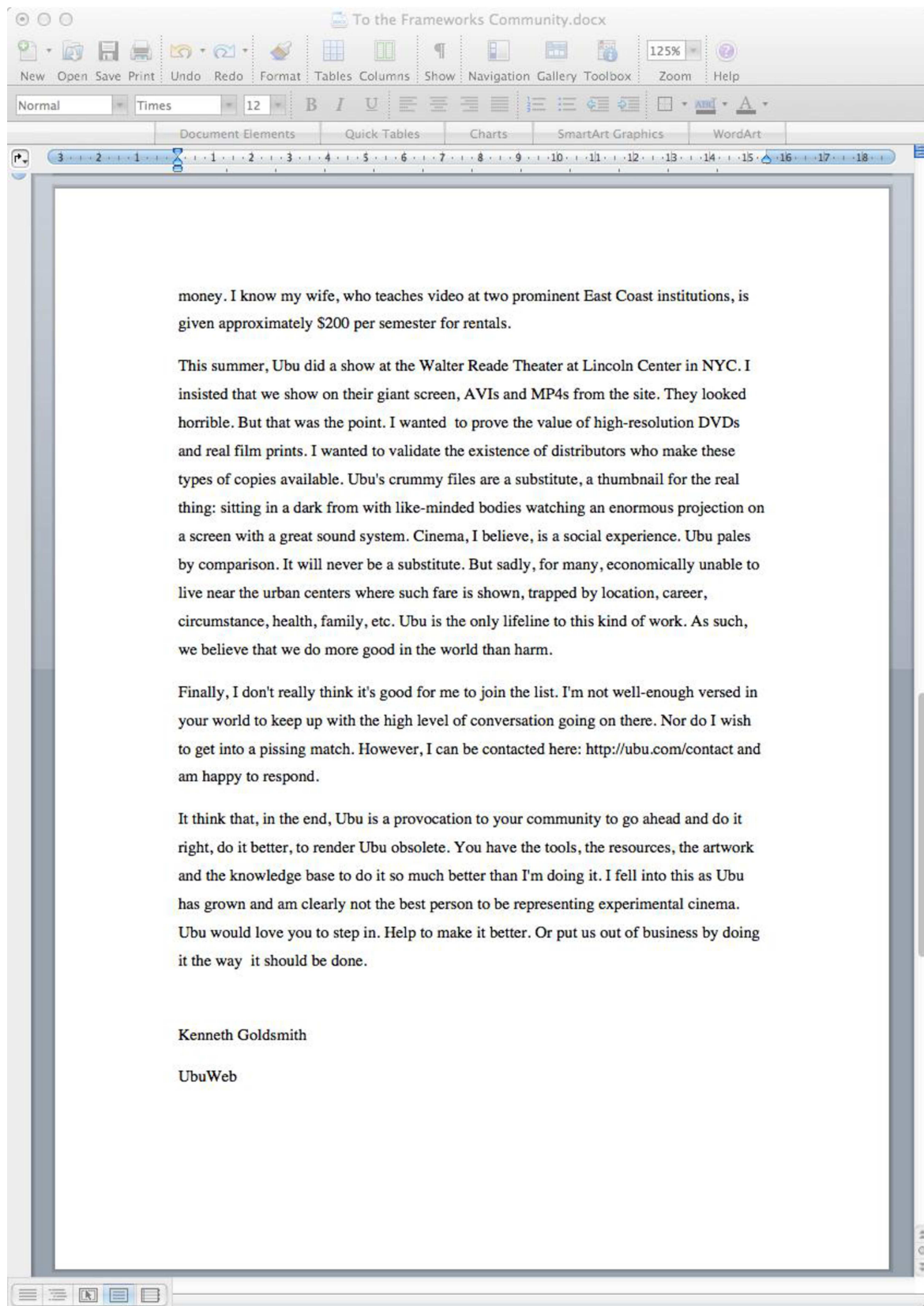


Fig. 2.25: “To the Frameworks Community.docx,” page 3, 18 October 2010.



Soliloquy: MoMA and UbuWeb

If you go to MoMA's website you'll see there's not one artist film or video there. They'll tell you what's on at the gallery and what they're serving for lunch that day. Some educational MP3s, you know. Education is allowed to put those things up of people who do lectures. But you can't see, say, an Andy Warhol film up there. Or any of it. So, I've got like three or four thousand films up on Ubu, and tons of audio, primary source material, and MoMA has nothing! So, UbuWeb is much bigger and much more important than MoMA in some world, in some parallel universe. I get the works from Kargara or a friend or whatever, I heave it up to a server, quickly rattle off the HTML, and post it. Done. If MoMA wants to put up a film or a video on their site, they've got to begin to, well, the first thing is that they have to contact the artist and get permission. Then they have to get their lawyer to work with artist's estate or the gallery, and there are people who broker a contract for how much someone is going to be paid, is it per stream, what kind of revenue sharing plan, et cetera. Even if it's free for them, they have to do a contract and get lawyers involved. Then, after that, comes the digitization, and they have to follow very tight standards [...] So, if MoMA wants to put something up, they have to broker with the artist, then they have to do all the file format stuff, they've got to pay for somebody to transfer it probably. They've got sixteen file formats. So, that's more money. And after that, god forbid, that, you know, in the film there's a snippet of radio playing from a 1966 and it's "Jumping Jack Flash" going, well, then they got to contact Mick Jagger or The Rolling Stones, and then they have to pay royalties for every little snippet of music. They've got to clear all these permissions and get all this stuff, and that's just for one film that some guy made with a sixteen millimetre camera back in 1970. At that point, with all of that, it's got to be ten thousand dollars just for that object to even go online. Where are you going to get that money? If you had to rebuild Ubu properly from scratch, it would take untold millions and millions of dollars just to do what we've already done. It's intimidating. That's why it never gets done. People just can't, they can't deal with it ... Anyway, that's why Ubu outstrips MoMA. I always say, Why aren't there sixteen UbuWebs? Because nobody, everybody is scared of copyright. And I've learned that copyright is not a black and white thing, it's really grey. And mostly I've realized copyright comes down to money. If something's making money, they're going to come after you. If something is really having a hard time making money, people are not going to throw good money away for no money.³⁶⁶

Fig. 2.26: MoMA website directing users to visit UbuWeb, 4 June 2018.

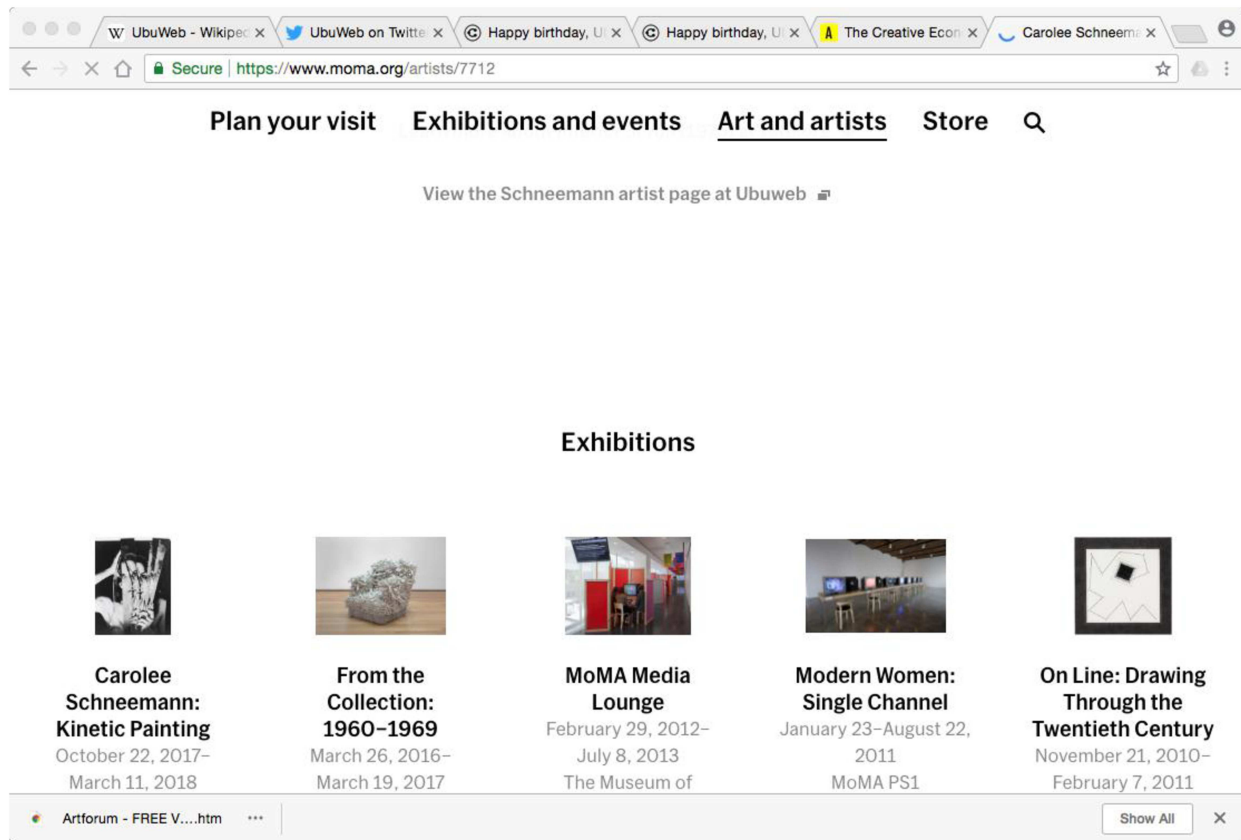


Fig. 2.27: Whitney Museum of American Art website directing users to UbuWeb, 4 June 2018.

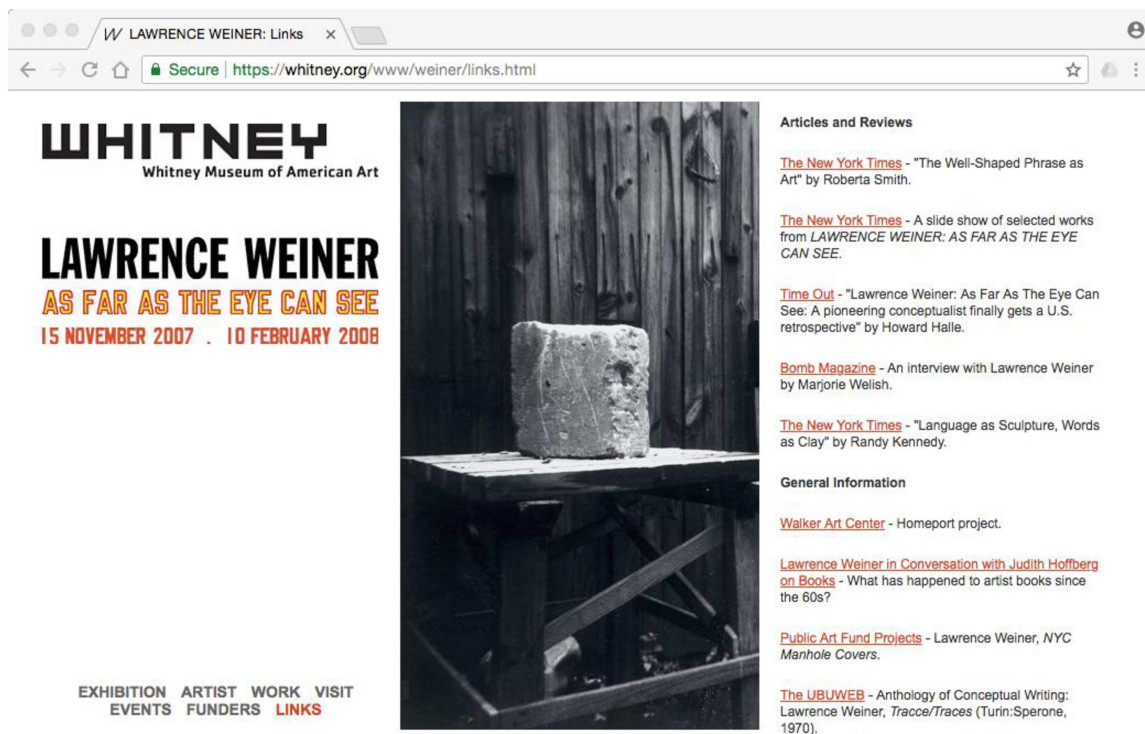


Fig. 2.28: Flyer for “Who owns the image?” at CENTRO, Mexico City, September 23, 2010.

congreso

Who owns the image?

Congreso de debate sobre propiedad intelectual y copyright

Centro de diseño, cine y televisión y Labor te invitan a un congreso especializado: conferencias y mesas redondas donde se verán casos de estudio y paneles de discusión sobre el tema de propiedad intelectual. Impartido por artistas, teóricos y críticos legales nacionales e internacionales.

Programa

- Inauguración a cargo de Pamela Echeverría (Labor) y Uzyel Karp (CENTRO).
- *What Remains of the Commons*: Presentación y plática abierta a cargo de Imre Szeman, catedrático de estudios culturales y estudios de cine de la Universidad de Alberta.
- Caso de estudio 1: *Copying, Copyright and the Artistic Commonwealth el caso de Superflex* por Daniel McClean.
Mesa redonda: Imre Szeman + Manuel Alcalá + alumno invitado
- Caso de estudio 2: *How the Guillotine Invented a Pictorial Genre* por Etienne Chabaud.
Mesa redonda: Iván Abreu + Gabriela Traverso + Adam Kleinman
- Receso de comida
- Caso de estudio 3: *If We Had To Ask For Permission, We Wouldn't Exist: A Brief Accounting of Why Ubu Web Doesn't Believe That Copyright Is Real* por Kenneth Goldsmith.
Mesa redonda: Daniel McClean + Adam Kleinman + Manuel Alcalá
- *Sovereignty and Inscription*: Presentación y plática abierta a cargo de Adam Kleinman, escritor y curador, colaborador de *Artforum*, *Bomb*, *e-flux Journal* y *Texte zur Kunst*.
- Caso de estudio 4: *Compilation, Collage, Culture-Jam: Jiu-Jitsu Tactics Against the Empire of Signs* por Craig Baldwin.
Mesa redonda: Daniel McClean + Jorge Bolado + alumnos invitados
- Conclusiones por Jorge Bolado
- Cocktail de clausura

Aforo limitado

centro.edu.mx/who-owns-the-image.php

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LABOR

Jueves
23 de septiembre
12 a 20 horas

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Sierra Mojada 415
Lomas de Chapultepec, 11000
Miguel Hidalgo, México D. F.



Informes
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Ubu in Mexico

In the autumn of 2010, the future of UbuWeb was unclear. The CFI grant at York University that supported the majority of the repository's server space and bandwidth was coming to an end. PennSound hosted permissioned media, but such files comprised of only a small portion of the overall collection. During this period of uncertainty, Goldsmith accepted an invitation from curator Pamela Echeveria invited Goldsmith to Mexico City to take part in a series of talks on copyright and artistic works called "Who Owns the Image?" that she had organized at CENTRO, a private university specializing in creative studies.³⁶⁷ Or, as Echeveria puts it, the talks were "all about where people can get information and where they can learn. For free."³⁶⁸ Prior to her founding the gallery LABOR in Mexico City, Echeveria worked in a number of institutions where she dealt extensively with exclusive and unique objects. "I first became aware of UbuWeb," she states, "right after people started having access to art galleries online, when the MoMA, for example, and the Met began to launch their archives online." She cites UbuWeb as being a catalyst behind her thinking on the relationship between artistic works and intellectual property in the first place: "At a certain point, I became interested in thinking about works of art and copyright, and I became more interested in UbuWeb then. I was always wondering: How is this site working?"³⁶⁹

During his talk at CENTRO, Goldsmith explained exactly this, discussing at length the vulnerability of UbuWeb and the uncertainty of its future, given the events of the last months. These words struck a chord with Jorge Bolado, professor of film and cinematography at CENTRO. After the talk, Bolado approached Goldsmith and told him, "I want to help. I want to give you what you need." As Bolado narrates:

I can give you the money and support you need, I told him. As a personal thing, you know. Not as an institution. And he put on this face, I think of it as an American face when an American is confronted with a political thing, you know. He made this face, maybe he went a little white in the face, and said No, no, no, no, no. I don't receive money. It was as if I were saying something wrong. And I didn't catch that at first. I said, Maybe you don't understand me. You say you need help and I can give you the help. I just want to help. And he replied, No, no. I don't receive money for UbuWeb. Never. I think that he felt that he was person that needed to be very cautious, and he needed to do the correct things around money, and that what I was offering was a kind of trap. I realized this not at first, but in our second exchange. So I said, well you just said this – and I repeated at that moment, I don't remember the exact words, and I have come to do that. If it is not money that you need, then tell me what you need. I really want to help because I enjoy UbuWeb, and think this project needs to

continue.

I was the director of cinematography and I was a teacher. I told Kenneth that this is a school and maybe we can help as a school. He said something to the extent of that any university in the United States did not want to back the project because of legal questions, because of legal problems. So I told him, we are not in the United States, we are in Mexico and maybe we can help in that way. You just tell me what you need. And he said to me that he needs a server. And I said, Really? Okay. Then I asked what were perhaps some bizarre questions because I don't understand very well things about servers. And I said to him, Okay, can you give me five minutes? I asked for five minutes because I saw Kerstin [Scheuch, CENTRO's director,] and I wanted to discuss this with her. I went to her and I said: Kerstin, I have this case. She understood because she was at Goldsmith's lecture. I think that we can help and I think it is the most important thing that CENTRO could do in this moment.

She said, Yes, let's resolve this now. Then in that moment we had another director [named Manuel Alcala] who is no longer working with us, but he was working on new media and digital works. He was a part of the conference as well. And I said to him, Let's ask him if we can do this, if it would be a big issue. Very quickly, he replied, Oh, no, it's not a big issue. It all happened in five minutes, ten minutes at the most. Then I returned to Kenneth and I say, I think everything is resolved. We can do it for you.³⁷⁰

The basic transaction took place in a matter of minutes.

CENTRO's director Kerstin Scheuch admits she saw the potential of hosting UbuWeb as a valuable asset to the institution. The repository exemplified, in her opinion, the interdisciplinarity and engagement with culture that she sought to foster at CENTRO. As Scheuch states:

When we did our research internationally, we found that educational institutions are a sort of animal that likes consistency. Everything needs to be solid and looking back more than looking forward. Obviously there are exceptions, but this institution was built at a time when change was already the main driver of what's happening. I think, between the twentieth century and the twenty-first century, there is a major change in the attitude of how we work and what we do. Now, everyone is a mega-city, one where things are at the same time crazy and perfect, not planned but functioning well. Everybody is somehow like that. Every project is somehow like that. In a way, being built in that time was very useful because the people you hire and the way you build the whole thing, it is built upon this idea of constant improvement where we are constantly revising things again and again. Nothing is ever really finished. Everything is always moving, growing, under construction, and moving into other areas. I can't remember a time when anything ever felt finished. This process inflects the culture of an institution in that we believe that you can't live solely in a single, strict subject area. There needs to be a concept of general culture, which, these days, is not a general idea at all. Here, I think, one of the components that unites all [seven]

of the directors here and is a core belief of the university is that you have to be aware, that you have to be involved, and that you need to have access – that is why UbuWeb is so important – to cultural output in all sorts of forms and at some level of excellence. This is so crucial to all of the areas we are concerned with and developing here at CENTRO. It is a mindset we are trying to create.³⁷¹

In hearing this, a comment from Wershler comes to mind, that “UbuWeb is precisely the kind of site that contemporary digital cultural policy should be trying to produce ... but it is also, paradoxically, the kind of site that universities, businesses and governments have to officially disavow.”³⁷² Here, Wershler points to the legal, administrative, and financial burden a site like UbuWeb can bring to any institution willing to support it, even if the site’s cultural value is widely acknowledged. When I ask Bolado about any potential concerns from the perspective of the institution for their support of UbuWeb, he describes the process by which he and Scheuch have insured CENTRO is protected if the site gets into legal trouble

We decided to open a new company. It's not directly set up at the university of CENTRO, but it's a company beside the university. If in any case that we have problems, the problems go against this company that we have started and not CENTRO. For this new company, Centro chose it because I told CENTRO that I was not interested in doing the bureaucracy around this issue. I'm not a legal person in my own life. Then Centro made all the things and I just signed them, and Manuel signed them too. We are the CEOs or something like that of this new company.³⁷³

Thus, the way they are able to protect the institution from potential litigation has been by creating, essentially, a shell corporation tangential to CENTRO that will absorb responsibility for potential issues, all the while they fully integrate UbuWeb into the university. The costs to finance this parallel corporation run around 3400 \$MXN per month (around 220 \$CAD),³⁷⁴ and that, as UbuWeb is listed as a “critical service” for CENTRO to maintain,³⁷⁵ this sum is pulled from a number of sources around the university. As Bolado explains:

Kerstin [Scheuch] manages these things. She tells me that she will take some of my money for UbuWeb, and I say go ahead and take it. In the end, I'm not sure how we count this. I think it is a special thing. Probably, we can have more money in the department if we didn't support UbuWeb. But we simply don't count this money as a loss. Everything goes toward a good thing because we are a university and we are interested in developing our ability to teach the arts and design. In the end, too, it's not just from my department. Then it would look like a special thing for my department, so money comes from other areas too. We try to make it clear that UbuWeb is not just good for the Film Department. It is good for other departments as well like New Media, Fashion, and Architecture.

He looks upon this arrangement with great pride: “I tell [my students] to remember that the most important thing that I have done at this school, and probably will do at this school, is to help UbuWeb. [...] Everybody that is in the world who is looking at UbuWeb, it's because Centro is helping...”³⁷⁶

While at CENTRO, I wanted to see the server. Standing before it, I imagined, would be this profound experience of the digital real, a physical spot where virtual and social completely overlap,³⁷⁷ one where I could point to this metal object with blinking blue lights and say: “That is UbuWeb.” Talking with Victor and Aldo – the two IT staff who maintain CENTRO’s technology systems, and who comment, while viewing UbuWeb’s analytics, how its contents are always at their hard drive’s maximum two terabytes hard drive – they look at me with uncertainty when I ask to see the server. They lead me down a hall, into a room filled with audio-visual equipment and hundreds of various cables, and open a closet. “Here is CENTRO’s server,” Aldo tells me. Immediately, I begin taking pictures of it, feeling a particular joy that I’ve tracked down and am able to document one of the most important objects in my research. “But UbuWeb is not on it,” he says, as I snap my last photo.

I learned, later, that UbuWeb’s server has been outsourced to an external provider (ISP), to a Mexican company called Xpress Hosting, who has offices in Mexico City that are connected to Red IT, one of the most important data centers in the city.³⁷⁸ The shell corporation that officially sponsors UbuWeb has arranged for this service, and it is part of the overall package to create a safe guard for the institution in case of litigation against UbuWeb. Although, it’s worth noting that, in writing, CENTRO’s IT manager Sergio Rios Casas explains to me that the reason behind the external provider is that it can more adequately support, maintain, monitor the site than CENTRO’s technicians.³⁷⁹ Along with these services, CENTRO’s own IT staff – Victor and Aldo – are able to validate that everything with UbuWeb continues to run properly via an Xpress Hosting interface online.

The opportunity to come face-to-face with UbuWeb’s server slid even further away when, having reached out to Xpress Hosting and Red IT, I learn that the remote server that hosts UbuWeb is a “virtual server.” This means that it is a server located in the cloud, not physically located at any site that either Xpress Hosting or Red IT directly manage. In addition to this, as an Xpress Hosting operator tells me over the phone, although they never exactly know where a virtual server is, they do know it is likely at a data centre within one of the four main countries

they work with – the United Kingdom, Argentina, Brazil, or the United States – although they never know for sure. It is likely, even, that the location regularly switches between data centres within those four nations.

It feels as though I had unintentionally stumbled upon something “as real” as pointing to a metallic box and saying, “That is UbuWeb” – a paradoxical space where UbuWeb is both and neither here nor there. It is a logic that permeates the repository and the discourse built around it. UbuWeb is one person and it is many people. It is an amateur’s *Wunderkammer* and an expert’s archive. It is a side project, and it is also a masterwork. It is rogue, even while it operates through and by means of an assemblage of cultural and educational establishments. It is a crowing achievement of an institution, even as it is operated out of a mostly anonymous shell company. Its centre or hub is a desk and a scanner in a Manhattan home office, at the same time its centre is dispersed throughout a digital cloud. It is a radical and utopic space, even as it channels and perpetuates the logics of neoliberal global capital. This, in turn, points to something important about the shifting status of the digital object in its circulatory matrixes, that its identity is site-specific and adaptive, dependent upon the set of actors it is bound up with and the space they occupy.

Fig. 2.29: Goldsmith at LABOR in Mexico City for Printing Out the Internet, July 2013.



Fig. 2.30: Online petition requesting that Goldsmith not print out the internet included in Printing Out the Internet at LABOR, July 2013.

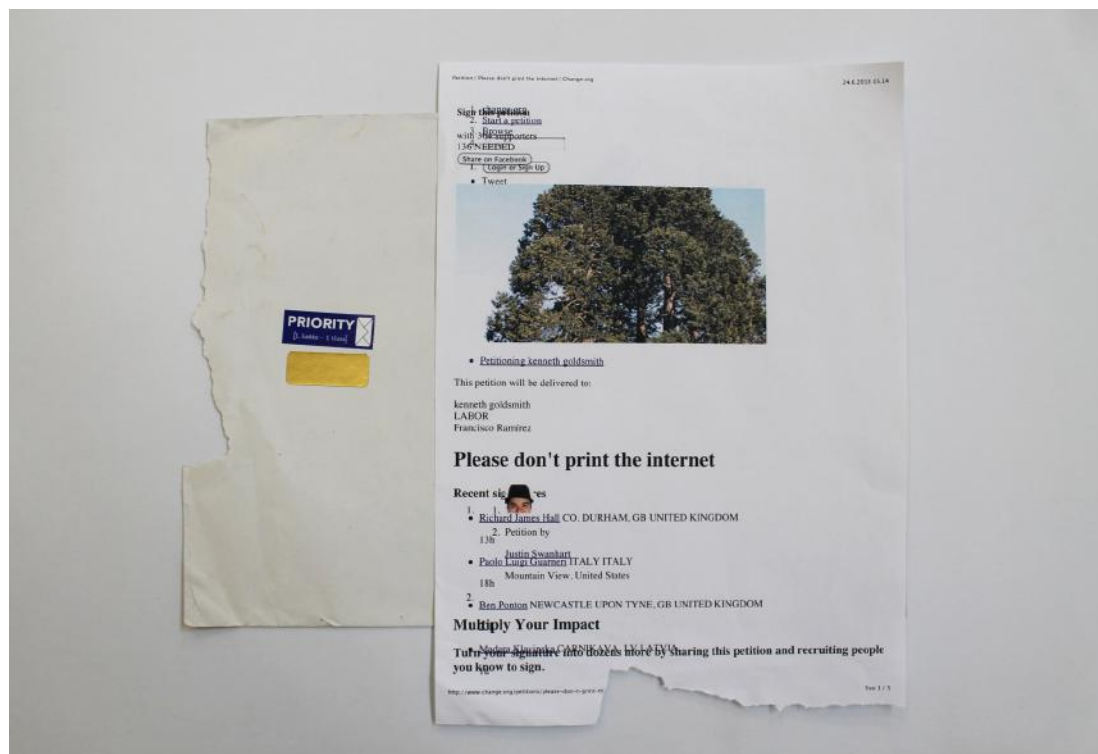
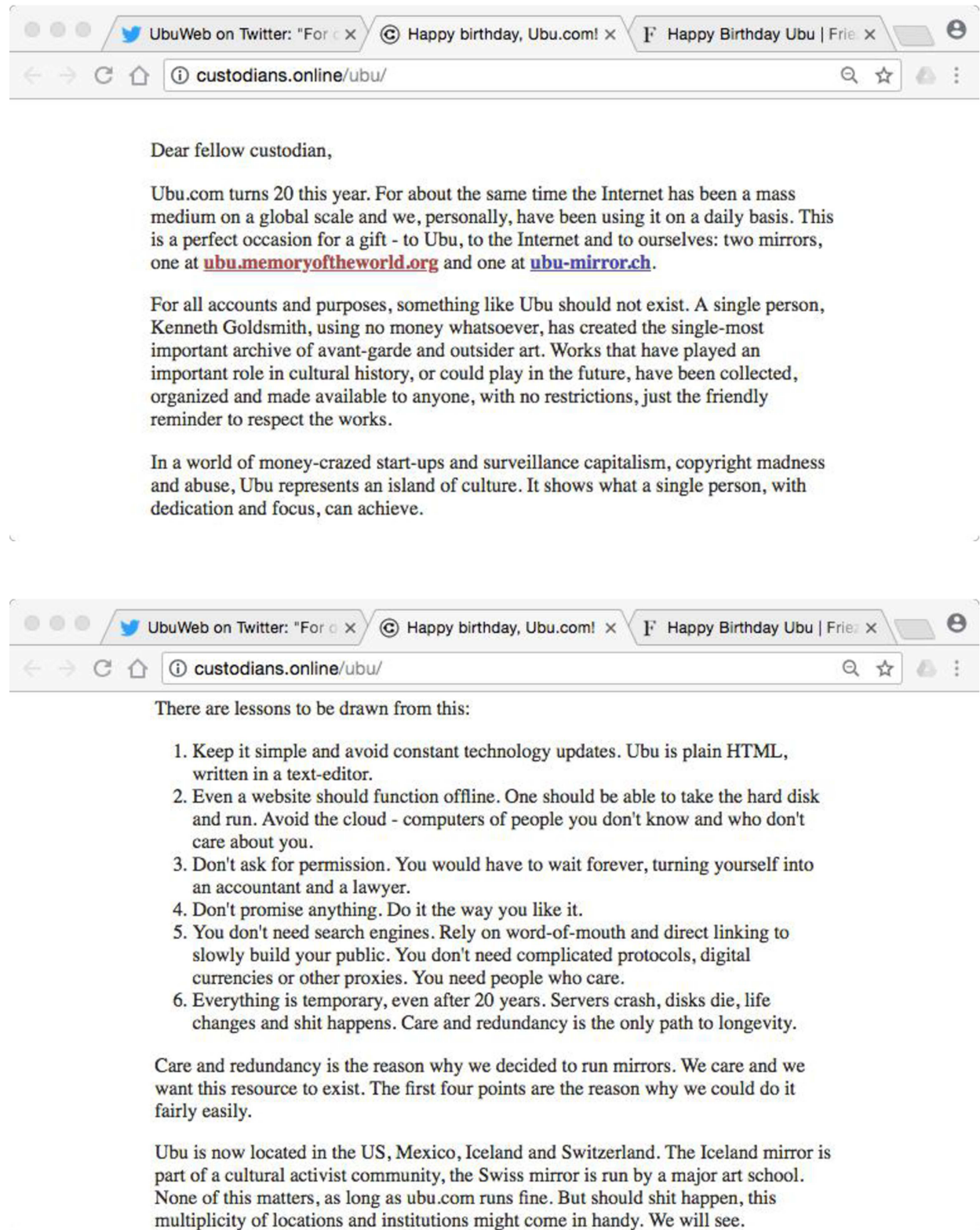


Fig. 2.31: Happy birthday, Ubu.com! (Parts 1 &2)



Poetics at the Edge of Circulation

Between completing my research for this chapter and finalizing it within this dissertation, the composition of UbuWeb has changed yet again. It comes as no surprise: I've begun to understand the repository as a roving, mutable entity, even as its interface stays mainly the same, as though it were a work of early HTML concrete poetry. On the site, it's a challenge to track down the specific changes. Yet, they are there, hinted at in the margins of UbuWeb's many frames – in the URL addresses for specific pages, in the insignia located in the corner of a video window, or in one of the repository's dozens of paratexts dispersed across the Web.

While cross-checking information for the chapter online, I come across an interview with Goldsmith concerning UbuWeb published within the last month and conducted by Manuel Alcalá, the former CENTRO professor who was partly responsible for Ubu's move to Mexico. I had tried at several points and through various associates to track him down for an interview about his involvement. I heard from one group of people that Alcalá was living in Oaxaca, Mexico, and from another group of people that he was likely living in Texas. Each email I wrote to his supposed addresses bounced back or never received a reply. In Alcalá's introduction to the interview, entitled "The Creative Economy" and published online by a Mexican magazine called *Animal*, he states he learned during the interview that "after 4 years, CENTRO stopped supporting the project [of supporting UbuWeb's servers, bandwidth, and day-to-day maintenance]." ³⁸⁰ This comes as a surprise, since I had met with both the people at CENTRO and with Goldsmith exactly four years after CENTRO began hosting UbuWeb, and there was no discussion of such changes. "Apparently," writes Alcalá, "the entrepreneurs of design did not find it important to house the most complete avant-garde archive in the world." ³⁸¹ This information contradicts everything I heard at CENTRO.

And yet, I scroll through UbuWeb, and all of the signals that connect pages on UbuWeb to CENTRO seem to have been scrubbed. I see no "ubumexico.centro.org.mx" in any of the URLs any longer. On UbuWeb's "Partners" page, CENTRO is not listed. "Don't worry," Goldsmith apparently tells Alcalá in the interview – it's difficult to ascertain who is saying what exactly due to the odd format of the exchange – "I found some hackers who helped me and now it's on servers in Iceland." ³⁸² I look for different sources online to confirm this news and, instead, find an announcement detailing the gift of two mirror sites – one in Iceland, the other in Switzerland – by an anonymous Internet group called "Custodians Online" (fig 2.31). The two

mirror sites – ubu.memoryoftheworld.org and ubu-mirror.ch³⁸³ – appear online exactly the same as ubu.com, and are there to continue its legacy on the Internet should anything happen to the primary site. “Custodians Online” sees in UbuWeb a number of important lessons to draw on to consider in the creation of digital objects more generally:

1. Keep it simple and avoid constant technology updates. Ubu is plain HTML, written in a text-editor.
2. Even a website should function offline. One should be able to take the hard disk and run. Avoid the cloud – computers of people you don’t know and who don’t care about you.
3. Don’t ask for permission. You would have to wait forever, turning yourself into an accountant and a lawyer.
4. Don’t promise anything. Do it the way you like it.
5. You don’t need search engines. Rely on word-of-mouth and direct linking to slowly build your public. You don’t need complicated protocols, digital currencies or other proxies. You need people who care.
6. Everything is temporary, even after 20 years. Servers crash, disks die, life changes and shit happens. Care and redundancy is the only path to longevity.³⁸⁴

Although a few things stand out here as not being presently applicable to the state of UbuWeb – as its film and video files are now located on the cloud, and UbuWeb is now detectable to search engines such as Google – the itemized list gets to the core of UbuWeb’s capacity to perpetually transform and reconfigure itself, its rogue and counter-institutional approach to preservation and circulation. The announcement, from 2016, states: “Ubu is now located in the US, Mexico, Iceland and Switzerland,” which seems to discredit Alcalá’s statement that Ubu left Mexico in 2015.³⁸⁵ At this point, I consider writing again to Goldsmith or the folks at CENTRO to ask them about the situation, or think that I could even begin to track down who these hackers are and where are these supposed servers located in Iceland or Switzerland, but that is, perhaps, besides the point.

“By the time you read this, UbuWeb may be gone,” Goldsmith wrote in a text to celebrate UbuWeb’s fifteenth anniversary in 2011.³⁸⁶ It’s a phrase he has stated often, nearly any time he has discussed UbuWeb and its history in a public forum during the last years. Like “If we had to ask permission, we wouldn’t exist,” the sentence is a kind of calling card, a slogan to remind its publics of the project’s fragility and uncertain future. “Never meant to be a permanent archive,” Goldsmith writes, “Ubu could vanish for any number of reasons: our ISP pulls the plug, our university support dries up, or we simply grow tired of it”³⁸⁷ Elsewhere, he states: “it could vanish any day.” Yet, it’s worth noting just sentences before this statement, he writes: “The

future is eminently scalable: as long as we have the bandwidth and server space, there is no limit as to how big the site can grow.”³⁸⁸ It’s curious how often and how well Goldsmith is able to pull off this kind of appeal to two disparate possibilities.

The reality is, perhaps, something more like this: By the time you read this, UbuWeb will be different. Its servers will be located elsewhere. Its media files will be networked between several new locations. The site’s materials will shrink or grow depending on the support offered by its benefactors. The file formats it uses will be different. Perhaps, counter to one of Goldsmith’s long-held conceptions of the site, more of its materials will be located on the cloud and streamed through corporate interfaces embedded on the site. Or perhaps Goldsmith will have already removed all of the film and video off Vimeo because he was able to find a better alternative. Perhaps there will be whole new acquisitions that will alter completely the purview of the repository. Either way, it is a safe bet to say that what will likely be the case is beneath the same cool, minimalist interface and its linked indexes, there will exist an entirely different substructure that articulates its materials so that they can continue to circulate amid our ever shifting digital networks.

Chapter Three

PennSound

Le goût de l'archive est visiblement une errance à travers les mots d'autrui, la recherche d'un langage qui en sauve les pertinences.

[The allure of the archives entails a roaming voyage through the words of others, and a search for a language that can rescue their pertinence.]

—Arlette Farge³⁸⁹

At the Kislak Collections, with all seven boxes of the PennSound materials spread out before me, I am uncertain where to begin. Each one, when I open it, is a mess of things: cardboard boxes within boxes, envelopes of all sizes, individual plastic cases that contain compact discs and tape cassettes, the occasional DAT tape or reel-to-reel or floppy disk, handwritten stick-it notes, printed pages, elastics so old and ossified that when I pick up the objects they band together the rubber crumbles to pieces. The boxes are “unprocessed” – as Lynn Farrington and Thomas Hensle of the Kislak Collections tell me – meaning they have not organized the materials inside them in any particular way and have kept them in the same groups as they arrived at the collections over seven years earlier. In fact, they tell me, they aren't exactly sure what “processing” them might mean.

Accustomed to dealing with and preserving textual forms from manuscripts to correspondences to codex editions, the PennSound materials confront them with a number of challenges. Should they organize the materials as a single collection? Or do they attempt to establish the provenances of the various collections – which are themselves, often, collections of collections all with varying sources – that together form the PennSound collection? Do they arrange the materials by their specific formats? Or perhaps by the specific instalments in which they received – the earliest being the box of tapes Charles Bernstein had brought over from an English Department storage closet in 2008, the latest the box I brought over from underneath Bernstein's office desk earlier that morning? Whichever way they might choose, they know it will be a significant amount of labour that they are uncertain they have the capacity to do – in terms of both expertise and material support. For these reasons, the seven boxes have remained in their unprocessed state at an off-site storage space over the years.

Unlike most literary audio recording collections, these materials have previously been digitally transferred and made available to interested listeners. Through PennSound, MP3 versions of these recordings circulate on the Web, with their basic metadata in tow: author, site of the reading, date of the reading, and, often, the names of the poems the poet reads and their duration. As I begin to sort through the boxes, I realize I am familiar with many of the recordings from listening to them on the site. And yet, or on account of my familiarity with them, I feel overwhelmed by their sheer materiality before me and in my hands. Inspecting them, little inscriptions jump out at me – the handwriting on the back of the cassette case, the personal note to its intended listener on the cassette itself. There are brief notes intermixed with the recordings, signs and signals of their transmission, that attest to one person collecting them, another one posting them, and others still upon receiving them processing them to be on PennSound. In one box, I find the entire collection of tape cassettes from the 1970s and 80s that the poet Ron Silliman had donated, which, as a set, portray an engagement that is remarkable for the various generations and schools of poetry it brings together. In another box, I come upon a series of Jackson Mac Low recordings, one of which stands out – his *Song and Simultaneities*, produced by TARMAC Tapes & Books. Having spent a significant amount of time on Mac Low's PennSound page, I know this one is not there. I open the cassette's plastic case and, inside, see a handwritten note: "With love to Charles & Susan & Emma / Jackson & Anne / NY Book Fair, 10/1/85" (see fig. 3.03). Then, in a box of recordings from the Poetry Project, I come upon a tape cassette of Rob Fitterman reading at St. Mark's Church in 1989, which I know must be an early recording, as the work of his I'm most familiar with did not start appearing in publications until a decade later. After listening to the tape and then consulting PennSound, I find this recording, too, is not up on the site.

In looking through these boxes, I sense how these same materials could have served as the basis for a number of other potential repositories, ones infinitely different from PennSound. Perhaps, specific groupings of these materials could have formed their own repository based on their shared site of origin. Or, perhaps, they could have been part of a PennSound had been organized altogether differently – one, for instance, that focused more implicitly on the physical media and provenance information, or one that included entirely different collections of recordings. So I begin here, struck with imagining how PennSound, by its very materials, might have been otherwise – focusing less on what has been "lost" in the digitization of these materials

on PennSound, and more on that which becomes discernible after the fact of PennSound's editors digitizing, organizing, and putting them to use.

In tracing out PennSound's particular articulation of literary practice and theorization, pedagogy and conviviality – from Charles Bernstein's personal recordings and his critical writings based on his extended considerations of those recordings, through Al Filreis's infrastructures for teaching he has attempted to build at and by means of the University of Pennsylvania – this chapter documents a number of sites and exchanges. At first, I review the scholarly writings on PennSound so as to trace out the repository's impact on the status of sound in literary studies. Following this, in "Phonopoetics," I outline the particular theoretical frame by which I approach PennSound, its materials and protocols. With this in mind, in "A/Oralities," I move on to the figure of Bernstein, who has been one of the main movers behind both the EPC and UbuWeb. With PennSound, Bernstein's own wealth of audio recordings are the central collection of the repository, while his numerous writings on the sonic and performative components of poetic practice outline the importance of making such a collection accessible. These materials and critical writings provide an excellent counterpart to Al Filreis's pedagogical explorations, which he discusses in the following section, "Revelations." Here, we hear from Filreis on his initial attempts to create a "wired" classroom setting, at once a laboratory for humanities dialogues and also a media production space that opens up and involves contributors far beyond that locale. In "Make It Free," I depict Bernstein and Filreis's correspondences to establish the protocols for PennSound, focusing on their exploration of what it means for these files to be "free" to use. Following this correspondence, we hear from Bernstein himself on the cultural importance of what it means to make these recordings accessible for free, and the overall importance of circulation more generally for poetic practice, encapsulated with his declaration that "distribution is what the work is." Next, in the "The Tapes Index," I consider the construction of PennSound's technical interface by means of how Deb Sica, a graduate student research assistant working with Bernstein, organized recordings' metadata for a specific document called "tapes_index.doc." Then, moving from PennSound's technical interface to its social one, in the final section of this chapter I reflect on the development of what Al Filreis terms "our format" – by which he means the specific social-technical infrastructure he has developed at Penn's Kelly Writers House for producing and archiving of media on poetry and poetics – in order to imagine what possible futures PennSound's materials hold.

Fig. 3.01: PennSound Box 2, Kislak Collections, which includes Segue Reading Series cassettes.

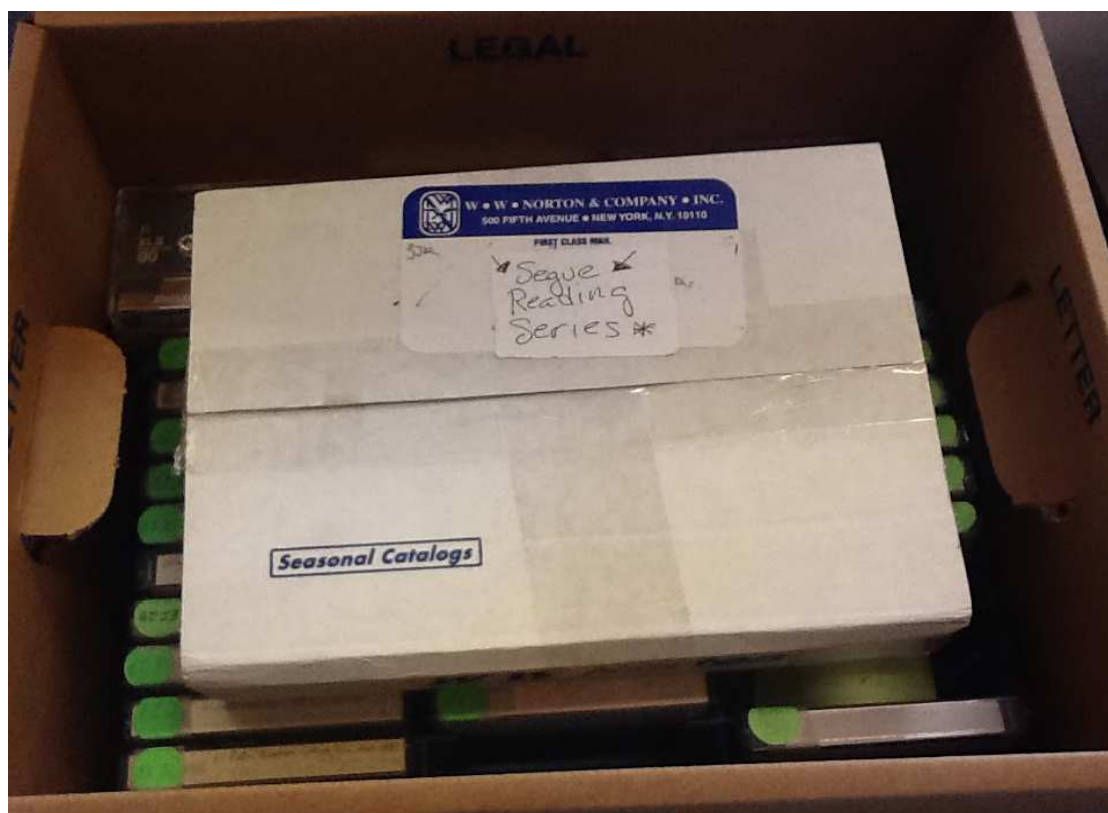


Fig. 3.02: PennSound Box 4, Kislak Collections, and Bernstein's "1-100," 1969, reel-to-reel.

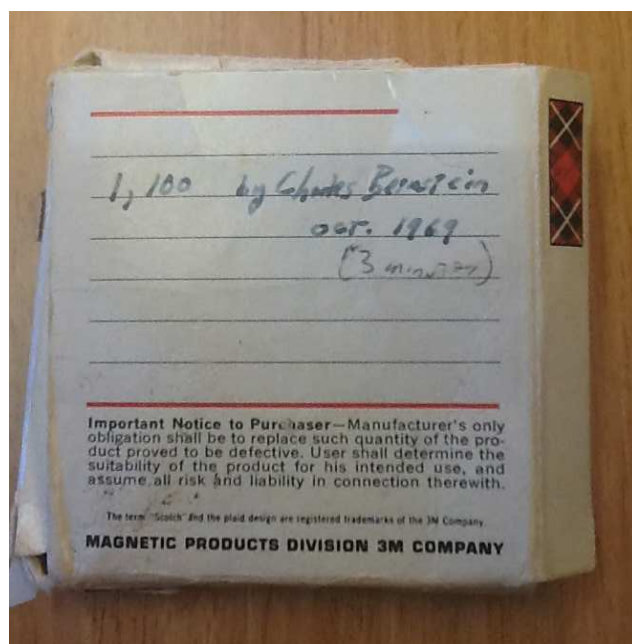
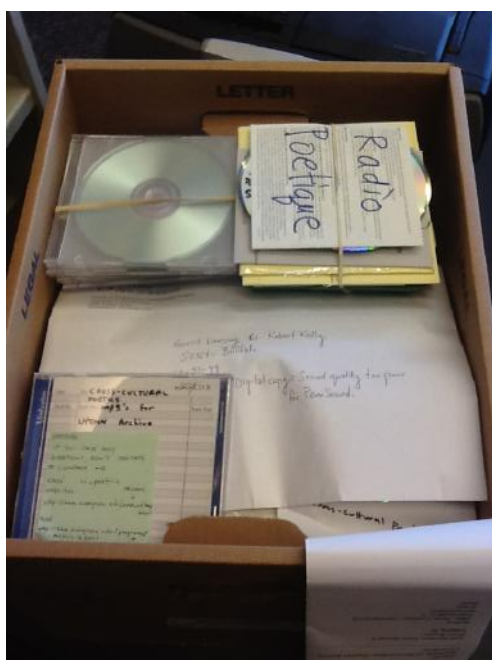


Fig. 3.03: Jackson Mac Low and Anne Tardos' "Songs and Simultaneities," 1985.

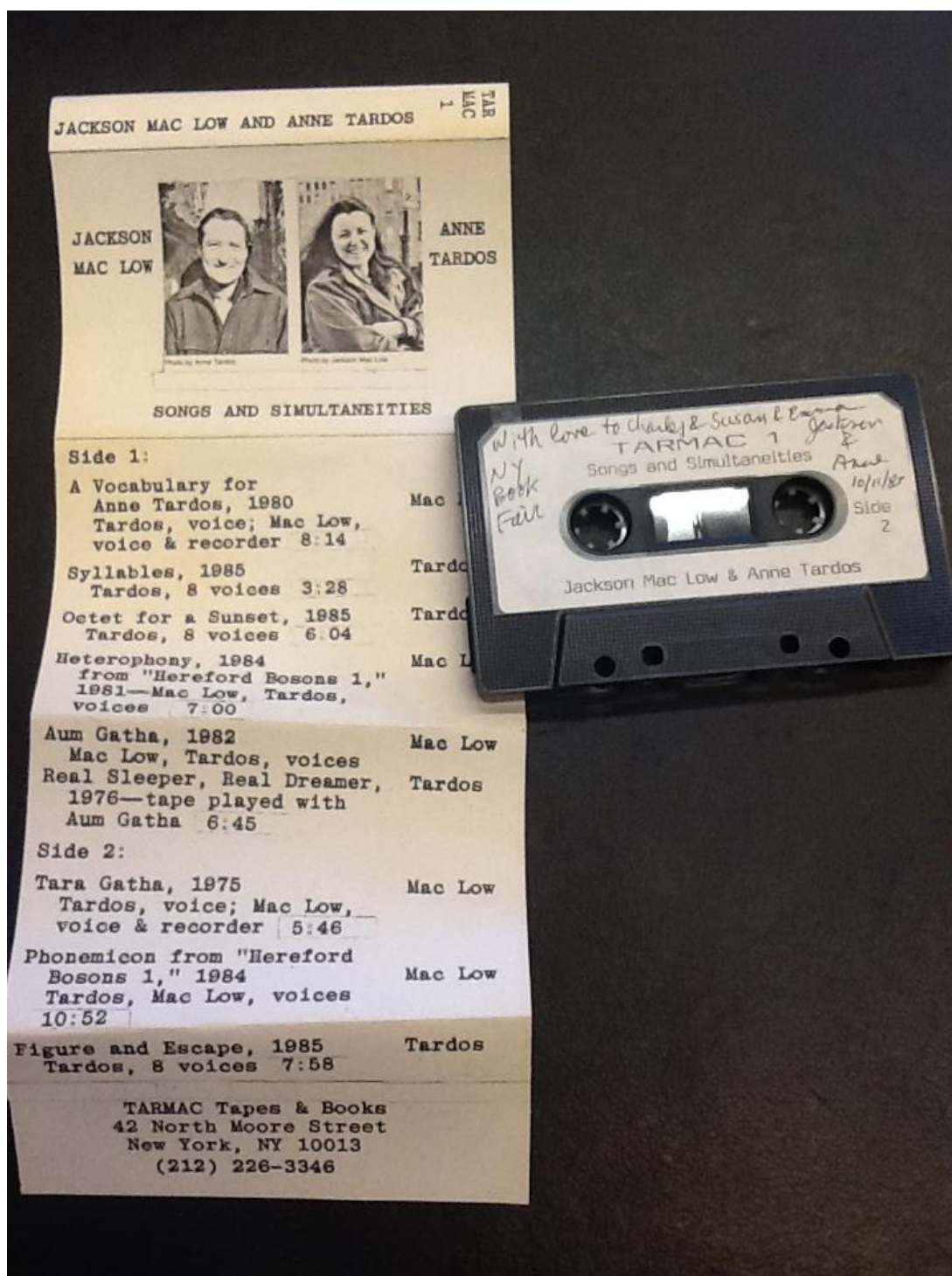


Fig. 3.04: Bob Perelman's recording of Lyn Hejinian's "The Rejection of Closure" talk, and Leroi Jones's recording from the American Poetry Archive Audio Collections, 1965.

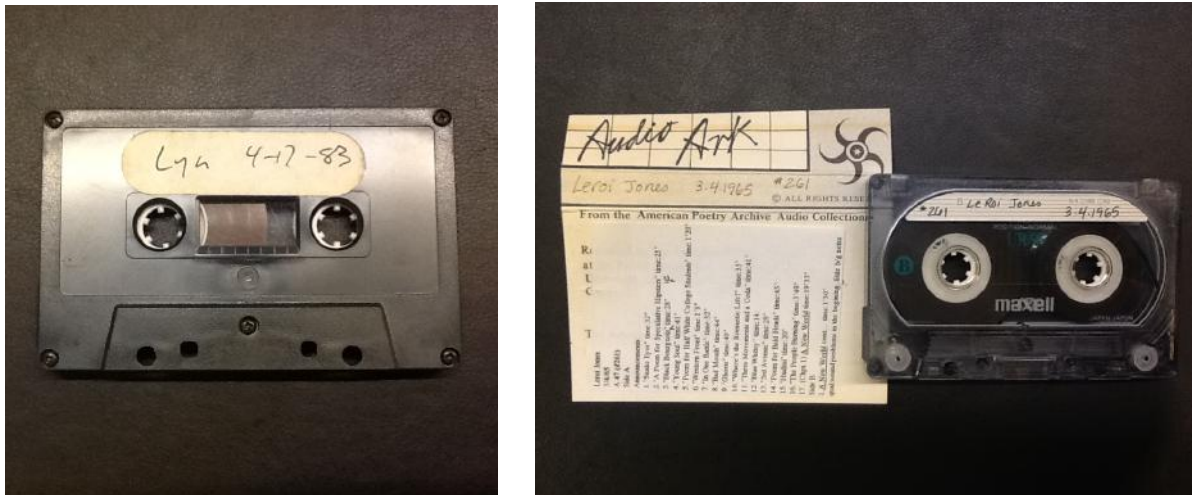


Fig. 3.05: John Wieners reading at Brooklyn College, 1965, with Allen Ginsberg introduction, and Rob Fitterman reading at the Poetry Project at St. Marks, 1989.

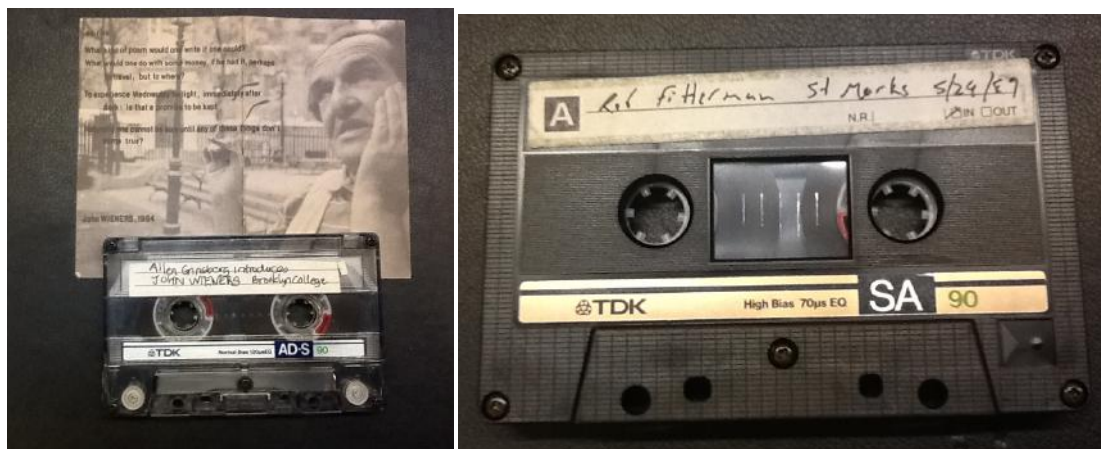


Fig. 3.06: Segue Reading Series DAT tapes, 2003, and various recordings in CD and floppy disk.

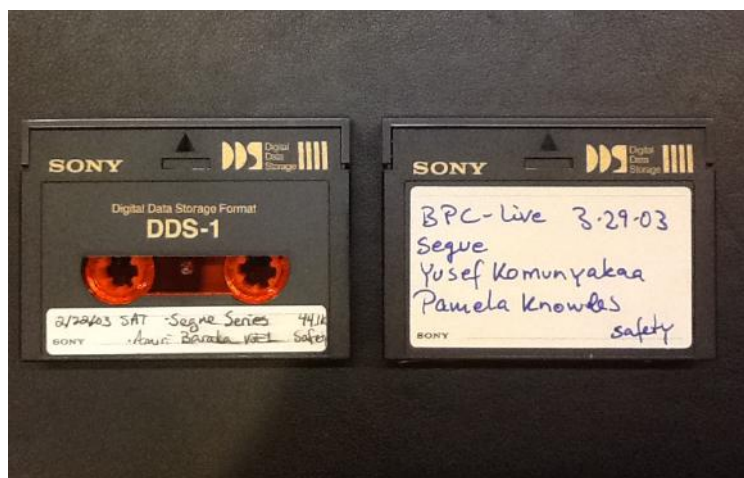


Fig. 3.07: CD-Rom of “Cross-Cultural Poetics” radio show recordings sent by Leonard Schwartz.

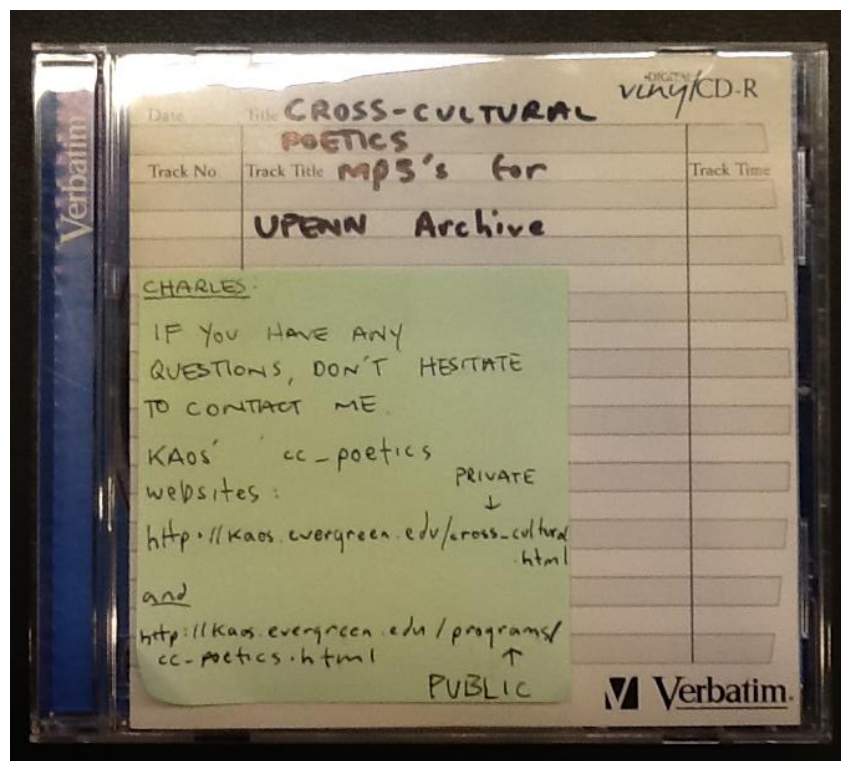
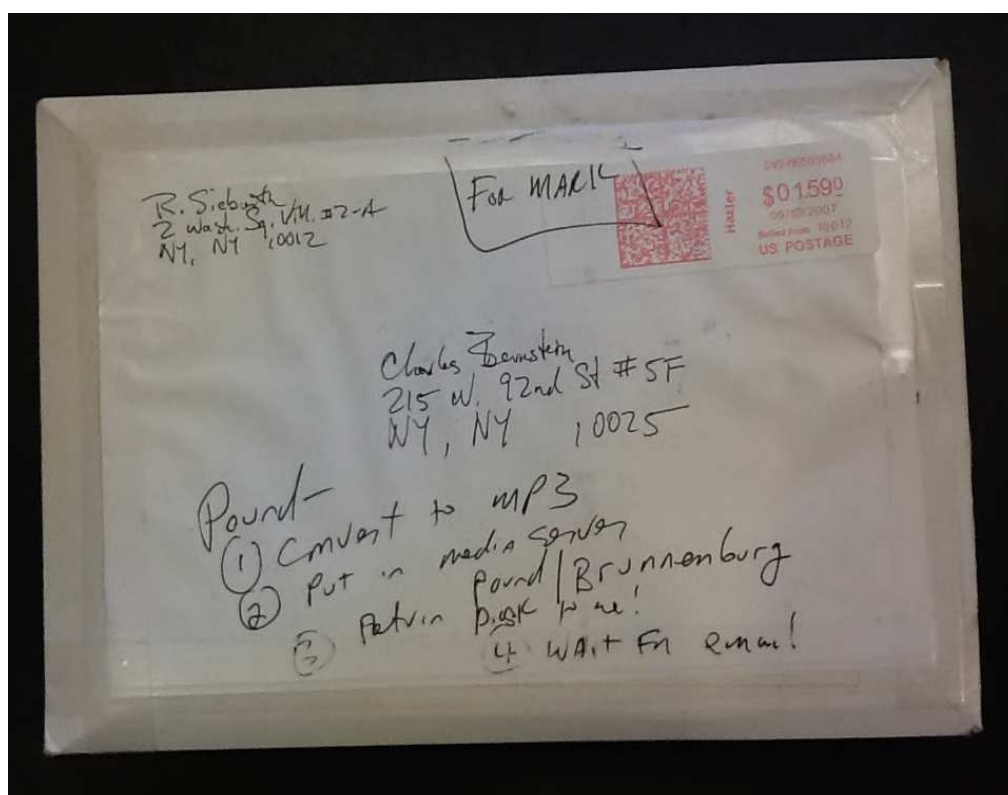


Fig. 3.08: Ezra Pound recordings sent by Richard Sieburth, 2007.



Literature on PennSound

Though there are numerous statements citing the overall importance of PennSound, the critical literature on the project is notably sparse. Yet these few critical discussions, mapped over a decade, begin to register PennSound's impact on critical writing that addresses the sonic aspects of poetic practice. The special issue of *English Studies in Canada* entitled "On Discreteness: Event and Sound in Poetry" (2007) marks PennSound's immediate impact on scholarship, as well on the forms of scholarship it makes possible. Numerous articles in the issue perform close listenings to recordings made available through the digital repository. As editor Louis Cabri writes:

This issue is testament to the enormously vital role Charles Bernstein continues to play in shaping the literary field of English-speaking poetry. My sense of the contemporary poetic field is that, in it, it is Charles Bernstein who is largely responsible for the re-emergence of sound as a value for critical attention. It is not only his anthology *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (1998) but also his manifesto and his and Al Filreis's vision for PennSound, a major online digital editing archive at the University of Pennsylvania that recently announced the four-millionth download since its 2003 inception.³⁹⁰

Cabri sees, even in PennSound's earliest days, the degree to which collections of accessible audio recordings of poetry will impact the analysis of poems, their expressivity, their connection to everyday speech, the modification of articulation and the corresponding shifts in the sound spectrum. Listeners will also be able to access the "non-lexical moments" of poems, too, for example William Carlos Williams' onomatopoeic outbursts and sonic imitations, such as the great burst of a "Blouaugh!" in his poem "The Sea Elephant." This is to say that Cabri envisions a future in which PennSound's recordings impact literary analysis by opening up the poem to greater variant readings based on their iterative performances.

If Cabri's edition sets a ground for what critical practices become possible in a milieu in which one has access to entire collections of poetry recordings, the same cannot be said of Lesley Wheeler's *Voicing American Poetry: Sound and Performance from the 1920s to the Present* (2008). Wheeler, citing Bernstein's impact on the field, notes that while "it remains true that the pioneers of this new work on sound culture and poetry performance are often poet-scholars who identify strongly with various avant-gardes," she is not interested in engaging the "notoriously slippery, binary oppositions" between "'academic,' 'mainstream,' and 'populist,'" poetry and "'innovative poetries.'" Yet, Wheeler asserts that "poets and critics with abiding interest in

poetic forms” – writers of “the sphere Bernstein refers to as ‘official verse culture’” – have clear “intellectual commitments to voice as a medium” and “never stopped listening to poetry.”³⁹¹ In the book, Wheeler focuses on the “multiple media in twentieth-century poetry, sounding the relationships among page, stage, broadcast, and to a lesser extent recording” (13), though she rarely provides an actual account of listening to the “sounding voice” of the poets she discusses. In her chapter on Edna St. Vincent Millay, Wheeler writes of one radio broadcast, noting Millay’s “desire to avoid aural white space,”³⁹² and contrasts the audible difference in Millay’s voice when speaking between poems and reading the poems themselves. At the end of her chapter on Langston Hughes, Wheeler briefly discusses a Library of Congress recording so as to conclude that “the audiotext is less forceful and less shifty than the print version of the poem.”³⁹³ Only in the chapter on slam poetry, “Voice Activated,” does Wheeler offer a detailed account of attending and listening to readings. Furthermore, of the nearly 400 sources listed in the book’s “Works Cited,” three incorporate actual sounds: two recordings of Millay, and one film on spoken word poetry.³⁹⁴ The “sounding voice,” for Wheeler, remains mainly a metaphor of voice – an element of poetic works that resonates out of graphemic significations, rarely phonemic ones.

“What happens when the archive is literally transformed into a scene of performance and noise,” Kate Eichhorn asks in “Past Performance, Present Dilemma: A Poetics of Archiving Sound.”³⁹⁵ This initial question moves into a series of subquestions:

[I]s such a space still an archive, or do attempts to archive sound push up against the archive’s limits? What restricts our ability to explore the full possibilities of a sound archive—is it our technological limits or a stubborn attachment to what the archive is and ought to be? How might an archive provide access to past sound events, including poetry performances, without reducing them to flat lifeless artifacts?³⁹⁶

Eichhorn’s essay is an important contribution to the field of phonopoetics for its meditation on the archive of sounds in general, and for its detailed consideration of an attempt to archive materials related to the Toronto-based Scream Literary Festival in the particular. Moving from a conceptual discussion of the archive and repertoire to poetry and performance, Eichhorn quotes from Bernstein’s introduction to *Close Listening* (1998) – “To be heard, poetry needs to be sounded—whether in a process of active, or interactive, reading of the work or by the poet in performance”³⁹⁷ – so as to address the performed embodiment of a poem, its durations and spaces in transmission. Shifting from performance venue to archive, Eichhorn acknowledges,

following Bernstein, that the poetry performance is “an integral rather than incidental part of a poet’s archive of work,” yet notes the difficulty of actually maintaining an institutional space aimed to preserve such work. She writes: “Throughout the past century, people have recorded poetry readings, but to date most of these recordings, even those housed in established archives, remain neglected. Evolving technologies of restoring and preserving recordings on old media exceeds the resources of most collections.”³⁹⁸ Eichhorn then discusses and compares two “notable exceptions” – Harvard University’s Woodberry Poetry Room (WPR) and PennSound – two collections that each “express a desire,” she writes “to create archives that reflect the unique qualities of poetry readings.” The WPR’s collection is comprised of the most well-known 20th century US American poets that one can listen to in-house at one of the eight listening stations in a designed space that “foregrounds the significance of listening, reflecting a recognition that poetry listening is not an individual but rather a communal activity.” PennSound’s collection privileges more innovative English language poetic works that listeners can access over the Internet. Whereas the WPR has digitized only a fraction of its collection, of which users can only download segments, all of PennSound’s materials are downloadable and can be redistributed for noncommercial and educational purposes. The former is a highly regulated environment that primarily caters to Harvard faculty and students; the latter explicitly seeks to keep the archive’s materials open and accessible “in the spirit of the repertoire of sound, gesture, and performance.”³⁹⁹ Yet neither site, Eichhorn argues, “adequately ‘preserves’ what makes the poetry readings most unique”: the sonic ambience of “borrowed spaces”⁴⁰⁰ in which performers “shout over gurgling espresso machines and beeping cash registers,” atmospheric sounds such as “wind and rain...birds, crickets and traffic,” and a general sense of “the energy, vitality, and spontaneity of poetry in performance.”⁴⁰¹ Yet Eichhorn’s claim about the absent accidental sounds and ambiences of the poetry performance as they are preserved by the WPR and PennSound may arise not out of her particular engagement with the collections – these sounds and ambiences are certainly there, as I discuss regarding PennSound later in this chapter – but, instead, functions as part of the narrative for framing her own attempt to archive the Scream Literary Festival’s collection of recordings.

Derek Furr’s *Recorded Poetry and Poetic Reception from Edna Millay to the Circle of Robert Lowell* (2010) complements, in the author’s own words, Susan Wheeler’s “groundbreaking study [discussed above] by focusing in detail on the recorded poetic voice,

describing some of the major scenes and kinds of modernist poetry recording and providing critical analysis of these recordings alongside their more familiar print versions.”⁴⁰² Where Furr differs from Wheeler is in his commitment to focusing on specific recordings of poets reading. The book’s first sentences discuss how the US Poetry Foundation, having received a \$100 million donation from philanthropist Ruth K. Lilly, began to feature a few dozen archival recordings on its site in 2008. It is notable that this example – rather than the thousands of recordings made available on PennSound in 2005 – is what prompts Furr to state: “As recordings are made easily accessible, public and scholarly interest increases, which in turn drives efforts to recover and disseminate recordings” (3). Furr then drafts an overview of the recent history that “bears this [previous statement] out,” beginning with a 1987 New York Times article citing recent demand for audio books as well as the publishing corporation Harper and Row’s acquisition of Caedmon, who produced commercial LPs of poets reading beginning in the 1950s. Then, Furr notes two compact disc compilations of recorded poetry from the 1990s: a series produced by Random House, another major publishing corporation, called *Voice of the Poet*, and Sourcebooks’ *Poetry Speaks*, as well as a few “smaller, more specialized” recordings made by the Academy of American Poets. Again, it is notable that Furr, in attempting to cover “the broad mainstream of modern poetry,” neglects vast swathes of phonopoetic practice in roughly the same period he mentions (which I will address in the following section). To this extent, Furr’s commitment to discussing a vaguely defined “mainstream” of poetic practice prevents him more thoroughly engaging his intended subject. Yet he does bring up PennSound, which he views falsely as being nearly one and the same with UbuWeb. Writing on the movement from compact disc compilations “giving way to a more dynamic medium, the Internet audio archive,” Furr states: “Ubu[W]eb and PennSound, which holds [*sic*] a place of honor as one [*sic*] of the first such sites, generally emphasize the twentieth-century avant-garde.” He then describes PennSound further:

At PennSound, there is a rich representation from the poets in the objectivist, New York School, and Language poetry traditions. PennSound takes advantage of multiple aspects of digital technology by offering live webcasts from classrooms and poetry readings and hosting a regular podcast, PoemTalk, in which a circle of poets and critics “offer a close but not too close, reading” of a poem held in PennSound’s archive (4).

Comparing the Academy of American Poets and the UK Poetry Archive to PennSound and UbuWeb, Furr finds that “[t]he range of twentieth-century poetries on the [former] sites is wider than on PennSound or Ubu[W]eb ... but the representation [in the former sites] is less adventurous [than the latter ones].”⁴⁰³ Such a statement, though, reveals more the author’s ideological assumption of aesthetic “range” and its “width” than it does an actual engaged listening and categorization of the works included in these collections. Finally, Furr comments that “[t]he differences among these collections, however, are balanced by their fundamental similarity: a shared assumption that the poet’s reading is important and instructive.”⁴⁰⁴ Again, such a general conclusion – “the poet’s reading is important and instructive” – flattens out the collections’ crucial differences regarding the ways in which they are produced, discursively framed, and how their materials are accessed and distributed.

In *Bodies on the Line: Performance and the Sixties Poetry Reading* (2014), Raphael Allison writes: “Sites like PennSound (and its cousin UbuWeb, dedicated to avant-garde recordings) aren’t simply making these materials more easily accessible; by doing so, they’re shifting the bank of primary materials students and scholars can study from solely print-based ones.”⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, *Bodies on the Line* does exceptional work in demonstrating the scholarship that becomes possible when the bank of primary materials include a vast collection of poetry recordings. For example, in his discussion of Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl* and reading performance style, Allison compares three different recordings of Ginsberg performing the long poem. At the 1959 Big Table Reading in Chicago where Ginsberg declaims the poem “in a peremptory style that is truly affecting” for a duration of twenty minutes, carefully modulating his voice and “taking measure of the poem’s underlying movements of feeling, which build over the three parts in a slow crescendo.”⁴⁰⁶ Contrasted to the 1959 reading, Allison describes the reading of *Howl* at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference. There, Ginsberg’s voice is “deflated, flat, and almost querulous.” He introduces the poem by saying, “I’ll read it until I get bugged or bored” – a duration that ends up being less than a minute: Ginsberg interrupts himself and mumbles, “Actually, I don’t want to read that. I don’t see why I should. Fuck you.”⁴⁰⁷ The 1971 Intersection for the Arts reading in San Francisco contrasts both of these earlier readings for being “lively, comic, edited (possibly spontaneously), interspersed with comments from Ginsberg and laughter from the audience.”⁴⁰⁸ Allison notes that, compared to the Big Table reading, Ginsberg’s voice is “tonally polyvalent,” beginning with energy and force and moving

into a clownish or vaudevillian moments as he extemporaneously jumps from section to section with notable insertions and aside commentaries on specific lines of the poem.⁴⁰⁹ Allison's discussion of these iterations of *Howl* critically engages the difference in each materialization of a poetic work. Thus, he is able to avoid the essentializations and generalizations that Wheeler and Furr too often make regarding poetic text and performed repertoire, and engage each materialization of a poetic work – whether textual or embodied – with a necessary degree of specificity and nuance.

Two essays from *Amodern*'s "Approaching the Poetry Series" issue (2015) – Danny Snelson's "Live Vinyl MP3: Mutant Sounds, PennSound, UbuWeb, SpokenWeb" and Deanna Fong's "Spoken, Word: Audio-Textual Relations in UbuWeb, PennSound and SpokenWeb" – address the numerous digital and networked aspects that are important for considering PennSound. The two essays set important precedents for the comparative analysis of digital collections. Snelson, in charting "the passage of a specific constellation of materials through several little databases as a scenario for objects hosted by online collections in general," focuses on the format specifications of digital objects, and the cultural and technical processes related to their preservation and distribution. He follows specific audio works through several digital collections – Mutant Sounds, PennSound, UbuWeb, and SpokenWeb – in order to understand the practices for how each collection mediates the recordings, as well as the particular environments in which the recordings are collected. "Inhabiting the vexed space between preservation and distribution, between memory and practice," Snelson writes, "these sites dramatically reconfigure the contemporary experiences of historical artifacts."⁴¹⁰ He carries out his discussion of PennSound mainly as an extended comparison with Mutant Sounds, a blog founded in 2007 that collected rare and obscure music albums, primarily copied from out of print vinyl LPs. "Both sites," Snelson writes, "push against canonical formations in their own way: Mutant Sounds against the tidy lineages of popular music, PennSound against the tidy lineages of mainstream poetry."⁴¹¹ So, both sites function in relatively similar ways in their own discursive assemblage, yet belong to or interact with different discursive formations. While PennSound "operates as a strictly permission-based platform,"⁴¹² Mutant Sounds makes no effort to secure permissions or copyright. Here, Snelson acknowledges the institutional milieu – specifically, the University of Pennsylvania – in which PennSound is located, whereas Mutant Sounds, like UbuWeb, operates mainly outside of such institutional formations, and is therefore able to risk

what some consider to be “piracy” for the sake of re-circulating works that are presently difficult to access. PennSound collects individual poems and complete readings, while Mutant Sounds releases mostly full album collections, ones “previously published by a dispersed array of labels.”⁴¹³ Both sites circulate highly compressed MP3 audio files, both remediate from older audio formats (such as cassette, reel-to-reel, tape, vinyl, and radio broadcasts), and both are designed for user downloads. Yet, Snelson notes, the specific format that PennSound has chosen to collect its recordings – the MP3 – “prevents [it] from official recognition as a poetry recording *archive*. Where other projects might acquire certain types of funding for digital archives hosting ‘lossless’ formats like WAV or FLAC, PennSound’s emphasis on speedy distribution precludes it from archival classifications, despite the range and depth of its collection.”⁴¹⁴ I take up this final point – concerning the institutional difficulties of classifying PennSound as an archive due to its chosen format for collecting and circulating files – at length later in this chapter.

Fong, in her comparative analysis of the organizational structures of digital audio collections and their interfaces, outlines three “models of audio-textual relations” and details for each a paradigmatic example. In discussing the “modular audio archive,” she cites UbuWeb as an exemplar. Such a collection’s “dominant aesthetic is bricolage,” meaning that “[t]he audio artifact, in playback, is often divorced (in both streaming and downloaded formats) from any fixed textual components and there is no consistent format for the presentation of text and in playback.”⁴¹⁵ A modular collection’s ad-hoc quality of preserving artifacts “in spite of – and because of – the continual mutation of digital information” means that whatever might catch a collector’s fancy or be seen as important might appear in its holdings. This differs from the “situated audio archive,” which has specific protocols as to what pertains in its holdings and how those holdings are displayed, often focusing “on a specific historical subject: author, location, community or event.”⁴¹⁶ Whereas the modular collection continually accrues artifacts and is, therefore, perpetually redefined by that accumulation, one designs a situated collection from its inception with a rather comprehensive sense of its total materials and how users might best access them. Fong then discusses PennSound as a model of a “constellatory audio archive,” which

makes meaning via the articulations between texts, interpretive communities, and systems of circulation. Its discrete, constitutive units – in this case, either “single” or “record”-length audio artifacts – are grouped into taxonomic categories: authors, reading series, playlists, events and anthologies. The effect of the constellatory

archive is to reconcile the temporal paralysis of the audio artifact – the product of an irretrievable, singular event – with an ongoing, processual notion of history.⁴¹⁷

She takes up the term “constellatory” following Bernstein in his discussion of how sound files of individual poems freely available on the Internet offer “an intriguing and powerful alternative to the book format in collecting a poet’s work, and to anthology and magazine formats in organizing *constellations* of poems.”⁴¹⁸ Fong sees in Bernstein’s argument a philosophical position manifest in the organizational structure of PennSound:

that literary artifacts, whether aural or textual, are semantically conditioned by their relationships to other things: texts, technologies, media, events. Constellation is an apt metaphor because it not only denotes a perimeter, a defined area of the celestial sphere, but also the patterns formed within it. Similarly, the digital archive, like the anthology or the magazine, is conceptualized as the container for and sum of its holdings, in which relational groupings are paramount. In the sound archive, however, these groups or patterns are not fixed, but are in constant flux – the same group of stars can form myriad meaningful patterns that are inflected by region, culture and history.⁴¹⁹

Overall, she cites the unique features of PennSound – its multiple browsing paths and “the generative possibilities of multiple ways of reading, navigating, and seeing”; using downloadable MP3s for easy distribution and recirculation, for example in syllabi or course-related sites; the fact that all the materials are cleared in terms of permissions for educational use; each page’s internal linking to other relevant materials; its organization of poetry reading series and the constellations of poets involved in those series; the critical podcasts such as Close Listening and PoemTalk – and its overall aesthetic as being “undergirded by a pedagogical function.”⁴²⁰ In emphasizing the importance of how an interface’s particular articulation allows certain uses of the overall collection more fluidly over others, Fong opens up important ground that I will address from an historical perspective in this chapter, where I map out the theorizing, planning, testing, and integration of these features in PennSound.

Fig. 3.09: PennSound authors index.

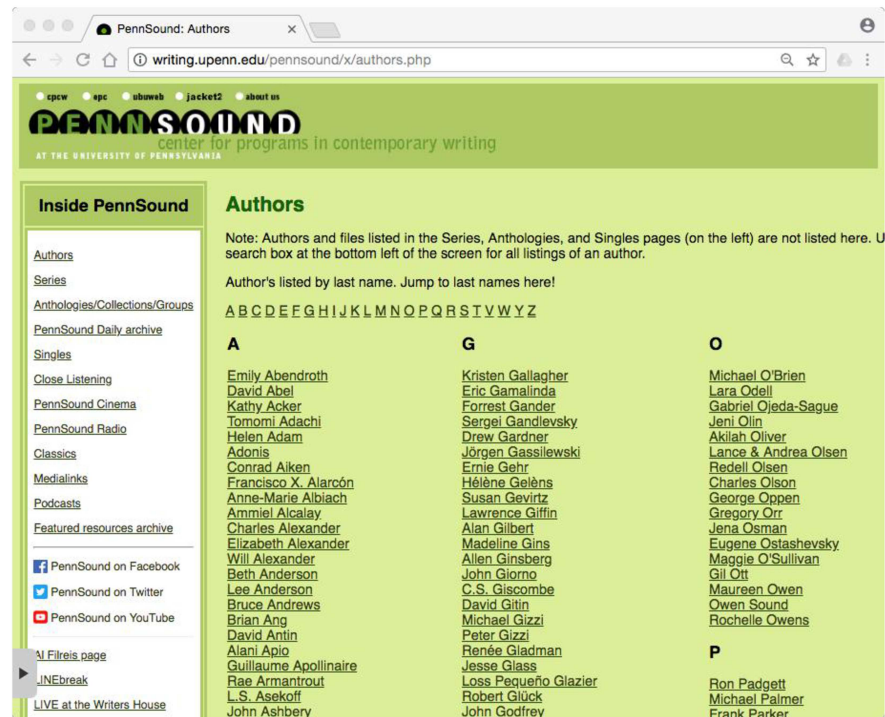


Fig. 3.10: PennSound authors index.

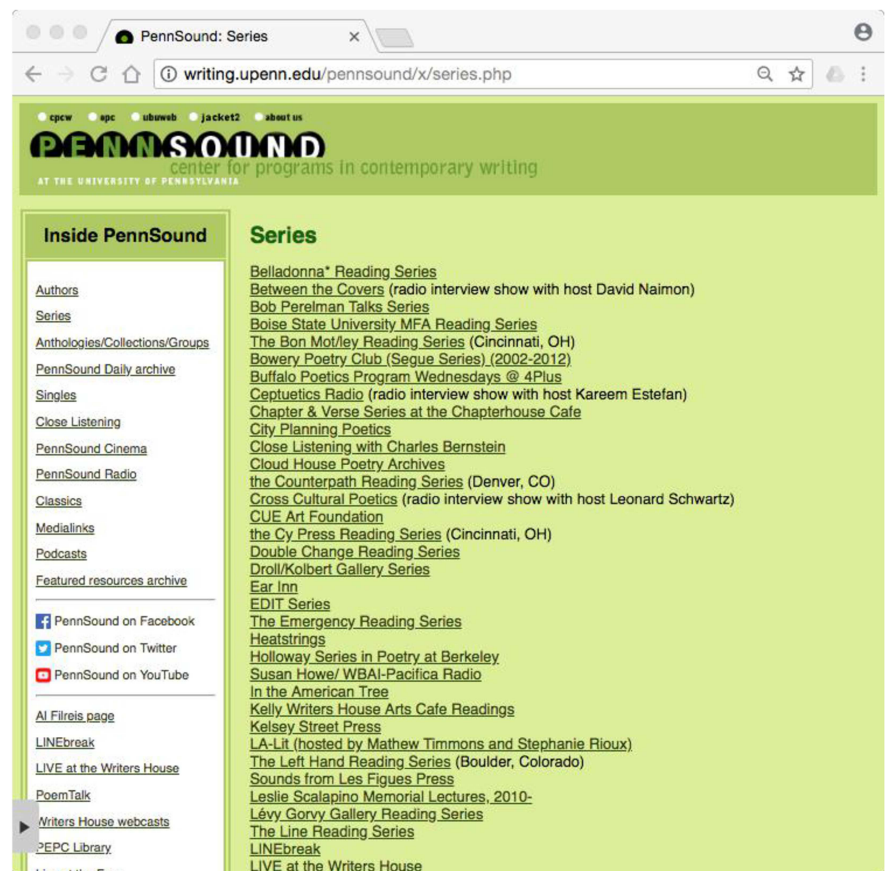


Fig. 3.11: PennSound author page for David Antin.

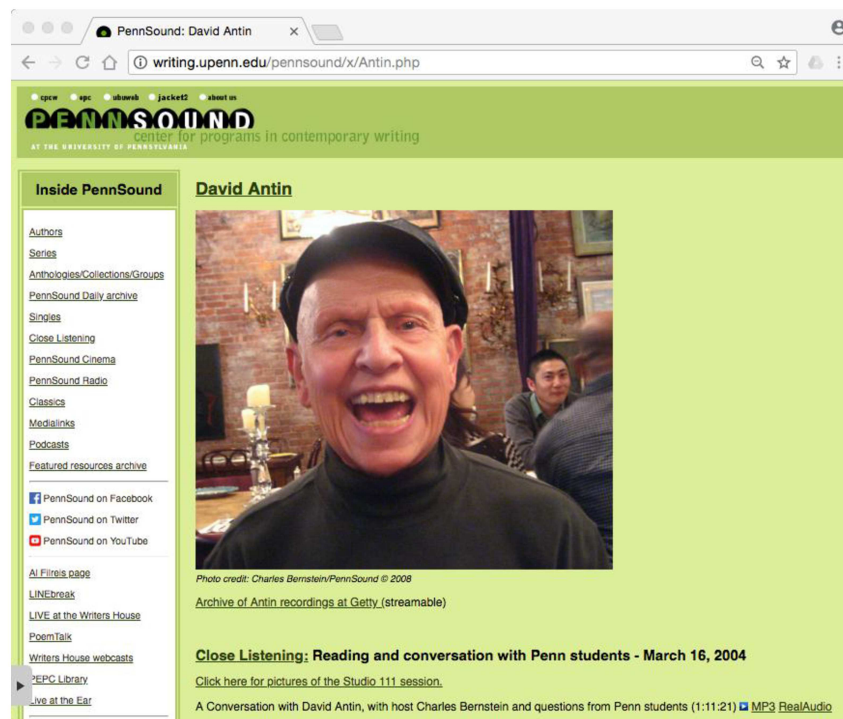


Fig. 3.12: PennSound author page for Simone White.

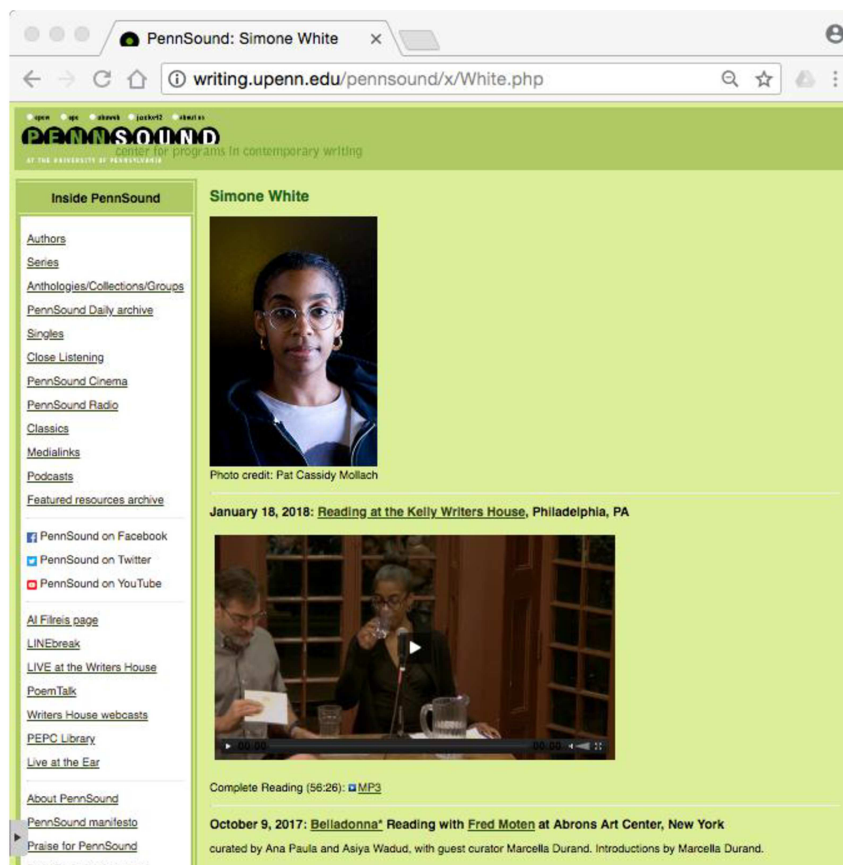


Fig. 3.13: PennSound full-page audio listening display.

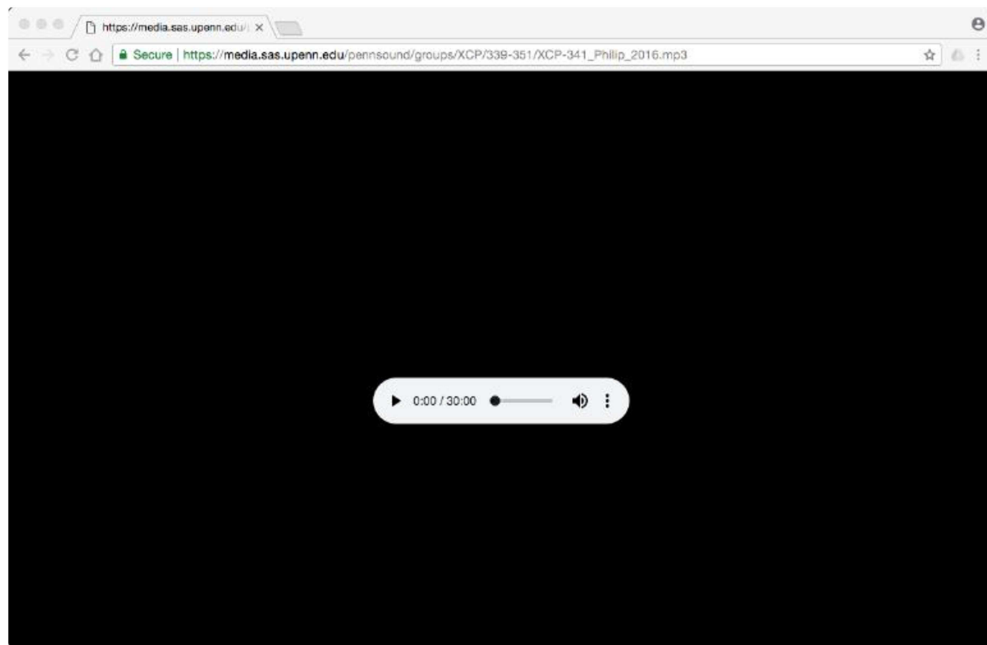


Fig. 3.14: PennSound video section featuring the works of Robert Ashley.

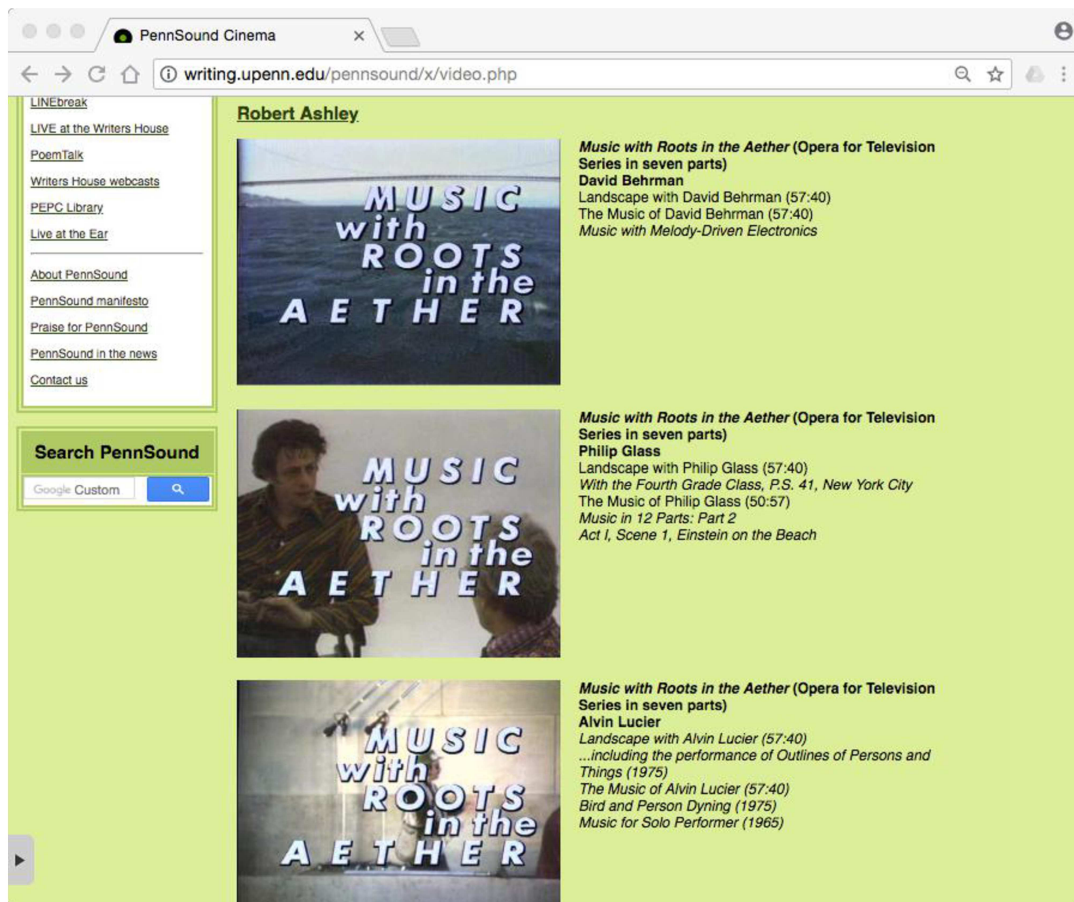


Fig. 3.15: Example from PennSound's Anthologies/Collections/Groups page.

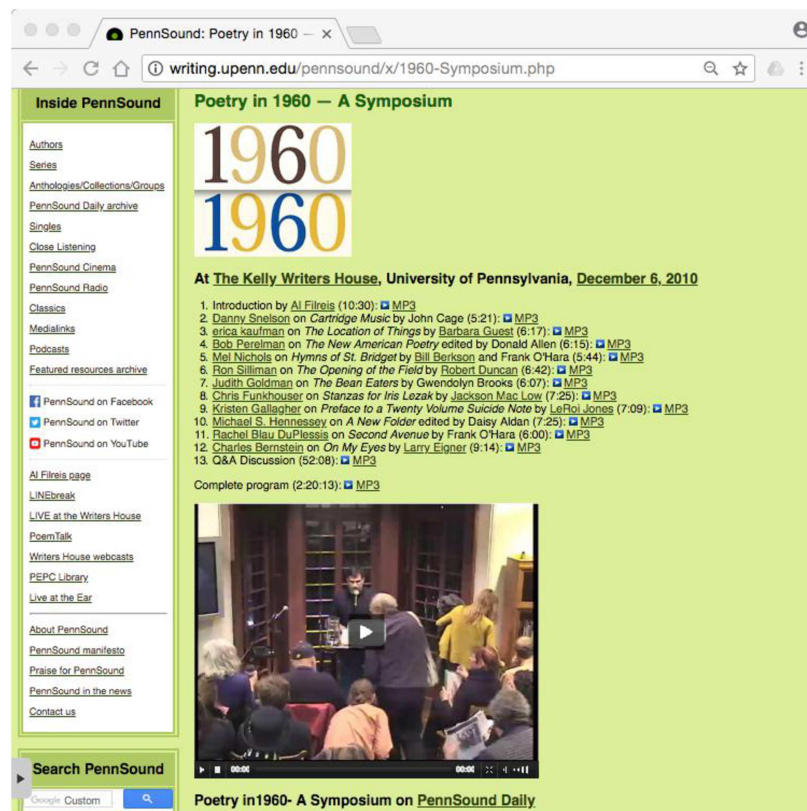
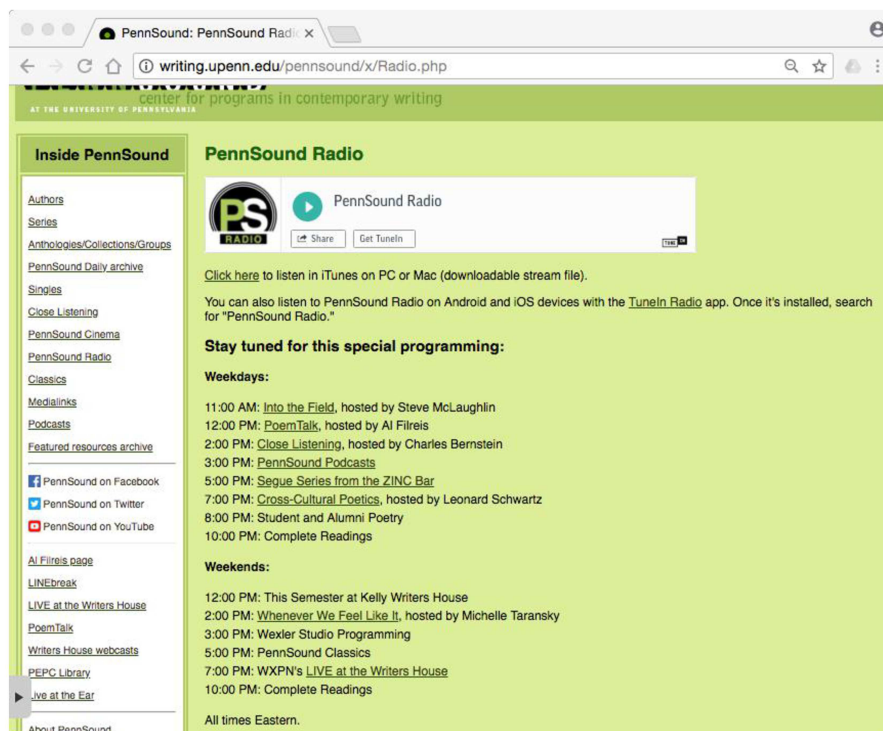


Fig. 3.16: PennSound Radio page.



Phonopoetics

The poetry phonotext is at least as old as the earliest modern technologies of sound reproduction.⁴²¹ In 1877, the first words Thomas Edison uttered into and then resounded from his tinfoil phonograph were lines from “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” a poem originally composed by Sarah Josepha Hale. One of the initial recipients of a cylinder phonograph was Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the poet whom W.H. Auden described as having “the finest ear, perhaps, of any English poet.”⁴²² Tennyson used the phonograph – a gift from George Gouraud, Edison’s representative in London – at the end of his life to commit many of his famous works to wax. As John Picker writes, the phonograph allowed the poet of the divided mind – consider, for example, his poem “The Two Voices” – “the opportunity to perform a kind of self-fragmentation, literally to etch in an ostensibly permanent manner the different voices of the self.”⁴²³ The voice of Robert Browning is one of the earliest voices to resound in mechanical playback after the death of its speaker. During a gathering in April 1889, Gouraud persuaded Browning to read two poems to become part of Gouraud’s “Library of Voices,” despite the poet’s “most decided objection to public speaking.” The recording would take on a special significance in December 1890, exactly one year after Browning’s death, when Browning’s friends convened to celebrate his life by playing the recording of Browning reading his poems – an event described in the *Times* as an “unique in the history of science and . . . [an] extraordinary séance.”⁴²⁴

The techniques and technologies of the mechanical reproduction of sound share an extensive interrelated history with poetry. Yet sound “as a material and materializing dimension of poetry” has historically been an underacknowledged aspect of modern and contemporary poetic practice.⁴²⁵ Though numerous scholars have taken up discussions of orality with appeals to poetic practice,⁴²⁶ they predominately approach orality as a timeless category of human culture and perception without recognizing the material techniques and traces involved in such cultural productions.⁴²⁷ Their body of work informs many of the writings by contemporary scholars who focus on poetry, orality, performance, and sound recordings.⁴²⁸ In taking up this trajectory of writing on sound and its reproductions, these contemporary scholars perpetuate a semi-mystical or transcendent understanding of sound and its performances, while reinstantiating a beleaguered metaphysics of presence.⁴²⁹ One could argue that the paucity of collections of poetry sound recordings are responsible for the slip into such idealizations,⁴³⁰ or, if not the paucity, the

difficulty in actually locating and accessing collections of recorded poetry.⁴³¹ Though the seemingly scarce number of literary audio recording collections and the actual limited access to poetry sound recordings are issues worthy of attention (ones I take up below), it is worth recognizing that even when substantial collections of poetry sound recordings exist in abundance and are rather easy to access, scholars have often neglected to take up such materials as primary sources even when addressing the sonic elements of a poet's oeuvre.⁴³²

The general omission of poetry audio recordings, or “phonotext,”⁴³³ in scholarly writings seems inexplicable when one acknowledges that since the late nineteenth century poets have been recording their works on an array of sonic media, exploring the possibilities for composition, publication, and distribution available with each format. In beginning to sketch out this history, a number of examples following the phonographic specimens mentioned above spring to mind: the aluminum plate records of Gertrude Stein, Harriet Monroe, and James Weldon Johnson (fig. 3.19); the “Dylan Thomas Reading” LP published by Caedmon that became a staple of 1950s’ record collections (fig. 3.21); the “New Jazz Poets” LP curated by Walter Lowenfels (fig. 3.); the figure of Paul Blackburn and his Wollensak reel-to-reel that was infamously hauled all over New York city in order to record readings (fig. 3.20); the Giorgio Poetry Systems records, his Dial-A-Poem project, as well as the “Electronic Sensory Poetry Environments” he constructed at St. Mark’s Church (fig. 3.21); the “Tape Poems” poets that brought together Vito Acconci, Hannah Weiner, Bernadette Mayer, and others (fig. 3.23); Lyn Hejinian and Kit Robinson’s “In the American Tree” radio broadcasts; the recorded poem works of Laurie Anderson, David Antin, and Steve Benson (fig. 3.25); the outstanding Underwhich Audiographics and Widemouth tape cassettes (fig. 3.26). This brief sketch lists only North American anglophone poets – excluding the traditions of poetry and recorded sound of the Italian Futurists⁴³⁴ and French poésie sonore,⁴³⁵ among other examples, and does not even venture into digital audio formats – yet it begins to outline the many trajectories and historical robustness of phonopoetic practice.

As I intend to track and trace out the histories of poetry audio recordings from their initial performance and first recording to that recording’s transmission across a number of contexts, practices, and formats, I want to route – as opposed to its homonym *root*⁴³⁶ – this phonopoetical approach to a notion of the fugitive. Thomas Edison, in his initial reflection on the phonograph entitled “The Phonograph and Its Future” (1878), writes these opening sentences: “Of all the

writer's inventions, none has commanded such profound and earnest attention throughout the civilized world as has the phonograph;" he then notes the "almost universal applicability" of the instrument's "foundational principle," which is "the gathering up and retaining of sounds hitherto fugitive." Shortly thereafter, Edison lists his five "essential features of the phonograph":

- The captivity of all manner of sound-waves heretofore designated as "fugitive," and their permanent retention.
- Their reproduction with all their original characteristics at will, without the presence and consent of the original source, and after the lapse of any period of time.
- The transmission of such captive sounds through the ordinary channels of commercial intercourse and trade in material form, for purposes of communication or as merchantable goods.
- Indefinite multiplication and preservation of such sounds, without regard to the existence or non-existence of the original source.
- The captivation of sounds, with or without the knowledge or consent of the source of their origin.⁴³⁷

Counter to this idealized captivation, against the rhetoric of commodification in which Edison steeps his dream of the phonograph's future, Fred Moten – in his lecture "Black Kant (Pronounced Chant)"⁴³⁸ – describes a "lawless phonography," a trajectory of sound moving with "dispossessed and dispossessing fugitivity in its very anticipation of the regulative and disciplinary powers to which it responds." Here, Moten theorizes, via Foucault, how sound is *not* "totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them."⁴³⁹ In other words, aspects of sound always exceeds its inscription. Thus, to critically engage the production of sounds and their resonations, one must focus upon the contexts and means by which such excesses occur.

Edison's and Moten's articulations of the fugitive provide the limit conditions for considering the reception, regulation, and migration of sounds. Embedded in Edison's techno-fantasy are actual inscriptions, though they are *impermanent* and format-specific retentions of not "all," but specific and contingent characteristics of a performance's sonic aspects. The sound recording instrument itself is a part – in certain instances, a collaborator, in others, a warden – of a performance's reiterations. Yet Edison's statements point toward a certain Kittleresque machine-centered analysis of the phonotextual object – one that is important for its scrutiny of how and what machines actually inscribe, yet fraught for its absence of considering the political economy and the cultural practices in which such technologies and techniques are produced and

take up. At the core of Moten's notion of fugitive sound is an acknowledgment of differential inscriptions, inscriptions that are technological, but also affective, embodied. Yet, there are inscriptions; there is a capture, or an attempt to capture: there needs to be a mark, a marking, a marked body for sounds to resound. For Moten, this negotiation between captivation and fugitivity that sounding out entails is always embedded within a political economy and always indexed to relations of power.

Alexandra T. Vazquez echoes Moten's sense of the fugitive to develop a methodology of close listening focused on the detail. "Details are those fugitive and essential living components," she writes, "that contribute, in very specific ways, to an event and its aftermath."⁴⁴⁰ They "effect in flashes and refuse analytical capture."⁴⁴¹ Rather than an *account of*, listening to the fugitive detail offers an *experience with*. It is a method "not invested in possession or clarification."⁴⁴² Listeners risk responding in the midst of listening: to allow themselves to be affected, to think with or alongside of that which they hear, and to respond from the situation, from their situatedness. Here, a listener is always in movement, allowing the resonances to carry one off on the various lines of flight that sounds induce – toward other sounds and sound-making, into the mesh where one registers and attempts to comprehend how such sounds leave their mark – then back again to the event itself of listening. One listens for tones and textures, for the breath or underlying hum or grunt of a speaker, for the non-lexical acknowledgment from an audience, for their participation or lack thereof within the space of a work, for the architectural acoustics of a space, for the grain, glitch, or hiss of machinic sound that becomes a part of the work by the various technologies involved in its reproduction. Not only are there an array of details to listen to in the phonotext but also an array of ways to engage these details.

Though listening underlies my engagement with the materials I discuss throughout this chapter, here I primarily stay on the exterior of the phonotextual object, considering the inscriptive and archival practices so as to study the extended history of a phonotext's production, reception, and regulation. One begins by asking: What is inscribed? How is it inscribed? What is the recording's relationship to the event it documents, meaning: what of the event exceeds a specific inscription, how is it exceeded? Has the recording migrated through other formats and, if so, how? Where is the recording collected? What are the means by which it was collected? With what other recordings is it collected? Who has access to the recording and how is it accessed?

Here, I want to keep in mind in all situations that the phonotext is a record *of* – and a record produced *by* – dynamic living agents, and to perform a work is, as Vazquez writes, not simply “to ossify one’s voice to the record, but to lay down your voice in the hopes of being revisited, or being revised.”⁴⁴³ Therefore, I want to include in a phonocritical approach the contexts and agents of these revisitations and revisions. Who is recorded? How is it recorded? What is the subject of the recording’s relationship to those who are recording and the technologies they are using to record? In Moten’s emphasis to depict the cultural techniques by which sound-waves are captured – how they are “governed and administered,” to use his own terms, in some occasions “without consent,” to use Edison’s repeated phrasing – one confronts a politics of recording and recorded sound that ought to be a point of reflection for any critical engagement with the phonotextual object.

Fig. 3.17: Edison foil.

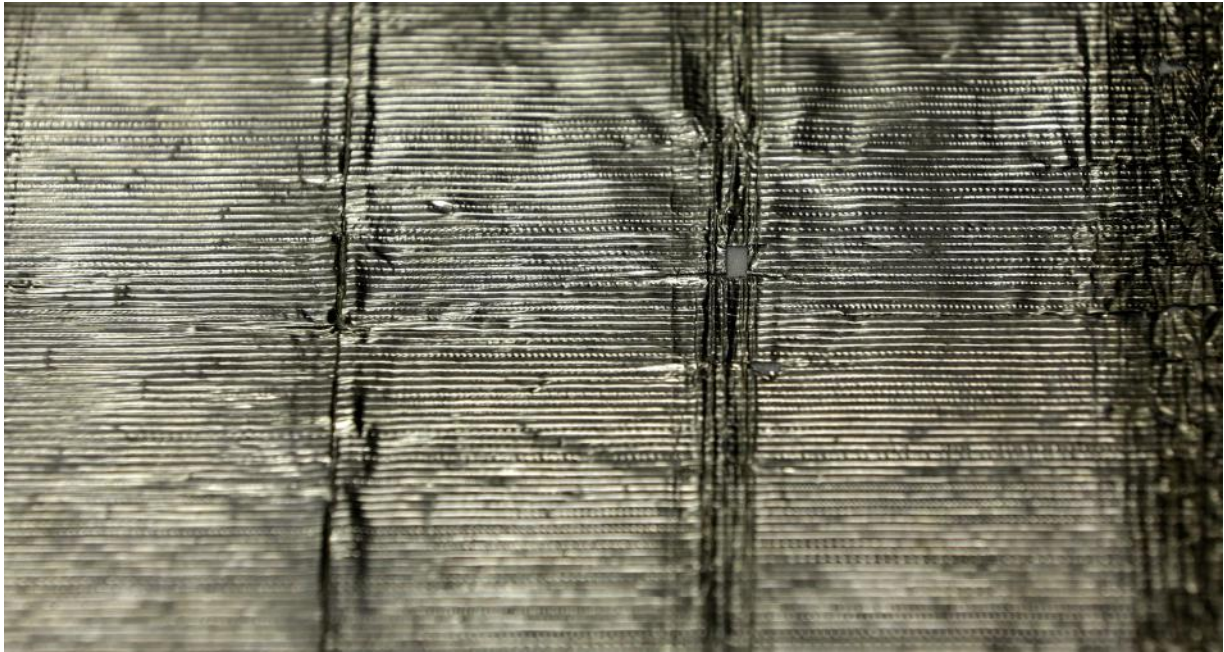


Fig. 3.18: Tennyson and wax cylinder phonograph.



Fig. 3.19: James Weldon Johnson, Harriet Monroe, and aluminum platter record.



Fig. 3.20: New Jazz Poetics, compiled and edited by Walter Lowenfels, 1967.

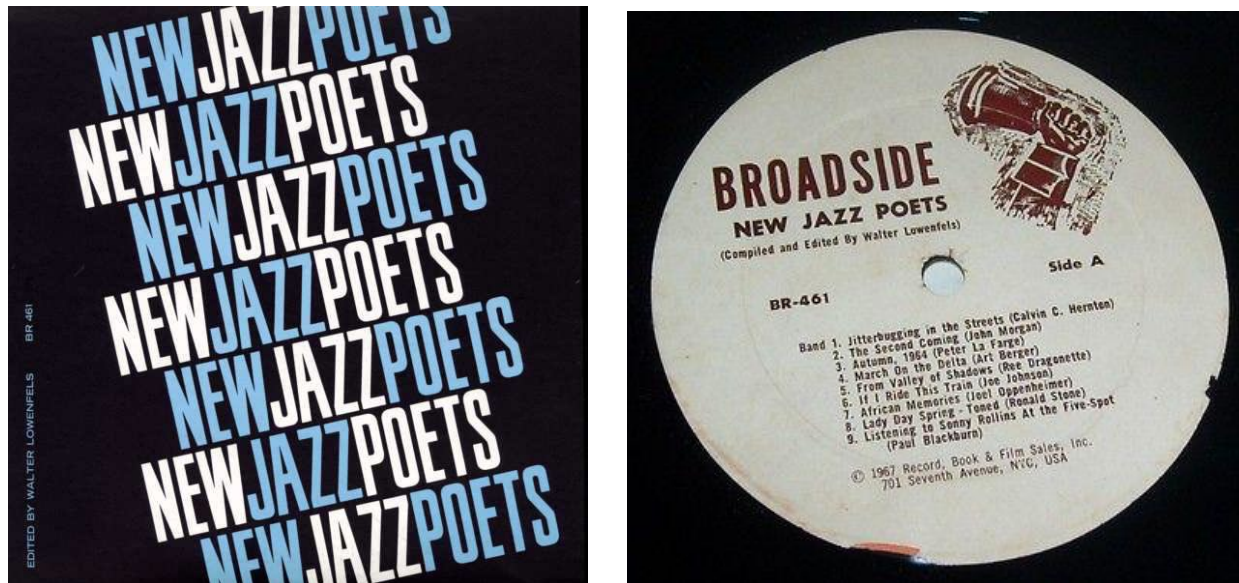


Fig. 3.21: “Dylan Thomas Reading,” Caedmon, 1957, and “Sugar, Alcohol, & Meat: The Dial-A-Poem Poets,” Giorno Poetry Systems, 1980.

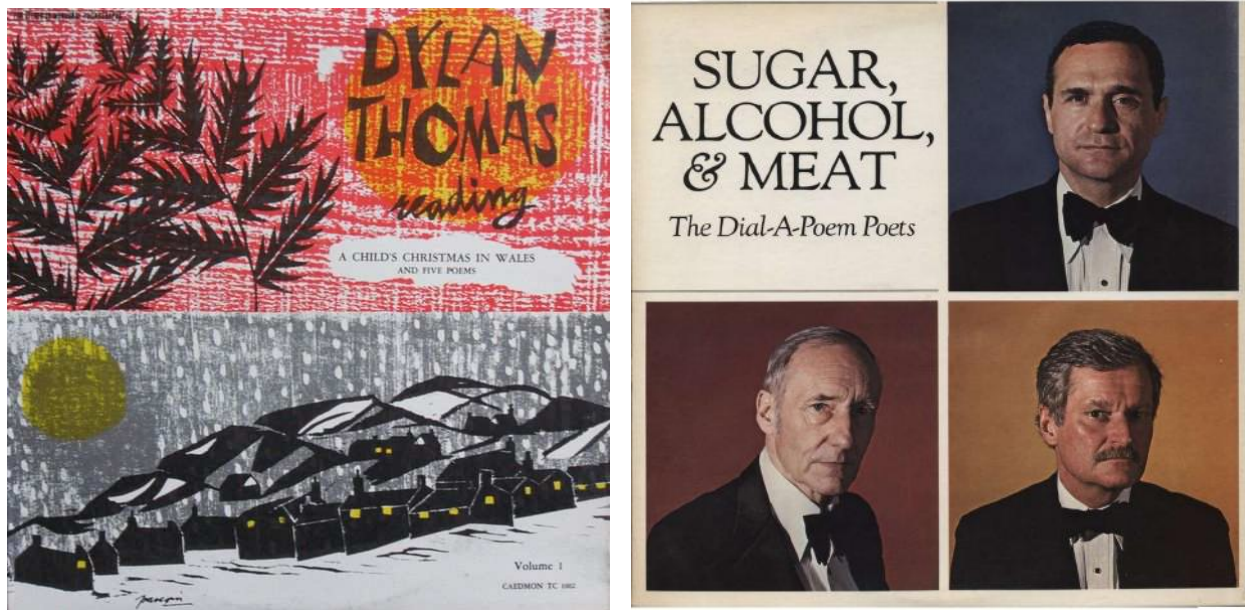


Fig. 3.22: Paul Blackburn and his Wollensack reel-to-reel audio recording machine.



Fig. 3.23: The Tape Poem Poets, 1969.

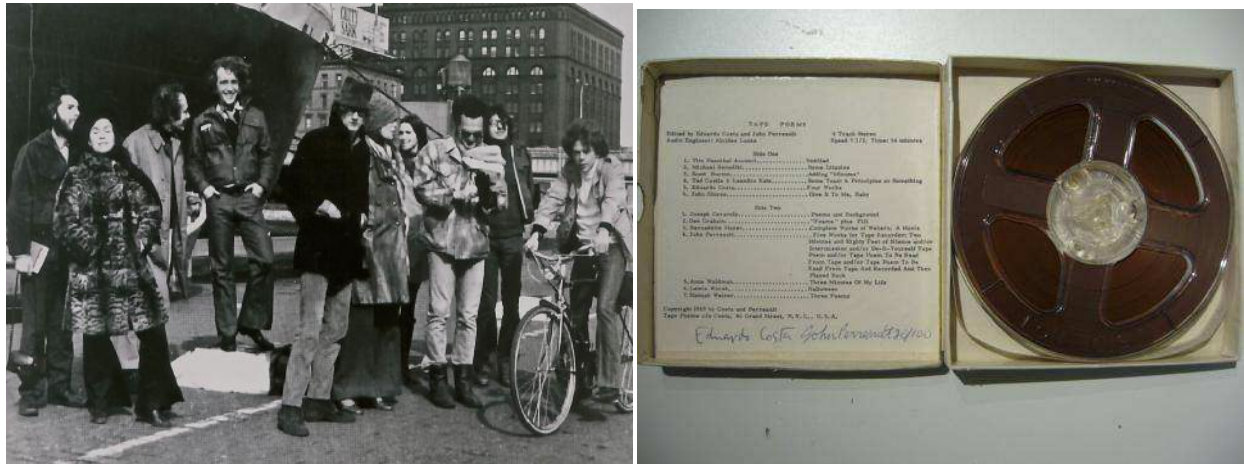


Fig. 3.24: Steve McCaffery's "Wot We Wukkers Want/One Step to the Next," Underwhich Audiographic Series, 1979; Doug Lang and Tina Daragh's "Xa," Widemouth Tapes, 1979

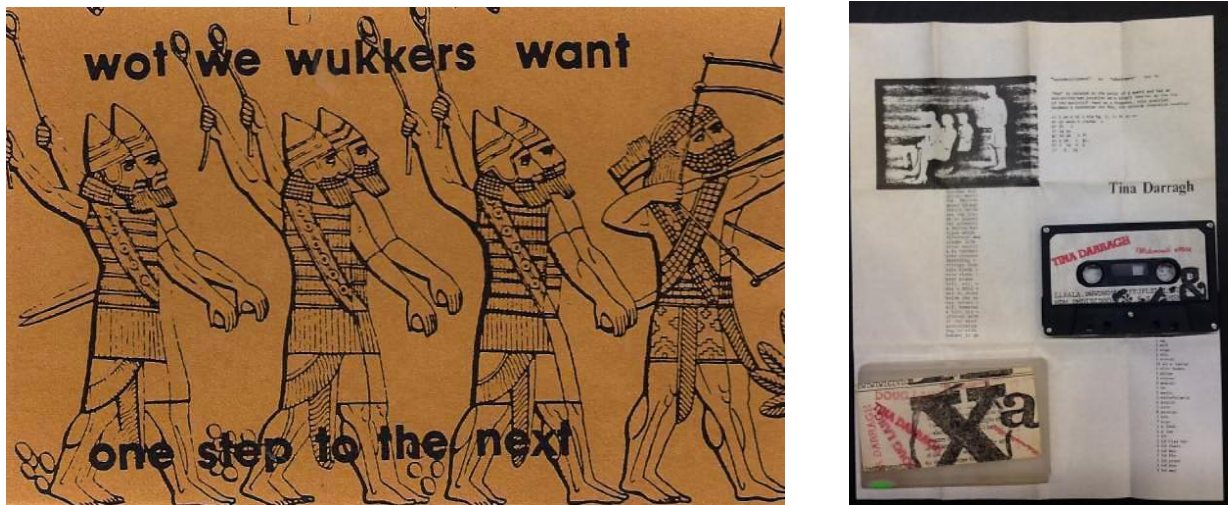
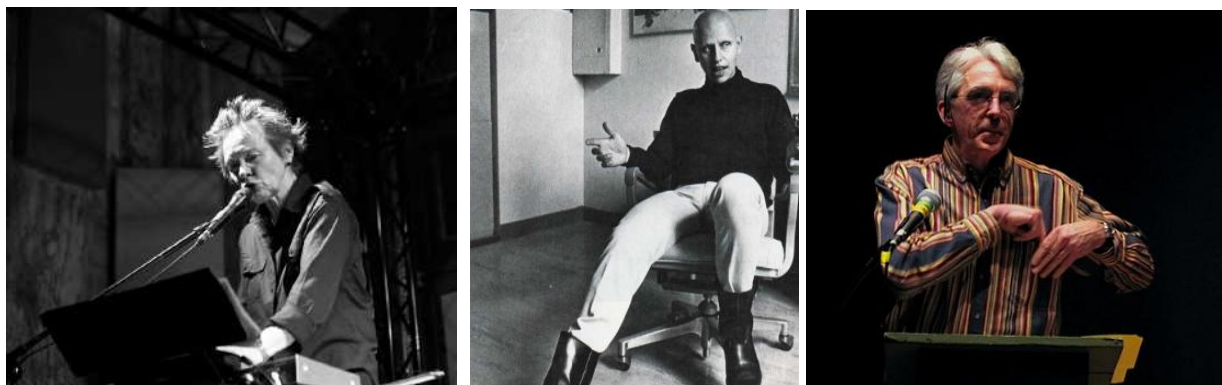


Fig. 3.25: Laurie Anderson, David Antin, Steve Benson.



A/Oralities

When asked about the origins of his recording practice, Bernstein admits he was “a pre-adolescent taper.”⁴⁴⁴ Beginning somewhere around the age of 11 or 12 years old, he began to make recordings of the theme songs from TV shows and then collected them into a single tape anthology. “One of the first things that I did was to tape all the theme songs, one after the other,” he states, “and inside the reel-to-reel box, I have a track list of all the themes with their footage indicator number. And I’ve always kept a tape recorder close. That’s one thing I remember from that time.” Bernstein’s earliest recorded poem, “1–100” – which Kenneth Goldsmith described in the *New York Times* as “a three-minute recitation of the number 1 to 100 in that order,” provoking potential listeners to “[f]eel the suspense as the piece slowly builds; if you last that long, things get really spicy around 75”⁴⁴⁵ – dates from just a few years later, 1969, when Bernstein was 19 and was “conceived and performed in the Fall of [his] sophomore year at college.”⁴⁴⁶ Just a few years later, in 1973, Bernstein was living in Santa Barbara, where he hosted a radio show called “Mind and Body” on the University of California, Santa Barbara college radio station. “I was working in the alternative health care movement as a health education coordinator,” he recalls, “and one of the things that I did in that role was the radio program. We were involved with groups like Planned Parenthood. It was also a kind of proto-gay-male-health center, pre-AIDS, and I would interview people about issues regarding prostitution and drugs, and to discuss the programs we ran at the center.”⁴⁴⁷

In 1975, Bernstein returned to New York City, and there he made a number of recordings that are now archived on PennSound as his “Early Recorded Works: Homemade Tapes, 1975-1976.”⁴⁴⁸ On the composition of these works, Bernstein states:

That was really before I was writing poetry. I mean, I was writing poetry, but in a certain way I was making these recordings as much or more than I was writing poems in that period. [...] The tape works I made were pre-*L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* magazine. It was around the same time that I was making the poems in *Asylums* and *Parsing*.⁴⁴⁹

On the early tape works, Bernstein performs many of the poems in *Asylums* (1975) and *Parsing* (1976)⁴⁵⁰ – Bernstein’s first two books of poetry. It is worth noting that a significant compositional feature of Bernstein’s earliest poems is the degree to which they are inextricably bound to his sound recording practice.

In discussing these early tape works, Bernstein immediately begins to reflect on the machine he used to record at that time, as if to emphasize how the recordings and the means of recording are, of course, always linked. “At that time,” he states, “I had one of the most common early recorders that made simple mono recordings. It cost maybe thirty-five dollars. It had four buttons that made big clunky sounds when you pressed them, and it was rectangular, about half the size of a laptop.”⁴⁵¹ This would be the recording device Bernstein would take with him to the Ear Inn in September, 1978 in order to record readings by poets John Ashbery and Michael Lally, the first in a series at the Ear Inn that would continue for nearly twenty years (see fig. 3.26).⁴⁵² Founded by Bernstein and Ted Greenwald, the reading series at the Ear Inn was a central site of poetic activity in New York City, one that functioned – as Daniel Kane wrote of the 1960s generation of Lower East Side poets – “as a staging ground for an alternative community,”⁴⁵³ in this instance, the community forming primarily around Language-centered poetics.

On that tape recorder, Bernstein would make over three hundred cassette tapes of Ear Inn readings.⁴⁵⁴ From these tapes, thirteen excerpts from poets reading would form the *Live at the Ear Inn* compact disc album, the “First Audio-Anthology of PostModern L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E P=O=E=T=R=Y” as noted on the album cover, that Bernstein edited in 1994.⁴⁵⁵ The audio-anthology includes recordings from Susan Howe, Ron Silliman, Leslie Scalapino, Ted Greenwald, Rosmarie Waldrop, Alan Davies, Barrett Watten, Erica Hunt, Bruce Andrews, Hannah Weiner, Steve McCaffery, Ann Lauterbach, and Charles Bernstein. In the thirty-two page booklet that accompanies the compact disc, Bernstein writes:

The Ear Inn, a small bar on Spring Street near Tribeca (just before it turns into the Hudson River), has been the home of arguably the best reading series in New York City over the past two decades. Ted Greenwald and I started the Saturday afternoon series in the Fall of 1978 with a reading by John Ashbery and Michael Lally. Over the many Saturdays that followed, the audience has shifted in size, the PA system has worked and had conked out, the noise from the bar has sometimes become intrusive.

But the commitment to a continuing renewal of the art of poetry has never faltered; a commitment, that is, to a spectrum of writing that places its attention primarily on language and ways of making meaning, that takes for granted neither vocabulary, grammar, process, syntax, program, or subject matter – indeed where all these dynamics remain at play.

Over the years, the Ear Inn series has been able to retain its vitality because of the energy and judgment of the poets who have curated the program, for sometimes just a month and for sometimes several years; in particular Mitch Highfill, Jeanne Lance,

Andrew Levy, Rob Fitterman, Laynie Brown, James Sherry of the Segue Foundation, George Peck of the Ear Inn have all been crucial to keeping the series going.⁴⁵⁶ Also from these tapes, two-hundred-fifty-one readings dated from 1978 to 1998 currently appear on the Ear Inn page on PennSound.⁴⁵⁷ The tapes from the Ear Inn readings, all together, make up a significant sub-collection within Bernstein's personal audio collection, and form a major node in the network of audio collections in constellation through the construction of PennSound.

When Bernstein began to teach at the University at Buffalo in 1990 he started to use a Sony Walkman Professional – which, he noted, had Dolby C noise reduction that allowed greater fidelity for capturing the live exchanges – to record poetry-related events there (see fig. 3.27). Over two hundred of the recordings of readings, lectures, and seminars on poetry and poetics that Bernstein recorded with this device, dating from 1990 to 2003, are on PennSound.⁴⁵⁸ This collection of recordings is remarkable for its variety of modes. It documents a culture of poetry in which the reading of poems is only one genre of public exchange among many. Introductions, conversations between poets, class room discussions, and more informal talks feature prominently in the collection. In the live event of the reading, the ways in which poets discuss and frame their own poems, and the ways in which their audiences – often composed of other poets, scholars, artists, students, and admirers of poetry – respond to the works is an important component of the transmission of poetics. These exchanges serve as a space where those interested can collectively think with and respond to works, comparing them to prior precedents, and imagining future works and practices. This is to say that such exchanges establish the greater contexts of poems. In recording these exchanges, the impact they can have on compositional practices and also on the pedagogy of poetry expands, in that they become a potential object of study to learn about the premises behind works and also their reception.

For two years in the midst of these events in Buffalo, 1995-1996, Bernstein began to host thirty-minute radio programs called LINEbreak. Produced and directed by Martin Spinelli, each episode of LINEbreak featured a poet in dialogue with Bernstein about their poetry and practice, and would feature readings from their works. Several of these programs were made in the New York apartments of the poets (for example, Bruce Andrews, Paul Auster, Susan Howe, Hannah Weiner), some were recorded at the SUNY Buffalo Music Department (Robert Creeley, Jena Osman, Jerome Rothenberg, Fiona Templeton), and several were recorded at the Charles Morrow and Associates Studio in New York (Madeline Gins, Barbara Guest, Jackson Mac Low, Cecilia Vicuña).⁴⁵⁹ The LINEbreak series, notable for broadcasting the poetry of experimental

postmodern poets, was distributed over the Public Radio Satellite System, its episodes played on public and college radio stations across the United States. Initially brought online as the first audio recordings of the Electronic Poetry Center, the LINEbreak recordings, again, assert the importance of poetics, of listening to poets not only read their poems, but discuss their compositional aspects and affinities to other poems and poets.

In recording these poetry series, dialogues, and exchanges on poetics, the phonotextual element of poetic practice began to be a central theme throughout Bernstein's critical writings. In "State of the Art," a polemical essay on the discourse of contemporary poetry in the United States – its "states, moods, agitations, dissipations, renunciations, depressions, acquiescences, elations, angers, ecstasies"⁴⁶⁰ – Bernstein frames his interests in poetics in terms of the sonic:

When poetry averts conformity it enters into the contemporary: speaking to the pressures and conflicts of the moment with the mean just then at hand. By which I mean I care most about poetry that disrupts business as usual, including literary business: I care most for poetry as dissent, including formal dissent; poetry that makes sound possible to be heard that are not otherwise articulated.⁴⁶¹

A few years later, he would begin *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (1998), his edited collection on the cultural techniques of poetry in performance, with an epigraph of Jack Spicer's resigned proclamation from the poem "Thing Language": "No one listens to poetry."⁴⁶² Spicer's turn toward "language" and insistent focus upon the event or act of auditory reception – the mediation of a phonemic sounding out, as well as its embodied, aural reception – becomes one of the compositional aspects central to Language poetry.⁴⁶³

It also serves as a provocation for a social positioning of both the poem and the figure of the poet for which numerous Language practitioners have argued.⁴⁶⁴ In "What is a Minor Literature?," Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari outline three characteristics a minority makes in a major language. The three characteristics are the "deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual and the political, [and] the collective arrangement of utterance. Which," they write, "amounts to this: that "minor" no longer characterizes certain literatures, but describes the revolutionary conditions of any literature within what we call the great (or established)."⁴⁶⁵ Their theorization of how a minor literature might alter the practices and use of a dominant practices language serves as an important framework for understanding Language poetics. Take, for example, Hejinian's "transitive" poetics, which privileges a live public moment of multivocalic composition, the phonemic moment for which any graphemic poem

emergent from that moment might function as a documentative or archival text. Through the experiment of the multivocalic production of a language event and that event's (possible) poem-text(s), the poem functions, for Hejinian, not as "an isolated autonomous rarefied aesthetic object"; instead, as Hejinian writes, it moves towards a production in which "aesthetic discovery is congruent with social discovery" and "new ways of thinking (new relationships among the components of thought) make new ways of being possible."⁴⁶⁶ In such a poetics, the importance of the audio recording – as a document of exchange, as a primary textual source in an iterative practice – is clear, and makes Bernstein's injunction to bring critical attention to both the audio recording and the practice of listening all the more important.

The epigraph from Spicer is an important marker of his bearing on the poetics of *Close Listening*, and it functions as a provocation – to *listen* to poetry – that is practiced and addressed throughout the edited collection. "While the performance of poetry is as old as poetry itself," Bernstein writes, "critical attention to modern and contemporary poetry performance has been negligible, despite the crucial importance of performance to the practice of the poetry of this century."⁴⁶⁷ The essays in the collection consider graphemic performance (page-based text works) and "a/oral" performance ("sound language, language grounded in its embodiments."⁴⁶⁸ The two modes of performance are not oppositional, but conducted in relation – for example, Perelman's discussion of the reading event, talk, discussion, tape, and transcript in his 80 Langton Street series; and Drucker's articulation of concrete texts and the performance of sound poems in the early to mid-twentieth century. Bernstein continues:

Since the 1950s, the poetry reading has become one of the most important sites for the dissemination of poetic works in North America, yet studies of the distinctive features of the poem-in-performance have been rare (even full-length studies of a poet's work routinely ignore the audiotext), and readings – no matter how well attended – are never reviewed by newspapers or magazine (though they are the frequent subject of light, generally misinformed, "feature" stories on the perennial "revival" of poetry). A large archive of audio and video documents, dating back to an early recording of Tennyson's almost audible voice, awaits serious study and interpretation.⁴⁶⁹

The "large archive of audio and video documents [...] that awaits serious study and interpretation" remains, at the moment of *Close Listening*'s composition, an unclearly defined entity. It exists as a dispersed array of materials, cited occasionally in the essays – materials often difficult for more than one or a few people to access. Few of the writers in the collection consult

audio-recorded works. Only six of sixteen essays in *Close Listening* reflect upon works in the form of audiotape – McCaffery, Perelman, Quartermain, Middleton, Schultz, Silliman – despite the fact that, as Bernstein asserts, “[w]hen the audiotape archive of a poet’s performance is acknowledged as a significant, rather than incidental, part of her or his work, a number of important textual and critical issues emerge.”⁴⁷⁰ One of the provocations that clearly resonates beyond the pages of *Close Listening* is that the reason, perhaps, that “No one listens to poetry,” to echo Spicer, is that the material emanations of poetry in performance generally exist in elusive spaces of circulation.

Bernstein’s composition of “Making Audio Visible” – as a talk (2003-2004), as drafts and journal articles (2006-2009), and as a book chapter (2011) – marks a period of time beginning with the initial conception of PennSound as a distinct medial object, to its articulation as a site and its initial years of use. The essay documents a number of considerations Bernstein developed in forming *a version* of the archive he envisioned in *Close Listening*. A handout, “MakingAudioVisible_handout.doc” (17 March 2003), that accompanied Bernstein’s talk at the Society for Textual Scholarship (21 March 2003) highlights the audio format (mp3), the file naming protocol (lastname-firstname_“poem-title”_place_date.mp3), and includes the first publicly disseminated “PENNSound manifesto” (fig. 2). A document prepared for a talk at the University of California, Santa Barbara, “MakingAudioVisible-SB.doc” (11 March 2004), begins with the talking point: “Over the past several years, I have been working on a series of essays about the relation of the technological reproduction of language to poetry. My remarks here extend my work editing *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*.” A draft version of the essay, “MakingAudioVisible-TP-with-addendum.doc” (1 July 2007), intended to be published in a *Textual Practice* (2009) issue on contemporary writing environments, frames the essay by stating: “sound recordings are crucial environments for poetry.”⁴⁷¹

The iteration published in *Attack of the Difficult Poems* (2011), subtitled “Poetry’s Coming Digital Present,” is Bernstein at his most McLuhanesque. His style combines media analysis and manifesto. In the essay, he develops a media poetics of the poetry audio recording collection. Bernstein situates his discussion of poetic practice and its material inscriptions over a broad historical arc, “the era of print,” in which “literary production has been synonymous with writing understood as a visual system of notation.”⁴⁷² That era, Bernstein argues, is undergoing a fundamental shift due to “the advent of file compression and broad-band web connections” that

allow for a more voluminous circulation of poetry-related sound recordings. In the era of print, Bernstein notes, “archives of poetry recordings exist,” though, “[t]hey are largely inaccessible. Very few editions of poet’s sound recordings have been published. As a result, basic principles of textual scholarship have not been applied to the sound archive.” He then introduces

PennSound:

At the University of Pennsylvania, we have started a project we call PennSound, which extends the work I have been doing with Loss Pequeño Glazier and Martin Spinelli at the Electronic Poetry Center in Buffalo (<http://epc.buffalo.edu>) and builds on the foundational work of Kenneth Goldsmith at UbuWeb (<http://www.ubu.com>). Penn[S]ound is a collaboration between the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (Al Filreis) and the Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library (Michael Ryan). For this project, we intend to develop protocols for the indexing and tagging of sound files of poetry readings. At this time, there are no such standards, and relative chaos exists at every basic level, from file-naming conventions to copyright questions to storage and preservation issues.

I believe that the availability of compressed sound files of individual poems, freely available via the Internet, offers an intriguing and powerful alternative to the book format in collecting a poet's work and to anthology and magazine formats in organizing constellations of poems.⁴⁷³

Bernstein envisions that the MP3 poetry collection as having direct effect on the practice of poetry and discourse of poetics. It will impact the consumption of poetry: the poetry MP3 is mobile, and can be listened to in numerous and in an array of settings. It will impact the pedagogy of poetry: “The sound file would become, ipso facto, a text for study.”⁴⁷⁴ Poets will make use of the sound recording as a media of composition, constructing “the text of their poems by dictating and editing sound files much the way we now compose and edit alphabetic writing.”⁴⁷⁵ It will impact poetry criticism: the poetry MP3 could be embedded into digitally-published essays for detailed analysis; critics could even compose their works in MP3 format, for example to present a deformative listening.⁴⁷⁶ Crucial to these new modes of criticism will be the need to develop what Jerome McGann calls a “philology in a new key”⁴⁷⁷ – ways to analyze the bibliographic codes or formats of poetic media, and document their provenance and use.

Fig. 3.26: Flyer for the initial season of the Ear Inn readings, 1978.

READINGS
at
Ear Inn
326 Spring St.
Saturdays, 4 PM
(\$2 Contribution)

<u>September</u>	<u>October</u>
16 JOHN ASHBERRY MICHAEL LALLY	7 JACKSON MACLOW RACHELLE BIJOU
23 LYNNE TILLMAN ALAN DAVIES	14 BILLEN MYLES MICHAEL GOTTLIEB
30 JOHN TAGGART JOHN YAU	21 JOE CERAVOLO TIM ELIGOS
	28 BRUCE ANDREWS CHARLES NORTH

Organized
by
Ted Greenwald
Charles Bernstein

Fig. 3.27: Poster for Wednesdays at 4 reading series, University at Buffalo, Fall 1991.

WEDNESDAYS AT 4 PLUS

Readings, Lectures and Seminars in Contemporary Poetry and Poetics

Fall 1991 Poetry and Prose • September 11 - November 20, 1991
at the State University of New York at Buffalo

GENE FRUMKIN

Poetry Reading

Wednesday, September 11, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

Gene Frumkin is Professor of English at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. He is the author of eleven books of poetry, including *Comma in the Ear*, (Living Batch Press). His poetry, reviews, and essays have appeared in *Sulfur*, *Hambone*, and *boundary 2*. His most recent book of poetry—*Saturn Is Mostly Weather: Selected and Uncollected Poems*—is forthcoming in 1991.

NICOLE BROSSARD

Poetry Reading

Wednesday, September 25, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

Open Seminar

Thursday, September 26, 12:30 p.m.,
438 Clemens Hall

Nicole Brossard is co-founder and editor of the reviews *La Barre du Jour* (1965) and *La Nouvelle Barre du Jour* (1977). She is the author of nineteen collections of poetry, seven novels, a play, essays, and several pieces for radio. She co-directed the film *Some American Feminists*. She has been awarded Canada's Governor General's Award twice, and has been an active participant in international colloquia on feminism. Her most recent books are *Maive Dessert* and *Picture Theory*.

TOM RAWORTH

Samuel P. Capen Chair Residency

Poetry Reading

Wednesday, October 9, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

Reception

Thursday, October 10, 11:00 a.m. - Noon,
438 Clemens Hall

Tom Raworth's most recent books include *Visible Shivers* and *Tottering State*, which bring together work selected from twenty previously published books. He has six books forthcoming in 1991, including *Catocoustics*, *All Fours*, and *Survival*. Widely regarded in the U.S. as one of England's greatest living poets, he lives in Cambridge.

LYN HEJINIAN

Poetry Reading

Wednesday, October 23, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

Reception

Thursday, October 24, 11:00 a.m. - Noon,
438 Clemens Hall

Open Seminar

"The Poetics of Knowledge—Writing as a Process of Exploration"
Thursday, October 24, 12:00 p.m.,
438 Clemens Hall

Lyn Hejinian's books include *My Life*, *The Guard*, and now this year, *The Cell* and *Oxota*. *Description*, translations of Leningrad poet Arkadii Dragomoschenko, appeared last year. She lives in Berkeley, where she co-edits *Poetics Journal*.

THE NEW GOTHIC: TRANSGRESSIVE TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Friday and Saturday, November 8 and 9

Featuring readings by Peter Straub, Paul West, Lynne Tillman, Kathy Acker, Patrick McGrath, and Bradford Morrow in a festival honoring Random House's publication of *The New Gothic*, edited by Morrow and McGrath. See separate announcement for details or call 636-3422.

LORENZO THOMAS

Poetry Reading

Wednesday, November 13, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

Lecture

"Melvin Tolson and Amiri Baraka"
Thursday, November 14, 12:30 p.m.,
608 Clemens Hall

Lorenzo Thomas is Writer-in-Residence at the University of Houston. His books include *Chances are Few* and *The Bathers*. Thomas's poems have been published widely and his essays on African-American poetry are distinctive and influential. He is anthologized in *New Black Voice*, *Another World*, and *The Poetry of Black America*.

JOHN MONTAGUE

Poetry Reading

Thursday, November 14, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

John Montague's most recent book is *Born in Brooklyn* (Buffalo: White Pine Press, 1991). His selected essays, *The Figure in the Cave*, appeared in 1989. Montague has established himself as a follower of the lyric traditions of Yeats, and with books like *The Rough Field* (1972), *The Dead Kingdom* (1982), and *Mount Eagle* (1988) claimed his place as a major contemporary Irish poet.

JACK CLARKE

Poetry Reading

Wednesday, November 20, 4:00 p.m.
Poetry/Rare Book Room, 420 Capen Hall

Jazz musician and Blakean, Jack Clarke joined the newly-formed State University of New York as its Blake Specialist in 1964. In association with Charles Olson and others, he edited the *Niagara Frontier Review*. He currently edits from Buffalo the newsletter *intent*. His many books include *Green Field*, *The End of This Side*, and most recently, *In the Analogy*, *Book 1*, a collection of sonnets.

All events are free and open to the public.

"Wednesdays at 4 PLUS" is a Poetics Program production sponsored by the David Gray Chair of Poetry and Letters, Department of English (Charles Bernstein); the Samuel P. Capen Chair of Poetry and the Humanities (Robert Creeley); and by The Poetry/Rare Books Collection (Robert Berthoff). Also thanks to Poets and Writers for funding provided by the Literature Program of the New York State Council on the Arts. Nicole Brossard reading is co-sponsored by Canada Council. Tom Raworth's reading is co-sponsored by The British Council.

For further information call Charles Bernstein or Jackie McGuire at 636-3810.

Revelations: A Dialogue with Al Filreis

Michael Nardone: *Do you remember when the idea of PennSound began to be developed?*

Al Filreis: Well, it depends on what you mean. PennSound per se was something Charles wanted to do when he arrived. It was his name for it. He talked about when we met when he was a candidate for this position that's he's in now. That's one way of answering it. The other way is that PennSound started when we glued together the institutional pieces that gave us through relationships the earliest forms of digital humanities, as they would be called now. The relationships that we had – that I had and others had – with the people in the so-called Humanities Computing, a division of the School of Arts and Sciences Computing (SASC) organization, which is where Chris Mustazza works.

He was one of the first technicians to work on PennSound?

He was an early technical editor on PennSound, but that organization long precedes Chris being here or Charles being here. So that goes back to my archival mania in the earliest days of the MP3. When the Writers House opened in 1995-6, we immediately began to do recordings as a lot of people did on DAT tape and cassette and began to preserve an audio archive. Then we started to use RealAudio and RealVideo formats. We used RealVideo as recordings of live webcasts. We called them netcasts then. At first, we did a series of live audio radio-style Writers House programs in 1998-99. [...]

In 1998-99, we began to toy with what is our format. In the summer of 99, I convened a group of poets – Kristen Gallagher, Sean Walker, Bob Perelman, and maybe one other person, maybe Jena Osman – to talk about "To Else," the Williams poem. So we have an hour and forty-minute discussion, and people called in – we set up a regular telephone line and people called in and we put the phone next to the audio recorder. It was an early version webcast. Early version ModPo webcast. So once we started doing that we realized that we needed to see it all as one. We needed to see the set piece single event readings as the same as convened symposia and conversations that had interaction – people calling in or sending emails in, like a talk show – to see this as the same as recorded teaching, the same as the radio style one-way that we started to fool around

with (the so-called netcasts). All of that, it seemed to me at the beginning, was the same. So, I started building the course that I call English 88, or ModPo in 1994. [...] The point I'm making though is that poetry class which I call English 88, as early as 1994, I was putting everything up online. Just after we switched from Gopher to the World Wide Web. So most people were using a non-graphical interface and we were using links. We were using a Telnet prompt and typing Lynx to create a view of the web that was an Ascii view of the web.

How did you get into this kind of thing? You don't necessarily focus on technology.

No, I don't.

You just taught yourself these things?

It was all just Rube Goldberg stuff. The course could be accessed through a non-graphical browser through Lynx or through Mosaic or Netscape when that came out. [...] Anyway, this material I began to collect was essentially all text material. Soon, around 1997, I began to add RealAudio files. The RealAudio files I made myself. They were mini lectures, they were conversations, readings. Then I stole some primitive recordings of maybe Robert Frost that were out there, or maybe Williams, converted from cassette, asked no permission – that kind of early stuff. That kind of behaviour that became central to UbuWeb – anyone of us who was doing this kind of thing in the early days of the Internet, was doing what Goldsmith has made into an aesthetic and an ethic. For me, it wasn't anything like that – it was simply what you did. It was a practical matter. My goal eventually was to go legit and to create a site. The reason why the English 88 pages get so many hits is that they've been there since 1995-6, so the search algorithms naturally promote them because they are old and they are stable. I'm not sure how or why that works.

This was a revelation for me, Michael. Once I began to teach the course to maybe 90 or 100 students here, and they were able to go home and access the texts, I stopped using an anthology really early. I started just reproducing stuff. There was some scanning. It was basically OCR poured into a pre-formatted HTML page. It was HTML then angle bracket pre. It was just the formatting of a Ginsberg poem. I still have some of those files, some of those webpages go back

to the 90s. I remember “America” by Ginsberg in a courier, non-proportional pre-formatted font that had been a Gopher page, which had converted from Gopher to the Web in 1993 or 4. [...] The revelation, for me, pedagogically and theoretically and poetically, was that lots of people around the world were getting access to this course. They didn't have the virtue or the vice, depending on your point of view, of me guiding them through it. It wasn't a real course like ModPo is now, but it was a bunch of materials and it was the first one up there. I began to realize that my career, which I had thought of as local teaching and scholarly articles and books, which are slow to come out and only a few people buy them – I had that first revelation which is now a cliché which is that I realized that there was a community out there, largely a non-academic community, of people who were looking for this stuff. That's how I made my first contact with Kenny. That's how Charles and I began to get to know each another, and a lot of other people. So what this means is that my anthologizing – and the course used to end with Language poetry in 1996 or 7 – it means that my anthologizing had much more effect and I became much more sensitive to my choices. I began to put the materials, the RA files and the text files in a single in the UNIX folder that we had on the server that we had. This is the old English server here at Penn. So, I had the beginnings of that, and I was pretty systematic about naming it, it was all there, but that's – in answer to your question – that's what PennSound was in my version of it, based on teaching and my own mania for collecting stuff that would help me to teach.

I know that you've done archival work for critical writing that you've done, but do you have any background in archival or information sciences.

No.

So, you learned it all ad hoc?

Yes, which is why PennSound looks the way it does. Because Charles is anarchic by instinct, and I'm just untrained. You know, the first years of PennSound were Charles and I keyboarding in the middle of the night – segmenting, doing the HTML, with Mustazza converting things. Soon Mike Hennessey came along. We were simply building something. Charles had an incredible store of his own recordings. Then I had all these Writers House recordings. So, we started out with thousands of recordings, and those days there really wasn't anything else going on [in terms of institutions collecting poetry audio recordings], so people would just send us recordings or bookstores would give us their files. So we had more than we could deal with. We've had to

build up more of an institutional going-forward-machine, which gets us to the main thing I want to get to – we may not have time to talk about it in depth today, but we'll continue these discussions. It is silly to think of something like PennSound, which is not based in the library, right, so someone like Jason Camlot or Steve Evans are rightly critically observant that the best way to do this is to have a really good architecture from the start, an archival architecture. We chose not to go with the library for a couple of complicated reasons. We had created a salon styled entity here that was a little more like the poetic free spaces that had developed in the bohemian ends of the poetry world in San Francisco and New York, Cambridge and Buffalo, and so forth. We – I think it's an ideology we didn't want – this is where we are more aligned with Kenny [Goldsmith and UbuWeb]– we didn't really want to be absorbed into the library's wonderfully systematic system and therefore live forever. We wanted to play on the edge. So we have a relationship with the school of Arts and Sciences media server, which we've partly paid for and its huge.

And figuring that the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania is a pretty robust institution and is likely to last as long as the library in terms of online archiving, but then we decided to have the front-end interface look a lot like the DIY world that we were creating here at the KWH which poets come and go and there is a lot of serendipity and wow, look at the people in this room. So very much like the recordings themselves of *Writings/Talks* in Bob Perelman's Berkeley or the St. Marks Poetry community – many of the recordings that you actually hear on PennSound – the Vancouver conference – PennSound itself as a site behaves in a way that is similar to the less organized and more serendipitous recordings. Now that, what I just said – this form-content jiving – is unheard of in digital humanities theorizing.

Fig. 3.28: Second page of “MakingAudioVisible_handout.doc,” 17 March 2003.

PENNsound manifesto for the archiving of recorded poetry:

1. It must be free. Ideally, all the sound material we put on the web should be cleared for copyright to be distributed free. Users of the site will be able to download the MP3s to their own computers or players or play them in a streaming fashion. Teachers could make course CDs or add the MP3s to their on-line syllabi. Other web sites and libraries could recollect the material. Credits for digitalization and copyright release would also be embedded into each file (which would note the files are free to download for noncommercial use). One of the advantages of working with poetry sound files is that we don't anticipate a problem with rights. At present and in the conceivable future, there is no profit to be gained by the sale of recorded poetry. There is, however, considerable expense involved in preserving, cataloging, and distributing such material.

2. It must be MP3 or better. RealAudio is a proprietary format with sound quality that will not stand the test of time. We need to use open formats that reproduce reasonably high quality sound, for a listenership that is used to astoundingly good sound quality from commercial sources.

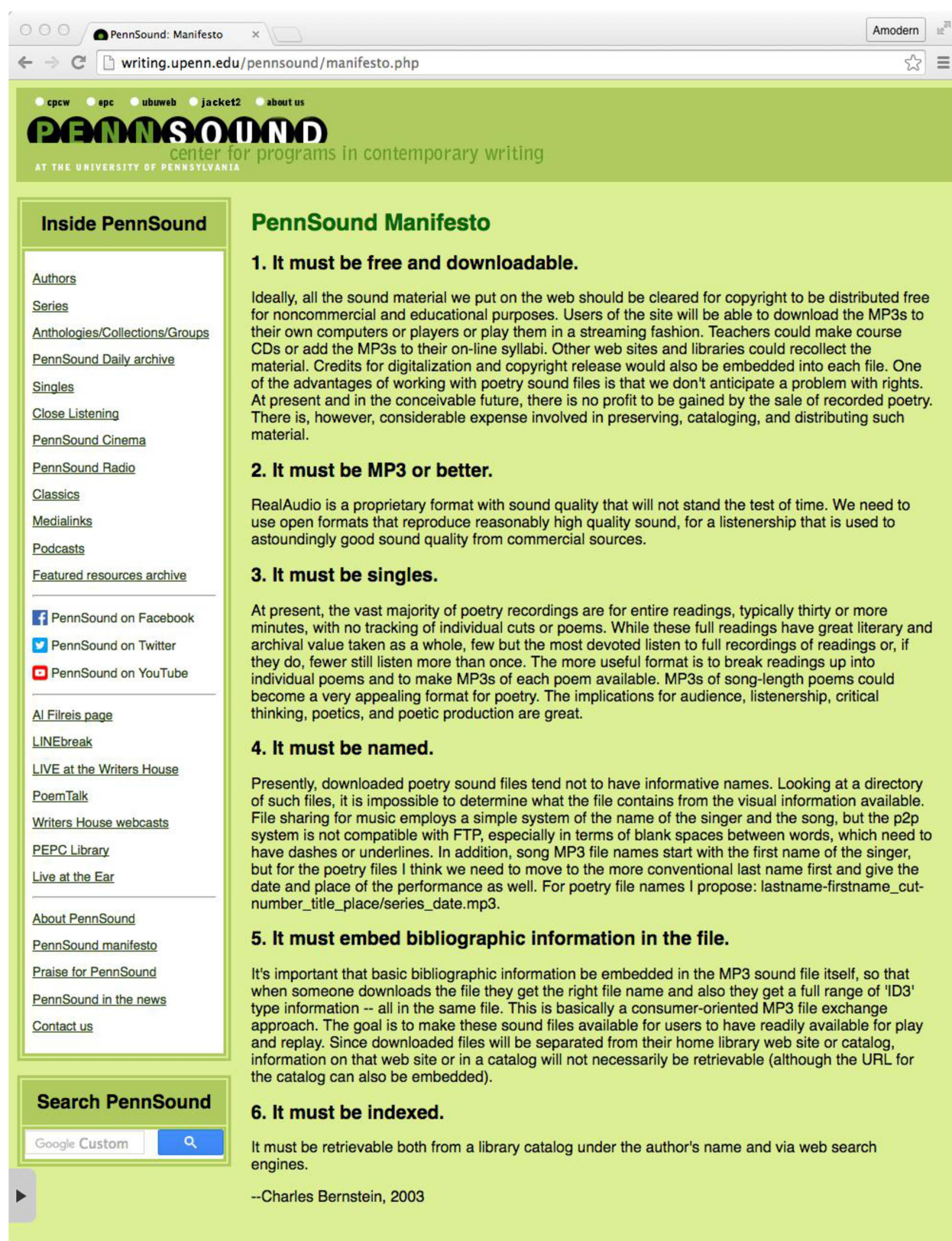
3. It must be singles. At present, the vast majority of poetry readings are for entire readings, typically thirty or more minutes, with no tracking of individual cuts or poems. While these full readings have great literary and archival value taken as a whole, few but the most devoted listeners listen to full recordings of readings or if they do fewer still listen more than once. The more useful format is break readings up into individual poems and to make an MP3 of each poem available. MP3s of song-length poems could become a very appealing format for poetry. The implications for audience, listenership, critical thinking, poetics, and poetic production are great.

4. It must be named. Presently, downloaded poetry sound files tend not to have informative names. Looking at a directory of such files, it is impossible to determine what the file contains from the visual information available. File sharing for music employs a simple system of the name of the singer and the song, but the p2p system is not compatible with FTP, especially in terms of blank spaces between words, which need to have dashes or underlines. In addition, song MP3 file names start with the first name of the singer, but for the poetry files I think we need to move to the more conventional last name first and give the date and place of the performance as well. For poetry file names I propose: lastname-firstname_poem-title_place_date.mp3.

5. It must embed bibliographic information in the file. It's important that basic bibliographic information be embedded in the MP3 sound file itself, so that when someone downloads the file they get the right file name and also they get a full range of “ID3” type information -- all in the same file. This is basically a consumer-oriented MP3 file exchange approach. The goal is to make these sound files available for users to download and keep on their own computers or burn to disks. Since the files will be separated from their home library web site or catalog, information on that web site or in a catalog will not necessarily be retrievable (although the URL for the catalog can also be embedded).

6. It must be indexed so as to be retrievable both from a library catalog under the author's name and via web search engines.

Fig. 3.29: PennSound Manifesto, dated 2003, with updates from 2005. Screenshot 8 June 2018.



Make It Free

When Bernstein interviewed for the position of Donald T. Regan Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania in November 2001, PennSound was one of the projects he envisioned initiating during his tenure there. The idea struck a chord with Al Filreis, at that time the Class of 1942 Professor of English at Penn and Faculty Director of the Kelly Writers House. During Filreis's previous 15 years as a professor at Penn, he had established for himself a reputation for innovative pedagogy and for re-imagining the literary studies classroom. An August 2001 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* describes Filreis as "a revolutionary," one of a few "quiet innovators ... harnessing the power of Web sites, listservs and other computer-based innovations to change their teaching style and let students play a more active role in their own education."⁴⁷⁸ In developing his survey course on Modern & Contemporary American Poetry, English 88,⁴⁷⁹ Filreis had consistently experimented with the infrastructure of the classroom, creating multiple sites of engagement inside and outside of it. The networked digital infrastructure of the class – the English 88 Web page, the links to hundreds of sites and streamable media files (audio and video) related to the course materials, the class electronic mailing list and other online discussion forums – make up only part of the pedagogical experience.

In establishing the Kelly Writers House in 1995, Filreis created a physical space – one outside any particular department and that function, according to Filreis, in a manner that is "semi-autonomous" to the university⁴⁸⁰ – where writers and students interested in writing could convene to write, hold classes, attend a reading, meet informally with peers, develop text and media projects in a publications studio, cook and eat a meal. In an e-mail following his interview, Bernstein expressed his gratitude for Filreis's generosity while visiting the campus, and expressed his admiration for what Filreis had initiated at the Kelly Writers House: "... as much as I thought I knew about the Writers House, I was knocked out about all the stuff I didn't know."⁴⁸¹ The articulation of the technological infrastructure for circulating class-related media and the physical space of the Writers House would provide an important context in which Bernstein and Filreis could develop PennSound.

The Bernstein–Filreis correspondence from this time (late 2001) until the publication of PennSound (early 2005) is remarkable for the speed at which Bernstein and Filreis are able to plan and realize PennSound, and also in the ways they are able to integrate it into new and pre-

existing media infrastructures devoted to poetic exchange. These infrastructures include the Kelly Writers House (KWH), the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW), and, later, the journal *Jacket2*, as well as the EPC and UbuWeb. The general tone of the correspondence is one of mutual admiration and excitement as they developed these projects. The next exchange is dated 15 November 2002, a year following Bernstein's interview. By this time, Bernstein had accepted the position at Penn, but he would not begin it until the following July. The two discuss the essays of an edited collection – *Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print*, edited by Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux and Neil Freistat (2002) – that Bernstein is teaching that semester in Buffalo and that has impacted his thoughts while preparing a talk on “the digital archiving of poetry readings.”⁴⁸² Filreis responds to this: “I’ve spoken with my two pals in Arts & Science computing about your ideas, generally speaking, on digital archiving. Once you’re here, on the ground, we can talk some more with them and others” (E-mail, 15 November 2002). They make plans to connect during the winter holiday to discuss the subject further.

In January 2003, Bernstein writes that he is “so pleased to be coming to Penn just at the inception of ‘[Center for] Programs in Contemporary Writing,’” which Filreis initiated during that semester, “and to be able to become a part of your program from the onset, both with ‘experimental writing’ and visiting writer seminars” (E-mail, 7 January 2003). They imagine constructing a physical space they will link to their “digital projects”: a seminar room that could be used for “events ‘in conversation,’” and to do formal and impromptu recording sessions. They discuss this space right down to its details for the audio equipment involved and the balancing levels of its microphones.⁴⁸³ The space, as they imagine it, will be designed to teach sound recordings of poetry, and also to facilitate people producing their own recordings.

They also begin to develop the networked infrastructure for PennSound. During these first two months of 2003, they establish a number of components for the project: the server, run by PennSound's first Technical Advisor, John MacDermott; a work-study position devoted to working with the initial audio materials as well as helping Bernstein organize a readings and talks series with invited poets and scholars; possible organizations structures for the media files, including their naming protocols; and the ways in which they will be able to edit and circulate the materials. They discuss the possibility of having the sound files stored on a “dedicated library machine that would handle the streaming. If that is the case, we might simply give the library our

materials on CD-Roms and let them actually upload them.” Yet, Bernstein writes, “the spontaneity of immediately putting up sound files on a server that we have direct access to is important.” It would be good if they could “add files to it all the time.” So, with this in mind, going the route of the library could be difficult. Therefore, they will have to “figure out a way to collaboratively manage the site, [and the] issue[s] of permissions, access, etc.”⁴⁸⁴

Bernstein’s outline of the project on 3 March 2003 – written as the first email following the creation of the pennsound@english.upenn.edu e-mail address to all those involved in the initial development of PennSound – is worth quoting at length since it provides the earliest and most developed overall description of the project. He writes:

As a kind of general preface, I want to emphasize that none of what I propose here needs to be done on any particular timetable and we should only pursue what we think is aesthetically and bibliographically interesting. I am as much interested in the model we would create as the final archive, although I do think the potential for the latter is substantial. Still, it’s important that you actively note limits, practicalities and preferences. What I am presenting are possibilities; nothing is fixed.

Ideally, all the sound material we put on the web should be cleared for copyright to be distributed free. Users of the site will be able to download the MP3s to their own computers or players or play them in a streaming fashion. Teachers could make course CDs or add the MP3s to their on-line syllabi. Other web sites and library [sic] could recollect the material, but we would ask for credit as to source. The credit would also be embedded into each file.

Practically, we will probably need some kind of restricted site for material for which we do not have clearance. This would be for use only for virtual library patrons. I would like to keep this material to the minimum, but there will be some items that we are processing that may fall into this category and others for which we will not get permission.⁴⁸⁵

Moving from the issue of the overall organizational structure of the site, Bernstein discusses the materials themselves:

I am a strong believer in editorial selection. We don’t need to digitalize everything and we don’t need to break all the readings we digitalize into individual poems. We should prioritize based on value and interest.

All the items in the archive will be indexed as part of the library collection and some up on library author and title searches. This point, which you made, is potentially one of the most interesting parts of the projects. It will encourage individuals to donate their sound materials to us to be included in our collection.

In addition PENNsound itself should have a web index listing all poems by author and titles: a simple HTML index page. This could grow to be a meta-list of selected sound resources on the web. The first place to go if you are looking for sound files. This itself i[s] a big project and one we could pursue independently of

the other projects. It is something I have been meaning to do to extend the page at <http://www.epc.buffalo.edu/sound/>. [...] In *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* I included a section of available poetry sound resources, but that is totally outmode[d] now of course.

For our archive of recorded poetry there are several categories of materials involved:

I have about 175 cassette tapes made at the Ear Inn and sequel series from 1978 to the 90s. These are each two-person readings, about 30 minutes each. On the older tapes, I have cassette dubs already made. Add to this tapes of reading[s] at the University of Buffalo, maybe 100 readings by single authors. These are all indexed and labelled and for some I have a list of poems read. I will be able to send you a text file of the index of all the tapes fairly soon, I am in the process of bringing the list up to date. I can give these tapes to the library as part of the project.

We will have to write for permissions to put them on the web [...] but I think in most cases we can get that with a single email or form letter. Still, we need to explore the permission issue.

For each tape I would like to create an archival .wav or CD (I am not sure what is the current archival quality for sound); this is of secondary importance, but probably something we will want to do anyway. For each tape I want to make an MP# of the whole and put this up on the web.

For SOME of these tapes I would like to break this up to have MP3[s] of single poems or possibly of selected poems. We could in many cases work with the author in determining the poem titles and sources (after we get their permission we can send them a digital copy of the reading); in some cases we may be given text to accompany the readings, but this can be supplemental.

File naming standards need to be established as well as protocols for embedding textual information within the file.

For file name I proposed: lastname-firstname_poem-title_place_date.mp3.

For embedded file information, I propose the same plus any additional info we have on the textual source of the poem. We also want to embed the Penn credit for our work and as our collection.⁴⁸⁶

Bernstein then lists and describes the various collections of recorded materials they will be able to draw from for the first articulation of the site. These include: “immense collection of DATs at the Writers House;” the “LINEbreak series [that] is now only up in ReadAudio;” “Joel Kuszai’s Factory School site;” “The Radio Reading Project of Ernesto Grosman,” which includes “Mac Low, Andrews, Drucker, Hannah Weiner and others;” “Live at the Ear Inn;” “New tapes we will acquire once it becomes apparent the kind of digitalization we can provide” such as ones from David Antin and Robert Creeley; and “New Production,” which will be key.⁴⁸⁷ Integral to Bernstein’s conception of PennSound is the fact that they will learn how to archive the materials better through the production of materials for it. “By making new audio materials,” he writes, “we will better understand how to do everything else.” Bernstein then discusses ways of

indexing the material, and does so with reference to UbuWeb and the EPC: unlike the EPC, the bibliographic information for the recording needs to be embedded in the file; unlike UbuWeb, they will be sure to obtain permissions to circulate the media, they will follow a standard file naming convention, and they will make easier to search and navigate the site.

Bernstein concludes the project description by bringing up the issue of format:

At our meeting, Al raised the issue of RealAudio versus MP3. Up until recently, I strongly supported putting up files in RealAudio, since it is easier for those with tel[e]phone connections. At this stage, thinking ahead, I am reluctant to make any investment in a proprietary format that will surely be outmoded in a few years.⁴⁸⁸ I think for front end material, like NEW Writer's House program, we should continue to support RealAudio for the moment, but for all else MP3 alone should do. MP3 allows users to download and have very high quality audio; I am assuming that the proliferation of the format will allow us to upgrade if necessary in some systematic way. It could be argued that MP3, since it is [a] compression format, loses some of sound. But to my ear, for spoken word, I think the MP3 preserves a sufficient amount to make it viable in the long-term. Still, this is an issue we should consider carefully and ask for advice about.⁴⁸⁹

For a repository that prioritizes access and circulation, decisions concerning format are fundamental to its overall construction. Though, in the early days of PennSound's development, the RealAudio format allowed users connected to the Web via telephone lines to more easily access the recordings as streaming media,⁴⁹⁰ Bernstein anticipates the limits of that access. In making a repository of media files, one always risks the obsolescence of those files in various ways. For example, formats are superseded by other formats, or software supporting the format stagnates and the files fail to be compatible in current networked environments. Using a proprietary format like RealAudio would mean PennSound would have to rely on the standards and their continued implementation set by the format's commercial developer, RealNetworks. If the company were to alter its terms and conditions of use, or develop files that can only be played through their own proprietary audio player media, it might mean that for many users the files would be unlistenable. There are, in addition, a number of compatibility issues when it comes to using proprietary audio formats. Upgrades to the software could create unintended changes to the design and use of the site. To invest the time and resources into constructing PennSound using RealAudio would therefore mean risking the possibility of costly and labour-intensive redevelopment of the site and its materials on account of such unanticipated changes.

Yet the decision to use the MP3 as the primary format for PennSound is not without limitations. One of the core components of the MP3 is its use of lossy compression, an encoding method that reduces file size through inexact approximations of and discarding redundant elements of a file's data. "To make an MP3," Sterne writes,

a program called an encoder takes a .wav file (or some other audio format) and compares it to a mathematical model of the gaps in human hearing. Based on a number of factors – some chosen by the user, some set in the code – it discards the parts of the audio signal that are unlikely to be audible. It then reorganizes repetitive and redundant data in the recording, and produces a much smaller file – often as small as 12 percent of the original size file.⁴⁹¹

The MP3's compression model has allowed it to become "a triumph of distribution,"⁴⁹² yet it is far from an ideal format for traditional archival needs – even if it had become the primary format for online circulation platforms such as Napster, YouTube, the Internet Archive, and Spotify. The MP3, as Bernstein acknowledges, "since it is [a] compression format, loses some sound."⁴⁹³ Even if the elements of the sound file that the MP3 discards or approximates are not audible to human listeners, the augmentation of the original recording's data makes the MP3, typically, a lesser quality recording and therefore a poor format choice for archival purposes. Archivists working with digital audio have set a clear precedent for preferring WAV files, which do not compress or discard data in the sound file.⁴⁹⁴ In selecting the MP3 as the primary format for PennSound, Bernstein prioritizes access to the recordings and their continued distribution over a higher fidelity and more data-rich acoustic experience. Even though, Bernstein notes, they would later establish on a remote server a WAV depository of all the files on PennSound, he wonders if someone will actually need them. In dialogue, he states:

I like the [depository of WAV files] as a back-up in case recordings get lost or something else happens. I like redundancy. Yet, in terms of listening, it seems uncertain to me what the value of the WAV file would be compared to a high quality MP3, which sounds perfectly professional. There's no additional information that is not included in the MP3 but is in the WAV that really anyone would be seek out. Audio people tend to disagree with what I am saying, and I've often been nervous about making the wrong decision about this because the implications are large. In certain ways, the MP3 is actually a better method of archiving than a WAV file because the latter format is difficult to circulate and access. Inaccessibility doesn't preserve. It depends on how you think of preservation.⁴⁹⁵

In its utilization of the MP3, PennSound functions somewhere between the archive (which collects and stores objects based on their provenance and originality) and the publication (which makes available and circulates content to general publics), incorporating aspects of both medial forms.

Following from Bernstein's descriptive overview of the project, the infrastructural work on PennSound begins. The Bernstein-Filreis correspondence maps this development as the two begin to work out each detail. In the late spring of 2003, Bernstein and Filreis determine the core bibliographic information for each individual recording – author name; poem title; date of recording; place of recording; text source (e.g. book or other print publication, album); web source (if text is online). They plan for these data fields to be embedded on each file, into the URL for each file (lastname-firstname_cut_title_place_date_mp3.), and serve as the terms by which one can search for recordings on the site. They then agree to go through the stock of recordings made at the Kelly Writers House during the previous years in order to select and prepare fifty recordings each of individual poems. Of the poems they choose to include in this initial collection are Harryette Mullen's "All She Wrote," Robert Creeley's "Bresson's Movies," Lamont Steptoe's "To Etheridge Knight, An Afterthought," Susan Howe's "Arisbe," Linh Dinh's "A Childhood in Vermont," Rachel Blau DuPlessis's "Draft 48: Being Astonished," Jena Osman's "Authorities: A Lecture," and Erica Hunt's "Death is a Cool Night." In founding PennSound's collection out of the reading events held at the Kelly Writers House, Bernstein and Filreis shape the repository in several important ways. First of all, though PennSound collects recordings of poetry readings from across North America and beyond, at its core there is a special emphasis on the poets, scholars, and students gathered together in Philadelphia through the hub of the Kelly Writers House. Yet this community is not necessarily Philadelphia-centric, since many of the students and scholars have landed there from elsewhere for durations dependent upon their relation to their educational institutions. Also, the university's substantial resources support bringing several poets each year to the Writers House for both readings and lectures. So, there is a particular overlay of communities in both geographical as well as aesthetic terms that is notable in this early articulation of the collection: Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Jena Osman as poet-scholars part of the Philadelphia community; Lamont Steptoe and Linh Dinh as poets based in Philadelphia who center their work outside of academic institutions; Susan Howe and Robert Creeley as poet-scholars from other US cities but brought together through their

engagement with the “New American” poetries of the mid-twentieth-century onward; and Erica Hunt and Harryette Mullen as poet-scholars also from elsewhere yet brought together through their engagement with the radical black tradition of US poetry and poetics from the early-twentieth-century onward. In addition to the mix of geographies and aesthetics brought together through the site of the Writers House, by founding the PennSound collection in these readings, Bernstein and Filreis set a precedent for making the Writers House a hub of media production related to poetry and poetics for which PennSound functions as one of its publishing outlets. Here, they establish a ground for developing what Filreis will later term “our format” – a phrase I reflect on at the conclusion of this chapter – by which he means the combined production of the literary reading event at the Writers House, its live media broadcast over the Internet, and, immediately afterwards, the inclusion of the event’s audio recording on PennSound.⁴⁹⁶

In the autumn of 2003, following Bernstein’s arrival at the University of Pennsylvania, Filreis and Bernstein were able to quickly develop a number of the site’s protocols and overall design. Between September and December, they set up the site’s URL, www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound, its 125 gigabyte mediamogul server, and a general outline for the organization of pages focused on individual authors and reading series. In discussing the organizational plans for the site’s directory, Filreis announces that the editing of initial poems started earlier in the year has grown into a collection of 300 MP3 files of “Writers House-related poems for the PENNsound archive.”⁴⁹⁷ Also at the time, Filreis founded the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW) at the University of Pennsylvania. Designed to create a “writing neighborhood,” as Filreis describes it in the center’s launch announcement,⁴⁹⁸ the CPCW functions as an umbrella institute incorporating the Kelly Writers House, the Critical and Creative Writing Programs, the English Department, and digital objects related to these sites such as PennSound. Filreis’s construction of a networked environment that integrates a number of institutional spaces, pedagogical sites, and digital objects is an important facet of PennSound’s development. The repository co-evolves with the articulation of immediate spaces where it will be produced and used. Filreis and Bernstein’s construction of PennSound is attentive to the institutions and pedagogical sites where it will be used, while also mindful of how the activity of the institutions and pedagogical sites can support and be programmed through the digital object.

One of the richest exchanges during this time concerns the issue of copyright and permissions to circulate the recordings. In order to expand the collection beyond those recordings

originally produced at the Writers House, Filreis and Bernstein began to actively seek out collections of recordings to include on PennSound, beginning with Bernstein's own audio library. At this time, they had initiated the process to include on PennSound recordings of individual poets such as Jack Spicer and Ted Berrigan, of entire reading series such as the Segue Readings Series and PhillyTalks, as well as incorporating the collections of poetry-related recordings hosted on the EPC and UbuWeb. Acquiring these recordings meant that it was necessary to develop clear protocols for acknowledging copyright and attaining the permission of the author or author's estate in order for PennSound to circulate the work. In one of the earliest of these exchanges, regarding their request for permission to include a number of George Oppen (1908-1964) readings from the 1960s and 70s, the poet's daughter, Linda Oppen, responded: "I do hold the copyright to my father's work, but the publishing and electronic rights belong to the publishers, therefore please follow up with them. I shall be glad to give my encouragement to your project. But let me know what I need to do after you receive instructions from New Directions."⁴⁹⁹

Considering this response, Bernstein wrote to Filreis: "I have taken the view that the publisher does not own rights to a voice recording, only to text. So if [New Directions] owns electronic rights, it owns the text rights for that, not the recording. But this is just my theory. I could propose that to Linda Oppen, or go to New Directions. But I think we need to have a policy!"⁵⁰⁰ With the help of Robert Creeley, they were able to develop a policy. In conversation, Bernstein explains:

When we first announced PennSound, Lawrence Lessig wrote us a note and said, "This project is great. You should use the Creative Commons licenses that specify different kinds of permissions." We toyed with doing that initially, but Creeley said something very simple:

"Get the copyright from the copyright author, who in all these instances is the poet. Don't make any special licenses that will confuse people, whereas they understand copyright. Simply say: 'We are getting copyright for you for people to access the recording for non-commercial and educational purposes. People can download it in the sense of listening to it. Everything will be downloadable. But we are not giving any other permission of any kind. You own the copyright just as if it was broadcasted on the radio or in a book We are simply making it available.' Any questions with regard to permissions would go back to the copyright holder."

And that's worked well because it's easy to understand. For instance, presently, strangely, I'm working with the [Robert] Frost Estate, as well as with the estates of

Langston Hughes and [Ezra] Pound, and with New Directions, and it's simple to explain to them: They continue to own the copyright. We just make it available. The other main thing is that we pay nothing and we charge nothing. That has to be universal. You can't make an exception. On the other hand, we will put some funding into preserving and making the digital copies of recordings. But we will never charge or pay anybody for any kinds of rights.

The copyright is simple. We take the view that nobody has any permission to give us except the author or the author's estate. We don't have these long contracts one signs to be published in a small magazine in which you assert that nobody else has rights over the work. Our permission is simpler. I think the more elaborate permissions are, the more problematic they become because they usually take rights away from the poet. Publishers will insist they can use a poet's work for this and that. We can't use it for anything. We don't have permission to use our materials for anything other than letting people listen to the recording.⁵⁰¹

Following Creeley's suggestion, Bernstein and Filreis were able to define a clear protocol for all the PennSound recordings they began to acquire: "These recordings are being made available for noncommercial and educational use only. All rights to this recorded material belong to [poet or poet's estate.] © [poet or poet's estate]. Used with permission of [poet or poet's estate]. Distributed by PennSound." They planned to include the information at the bottom of each author page, as well as embed it in each file's ID3 metadata so it travels with the files themselves as they circulate.

With this modeling, the ad hoc "salon-styled entity" or "DIY world" of convivial poetry community formation – one that Filreis, above, cited as being resonant with Bob Perelman's Berkeley, St. Marks Poetry Project, and Vancouver Poetry Conference as examples – began to take form. In their initial decision toward the formation of PennSound with regard to format, curatorial selection, the proprietorship and use of the files, Bernstein and Filreis had come upon one of the most important qualities of the digital repository as an archival genre, that it could be further developed and shaped by its community of users, and that its materials could be easily integrated on to other platforms and uses. Had they been interested in constructing for these materials an autonomous archive with a singularly defined interface and system for access and use, they likely would have made a number of different decisions. For instance, they might have selected a non-compression audio format for the recording files; or they might have focused the PennSound collection on only the Kelly Writers House and University of Pennsylvania-affiliated readings, collecting and storing the entirety of each reading as opposed to clips of specific

readings or opening up their poetry audio collection to absorb other similar collections; or they might have been more proprietary with the recordings, insisting that they remain “on-site” – whether at a physical space designed for listening (like the Woodberry Poetry Room) or on a Web page as non-downloadable but streamable files). Yet Bernstein and Filreis were deliberate in selecting otherwise. The protocols they established regarding format, curatorial selection, the proprietorship and use of their files allowed for them to design PennSound to operate as a medial form that incorporates aspects of the archive (which collects and stores objects based on their provenance and originality) and the publication (which makes available and circulates contents for public consumption).

In such a formation, feedback from users could help to determine the ongoing development of the digital repository. For instance, immediately following PennSound’s launch in January 2005, Ron Silliman noted on his blog that the repository’s “homepage links directly to both Ubu[W]eb and the Electronic Poetry [Center], which are its closest peers on the [W]eb. The three together go a fair distance toward the creation of an actual archive of poetry recordings.”⁵⁰² He then quotes the initial 6 bullet-point items of the “PennSound Manifesto”:

1. It must be free.
2. It must be MP3 or better.
3. It must be singles.
4. It must be named.
5. It must embed bibliographic information in the file.
6. It must be indexed.

Silliman comments that items 4 and 5 “seem aimed primarily at agitating for changes in Ubu[W]eb[’s] practices” to the degree that PennSound has opted for a more institutionalized bibliographic organizational structure over the idiosyncratic and anarchic ethos of Goldsmith’s UbuWeb. Silliman then offers an additional item he believes should be added to the manifesto: “It must be downloadable.” “This,” he notes, “is what separates out useful archives such as Ubu or PennSound from one that has interesting holdings but sometimes proves too irritating in practice,” and offers the example of Philadelphia’s Slought Foundation as the exemplary foil. The Slought Foundation is a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization focused on addressing cultural and socio-political change. From 1997 to 2001, Slought hosted the PhillyTalks reading series curated by poet and critic Louis Cabri, for which he paired two poets to read and have an extended dialogue on poetics. After each event, Cabri would publish the poets’ poems and

dialogue in a PhillyTalks newsletter, and Slought's executive director Aaron Levy would archive sound recordings of the event on the Slought website. Listeners could only access these recordings through streaming online, and it is for this reason the Silliman contrasted the Slought Foundation archive to PennSound and UbuWeb. "Streaming media ought to be banned from these kinds of projects," Silliman noted, "simply because even the best broadband connections [in 2005] can suffer buffer reload interruptions, especially during periods of high internet traffic. Plus you can't go back & forth easily to focus in on a few lines here or there, which is the advantage of recorded media when it comes to the reading. Logically, streaming should be understood as contrary to item 1 in Bernstein's list above – if it can't be downloaded, then it's not free."⁵⁰³ Silliman's argument made sense to Bernstein and Filreis, and they made the changes to the site and updated the manifesto to accommodate it.

This is just one of many examples of the feedback loop between PennSound and its communities of users that continues to define the digital repository. As PennSound absorbed components of numerous collections and ongoing recording projects (such as reading series, radio broadcasts, institutional and personal collections, media produced within classes), it was also, mutually, defined by them. In, for instance, including Bob Perelman's and Ron Silliman's personal collections of recordings, in addition to Bernstein's, made PennSound an invaluable site to study the emergence of Language poetics by means of its programming, exchanges, talks, and readings. With the inclusion of the entire Belladonna* Reading Series, initiated by poet Rachel Levitsky in New York during the late 1990s, the repository becomes one of the central platforms for learning about the breadth of poetics in contemporary feminist experimental writing. More to this point, the inclusion of the recordings emerging out of Filreis's classrooms transforms PennSound into a space for the pedagogical exploration of not only what happens when one teaches poetry through audio recordings, but also what happens when the audio recording becomes one of the primary means for materializing study and directed exchange on poetry and poetics. One of the many implications of this inclusion means that recorded dialogues, talks, and lectures become an integral component of the site and also an important genre of scholarly production. This integration, with the curricular components I discuss below, have had an important impact on making phonopoetics a legible field of composition and study.

Fig. 3.0: "tapes_index.doc," Acker – Andrews.

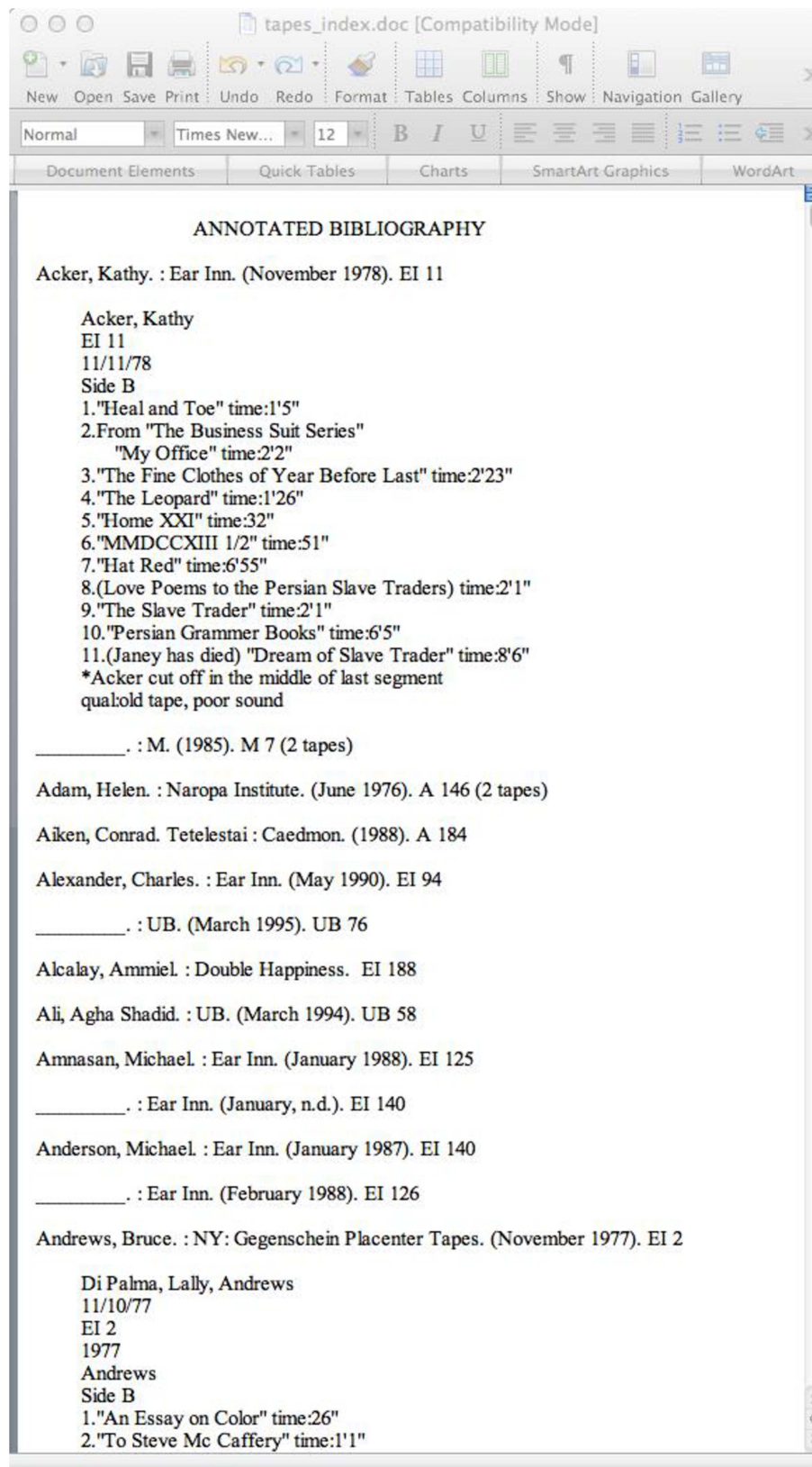


Fig. 3.31: TDK MF-2HD floppy disk on which “tapes_index.doc” is saved.



Fig. 3.32: Three cassette recordings of readings from 2002 with initial metadata.

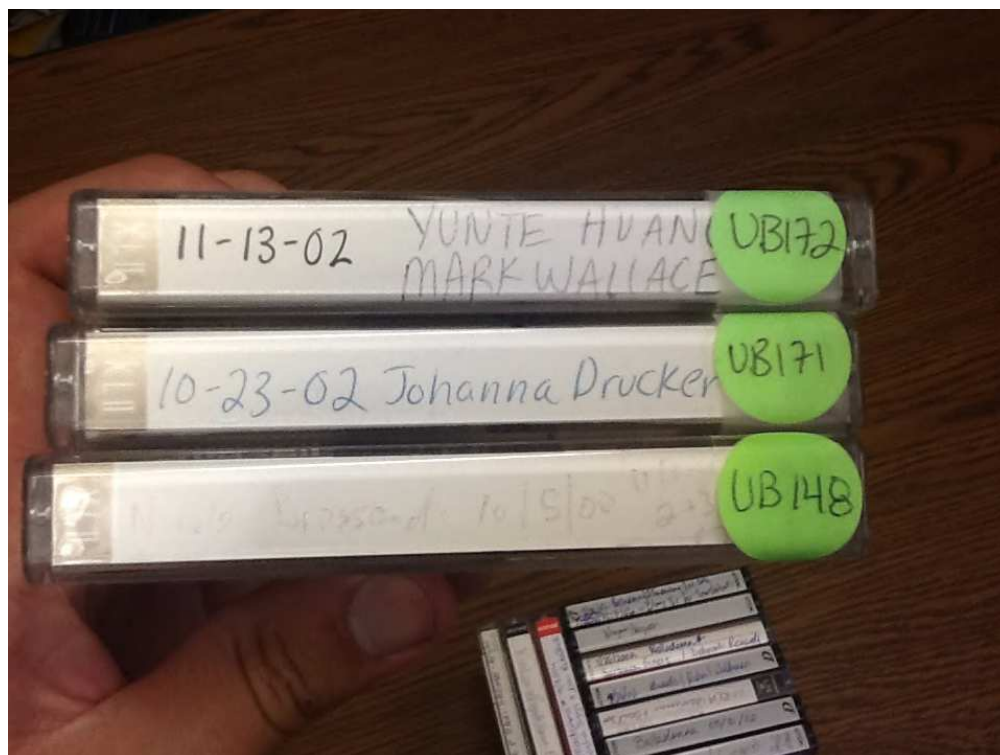


Fig. 3.33: Recording of Jackson Mac Low reading from 1982 with metadata.



Fig. 3.34: Tape cassettes of Kathy Acker + Lorenzo Thomas and P. Inman + Anne Waldman readings with metadata.

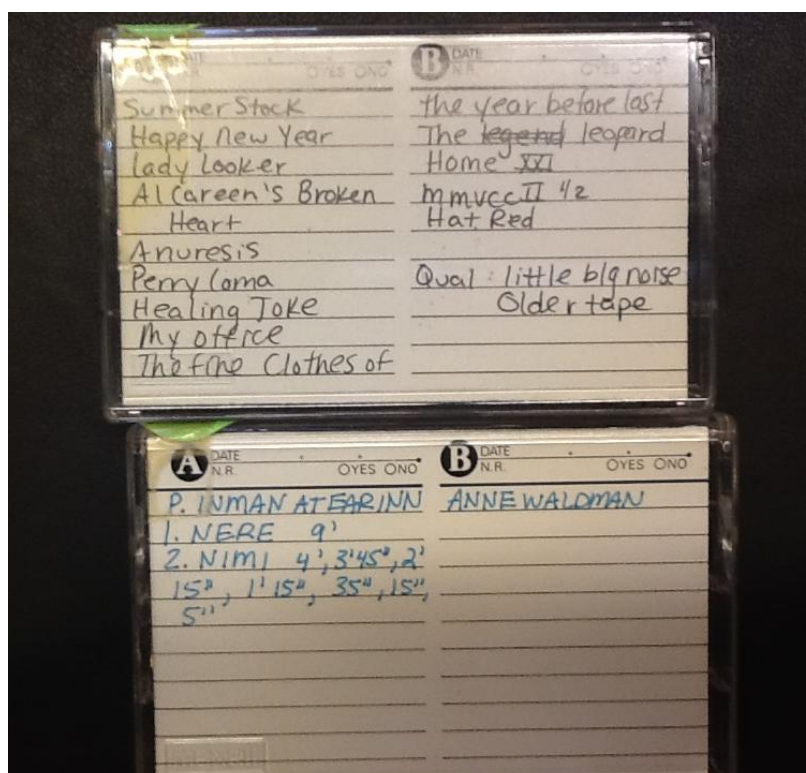
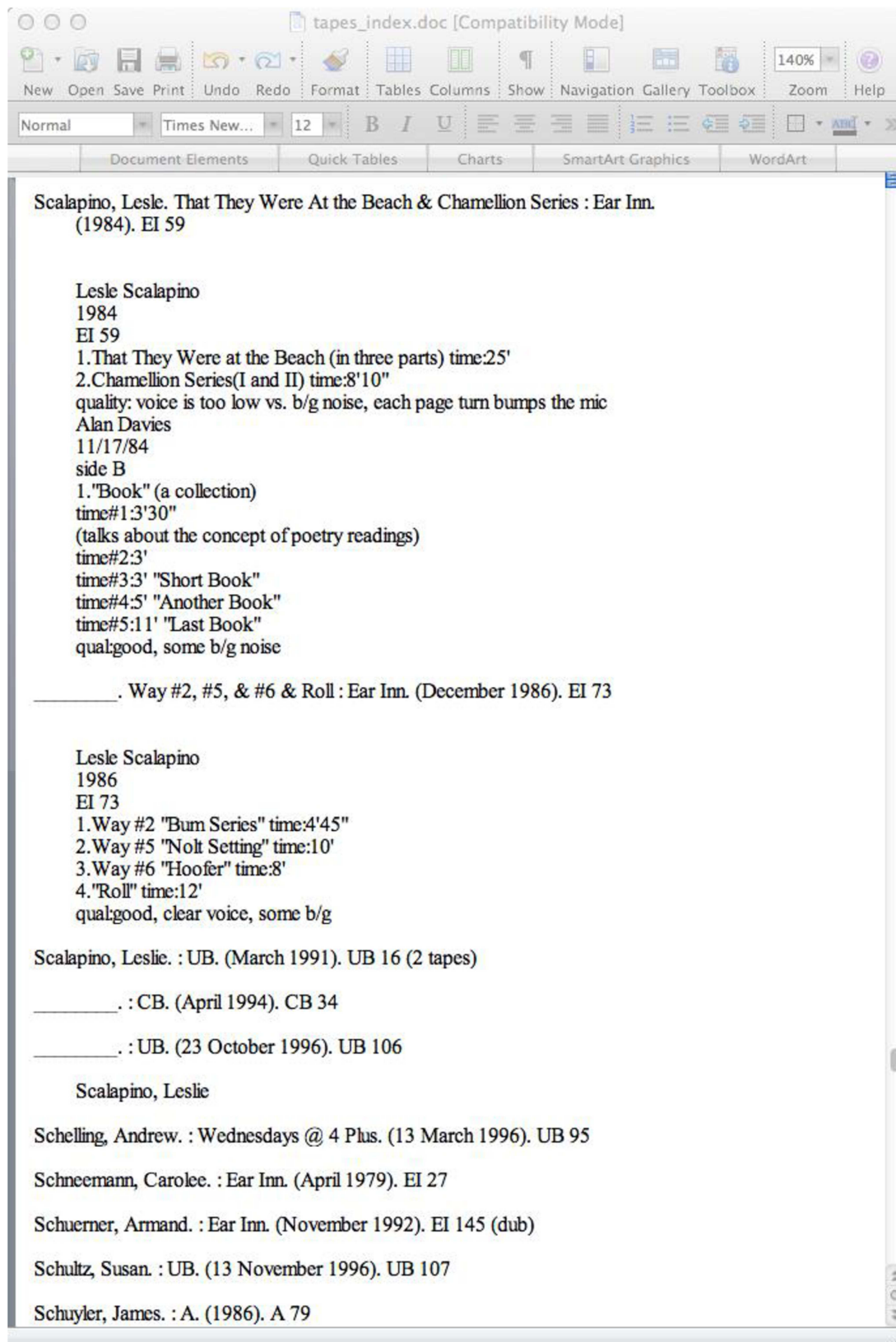


Fig. 3.35: "tapes_index.doc," Scalapino – Schuyler.



The Tapes Index

While developing PennSound's infrastructure and protocols, Bernstein and Filreis began to construct the site's technical interface. In tracing out the various elements that inform PennSound's interface, I begin in an unlikely place: a small closet in Charles Bernstein's Manhattan apartment. There, throughout the 1970s and 80s, Bernstein stashed his collection of poetry recordings in plastic shopping bags piled atop one another. Included among these recordings are the tape cassettes from the Ear Inn readings, the Tape Works and other personal recordings dating back to a 1969, as well as dozens of other cassettes he acquired from poets over the years. In taking up the position in the Poetics Program in 1990, Bernstein was able to move the mound of recordings out from the closet and unload them in his Buffalo office space.

That space, 438 Clemens Hall at the University at Buffalo, became a significant hub for the Poetics Program during Bernstein's tenure. "Having that space was crucial to what we were doing there," he recalls.⁵⁰⁴ Deb Sica, one of Bernstein's students at Buffalo, attests why the space was so important, describing 438 Clemens as an "office / classroom / archive / coffeeshop / salon / thinktank / language poetry war room," and noted that "[i]t was the best place to be on campus. Always a hive of activity."⁵⁰⁵ 438 materials that students could access there. As Sica remarks,

Charles had zines, rare publications, small press titles, etc. The recordings were part of his larger private collection [kept in his office]. [...] The tapes were on library shelving as you walked into his office to the left. They were stacked up in the cases with the metadata facing outwards. [...] They all had minimal metadata included; the name of the poets, reading location, dates were usually given, sometimes a note or two about the publication source. [...] They were simply arranged by date. Reading schedule.⁵⁰⁶

Sica became familiar with the materials Bernstein collected at 438 Clemens when she took up a workstudy position to help him catalogue his poetry recordings. The catalogue Sica compiled, "tapes_index.doc" (1996), forms the basis of PennSound's bibliographical organization of its materials. The tapes' movement from plastic bags in a closet to their arrangement in 438 Clemens was a significant first step toward others being able to access the recordings.

Continuing this trajectory, the annotated bibliography would prove to be an equally significant contribution for allowing the distribution of the recordings. When Sica first began this endeavour, the recordings were still kept in a number of plastic shopping bags. With Bernstein, she began to take them out and lay them on a table and arrange them in order of their date. "I am sure I told [Sica] to make an alphabetical index," Bernstein recalls, "so we could locate authors –

really a very primitive library catalogue. And next, to listen to the takes and write down the contents. I am not sure where Deb began or ended.”⁵⁰⁷

Sica, who now works as a librarian and archivist and cites this undertaking as influencing her career path, organized the materials in several ways. The “tapes_index.doc” annotated bibliography displays the recording collection by poet’s last name, from Acker to Zukofsky. The document functions in relation to the tapes themselves, each of which was marked with a small circular sticker designating the tape’s series and series number so that it can be located in the index. In that document, each author entry has at least one reading included under it, and for many of the poets there are several reading sub-entries. Each reading entry includes the date of the reading or initial recording production, as well as a letter marker of the reading series the recording comes out of – for example, “EI” for Ear Inn, “UB” for University at Buffalo, “NYT” for New York Talks, and “A” for recordings that Bernstein collected but did not make. Each reading series letter marker is further qualified by a number to show that specific reading’s placement in the series.

For example, Rae Armantrout’s first Ear Inn reading in 1979, during the second season of readings in the series, is marked as “EI 25” – the 25th recorded Ear Inn reading. Her Ear Inn reading in October 1992 is marked as “EI 115.” Though this ordering of series’ readings is helpful for tracking the progression of readers and series over time, there are problematic aspects with this system once the initially indexed collection of poetry recordings merges with other collections. Armantrout’s October 1988 reading at the Ear Inn – a recording Bernstein recovered after the initial indexing had been completed, is given the number EI 133 since it was not possible to go back and to include the recording in its proper position in the series – which would have been around EI 85 – and shift the number on each recording that followed afterwards both in the text and on the tapes themselves. In the shift from analog to digital organization, this will be an important fix in the constellatory system of the PennSound interface. Finally, on many of the recordings, but far from all, there is a listing of the poems read and their duration. For example, Lorenzo Thomas’s November 1978 Ear Inn reading (EI 11) has the following track listing:

1. “Summer Stock” time:15"
2. “Happy New Year” time:40"
3. “Lady Looker” time:1'25"
4. “Al Green’s Broken Heart” time:7'15"

5. "Anuresis" time:3'
6. "Perry Coma" time1:2.2' time2:6.0'
7. "Healing Joke" time:1'10"
8. "My Office" time:2'
9. "The Fine Clothes of the Year Before Last" time:1'30"
10. "The Leopard" time:1'30"
11. "Home by Eleven" time:35'
12. "MMVCCII 1/2" time:1'
13. "Hat Red" time:6'⁵⁰⁸

Each metadata category Sica documented in the 105-page annotated bibliography – author, date of reading, series, placement in series, annotation of contents (poem titles, their ordering and duration) – would be transposed to function as the primary data offered for the recordings on their PennSound pages. In selecting this metadata as the primary information presented on PennSound's pages – as opposed to, for instance, including images of the prior material media of the recording, background information on the authors, or, perhaps, a brief description from the event – Bernstein and Filreis limit the technical interface to its index. Such an approach mirrors the austere bibliographical approach to organizing materials on the EPC. In this instance, though, this simple listing of the materials means that it can be easily replicated when, for instance, others include the sound files in their syllabi, in digital publications, and in critical commentaries on specific readings or collections of recordings.

On compiling the index, Sica recalls:

I focused on the backlog which I first started and moved my way through time. The usual was two poets per tape as the readings were structured. Side A – Poet and a Side B – Poet so [Charles] could easily flip the tape and the intermission. [...] He would record them and drop [the tapes] off. [...] The originals rarely left the office unless I was indexing some from home. Then, I would take about 5-6 [tapes] and return those and take additional tapes. I recall making copies for inquiring graduate students as requested. [...] Listening to the tapes was an education in itself. I remember listening to Kathy [Acker] and Rae [Armantrout] for the first time...⁵⁰⁹

Here, the progression she and Bernstein developed from event (reading) to media (sound recording) to text (index) is important for considering PennSound's interface. While cataloguing the backlog of Bernstein's recordings, the two initiated a system of mediations in which they figured in the sound recording and its indexing into the production of the reading event. The recording is, of course, a rendering of the embodied, interactive reading event, transfigured into sonic inscriptions. The index, then, documents the readings by organizing a particular field of

descriptive terms related to the event's sound recording. The event is there, documented in the index, by means of its metadata.

This progression – from event to media to index – is a fine example of what Latour and Woolgar, in their ethnography on the production of scientific knowledge in laboratory settings, define as an *inscription device*: “any item of apparatus or particular configuration of such items which can transform a material substance into a figure or a diagram which is directly usable by one of the members of the [laboratory] space.”⁵¹⁰ In his commentary on Latour and Woolgar, John Law focuses on the example of an inscription device that begins with rats; these rats are killed to produce an extract that is placed in small test tubes; those test tubes are placed in a machine; the machine produces an array of figures or inscriptions on a sheet of paper for the scientists to read. Law notes: “These inscriptions would be said – or assumed – to have a direct relation to the ‘original substance.’” In the machine's report sheet, “*the materiality of the process gets deleted*.”⁵¹¹ Yet these inscriptions are what one examines in order to interpret the data the original materials offer and to form scientific fact. In terms of the index, the sound recording's bibliographical information stands in for the “original substance” of the reading event. It becomes the means by which one can properly organize, store, locate, and access that event's archival media. Furthermore, the index itself – the total entries it compiles – documents a literary and cultural history. Through it, one is able to study the particular poets and poems, as well as the sites and practices of curation involved over an extended period of time, and to do this without necessarily having to consult the recordings on which it is based. To this degree, the index consolidates and – in that consolidation – identifies a literary and cultural history that would, without the index, likely remain dispersed across a few hundred tapes cassettes that listeners could access, in all probability, only in part.

The index also impacts the constitution of the reading event itself. Once one works from the foreknowledge that the reading event is a part of this inscriptive device that includes the audio recording and the indexing of its bibliographical information, one's set of cultural techniques for producing the reading event shifts. As Sica's comments above indicate, the audio recorder and the tape cassette itself are de facto instruments involved in the event. The recorder's presence brings up a number of concerns: the reader's permission to have their reading recording, the reader's willingness to have their own vocalization of their writing in circulation, the possible remuneration for producing such work, and even the particular poems they might

select for the reading so as to differentiate the recorded reading from both previous and future performances.

Fig. 3.36: Filreis and Bernstein's draft press announcement for PennSound, 5 January 2005.

PennSound: All the Free Poetry You Care to Download

January 5, 2005

PHILADELPHIA - The recording industry may not want anyone downloading music without paying for it, but a new project at the University of Pennsylvania encourages downloading right to MP3 players and hard drives all the poetry a listener might want. And it's all free for the asking.

PennSound (<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound>), launched January 1, 2005, is a Web-based archive for noncommercial distribution of the largest collection of poetry sound files on the Internet. PennSound offers a large variety of digital recordings of poems -- currently 1,500 and fast growing -- mostly as song-length singles. "This has never been done before," said Al Filreis, PennSound co-director, English professor and director of Penn's Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing. "Most of the electronic sound files available to the public are of entire poetry recordings, 30 or more minutes long, with no tracking of individual cuts or poems. By right-clicking a PennSound link, a user can save a single poem and listen to it as a high-quality MP3 file. We believe philosophically that, since there is no significant profit to be gained by the sale of recorded poetry -- unlike music -- many, many more poets will continue to grant us permission to use their work." As part of the PennSound project, the Annenberg Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at Penn is developing a sophisticated cataloguing tool for the poetry sound files, enabling other libraries to collect the material and enabling teachers to add the MP3s to their online syllabi. The poetry sound files are retrievable both from a library catalog by authors' names and via Web search engines. PennSound combines aspects of a library archive and a Web music-download site. Basic bibliographic information is incorporated in each file so that a user downloads not only the sound but also key facts about the recording, including author, title, place and date of the recording, series, as well as copyright information.

"PennSound is as much about preservation as distribution," said Charles Bernstein, English professor who, with Filreis, co-founded and co-directs the project. "Most poetry sound recordings are at risk of deteriorating if not converted or copied. The beauty of PennSound is that in the course of preserving these recordings, we are also making available a treasure trove of wonderful poetry performances that we believe will attract a whole new generation to poetry as a performance art."

PennSound is an ongoing project for producing and archiving new audio recordings from Penn and around the world, as well as preserving existing audio archives. The site provides as much documentation about individual recordings as possible with new files and new bibliographic information to be added.

Funding for the project comes from private donors to Penn's Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, which sponsors the project. In addition, PennSound works closely with the Electronic Poetry Center (<http://epc.buffalo.edu>) and UbuWeb (<http://ubu.com>) as well as Penn's English Department and School of Arts and Sciences Computing.⁵¹²

Distribution Is What the Work Is: A Dialogue with Charles Bernstein

Michael Nardone: *I've begun to work through your correspondence with Al Filreis as the two of you plot out and begin to construct PennSound, and I'm curious to hear your own thoughts about the ideas behind PennSound and its particular articulation as a repository.*

Charles Bernstein: There are two things that I think are important, ideologically, with PennSound. There was never a study, never a report, no bureaucratic document of any kind before we launched PennSound. Al was able to get education technology people involved at the very start, and they gave us unlimited server space. I still remember the meeting when I first arrived at Penn at met with the head of IT. I asked, How much space will you give us? And he said, We will give you unlimited space. Al and I thought this was both amazing and hysterical because I'm not sure this person understood what I had in mind with unlimited space! In a certain way, it doesn't matter now. At that time he couldn't understand that we wanted to put up entire videos and films up, but now that's irrelevant because space is not an issue as it was then. They made that commitment to us, and it was a commitment we needed.

That was the only thing. We had that one meeting. Otherwise we never had any feasibility study. We never applied for any grants. Now, that's partly because Al is a genius in respect to how to use the university to serve interests outside the university. "The university without walls," we used to call it. He not only has that vision, he also pulls people at Penn along with that vision. Working with Al has been transformative. He does what needs to be done. He is responsible for setting up the infrastructure here – from establishing the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW) and the Kelly Writers House (KWH), to organizing with all of the information technology people so we have a solid engagement to deal with any kind of technical issues. Together, Al and I share a view of how to put this stuff up and make it simple and accessible.

The other point I want to make about PennSound is that nobody funds it. When Al fundraises for the the CPCW and KWH, PennSound becomes a part of that whole thing. So, he's able to get support from Penn alumni. Al is able to raise money from a number of people who are predisposed to help Penn, and that money can be directed to our projects. It's not as if

PennSound costs much money. It's, overall, a very small capital expense. But that little part that AI is able to bring in is of immense value and has enabled us to do what we do.

Every once in a while we pay for sending out reel-to-reel to have it digitized. We're talking about hundreds of dollars, though, hundreds of dollars over ten years for the digitizing.

Otherwise, we do have to have work study students, so that requires some funding. We pay students and sometimes we have interns too. PennSound is a large collective organization in which many people digitize material and contribute it to us. I don't think people fully understand from the outside how much of a collective it is. In this way, it relates to the EPC, but, it's quite different, and it's radically different from UbuWeb. We work with many different organizations. Sometimes they are able to digitize the materials, sometimes they're not. The Belladonna archive, the most important organization sponsoring women writers in New York in the last two decades, is a good example. I've had one work-study student for many years who has worked directly with them. They would send all of their recordings. We digitize what needs to be digitized, but often they put their recordings up on PennSound. They determine what is on the Belladonna page. They, of course, pick the people who are reading in their series. Nobody is micromanaging. Our constituents and collective groups decide what goes up on PennSound. We don't. Once we say that we're going to put Belladonna's materials on PennSound, then that's it. We don't determine or pick and choose from that materials. And, of course, we receive donations from people. Ashbery, for example, he doesn't do anything in terms of digitizing or coding the recordings. They literally hand us over an unsorted box, and we go through it.

So, one other thing I would add is that no matter how valuable you imagine the individual files on PennSound to be – listening to Gertrude Stein or listening to Jeff Derksen –they are great, but the greater value is the making of a public space for these materials to be available for free. In other words, the intellectual property part is the most important part. We have established a model where there is a huge archive of publicly available material, and you can have the full complete collections, not just snippets of them. Listeners are able to make these materials available to anyone and everyone else on the same basis. Within this economy of exchange, poets will happily contribute materials because it benefits them. It benefits the poets and it benefits the listeners. It benefits the institution, as well, in this case Penn. It benefits the students and teachers, too, here and elsewhere. All the benefit comes from making it free.

If we hadn't have made this intervention, you could be sure that perhaps not Jeff Derksen's recordings but Gertrude Stein's, for example, would be available from a conglomerate like Ebsco or Amazon, which would market these materials and charge you a dollar every time you listen to it. Then the Gertrude Stein estate would get something like fifteen or thirty dollars a year as royalties, and the conglomerate would get all the retail end. Poetry – the poets – would always be on the low end of this exchange. A thousand people might listen to them, but the poet would get a royalty check for five dollars. What would be the point of that in the case of poetry? You would just have a third party making money and you would limit the listenership by ninety-nine percent. The individual poets and the poets' estates would receive no gain.

Privatization is its own menace. People like privatization for the sake of privatization. That's what I'm saying about the NEH, as well. They prefer privatization and they don't even recognize that that is what they are doing. They think libraries should not be accessible. They think the scholarship that they are funding should not be available. There are many people who say, Well, if the NEH funds something, then it's got to be public. I am hardly a voice alone in this. And it is this point that unites what we are doing a PennSound to a much larger group of people interested in this, like Lawrence Lessig and others, people who might not necessarily be interested in poetry. I think this precedent we've set in terms of making the materials freely available remains an absolutely crucial part of what we've done.

Even if you look in other areas or disciplines – in music, in art – nobody has managed to create this much of a public space for the free exchange of cultural materials. That can not be said to be secondary from the practice of poetry. That exchange is why poetry is one hundred years ahead of the visual arts. The visual arts are all about privatizing. Yet, distribution is not secondary to the content of the work. That is something a lot of people do not understand or refuse to acknowledge. Distribution is what the work is. It is exchange. It isn't the beautiful poem that is significant. It is the distribution and exchange that is significant. It does not mean, for example, that you and I prefer one poem by Jeff Derksen to another. That's not the main issue. The main issue is the distribution of the whole Kootenay School of Writing archive on the KSW site, that you can come to it and find and listen to that work and engage with it. That is the most significant aspect.

Fig. 3.37: Al Filreis teaching Ashbery at the Kelly Writers House, 2008.



Fig. 3.38: PoemTalk on Erica Hunt's "The Voice of No," with Julia Bloch, Steve McLaughlin, Elizabeth Willis, Al Filreis, and Jessica Lowenthal. Kelly Writers House, 11 October 2008.



Convolute: Close Listeners

In 2010, I began to work with the *Jacket2*, an open online poetics journal produced at the Kelly Writers House, as an assistant editor. In dialogue with Al Filreis, Charles Bernstein, and *Jacket2* editor Julia Bloch, my duties involved listening to recordings throughout PennSound, and selecting ones that I found interesting enough to merit transcribing and publishing, in full or in excerpt, on the journal.⁵¹³ In this chapter's convolute, I have selected and excerpted a few of the transcriptions I have done over the last few years so as to provide a view into the kinds of exchanges on poetics, literary history, and critical analysis that I discuss throughout this chapter that PennSound extends to new audiences.

Robert Creeley at Kelly Writers House, 2000

Al Filreis: I have two questions to start. But before that, as a kind of preamble, Bob wants to show us some cool tech that he is into. Bob is clicking and pointing. You want to describe what you're doing?

Robert Creeley: Well, it always was a question, with respect to the ways I wrote, or the mode, not the mode, the so-called structure of the prosody. I used Williams's proposal: "break into the middle of some trenchant phrase," et cetera. I had really misread his format. I thought, for example, that he paused distinctly at the end of each line. He got, therefore, a syncopated rhythm from doing that, and then when I heard him read actually, on early records at least, he did not do that. He read through the line ending without pause. So, one of the consistent questions about the way I wrote was: you would make those pauses at the end of lines, but are you reading into the poem those intervals? And I insisted that I wasn't. It's simply a personal insistence. Then, with an early speech-synthesizing program called Monologue, which did happily stop at the ends of lines, I was able to demonstrate without any, you know, no hands. This cranky, crunky voice would read very well, would read my poems excellently. So, I could make clear it wasn't me doing it, the machine was doing it, which was a curiously very useful cause. It ended that argument, frankly, once and for all. It's a wonderful voice.

Filreis: Where's the speaker?

Creeley: It will come. I still have to get the appropriate file. It doesn't use the syncopation quite at all very much, but I am also interested in pacing, what the intervals apparent are. Again, as I say, this voice is in no way expressive or interpretive. I was visiting in a pleasant school in Dobb's Ferry in New York and one pleasant teacher there, a Chinese-American, said, "Sounds just like my uncle." So here we go. Speak!

[*Computer monologue reads inaudibly.*]

Creeley: Wait a minute, I'm sorry. Let's start again.... Come on, speak. Why do you never speak? ... I don't know. Maybe it's tired.

Filreis: That ended that argument once and for all.

Creeley: Wait a minute, we'll try again. Come on, I want to get it louder.... Louder, louder.... As loud as it can go.... Patience. Resume.... Speak.

[*Computer monologue reads poem.*]

Filreis: That was monotonous Robert Creeley.

Creeley: This program also allows you to slow down the tape and shift the pitch. It's rudimentary. This is noted as a US English male, H.L.

Filreis: H. L.?

Creeley: H. L. Mencken or something.... Okay, that's enough.

Filreis: All those lines are end-stops?

Creeley: Yeah.

[*Triumphant computer sound.*]

Filreis: So your sense of the line, your sense of rhythm at the level of the line: I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about William Carlos Williams. Was that *In the American Grain*, that voice?

Creeley: Yeah, I wanted something that would not express or read into the language overtly. I didn't want it to be necessarily a drab voice, but I wanted it to be a saying of the words that would be dependent upon their pattern rather than my interpretation of it. To me, one of the problems in poetry — at least one that my particular company spent a great deal of time on — was the question of the register of the text and how that might be used as an information for the person reading it, presuming he or she would be hearing it in his or her head or reading it aloud. Olson, for example, spends a lot of time on this problem. Duncan, literally, toward the end of his life, acquires what's then a state-of-the-art word processor so he can actually set his text and have it actually reproduced as the text of the published book, *Groundwork*. It was not *In the Dark*, but *Before the War* is thus composed. Denise Levertov has the same concerns. Paul Blackburn, et cetera. I don't know why it became such a remarkable question for us. But it really is a difference between our company and that just previous. The Objectivists, for example, seem to have these concerns but do not particularly involve them in their own recital or their own reading of their own work.

Ear turned toward the emergent: Close Listening with Myung Mi Kim, 2007

Heather Gorn: In listening to you last night and then a reading you did at Buffalo, I guess before *Commons* was printed officially, I was noticing a lot of differences in what you were reading and what I was reading along with in the text version. I was wondering if you would speak a little about versions of text, and when you do or don't think something is finished. Also, you mentioned last night about conceiving of your works as one long continuum, and sort of how that might play into how you think about a finished product.

Myung Mi Kim: When I finish the text, in fact, that is the finished text. However, I feel that when I'm giving readings from the finished text, it's as if the text literally re-presents itself to you. Even if you are the maker of that particular text, there's a way in which you're greeting it and reading it. So, the occasion of the reading creates a space in which that re-listening and re-making initiates itself, and sometimes that happens, say, before the event, that I'll sit down and wonder, in a sense, out loud to myself, what will I be reading. In that process, something gets kicked up, something is re-initiated. Sometimes it happens in the reading itself, at the instance of the performance. I don't think of them necessarily as revisions. I do think of them as reformulations, re-takes, re-assembling, which is a lot how I work in the first place, a kind of process of accretion and assemblage and reconfiguration. So, in a way, every time you come back to the text, the process can re-kindle itself. That's been of some interest to me simply because it opens up the question of what is real time, what is compositional time, and what is the time of making a text. I think they are all different filtrations of what it means to produce a written text, which is not to refuse or in any way empty out the meaning of the book or the text that might come to some kind of rest. These elements are being held in a conversation with each other so that no one part, processually speaking, forecloses on any other part.

Gorn: And your reformulations, do they change according to the atmosphere or your state of mind? Because you say sometimes you craft them before, sometimes right then —

Kim: Right.

Gorn: Given a kind of dynamic in the air, or, I guess, a little bit of both?

Kim: I think a lot of it is like elaboration and re-elaboration, and sometimes it's quite physical. There are certain things on certain days you can render, there are certain days that certain parts of text seem difficult to produce on a physiological level.

I am suddenly aware that phrases happen: Lyn Hejinian at Kelly Writers House, 2005

Kerry Sherin Wright: Ms. Hejinian, I just want to thank you for your reading last night, and for the whole experience yesterday. It was great. My question is: During your reading last night of *My Life in the Nineties*, you mentioned a phrase, I believe it was “where there are words, there is barbarism” or something about that. And that really sort of got me thinking. I went back and read your “Barbarism” essay from *The Language of Inquiry* to get a better sense of it. You mention in your barbarism essay that the poet is a barbarian, and your view that the poet is a barbarian, is a foreigner in some way. And I was just wondering the extent to which you think that’s necessary or a sort of a requisite for a poet to be in this sort of foreign space? Is that a function of an activist poet, or poetry in general? Is it a requirement of a poet to have this barbaric quality, this foreign quality? Sorry, I don’t have the exact page, but you mention “taking a creative, analytic and often oppositional stance, occupying [...] foreignness — by the barbarism of strangeness.” Is that a requisite?

Lyn Hejinian: I would hesitate to make a rule that is either definitive of what it would be to be a poet or of the requirements for being a poet. But in my own experience, I advocate to myself, I ask myself to try to ... The line that you are asking about is “wherever there are borders, there is barbarism.” It’s actually partly in reference to Bob Perelman’s *The Marginalization of Poetry*, and the notion that poets are on the margins of society. I wanted to suggest that instead of calling it a margin, one might call it a border, which sounds like a synonym for margin but isn’t. And then one can move that border to where it really exists, which is between things — like the border between Germany and France, or the border zone between Al Filreis and myself sitting at this table. Then, yet again, one might recast that notion of the border as a zone of encounter. And if it’s a zone of encounter along a border, everybody is a foreigner there.

So there’s all this negotiation to be undertaken, and you have to rethink your currency, either literally or metaphorically, and you’ve got to rethink your relationships. You’ve got to rethink your language because they might speak a different language at the border, or the people you meet might not understand your language, et cetera. And, of course, a kind of anti-nationalist position is implicit in one’s espousal of inhabiting border zones, a form of refusal of global capitalism: border zones instead of something that homogenizes everything. So, “barbarism” is actually a positive, affirmative concept.

I actually found instances ... Edith Sitwell wrote a little essay about Gertrude Stein, saying there had never been a finer barbarian. And I can’t remember the other instances, but many appeared around the period of the First World War. There were a lot of Surrealists who spoke favorably about barbarians. I thought maybe we should recover that.

Bernadette Mayer with Susan Howe, 1979

Susan Howe: You seem more closed talking in an interview than you do in some work you do, in diary work that you've done or dream work that you've done. Do you find the interview situation unpleasant?

Bernadette Mayer: [Laughs.] I guess it's just a self-protective feeling. One doesn't want to particularly have a personality in an interview. Then again, the other thing that happens is, in writing, where it's between you and the writing, and you can make great leaps. Those leaps and that ability to take the thing higher, a little bit higher, enables you to approximate the truth better. It relates to critical writing, too, because in discursive writing and in discursive speaking, then one feels that the truth is fleeting much more so. You always feel that you've possibly said the wrong thing. [Laughs.] It's a moral attitude.

Howe: That sounds like a rather puritanical, moral answer! The flesh is weak, and the written word is—

Mayer: Sacred. Yeah, well it sure is easier to write than to speak extemporaneously, somehow.

Howe: But that wasn't a problem for you when you were running a workshop.

Mayer: Well, that's different, because you know who you're talking to. But even then I always felt that one's chickens come home to roost. A lot of people still to this day will tell me something I said in the workshop that I no longer believe. They'll say: "How can you write poems that have rhyme and meter in them now, when you said in the workshop, in 1971, was this thing that you said," and so on. The answer to that is that one changes. I mean, hopefully one is learning something. The whole idea of a poet going through certain kinds of changes is a subject that any poet can talk about in that sense, but nobody really wants to hear about it. Someone said to me after they had read *The Golden Book of Words*, from which I was reading those poems, "Oh, you've finally found a style you can really nestle into!" And I said, oh, that's the last thing I ever want to do. That's a horrific idea to any poet.

Howe: What about the difference between *The Golden Book of Words* and *Eruditio ex Memoria*?

Mayer: Actually those books were written more or less at the same time.

Howe: And they're quite different. Can you write poems at the same time you're working on a prose piece?

Mayer: Sure. I always feel like prose is a great comfort to me. Prose is like mother love. If I sit down to write a piece of prose, I can feel that I can go on forever, and it's a great pleasure to me. Poetry is in some ways much harder work, because it's something that I'm learning. I think that all the prose I wrote when I was younger, it was easier for me to write. It seemed much more natural to me, and poetry was something that I had to learn how to write. I never knew how to end a line. It took me many years to know where to break the line. It took me many years to understand that I was allowed to use the kind of feeling I had for rhythm and meter in a poem. A lot of contemporary poets don't do that. You can even read William Carlos Williams's

indictment of meter, and at the same time you can read Milton's indictment of rhyme. So, it's really been going on for a long time! I never knew if I was allowed to do that, and also, in poetry, I suppose poetry has always seemed like, as I grew up with it, a place where one speaks about feelings and emotion, and I never really knew how to do it. I could do it in prose because it could take me a lot longer to do it in prose. Then I could do what one calls experiment with it, and learned about that way, and all that learning ultimately went into learning how to write poetry. Although, I'm not saying I'm not writing prose anymore, but I wrote a book recently which I thought was going to be a long prose book, and that was my intention when I sat down to write it, and it turned into a long poem, so I don't know. [...]

Howe: You worked with a tape, too.

Mayer: I find that very hard to do. I work with a tape recorder in a lot of different ways. One of the ways is that I would try to talk prose into the tape recorder. That was okay; that was easy. Then I tried to talk *sensible* prose into the tape recorder. That was a little bit more difficult. Then I tried to talk poetry into the tape recorder. That was impossible. But I do find that the tape recorder is very useful for making notes, you know, certain kind of notes, like in a situation where you're sitting around in the afternoon with babies who won't let you write things down, I can keep the recorder in the closet or something and run over and make a few notes if I want to. Now the babies are older and they let me take notes. [*Laughs.*] But I don't know what to do with it anymore, actually, because I really hate transcribing it. I find it such a chore. I think maybe if one had somebody else do the transcribing that it would be a more useful method for writing.

LINEbreak: Bruce Andrew, 1995

Charles Bernstein: Bruce, can you say something about how you compose? Your method of composing a work like that or that work in particular?

Bruce Andrews: Well, my methods have changed over the years, and this work was written in the mid-1980s. By that point I had pretty much adopted the method that I've been working with since, which is to generate large amounts of material on very small pieces of paper — one two, three, four, five words at a time in clusters, short fragments of phrases or prephrases — and then compose the work sometimes much later, after I had written the raw material into works based on a whole series of other decisions I'd make later. It's more like editing film footage; the editing process becomes the composing process. Or that's what gets focused on, more than some kind of point-of-inspiration moment that I actually wrote the words in.

Bernstein: Do you think poetry is a place that can change political values? A medium that can change political values?

Andrews: There is a lot of posturing that goes on around that issue. People making theoretical claims about writing that nobody reads as having tremendous revolutionary implications, and then other people scoffing at the very possibility or even the desire to have poetry or writing have any kind of social and political implications. I think it works on the writer, and it works on the reader, probably more as a kind of reinforcement of more fragile beliefs or attitudes that were getting formed — that need more support. I don't think it's so much a matter of mobilizing large numbers of people. The only easy way you can mobilize large numbers of people is by keeping them just the way they are. But if you are trying to reinforce some attempt at change, then it is going to be modest, and it's going to take place in the actual experience of the work, and that's obviously very limited.

Bernstein: Do reading values then become important? The way in which you read your own work? The way in which other people can read your work?

Andrews: I think of my own work as a giant reading project. The writing is a way of recasting and reconsidering what reading could be. And I think that a lot of my feelings about other writing in the past, for instance, comes out of thoughts and reactions to its readability, to its accessibility to a different way of configuring it in my own reading. What I've tried to do in my own work, to keep myself happy and geared up about it, has been to try to embody in it as much as I can the kind of reading possibilities that I want when I look at other people's work. In that sense, reading has always been central.

The Seeds of Its Own Unfolding: On Lyn Hejinian's "constant change figures," 2009

Al Filreis: Our poem today is an untitled twenty-seven-line lyric by Lyn Hejinian, the aforementioned, which has been published once in a magazine and, I think, later in an anthology, but has not been collected in a book. That volume, a decade in progress, is to be called *The Book of a Thousand Eyes*, and will possibly consist of a thousand poems, or maybe three hundred ten, which was how many were complete the last time I checked with Lyn. A handful of pieces from the project appeared in *The Little Book of a Thousand Eyes*, published by Smokeproof Press, but our poem does not appear there. We'll call it "constant change figures" from its first line, and our recording comes from a visit Lyn Hejinian made here to the Writers House in February, 2005 when she read this one and twenty others poems in the series. In the first line, the word "figures" is read, by Lyn, as if it's a noun, but it strikes me as a verb.

Tom Mandel: The first time through I think it's read as if it is a verb.

Filreis: How does it work, Tom?

Mandel: I think it's read as if it is a verb the first time through, as if it is a noun the second time, and, in the exact same pronunciation as when it was a noun, as a verb the third time.

Filreis: When it functions as a verb, what does it do, let's say in the first couple of lines?

Mandel: What does it do semantically?

Filreis: Yes.

Mandel: Semantically, it says that change is what decorates, presents, and makes available to us the time we sense.

Filreis: So, it figures time.

Mandel: It figures time.

Filreis: Bob, what do you make of that particular repetition: "constant change figures"?

Bob Perelman: A lot of things. I'm thinking how different it is looking at the poem on the page, hearing the poem, and then remembering the poem. It changes quite dramatically, it seems to me, in those various instantiations. I totally agree with what Tom says about the play between process and product, between fluidity and solidifying into Gestalt, and that's what she's doing throughout. I think the poem contains the seeds of its own unfolding, self-undoing and redoing. It is trying to teach us as it goes along how to read, unread, and reread it.

Recordings of poetry: Technologies, pedagogies, institutional politics, 2007

Al Filreis: What is the category here if we're talking about the pedagogical implications for the availability of heard poetry, recorded poetry?

Steve Evans: It's hard. What you know most is what isn't true. I mean, most of what we've done so far because the recording technology has been around in some available form forever, and it might have meant lugging heavier equipment —

Filreis: Right —

Evans: But mainly what I would fault my pedagogy for in the past has been that the sound file is illustrative. It's not a primary text. It's treated as a kind of peripheral text that perhaps frequently causes great dejection in the students because they had liked a poem until they heard it read, or, on the other hand, euphoria and that sense of this horrible thing that I sometimes hear students say which is that until they hear the voice, they say, "Oh, well hearing it really humanized the poet for me." Which worries you because they don't grant the category of human just out of the gate to the text.

Filreis: The printed text is a neutral, more grounded, closer to actuality thing that the recording can add to or detract from. There's a plus and minus effect.

Evans: Right, but always relative to —

Filreis: And isn't that simply a function of the — technology is too fancy a word, so is commerce — economy of the use of the poem on a single page in an anthology, or which is then mimeographed or photocopied. The single poem that the students have, hold, and mark up.

Evans: How are we going to separate the question of a pedagogy that makes full use of audio from the question of pedagogy more generally? There are terrible ways to isolate a poem and to make it teachable but to sort of drain it of various things. What happens then, you get the poem by itself, and then the sound file as illustrative of that. And that's kind of a baseline pedagogy that most of us could get by on, I guess. But you couldn't claim it as an intellectually, very vibrant project. Hit play and hear George Oppen's inimitable, gorgeous, authoritative, feeble voice.

Filreis: Right.

Evans: It does do something, but are we teaching in to what it does, or it is just okay, now that's over and we'll move on to Louis Zukofsky.

Filreis: Okay, that's a skeptical view. If you could just put on the hat of the optimist-revolutionist, using Oppen as your example, what's the change in scenario in 2015 or 2020 when, presumably, we've gotten past the fetish of "you gotta have Oppen in print first"? Let's say we don't have Oppen in print at all. I'm teaching just George reading. What's the optimist's view of this?

Evans: I'm just trying to plan a class, the first one in which I don't treat audio as peripheral. So really going in. Part of what I'm doing right now, and it's groping — as I imagine what Charles would say, "We're just groping a little bit along right now" — but one of the interesting things is to work without the printed text, either voluntarily or because you literally just don't have one. When I was doing a Lipstick of Noise thing on Lin Dinh's work, I didn't have the text. There are different hermeneutic questions that arise, but are they significant. I'll keep being the skeptic even while being the optimist, which is: I am really excited about this. I think that what's happened is a technology that was mostly creating inert media. That is, the tape recording technology was hard enough to use, hard enough to get at, and more or less archive-bound, that it was inert. So, who really has heard the Blackburn recordings from one end to the other? No one. Who has really thought about what that might be, what that might be as an object of inquiry? No one. People go in, they hear this and that, but is somebody really treating it — from the standpoint of what is poetics — well, what are the possible objects of a poetics? Is the sound file, is the recorded text something all of its own?

What's now happened is that — largely through Pennsound and other sites like it — this material is no longer inert. So, we can start trying it out, see if there are nontrivial hermeneutic results from working from sound, or from sound with text but not secondary to text. Do we ask any questions differently? Do we make good strides towards literalizing some metaphors, that whipping horse of ours for so long, the workshop poem in which you found your voice? We all thought that that was not such a credible metaphor. But when you're looking at a wave form of somebody's voice, you can see some things that are distinct. Then you can see a lot of things are phonemic, in general. But you are seeing something that a printed text will never give you. You're hearing accents that the printed text can imitate, awkwardly, through dialect, through those kinds of funny approximations. Working on contemporary poetry, there are so many ways to voice English that a text is going to be a poorer medium for then.

I'll give you an example. Working on a Sawako Nakayasu poem for Lipstick of Noise, not having a text in front of me, noticing that this person with an impeccable English accent, because she grew up in America, was putting on the accent in Japanese that her parents have. She voiced the poem in the accentual patterns of her parents as a kind of put-on. If somebody just hits that file cold, they have no way to get through the layers. Now is this interesting? It's interesting to me.

Filreis: No more interesting, perhaps, than the one poem, some dramatic monologue or some voice put-on, that you find if you know the collected poems, you have the one dramatic monologue that is really the voice of the poet. So, no more or less than that if you simply happen upon that? Let me ask, the last thing that you said created six or seven questions in my mind.

Evans: Go ahead.

Filreis: Here's one. If we were to map the way to the classroom, there are at least two routes there. One is the direct route, which is that these materials that I bring into class, that I make available to the class change, and so, delta, effect. We now work with sound files. We didn't before, and we're going right into the classroom with the material. When someone asks me to speak about or write about this, that's what I think of. But what about the indirect route, which is

something that a number of people have been talking about, you among them: this is going to change the way we, the people who set up the pedagogical, canonical must-do, must-read, must-hear list, it's going to change, or, to be slightly more precise about the way choosing poems and poets we teach in anthology or survey courses: you only have so many weeks in a semester, Oppen was never really on my syllabus for English 88 except incidentally because I could never figure out in a day how to do Oppen. So, Oppen never appeared. Now that the students have available to them Oppen, it's pretty clear to me I'm going to start teaching Oppen in a way that I hadn't. I love Oppen. So, what's changing is the path to the classroom starts with the change in the way we as teachers and critics think about the work. There's no way to predict that, but insofar as you can predict that path, what are some — and I don't mean to ask canonical changes, although I am interested in that, not just canonical changes — what are some of the things that are going to happen to us that will change what we bring into the classroom?

Evans: That question is going to get more and more interesting to answer because there's a way in which the canon is inscribed in who is viewed as worth recording when recording was a scarce resource. And so there is a way in which it wasn't until you were somewhat renowned that someone would bother to put the mic in front of you and let you go off. I'm thinking of the troves of Pound we have. There is a way in which canon formation dictated who got recorded, but that bet is off now.

I think that we are, and hope we stay, in this interesting phase for a long time, which is I think the analogy might be to field recordings of folk music. Right now [there is] ubiquitous documentation of poetry and not that much self-consciousness about it. People aren't necessarily playing only into the knowledge that they're going to be engineered, that the sound file is their looked-for result. There are some things that are bad about that. The unselfconsciousness of it is something I really value right now. Everything is recorded and nobody's caring that much about it. We haven't had the Brian Eno moment where everything is going to go in the studio and become hyper-engineered. That will be great too, but I like this moment right now where everyone's getting recorded. The value judgments are not prematurely coming in. I'd imagine you guys are ubiquitous in your documentation here. We try to be at Maine. More and more, people do that and as the technology becomes easier to just stick a digital recorder there, it's going to be everywhere. So then the canon won't have determined our audio archive. Now we're going to be able to say what's interesting as audio? What questions does that raise independent of what is text-based. So, the print will cease to be prior, at least some of the time.

LINEBreak: Barbara Guest in conversation with Charles Bernstein, 1995

Charles Bernstein: How has poetry changed for you in the last thirty-five years?

Barbara Guest: Well, it has changed because poets have changed. I have changed, but my sensibility is the same. The group that called themselves the New York poets, with whom I was connected, were just starting out. We were trying to experiment and we had certain ideas about the way poetry should be written. We were not going to write about ordinary things unless they were encased in extraordinary thought. We were influenced by European poets. We were not exactly daisy pickers. [Laughs.]

Bernstein: Was there company in the work for you at that time?

Guest: Yes, there was. We arrived, somewhat simultaneously, with the abstract expressionism. Most of us, four or five, were involved in painting. We reflected the ideas of the painters. They, in turn, often reflected our ideas and we collaborated. There was much more emphasis on painting and poetry together.

Bernstein: That has always interested me about your work. There is often a discussion of the relation of the New York school, and other poets in different contexts, to painting or to the visual arts. But your work has a very close formal relationship to aspects of painting. How would you describe that connection?

Guest: It's a connection that I have somewhat broken, but when it was in full flower, it was very agitated because I did collaborations with painters. A few certain tenets I still remember, such as the nonimportance of the subject: the subject finds itself.

Bernstein: The subject matter in this case. You can also talk about the subject as the person.

Guest: Yes, the subject matter. I was talking to some students in Santa Fe. They were very worried when I asked, "What have you been writing?" They said, "Well, not very much." I realized they were more disturbed by what they didn't want to write about, so I told them that the subject matter wasn't important. And this released them. They were thrilled. They went around for days saying, "She said the subject doesn't matter!" The idea is that sometimes you find the subject as you proceed with the poem. It's a good rule. It doesn't always work, but it's a good rule.

Any possible way of making words: Ted Berrigan, Lyn Hejinian, and Kit Robinson, 1978

Ted Berrigan: All that sounds so abstract, but it's not abstract when I'm doing it. It's simply trying to have something exist without describing it: to name its parts rather than describe it. Description is slow. I can't keep up to the pace of my metabolism when I am using description usually, but I can do it while simply naming things. I don't use images much but I will name an image. I mean, I will say "a tree." I don't try to make a picture of a tree for you. I assume —

Hejinian: What about in your novel, in *Clear the Range*?

Berrigan: What about it? I mean, that's another story entirely. I mean, that's a poet's novel. I wrote it as this poem, was writing it ... It's a genre work, a genre which I was thoroughly familiar with: the Western novel. And I used the genre then to make everything be very slow and to make this setting in which there was a hero and a villain — almost like *Commedia dell'arte*. Then there was a girl. And then there were various other characters, including a horse and a mule. But, I mean, the main thing that was going on was that the villain and the hero were constantly having these Western confrontations, in which they didn't finally pull out their guns and shoot each other. And they were very similar sort of, except that the villain was obviously villainous, and the hero was obviously the hero. Anytime one of them did anything like go into a restaurant or a bar, then the other one was a waiter or the bartender, and they had these confrontations every minute. I think I thought I was making something similar to Camus's book *The Stranger*, in which the guy, Meursault, the hero, walks around and becomes totally bemused by the sun smashing on his brain every minute and in the end, it seems, he killed somebody. He doesn't quite remember, or he does remember but he doesn't know why he did it or any thing in particular, but he did it for a very good reason: it's too hot.

Robinson: So how does logic or narrative get you to that? [...]

Berrigan: My sense, I suppose, quite often when I am writing poems, is that I'm going to tell a story. So, in that sense, it is kind of narrative. It is narrative in the kind of sense that it's telling, but I don't really want to tell. I don't want to be this teller. I don't mind being a teller of tales in which you make a story. I'm making something, but I'm also telling. So, I start out to tell a story, and I have this structure of the story, but I'm not very interested in the story, but rather in the feelings involved. And so I take out as much of the plot as possible. I mean I just leave out as much of the plot as possible. I don't even consider most of the plot. I simply put in the complete structure —

Robinson: You've got scaffolding —

Berrigan: Yeah, scaffolding, sure. The architecture of the story. And then I leave out, and put in the things that are necessary. In that sense it's a kind of impressionism, but it's not an impressionism of making pictures of impressions, but of using words to get details, because I'm mostly involved with rhythm, tempo, pace, color, and so on in order to get the feeling that's being involved. And yet, pure feeling is not enough. You need to have some sense of what kind of person is talking in this poem. And I do try and give you that. Not the person that I think I might be all the time, but the person that is talking in that poem. And there you have it.

Fig. 3.39 A reading by John Ashbery, Kelly Writers House, 11 February 2013.



Fig. 3.40: PoemTalk at Wexler Recording Studio, Kelly Writers House, with J.C. Cloutier, Michelle Taransky, and Clark Coolidge, 15 May 2018.



Our Format

In early December 2010, I visited the Kelly Writers House (KWH) at the University of Pennsylvania for the first time. I had become aware of the location through a series of mediations over the prior year: working as a transcriptionist for the newly founded *Jacket2*, I had listened to dozens of recordings produced there that had been made available on PennSound; also, from the Northwest Territories, I had participated in a number of events taking place there that were streamed online, and was therefore familiar with the main public gathering space used to host events, and which was often set up as an informal recording studio. Yet entering the space, I immediately began to see how the space provided a “gathering ground” – as Filreis has described it, echoing Loss Pequeño Glazier’s description of his “subject village” – of poiesis.⁵¹⁴ Just inside the entry, there were stacks of poetry collections, recent literary journal issues, and chapbooks scattered across a table, all donated to the space and free for the taking. A chalkboard easel had news of upcoming visitors, readings, and talks. I meandered to the back of the house first, to a kitchen where a group of people had gathered around preparing and eating food, then into the adjacent reception room where people had gathered in preparation for the evening’s event. Many were discussing the works they’d be talking about that evening as part of a symposium on a number of poetic works all published in 1960.

Everyone then gathered in the ground floor’s front room, a space with 40 or so chairs set up and a lectern at the front (figs. 3.37–39). A space for readings, lectures, group discussions, and classes, the room was remarkable for its technological set-up, how it has been designed to transmit. An in-house technician could control a small video camera perched in the room’s upper back left corner could be controlled so as to zoom in on a speaker then pan out on the whole room, only to zoom back in on one of the audience members. A speaker at the lectern was able to play media, video and sound on a screen beside the lectern. A series of microphones recorded the main speaker or speakers at the front of the room, and in the audience. Everything was set up to be broadcasted in real time over the Web, and those in the room could consult two desk top monitors at the side of the room to see the broadcast. Those listening over the Web were able to call or write in, and ask questions of those in the room. When the event came to a close, the technician in the room then moved the audio and video files of the symposium on the the KWH’s media servers, where, just days after the event, Bernstein and Filreis segmented the files, added

in the basic fields of information regarding each one, and made them accessible on PennSound.⁵¹⁵

Such production of event to media has become a common component for cultural institutions and their programming in recent years. Yet, as I discussed earlier in relation to UbuWeb, all too often the issue of rights and permissions prohibit institutions from disseminating this media on digital platforms. It's partially a matter of attaining rights and permission from the creators, yet largely a matter of being able to fund the extensive labour to secure those rights and permissions in the first place, and to then create an interface for them online.⁵¹⁶ There are several reasons why PennSound is able to achieve this so fluidly. First, there is the fact that it is a fairly long-standing practice. As Filreis describes above, he initially explored this form of production that he describes as "our format" starting in the late 1990s, and has been able to fine tune its form with each new semester of classes since and with each addition to the KWH's constellation of medial, archival, and publishing elements. Secondly, there are the resources offered through the expanse of the university: the graduate student labour (as in Deb Sica's work on the production of the tapes index), the resources available intra-departmentally or across schools with the university (as in the Humanities Computing director Chris Mustazza who has assisted PennSound's development since its conception), and the part-time labour offered through the KWH that has been offered to students and recent graduates (as in the production technician who manages the media during events). Then, finally, there is PennSound's existence as a digital repository, as a kind of evolving laboratory for texts and media. Its ad-hocness and the willingness to address it and its many components as questions to be developed in any number of directions allows for its evolution to be more open than an official archives or publication.

If the technical interface of PennSound is defined by the way the repository's components are organized when one accesses the site, the KWH helps to articulate what can be called its social interface. Alexander Galloway describes this type of interface as a zone activity, a site of processes that transform the material state of media.⁵¹⁷ It is where PennSound has remained distinct from the EPC (most notably after Bernstein's departure from the Poetics Program), and from UbuWeb (whose communities of consumption and interactivity are primarily only online). The KWH serves as a physical space – one tethered to its virtual communities online – for PennSound's users to mutually define the contents of the repository, its forms and uses. The

addition of the Wexler Recording Studio in 2014 has only contributed further to the KWH's ongoing development as a media production, serving as a space to produce Bernstein's Close Listening dialogues with poets, as well as episodes of Filreis's PoemTalk, which bring together three or four commentators who the workings of an individual audio-recorded poem. Here, what I am calling the technical and the social components of PennSound's interface, of course, overlap. They mutually define one another to articulate the format that Filreis speaks of as being unique to PennSound.

Postscript

Framework for a Future Edition

L'oeuvre se fait ainsi dépositaire d'une immense, d'une incessante enquête sur les mots.

[*The work thus makes itself the repository of a vast unceasing investigation into words.*]

–Roland Barthes⁵¹⁸

The digital repository is messy. Its organization regularly shifts with its materials as they come and go – over time, or in sudden unannounced changes. It has errors throughout, dead links from various updates, pages abandoned in various states of incomplete cultivation. Its documents are occasionally found in duplicate, sometimes partially reproduced in a different part of the repository, at times in a different format altogether. These qualities, I have argued, are part of what makes the digital repository distinct as an archival genre. Defined by certain parameters and protocols, it nonetheless remains open as a site of accumulation and transmission, capable of absorbing and distributing materials that become available that its creators select as being of potential interest. At several moments in this work, I have referred to their production as being *ad hoc*, doing so to emphasize the fact that their creators constructed them to make a space online for materials they loved; then, out of this primary desire, the creators developed additional components of the repositories that spoke to the interests and needs of the communities of users formed in the circulation of the materials. Occasionally, they have taken down materials or entire sections have been removed due to the complications or their falling out of use. Initially unforeseen in the original articulation of the repositories, the various medial forms and social activities that emerged out of these interactions – in turn, in a feedback loop – defined the overall organization and utility of the repositories. As in the narrative of the transmission of the various texts that both emerged from and comprised the *Poetics* that I discuss in this work's introduction, in tracing out the the histories of these repositories' materials – in their circulation, use, and integration into other textual environments – we are able to more clearly understand the shifting status and concerns of literary production over time.

In the foregoing pages, I have striven to give body and scope to this archival genre that previous scholars and commentators have often referred to yet have rarely explored with

sufficient depth. Due to the fact that the three particular digital repositories I have discussed in this work's main chapters have become integral components in the study of contemporary literature and media both inside and outside of scholarly and cultural institutions, it is my hope that the assembling of a narrative of their construction provides a helpful resource in their continued use, providing a substantial context to their resources. Alongside of the construction of this important historical narrative, I have aimed to enrich the historical context for approaching North American anglophone poetry and poetics from the early 1990s to the present, by historicizing the means and infrastructure for establishing and disseminating the works of several schools and tendencies of poetics during the time, most centrally those of Language and Conceptual writing. For both Language and Conceptual writing in particular, the digital repository has served as an important means of archiving and disseminating works, as well as providing a context for these movements' practices and aesthetics. It has functioned as a space to explore their intermedial and multi-genre poetics.

I have attempted to present this history and discuss its implications with regard to poetics as a practice and field of study that is particularly attuned to addressing both composition and consumption. It is my hope that there are impressions and lessons one might take away from this work and apply to numerous fields of study, as the accumulation, transmission, and use of texts and media are, of course, an element of every discipline. Because of my own engagement and occupation with the production and transmission of scholarly communications, I have attempted to construct the present work as a model for a future edition that further explores the form and design of the digital repository. Here, too, it's worth noting that the discourse of North American anglophone poetics in the milieu I have discussed throughout this work, especially with the rise of the poet-scholar since the early 1990s, has certainly concerned itself with the generation of new, hybrid forms of scholarly writing.

In terms of a future edition, I envision publishing the next iteration of this research on an interface that is resonant with the digital repositories I have discussed throughout this work. The home page would feature a bibliographical listing of the work's contents – preface to appendixes – each accessible via an HTML page with embedded media such as images, audio, and video files. Each section would, at the top of each page, include an icon to click on in order to save the chapter as a downloadable PDF. Then, modeled after the composition of Kathleen Fitzpatrick's *Planned Obsolescence* (2011), which she made available as a draft for open review

with MediaCommons two years prior to its publication,⁵¹⁹ I would like to have a commenting feature so as to expand and clarify aspects of the historical narrative specifically with those who have been involved in the milieus I have discussed. I then hope to append a number of documents media to this page that I have only been able to excerpt or refer to in the work, including:

- “The Tapes Index” that Deb Sica prepared for Charles Bernstein while a graduate student in the Poetics Program: a 100-page document that outlines Bernstein’s personal audio collection that serves as one of the core components of PennSound, in addition as being a primary model for its technical interface.

- Audio files of all of the exchanges and interview included in the appendixes;

- A selection of the Filreis-Bernstein e-mail correspondence between 2003 and 2008, from the period of Bernstein interviewed for his position at Penn through to the launch of PennSound and the first years of its development online – for the way that it shows the in-depth consideration and experimentation with the design of PennSound and its uses;

- Loss Glazier’s PhD dissertation “The Electronic Poetry Center: A Poetics of the Web” (1996), which is an in depth study of the construction of the EPC, with extensive materials that document the first two years of the repository;

- A file that includes each one of the EPC’s newsletters to the Poetics List, as these newsletters document the shifts in materials and uses of the EPC as it evolves, and it also documents regularly the various statistics and metadata regarding its use, including number of users, visits, countries that had accessed the site, and so on;

- Goldsmith’s personal collection of cease and desist letters, in which he shows the extent to which dealing with regard to materials is a regular part of managing and maintaining UbuWeb;

- And, finally, I would like to discuss with the creators and those who presently maintain the digital repositories ways that might be helpful for preserving the history of the repositories, and even ways of creating redundancies for each site and its materials by making available their files and media via this platform.

I am interested in including these documents and assemblages of materials so as to create, in addition to the historical narrative and analysis of the main text, a repository out of the materials collected during this research so that it may be of use to scholars for future study.

“It is, of course, the surplus of life,” Arlette Farge writes, “that floods the archive and provokes the reader, intensely and unconsciously. The archive is an excess of meaning, where the reader experiences beauty, amazement, and a certain affective tremor.”⁵²⁰ This tremor is

something that I have felt often while working through the collections and exchanges throughout this research. Struck by a particular phrasing during a dialogue, by the frankness with which one speaks of their aspirations in a personal correspondence, or by a handwritten note in the margins of an archival document, I have imagined in the materials of this research dozens of other possible trajectories in which this work – or subsequent other ones – may have moved. There is a certain satisfaction in being in the midst of such traces, pausing for a moment with the past and future potentials they hold. It is, as Michel Foucault writes of this kind of encounter, “without a doubt one of those impressions that is called ‘physical,’ as if there could be any other kind.”⁵²¹ It is the overwhelming affection for language where philology (*philia* + *logos*) begins.⁵²² The impulse to design this research so that it functions as a repository comes out of this desire to provide a context wherein such affective tremors might strike others amid their errant navigation through an accumulation of texts. It also extends a precedent common to scientific scholarship, where research and data sets are made available alongside of their analysis. As a significant component of this research has been tracking down a number of rare or unpublished digital documents related to the digital repositories I have discussed as well as producing others, it is my intention to create a space in which these materials can more widely circulate for others to use.

Endnotes

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- ¹ http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/perloff/witt_intro.html. Last accessed on 20 January 2018.
- ² <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/perloff/>. Last accessed on 20 January 2018.
- ³ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 5.6.
- ⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 20.
- ⁵ Peters 2015, 25.
- ⁶ Drucker 2009, 21.
- ⁷ Drucker 2009, 120.
- ⁸ Peters 2011, 18.
- ⁹ See Innis 1924; Innis 1925, 151-3.
- ¹⁰ See van Wyck, 2010, 190-1.
- ¹¹ See: van Wyck 2010; Buxton, ed., 2013, Creighton; Creighton, *Harold Adams Innis: Portrait of a Scholar*; and Watson, *Marginal Man: The Dark Vision of Harold Innis*, 40; Young, 2017.
- ¹² Acland 2014: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mij/15031809.0001.102/--dirt-research-for-media-industries?rgn=main;view=fulltext#N7>.
- ¹³ Liam Cole Young, 2017. "Innis's Infrastructure: Dirt, Beavers, and Documents in Material Media Theory." *Cultural Politics* 13.2: 227-249.
- ¹⁴ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, quoted in Edwards "Infrastructure and Modernity: Force, Time, and Social Organization in the History of Sociotechnical Systems". 187.
- ¹⁵ Innis 1924, 4. Quoted in Young 2017, 20.
- ¹⁶ Innis 1925, (152). Quoted in van Wyck 2010, 192.
- ¹⁷ Wilhelm Scherer, *Poetik* [1888]. *Mit einer Einleitung und Materialien zur Rezeptionsanalyse*, ed. Gunter Reiss. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977, 38.
- ¹⁸ By "articulations," I mean, following Jonathan Sterne (2003, 24), "the process by which different phenomena with no necessary relation to one another [...] are connected in meaning and/or practice." See also: Stuart Hall, "On Postmodernism and Articulation," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10:2 (1986):45-60; and Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 52-61. "Articulation" is a term I take up throughout this dissertation in order to describe both the conjoining of varying concepts as well as materials brought together through the digital repositories.
- ¹⁹ Foucault 2002, 128.
- ²⁰ Eichhorn 2008, 1.
- ²¹ Dick Higgins (1967) defines "intermediality" as occurring at "a conjunction of overlapping media and genres."
- ²² See: Norris 1984; Clay et al. 1998; Kane 2003; McGurl 2009; Braddock 2012; Camlot 2012.
- ²³ Appendix 5.
- ²⁴ Galloway periodizes the information age as "not simply that moment when computers come to dominate, but is instead that moment in history when matter itself is understood in terms of information or code." He continues: [T]he transformation of matter into code is not only a passage from the qualitative to the quantitative, *but also a passage from the non-aesthetic to the aesthetic – the passage from non-media to media*. [...] This historical moment – when life is defined no longer as essence, but as code – is the moment when life *becomes a medium*. (Galloway 2004, 111).

²⁵ See Harold A. Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

²⁶ Glazier 2002, 3.

²⁷ Here, I am intoning Jonathan Sterne's echoing (2003) of Marx (1898). Where Marx approaches the value of commodities as a "crystallization of social labour," Sterne approaches understanding *media* as "crystallized sets of social practices and relations." As Sterne writes (2003, 8): "Technologies are repeatable social, cultural, and material processes crystallized into mechanisms. Often, they perform labor that had previously been done by a person. It is this process of crystallization that makes them historically interesting. Their mechanical character, the ways in which they commingle physics and culture, can tell us a great deal about the people who build and deploy them. Technologies manifest a designed mechanical agency, a set of functions cordoned off from the rest of life and delegated to them, a set of functions developed from and linked to sets of cultural practices. People design and use technologies to enhance or promote certain activities and discourage others. Technologies are associated with habits, sometimes crystallizing them and sometimes enabling them. They embody in physical form particular dispositions and tendencies. [...] To study technologies in any meaningful sense requires a rich sense of their connection with human practice, habitat, and habit. It requires attention to the fields of combined cultural, social, and physical activity – what other authors have called *networks* or *assemblages* – from which technologies emerge and of which they are a part."

²⁸ On the pluriform work, see Bernstein's introduction to *Close Listening*. Important for developing the notion of the pluriform work, see Perloff on the "differential" text in *New Media Poetics*.

²⁹ Appendix 5.

³⁰ Appendix 1.

³¹ See Glazier 2002; Appendix 1. Frederic Jameson (2000) reminds us that "[u]topias have something to do with failure and tell us more about our limits and weaknesses than they do about perfect societies" (2000, n.p.). It is in this light that, at the end of this chapter, I explore the EPC's slow movement toward inactivity in the light of its forging of a model for poetry and poetics on the Web.

³² For example, take Dana Gioia's "Can Poetry Matter" (1991), which both praises and seeks to continue the tradition of "past" poets and critics who "addressed a wide community of educated readers," reporting their reactions with "scrupulous honesty even when their opinions might lose them literary allies," and who without "talking down to their audience" cultivated "a public idiom," and who prized "clarity and accessibility" over "specialist jargon and pedantic displays of scholarship." Dana Gioia, "Can Poetry Matter," *The Atlantic* (May 1991): <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1991/05/can-poetry-matter/305062/>.

³³ See Kuhn 1962.

³⁴ See: Fredric Jameson, "Utopia and Failure," *Politics and Culture 2* (2000): <https://politicsandculture.org/2010/08/10/utopia-and-failure-by-fredric-jameson-2/>; also: Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 154-180.

³⁵ "UbuWeb FAQ," last access on 28 March 2018.

³⁶ "UbuWeb FAQ," last access on 28 March 2018.

³⁷ <https://monoskop.org/Ubuweb>. Last accessed on 28 March 2018.

³⁸ <http://ubu.com/resources/frameworks.html>. Last accessed on 28 March 2018.

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- ³⁹ See Goldsmith 2010, 2011b, 2012.
- ⁴⁰ Lee and LiPuma 2002, 192.
- ⁴¹ Gaonkar and Povinelli 2003, 391.
- ⁴² Bernstein 1998, 4.
- ⁴³ Steve Evans (2012) defines the phonotext as a “threefold braid of timbre, text, and technology” (n.p.).
- ⁴⁴ Parks 2005: http://writing.upenn.edu/news/cp_pennsound.html. Last accessed 20 June 2018.
- ⁴⁵ “Make It New!” was an often-used slogan and injunction of Pound’s, and the title of his 1934 collection of critical essays on poetry and poetics. On the “making” of “Make It New,” see Michael North’s *Novelty: A History of the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- ⁴⁶ For example: the United States Library of Congress; the Woodberry Poetry Room at Harvard University; SUNY-Buffalo’s Poetry Collection Audio Archive; the Naropa Audio Archive at Naropa University; and the Archive for New Poetry at the University of California, San Diego.
- ⁴⁷ Bernstein 2003. <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/manifesto.php>. Last accessed on 28 March 2018.
- ⁴⁸ Bernstein 2003. <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/manifesto.php>. Last accessed on 28 March 2018.
- ⁴⁹ See Kirschenbaum 2002.
- ⁵⁰ See Galloway 2012.
- ⁵¹ Filreis 2006, 125.
- ⁵² Appendix 5.
- ⁵³ Appendix 5.
- ⁵⁴ Harshav 2007, 228.
- ⁵⁵ Todorov 1981, 6.
- ⁵⁶ Reed 2012, 1064.
- ⁵⁷ See: Macherey 1978.
- ⁵⁸ See: Eagleton 1975, 1978.
- ⁵⁹ See Shalev 2013, 265.
- ⁶⁰ In discussing such a “condition,” I mean to reference McGann 1991, but, in particular, I mean draw on Barrett Watten’s description of poetics as being “a discourse of the making of the work in its condition of possibility” in *Questions for Poetics* (2016), 20.
- ⁶¹ I would like to acknowledge and thank Eli Friedland for his support and patience in reading closely two editions of the *Poetics* in Ancient Greek (Lucas, 1968; Tarán and Gutas, 2012).
- ⁶² *Poetics*, 1447a8-b29.
- ⁶³ See: Lucas 1968; Richter 2010; Tarán and Gutas 2012.
- ⁶⁴ See: Tarán and Gutas 2012; Golden and Hardison 1968.
- ⁶⁵ Tarán and Gutas 2010, 23
- ⁶⁶ Aristotle, trans. Bywater, 1909, v.
- ⁶⁷ Aristotle, trans. Else, 1967, 10.
- ⁶⁸ Taran and Gutas 2012, 23.
- ⁶⁹ Cicero, *Academica* II, 38, 119.
- ⁷⁰ Mallette 2009, 584
- ⁷¹ Tarán and Gutas 2012, 35.
- ⁷² Tarán and Gutas 2012, 35
- ⁷³ Tarán and Gutas 2012, 4

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- ⁷⁴ It is important, here, to note Tarán and Gutas’s remark following this definition: “This does not mean that an ancient or medieval translation is in all instances equivalent to a Greek MS, for in many cases we are unable to reconstruct the Greek exemplars from which the translations were made” (Tarán and Gutas 2012, 4).
- ⁷⁵ Tarán and Gutas 2012, 129-35.
- ⁷⁶ Tarán and Gutas 2012, 144.
- ⁷⁷ Mallette 2009, 584.
- ⁷⁸ Tarán and Gutas 2012, 102.
- ⁷⁹ Lucas 1968, xxiii.
- ⁸⁰ Tarán and Gutas 2012, 146.
- ⁸¹ See: Tarán and Gutas 2012, 101-2; as well as Tkatsch 1928, 147-8.
- ⁸² Mallette 2009, 584.
- ⁸³ Mallette 2009, 585.
- ⁸⁴ Mallette 2009, 585-6.
- ⁸⁵ Eagleton 1978, 44-5..
- ⁸⁶ Farge 1989, 10.
- ⁸⁷ Farge 2013, trans. Scott-Railton, 4
- ⁸⁸ Farge 2013, 55.
- ⁸⁹ Farge 2013, 80.
- ⁹⁰ Farge 2013, 30, 100.
- ⁹¹ Farge 2013, 3-4.
- ⁹² On the subject of dust in the archives, Carolyn Steedman (2001, 160) considers dust as the actual source of Derrida’s *mal d’archive*, that “which is first solid matter, but comes to be so pulverized or comminuted as to make it able to rise in a cloud,” this infecting the mind and body of one who researches in the archive.
- ⁹³ Foucault 1972, trans. Sheridan, 129
- ⁹⁴ Bennington 2014, 115
- ⁹⁵ Foucault 1969, 171; trans. Bennington 2014, 115.
- ⁹⁶ Here, I mean “mediation” in a dual sense, as developed by Jeremy Braddock in his research on modernist collections (2012): the archive mediates between an act or text and an audience; as well as the archive mediates the text or act itself in a formal sense, meaning that the archive by means of its organizational structures has an impact or bears an impress upon an act or text (3-7).
- ⁹⁷ Latour and Woolgar 1986, 60.
- ⁹⁸ Latour 2005, 6.
- ⁹⁹ Latour and Woolgar 1986, 51; quoted in Law, 20.
- ¹⁰⁰ Law 2004, 2.
- ¹⁰¹ Latour and Woolgar, 1986, 64.
- ¹⁰² Law 2004, 21
- ¹⁰³ Theimer 2012, n.p.
- ¹⁰⁴ Though the EPC, UbuWeb, and PennSound are all primarily composed of “non-digital originals,” each one contains sizable collections of born-digital compositions in numerous formats. I address this extensively in the main chapters. Additionally, the “scholarly goal” aspect is certainly present for each repository, each one in its own way also aims to support practicing writers and artists, ones not necessarily intending to frame their work as scholarly.
- ¹⁰⁵ Peace-Moses 2005, n.p.

¹⁰⁶ Theimer 2012, n.p.

¹⁰⁷ Theimer 2012, n.p. Though “provenance” and “original order” should be clear for the non-archivist, the principle of “collective control” is likely not. Of collective control, Theimer writes: “Archival materials are generally managed as aggregates, not as collections of individual items. These aggregates, which can be referred to as record groups, series, and manuscript collections, are established according to the source of the aggregate, often a result of the activity which generated the records. The principle of collective control is dependent on understanding the provenance of the aggregate of materials. To return to the primary definition of archives, the aggregate will be defined by who created it (“a person, family, or organization, public or private”) and why it was created (“in the conduct of their affairs”). The aggregate of records created by a person, family, or organization may contain records with many different authors. For example, the records of a publishing house may contain correspondence with many individual authors. Once transferred to an archival repository, those records will be maintained as a distinct aggregate (say, the “Records of Smith Publishers”) and the contents will not be removed and added to other aggregates based on the individual authorship or topic.” (Theimer 2012, n.p.)

¹⁰⁸ Sterne 2012, 7.

¹⁰⁹ Bernstein 1992, 134.

¹¹⁰ See Davidson 1989, 1997, 2003, 2008, 2011.

¹¹¹ On Language poetry and poetics, see: Perelman 1996; Lilley 1997; Hejinian 2002; Watten 2003, 2016. On global Conceptual writing, see: Dworkin and Goldsmith, 2011; Victor 2015; Skrebowski 2015; Zeltl 2017.

¹¹² From Victor Hugo’s address to the International Congress of Peace, held in Paris, 1849. Quoted in Mattelart, Armand. *Networking the World: 1749-2000*. Trans. Liz Corey-Librrecht and James A. Cohen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 20.

¹¹³ Glazier 2002, 1.

¹¹⁴ On “paradigm shift,” see: Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Third Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹¹⁵ Glazier 2002, 1.

¹¹⁶ Glazier 2002, 1.

¹¹⁷ On small press publishing, see: Alan Golding, “Little Magazine and Alternative Canons: The Example of *Origin*” in *Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Ian Morris and Joanne Diaz, *The Little Magazine in Contemporary America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Faye Hammil and Mark Hussey, *Modernism’s Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Ross Hair, *Avant-Folk: Small Press Poetry Networks from 1950 to the Present* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017);.

¹¹⁸ Glazier 2002, 2.

¹¹⁹ Glazier 2002, 2.

¹²⁰ Glazier 2002, 2.

¹²¹ Glazier 2002, 3.

¹²² Eric McLuhan (1996). “The source of the term ‘global village’” *McLuhan Studies* (issue 2). Retrieved 2008-12-30.

¹²³ Glazier 2002, 3.

¹²⁴ Such an idea is embedded in Glazier’s overview description of a “subject village,” yet it is a facet he discusses at length in our dialogue. See Appendix 1.

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- ¹²⁵ <<http://epc.buffalo.edu/about/>>. Last accessed 15 March 2017.
- ¹²⁶ <<http://epc.buffalo.edu/about/>>. Last accessed 15 March 2017.
- ¹²⁷ This, of course, presumes a certain fluency with computing at a time when there cost provided one barrier to accessing the technology, and the basic facility to access online environments was, by no means, a commonly cultivated phenomenon.
- ¹²⁸ Appendix 1.
- ¹²⁹ Extensive note on WELL and Virtual Communities – Rheingold.
- ¹³⁰ Appendix 1.
- ¹³¹ For example, take Dana Gioia’s “Can Poetry Matter” (1991), which both praises and seeks to continue the tradition of “past” poets and critics who “addressed a wide community of educated readers,” reporting their reactions with “scrupulous honesty even when their opinions might lose them literary allies,” and who without “talking down to their audience” cultivated “a public idiom,” and who prized “clarity and accessibility” over “specialist jargon and pedantic displays of scholarship.” Dana Gioia, “Can Poetry Matter,” *The Atlantic* (May 1991): <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1991/05/can-poetry-matter/305062/>.
- ¹³² Roberts 2010.
- ¹³³ Appendix 1.
- ¹³⁴ Glazier 2002, 164.
- ¹³⁵ McMillen 1995, n.p.
- ¹³⁶ Reid 1995, 16.
- ¹³⁷ Reid 1995, 16.
- ¹³⁸ Lu 1999, 139.
- ¹³⁹ Lu 1999, 139.
- ¹⁴⁰ poets.org 2004.
- ¹⁴¹ Morris et al. 2006.
- ¹⁴² Morris 2006, 14.
- ¹⁴³ Morris 2006, 7.
- ¹⁴⁴ Roseman 2014a, 2014b.
- ¹⁴⁵ Roseman 2014a.
- ¹⁴⁶ Filreis 2006, 125.
- ¹⁴⁷ Glazier 2002, 3; Filreis 2006, 128.
- ¹⁴⁸ Filreis 2006, 129.
- ¹⁴⁹ Brito 2010; 2014.
- ¹⁵⁰ Brito 2010, 38-9.
- ¹⁵¹ Brito 2010, 40.
- ¹⁵² Brito 2010, 41.
- ¹⁵³ See Vincent Mosco 2004.
- ¹⁵⁴ Brito 2014, 2.
- ¹⁵⁵ See Rheingold, 1993.
- ¹⁵⁶ Barbrook and Cameron 1995, np.
- ¹⁵⁷ Appendix 1.
- ¹⁵⁸ Appendix 1.
- ¹⁵⁹ Appendix 1.
- ¹⁶⁰ Appendix 1.
- ¹⁶¹ Appendix 1.

¹⁶² Rheingold 1993, 5.

¹⁶³ David Golumbia writes on the relay between the discourse of “freedom” and digital technologies, situating it accurately within the framework of cyberlibertarianism, the belief that “freedom will emerge inherently from the increasing development of digital technology, and therefore entails that efforts to interfere with or regulate that development much be antithetical to freedom” (2016, 4-5). Langdon Winner describes cyberlibertarians believe that “the dynamism of digital technology is our true destiny. There is no time to pause, reflect, or ask for more influence in shaping these developments” (1997, 14). Glazier’s thinking often aligns with the cyberlibertarian perspectives that Golumbia and Winner, among others, cite as pervasive throughout the utopian aspirations of the early builders and users of networked digital infrastructures. While it might be convenient to fit Glazier’s aspirations within this box, I believe it’s necessary to approach them with more granular detail, and situate them specifically within a framework of literary production, specifically that of small press and the little magazine tradition of the twentieth-century. Within such a framework, one does not find Glazier working primarily against supposed government intervention in online discourse (though he touches on moments of that in Appendix 1), but mainly see him as attempting to cultivate an anti-corporate publishing model that speaks to the forms of interpersonal exchange and conviviality that postwar small press poetry communities have attempted to cultivate.

¹⁶⁴ Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁵ Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁶ Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁷ See: Dwight Goddard ed., *A Buddhist Bible* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1938).

¹⁶⁸ Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁹ Appendix 1.

¹⁷⁰ See Barbrook and Cameron, 1995; Turner 2006.

¹⁷¹ Appendix 1.

¹⁷² Appendix 1.

¹⁷³ Glazier, 1992.

¹⁷⁴ Appendix 1.

¹⁷⁵ Gitelman 2006, 99.

¹⁷⁶ Gitelman 2006, 99. Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁷ Appendix 1.

¹⁷⁸ Appendix 1.

¹⁷⁹ Appendix 1.

¹⁸⁰ Appendix 1.

¹⁸¹ Appendix 1.

¹⁸² Glazier would join this department as a professor in 2005.

¹⁸³ See Braddock 2012, 209-28; Maynard 2016 a, 3.

¹⁸⁴ Abbott 1948, 7.

¹⁸⁵ Braddock 2012, 216.

¹⁸⁶ Glazier, 1992.

¹⁸⁷ Glazier 1992, ix.

¹⁸⁸ Glazier 2002, 3.

¹⁸⁹ Bourdieu 1994, 17; see also Braddock 2012, 4-5

¹⁹⁰ Bourdieu 1994, 17.

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- ¹⁹¹ Braddock 2012, 216.
- ¹⁹² Glazier 1992, iv.
- ¹⁹³ <<http://poetics.buffalo.edu/program/index.html>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.
- ¹⁹⁴ <<http://poetics.buffalo.edu/program/index.html>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.
- ¹⁹⁵ Bernstein 2011, 22-3.
- ¹⁹⁶ Bernstein 2011, 245-6.
- ¹⁹⁷ There needs to be an extended comment here on McGurl's exploration of the creative writing program in reference to the particular instantiation of the Poetics Program, which has been developed with the kinds of programs McGurl studies, but mostly as counter-examples. Here, I will need to plumb prior examples that feed into the particular example of the Poetics Program, from Black Mountain School to various extra-institutional programmings of Language-affiliated poets, so as to show how the Poetics Program – as opposed to the workshop model of analyzing the contents of poetic works – sought to create a kind of conviviality and mode of interpersonal exchange synonymous with the small press poetry world inside the institution. This shall be developed further in time for the final submission of this dissertation.
- ¹⁹⁸ On the poet-scholar, see: the *Jacket2* feature "On the poet-scholar" (2015), edited by Margaret Ronda; also *A Concise Companion to Twentieth Century American Poetry* (2005), edited by Stephen Fredman. For an earlier discussion on the figure of the poet-scholar, see Langdon Hammer's *Hart Crane and Allen Tate: Janus-Faced Modernism* (2017).
- ¹⁹⁹ Appendix 5.
- ²⁰⁰ Rheingold 1993, 3.
- ²⁰¹ For a discussion of the "diasporic Poetics Program" see Appendix 6. For an extensive listing and discussion of publications originating in the Poetics Program, see Maynard 2016 a and b.
- ²⁰² Appendix 1.
- ²⁰³ Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
- ²⁰⁴ Located at: <http://epc.buffalo.edu/rift/>. Last accessed 17 March 2017. One can often find in many locations the title of the journal written also as *RIFT* and *RIF/t*.
- ²⁰⁵ Glazier 1996, 75. The first issue of *RIF/T* is archived and can be accessed here: <<http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/rift/rift01/rift0101.html>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.
- ²⁰⁶ The Poetics List archive can be accessed here: <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/epc/poetics/poeticslist.html>. Last accessed 20 June 2018.
- ²⁰⁷ Joel Kuszai's *Poetics@* (Roof Books, 1999) is an important documentation and editing of some of the initial exchanges on the Poetics List. The book can be downloaded as a free PDF here: <<http://epc.buffalo.edu/presses/roof/Poetics.pdf>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.
- ²⁰⁸ <<http://epc.buffalo.edu/poetics/welcome.html>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.
- ²⁰⁹ Appendix 1.
- ²¹⁰ How "total" or "comprehensive" these engagements are with an entire field is another issue as John Keene (2016) suggests in terms of the representation of POC writers included in contemporary digital repositories. On UbuWeb, for example, Keene writes:
- "Although a number of repositories of digital literature now exist online, (14) and new ones are developing every day, perhaps the oldest and most comprehensive archive of American and global work of this kind is UbuWeb.com, edited by the poet and theorist Kenneth Goldsmith. A virtual library of the virtual, UbuWeb, which takes its name from Alfred Jarry's eponymous antihero, began collecting digital literary projects by noted and established authors in 1996, and has continued to add new and older works on a regular basis. Whereas it once contained mainly

links to cyberpoetic experiments, it now has expanded to encompass a number of categories, including ethnopoeitics, conceptual writing, contemporary, historical, sounds, and words (essays). In its earlier guise, however, very few Black poets appeared on its roster. Recently I examined UbuWeb, and, as with before, noted the paucity of work by Black writers and artists from throughout the Diaspora. Under the “UbuWeb. com: Ethnopoeitics,” curated by Jerome Rothenberg, there was not a single Black poet or programmer. Under the section for contemporary digital poets, there was not a single Black poet or programmer. Under the section for “Conceptual Writing,” until recently one of the hottest genres in contemporary American poetics (and now declared both passé by critics such as Johanna Drucker, and worthy of entering the canon by proponents such as Goldsmith and critic Marjorie Perloff), the only Black writer or artist listed is the longtime conceptualist and philosopher Adrian M. S. Piper, whose work long precedes the rise of digital technologies. [...]

“One way of reading this would be as a criticism of Goldsmith and the other curators, and in some ways it parallels some recent anthologies of experimental and innovative writing. Goldsmith's recent anthology of conceptual writing, *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (Northwestern University Press, Chicago, 2011), and his study *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2011), not only feature almost no Black writers, but very few writers of color in general. Rather than personalize this as a critique of Goldsmith, and other members of the UbuWeb curatorial staff, such as Jerome Rothenberg, or its board, which includes writers Charles Bernstein and Darren Wershler-Henry, as well as critic Marjorie Perloff, I want to note that similar sites, such as the Electronic Poetry Center, hosted by the University of Buffalo, and the newer Center for Literary Computing, hosted by West Virginia University, for example, also feature almost no Black writers. [...] Again, one can and should lay this at the door of the curators of these sites, but, and I should be clear that my search has only begun and is not exhaustive, I have not found much evidence across the Web of digital literature by Black authors, except in isolated cases.

“This suggests further research, but also the importance of a dedicated repository for this work, which certainly does exist (or may have existed, perhaps, on sites like GeoCities) but perhaps is not being collected in the way that digital literature by at least some non-Black authors is. I shall conclude by considering two examples by an African American author and artist who has attempted what I suggested above, as a way of pointing an excellent example of and towards future possibilities in this genre, and several very current examples of Black digital poetics.”

²¹¹ Appendix 2.

²¹² <<http://www.pomoculture.org/2013/09/24/announcements-advertisements-2/>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.

²¹³ Kuszai 1999, 50-51

²¹⁴ Kuszai 1999, 2.

²¹⁵ Watten 2003, 94.

²¹⁶ *TapRoot Electronic Edition* (TRee) was periodic email version of *TapRoot Reviews*, a review-zine that focused on independent and innovative literature, art, visual poetry, sound art and intermedia, based in Lakewood, Ohio, and edited by Luigi-Bob Drake. The journal's electronic publishing history began in August, 1992 and ended in February 1995, having done six issues that included poets such as geof huth, Allison Knowles, Chris Funkhouser, Ben Friedlander, Steve Evans, Jena Osman and Juliana Spahr. For further information the TRee, see its page on

the EPC: <<http://epc.buffalo.edu/ezones/treehome/treeHome.html>>. Last accessed 17 March 2017.

²¹⁷ Glazier 1996, 75-6. Sherwood, in correspondence, echoes Glazier's points on the difficulty of archiving and hosting these materials: "We were initially circulating RIF/T as a file through listserv. But we had no place to host it; perhaps we had the first issue on the e-server at Virginia? But then we had trouble getting them to mount the second issue in a timely fashion. As I recall, that prompted Loss to explore the possibility of local hosting on a Buffalo server (wings). His institutional connections served and we gained space, eventually a dedicated domain etc. (Remember there was no GoDaddy in 1995!)" (Appendix 2).

²¹⁸ Glazier 1996, 77-8.

²¹⁹ Glazier 1996, 78.

²²⁰ Glazier 1996, 78.

²²¹ Glazier 1996, 79.

²²² On the transformation of libraries and their digital infrastructures, see Verheul 2010; Matheson et al. 2012; Jones 2017; Kahle 2017; Nwosu 2017. On the development of the digital humanities as a discourse, see Burdick et al. 2012; Warwick et al. 2012; Drucker 2013; Klein et al. 2016.

²²³ See, for example, the general excitement for the creation of new electronic resources in the January 1995 *Postmodern Culture* announcements cited above – for example this description of the new "Gopheur Litterature" created at the Université de Montréal, what claims to be the first such French-language literary electronic resource: "Gopher servers are sprouting like mushrooms these days. Not only universities have gopher servers, but also departments now. They can be very useful tools to locate information and students here are very fond of them. They are also the first step towards much more sophisticated modes of accessing collections of research and bibliographic data, e-texts, etc." (<<http://www.pomoculture.org/2013/09/24/announcements-advertisements-2/>>). Last accessed 17 March 2017.

²²⁴ See Glazier's statements about the perceived lack of interest in the EPC by fellow members of the Poetics Program (Appendix 1), and also Sherwood's statement: "Ironically now to remember there was some suspicion of electronic publishing at that moment. I remember conversations about copyright and theft, the legitimacy of virtual publication, etc. But also an excitement of discovering how to think about an audience, a community of contributing writers, and the format opportunities in electronic distribution" (Appendix 2).

²²⁵ Glazier 1996, 78.

²²⁶ Glazier 1996, 79.

²²⁷ Appendix 1.

²²⁸ Appendix 1.

²²⁹ Carlson 2016.

²³⁰ Glazier 1996, 79-80.

²³¹ See Appendixes 1 and 2.

²³² Glazier 1996, 83.

²³³ Previous to this materialization of the digital repository, specific collections of materials, singular publications, and reading events were able to present these elements of poetic practice. Yet, comparatively, these individual collections, publications, and events do not compare to the combined abilities to collect (store) as comprehensively and circulate as widely as what becomes possible with the EPC as a digital repository.

²³⁴ For example, as I note above, Al Filreis's conceptualization of the Kelly Writers House is to a large degree influenced by Glazier's model of the EPC's subject village. This is a topic I will take up at length in the third chapter.

²³⁵ Susan D. McGinnis, *Electronic Collection Management* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 69.

²³⁶ Glazier 1996, 82.

²³⁷ Glazier 1996, 84.

²³⁸ McGurl 2009. See also note 194.

²³⁹ Appendix 5.

²⁴⁰ Appendix 1.

²⁴¹ Appendix 1.

²⁴² Kittler, F. *Draculas Vermächtnis. Technische Schriften* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993), 182. Trans. John Durham Peters 2011, 26-7.

²⁴³ Through this chapter I quote extensively from my dialogue with Goldsmith, of which a transcript is included in this dissertation as Appendix 3.

²⁴⁴ <http://www.ubu.com/outsidere/ass.html>. Last accessed on 5 May 2018.

²⁴⁵ Appendix 3.

²⁴⁶ This document is now included on UbuWeb at: <http://www.ubu.com/outsidere/ass/Free-Saturday.jpg>. Last accessed 5 May 2018.

²⁴⁷ Appendix 3.

²⁴⁸ See, for example, his Facebook regarding on the event here, dated 16 March 2015: <https://www.facebook.com/kenneth.goldsmith.739/posts/354492771403205>. Note, as of 16 May 2018, this post is no longer available, and one receives notice that the link "may be broken, or the page may have been removed." The apology is extensively quoted here: <https://hyperallergic.com/190954/kenneth-goldsmith-remixes-michael-brown-autopsy-report-as-poetry/>. Last accessed 16 May 2018.

²⁴⁹ Appendix 3.

²⁵⁰ On information genres, see John Guillory 2004. For discussions on Goldsmith and information genres, see Nardone 2016 and Wershler 2018.

²⁵¹ Benjamin 2002, 208.

²⁵² Appendix 3.

²⁵³ Goldsmith and I had set up our meeting to discuss UbuWeb about a month before his reading at Bown. In February, while I was in Mexico City to trace out the micro-history of UbuWeb's move to being hosted there (which I examine later in this chapter), Goldsmith and I were in regular contact to discuss the details and peculiarities of that research, and planned then to meet in New York.

²⁵⁴ See, as example of only a few of the analyses of the event, Morris 2015; Wilkinson 2015; Park Hong 2015; Frank 2015; King 2015; Conrad 2015.

²⁵⁵ For one example, see Nathan Brown's commentary that describes the performance "as an expression of white power" (2016 np), while UbuWeb is listed as a top resource on Brown's website for his Centre for Expanded Poetics: <http://www.centreforexpandedpoetics.com/links/>. Last accessed 5 May 2018.

²⁵⁶ This is a point Goldsmith comes back to often during our dialogue (see Appendix 3), and others have stated elsewhere, as two examples: Paul Stephens writes "Though Goldsmith's writings have attracted considerable attention, perhaps his most influential accomplishment has been his role in the creation of *UbuWeb*, arguably the world's largest online archive of avant-

garde writing, music, and film” (Stephens 2015, 170); and Sukhdev Sandhu writes, not long after the Brown reading in *The Guardian*: “Many of his admirers think [UbuWeb is] his greatest achievement.” <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/21/kenneth-goldsmith-interview-i-wanted-to-take-walter-benjamin-off-pedestal-on-to-coffee-table>. Last accessed on 5 May 2018.

²⁵⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/21/kenneth-goldsmith-interview-i-wanted-to-take-walter-benjamin-off-pedestal-on-to-coffee-table>. Last accessed on 5 May 2018.

²⁵⁸ Cole and Emerson 2005; Perloff 2005; Drucker 2012

²⁵⁹ Dworkin 2005.

²⁶⁰ Perloff 2005; Cooney 2014; Nardone 2016.

²⁶¹ Drucker 2005; Goldman 2011.

²⁶² “UbuWeb FAQ,” last access on 28 March 2018.

²⁶³ Novak 2013, 17.

²⁶⁴ Goldsmith 2014, 251. This statement is also reproduced and used in the UbuWeb’s about page: <http://www.ubu.com/resources/>. Last accessed on 8 May 2018.

²⁶⁵ “UbuWeb FAQ,” last access on 28 March 2018.

²⁶⁶ Goldsmith 2006, 58.

²⁶⁷ “UbuWeb FAQ,” last access on 28 March 2018.

²⁶⁸ Wershler 2008, 3.

²⁶⁹ <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/ubuweb>. Last accessed on 14 May 2018.

²⁷⁰ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/online-galleries-put-art-for-everyone-in-the-frame-rms8h5khd>. Last accessed on 14 May 2018.

²⁷¹ Darren Wershler, “Uncreative is the New Creative: Kenneth Goldsmith Not Typing.” *Open Letter* 12.7 (Fall 2005): 158.

²⁷² Perloff 2006, 145.

²⁷³ Perloff’s exceptions fall into a category that she has described as “differential texts” (2002) – “texts that exist in different material forms, with no single version being the definitive ones” (2006, 146): Brian Kim Stefans’ *the dreamlife of letters* (1999), Caroline Bergvall’s *ambient fish* (1999), and Goldsmith’s *Soliloquy* (2001).

²⁷⁴ Perloff 2006, 144.

²⁷⁵ Perloff 2006, 144. *Aspen* is a multimedia magazine published from 1965 to 1971 by Phyllis Johnson. Via UbuWeb, users can access digitized copies of the various paper-based formats they published (prints, booklets, posters, postcards), audio recordings (phonograph and vinyl), spools of Super-8 film, and even the boxes that contained the original materials. In bringing together writers and artists such as Lou Reed and Marshall McLuhan, Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes, Yvonne Rainer and Ian Hamilton Finlay, Willem de Koonig and Jonas Mekas, *Aspen* is but one example of the many crucial documents on UbuWeb that exemplify the various meeting points between theory and artistic practice during the twentieth century.

²⁷⁶ Perloff 2006, 145.

²⁷⁷ Wershler 2008, 1.

²⁷⁸ Dockray 2012, 430.

²⁷⁹ Dockray 2012, 430.

²⁸⁰ Dockray 2012, 430.

²⁸¹ Dockray 2012, 430.

²⁸² Fong 2014, n.p.

²⁸³ Fong 2014, n.p.

²⁸⁴ Allen 2018, 240.

²⁸⁵ Peller 2015, 1.

²⁸⁶ In quoting extensively from the transcription of my dialogue with Goldsmith, as well as other Goldsmith dialogues, it is my intention to apply the “radical honesty” and “commitment to an ethics of speech” that Christian Bök sees as integral to Goldsmith’s practice in order to more comprehensively contextualize UbuWeb. See Bök 2005, 65, where he states: “Goldsmith thus makes an astounding commitment to an ethics of speech, owning up to all he says, taking credit for each word, be it kind or mean, doing so without embarrassment despite sociological consequences. While lawyers might now leap with evermore zeal to the defense of our copyright so that our words might receive due attribution, we often forget that we also utter disownable statements better left unassigned to us because we cannot bear to take credit for them. Who among us is willing to own all the we say behind the backs of our peers?[...] Who can sustain such radical honesty?”

²⁸⁷ For reflections on Dick Higgins’ passing, see UbuWeb’s collection of remembrances: <http://www.ubu.com/historical/higgins/index.html>. Last accessed 10 May 2018.

²⁸⁸ *foew&ombwhnw* is Higgins’ 1969 book of essays. The title is an acronym for: “freaked out electronic wizard and other marvelous bartenders who have no wings.”

²⁸⁹ Bergvall 2005, 88. Please note, that I have kept all of Bergvall’s original use, or absence, of punctuation for all the quotes attributed to this exchange.

²⁹⁰ Goldsmith’s *III* 2.7.93-10.20.96, published in 1997, is compiled of mainly appropriated language and complete texts. The work, though, functions primarily on an indexical level as opposed to the outright reframing of a complete text initially authored by others that would become more prominent in his texts *Day* (2003), *Weather* (2005), *Traffic* (2007), *Sports* (2008), and *Seven American Deaths and Disasters* (2013). To this extent, *III* has more in common compositionally with self-sourced transcriptive works like *Fidget* (2000), *Soliloquy* (2001), and the particlized and collaged aesthetic of *Capital: New York, Capital of the 20th Century* (2015).

²⁹¹ Appendix 3.

²⁹² Appendix 3. It is noteworthy that even long before Goldsmith began to articulate his approaches to conceptual writing, that he identified with a writer like Jarry, who, as Jerome McGann (2001, 2) notes, “laid a groundwork for post-romantic procedural writing” and “began to make clear once again the constructed character of textuality – the fact that texts and documents are fields open to decisive and rule-governed manipulations.”

²⁹³ On the Cable Building, Goldsmith states: “This is an amazing corner I had an office in this building the Cable Building it was my first poet-studio situation I consciously called it an office it was a great transition for me from being a studio artist to a writer I wrote 73 poems there I started off in a largish room that looked right onto Houston St here and I would be doing these textual wall pieces then I moved into a very cramped room with dropped ceilings and carpeting and that way I knew I couldn’t make any more visual art really I wasn’t able to and I wanted to do everything on the computer oh and *Soliloquy* took place here and *III* and ubuweb started here this is all probably 1990 I migrated to a laptop in the Cable Building” (Bergvall 2006, 87).

²⁹⁴ Bergvall 2005, 88.

²⁹⁵ Interview with SON[I]A on *Radio Web Macba*, 12 December 2017: https://rwm.macba.cat/en/kenneth_goldsmith_tag. Last accessed on 16 May 2018.

²⁹⁶ Geoffrey Young founded The Figures, a literary small press, in the mid-1970s in Berkeley, California. Closely associated with various lineages of Bay Area small press activity, and with

links to several practitioners of the then-forming west coast strand of Language poetics, The Figures stands as an interesting exemplar of intermedial moment in relation to Goldsmith's entry into the world and discourses of contemporary poetry. For each one of the books Young published with The Figures, he would pair the poet's work with an established artist who would contribute work for the cover and, often, the interior pages of the book. For more on the history of The Figures, see Young's "The Figures: A True Account of the Origina of a Literary Small Press," <http://www.geoffreyyoung.com/thefigures/history.html>. Last accessed on 24 June 2018.

²⁹⁷ Young 2005, 47.

²⁹⁸ Young 2005, 46. Young additionally notes that "the direction his work was going was less and less commercial, more and more about the book, so that it became something of a crisis with dealers. Kenny expected them to stay with him, knowing him to be a serious, committed artist, but they had to deal with the bottom line. By the time it went down, he had nothing for them to sell" (Young 2006, 47-8).

²⁹⁹ Young 2005, 48.

³⁰⁰ Young 2005, 47.

³⁰¹ Appendix 3.

³⁰² Goldsmith 2011, 54.

³⁰³ Goldsmith 2011, 54.

³⁰⁴ Eugen Gomringer, *The Book of Hours and Constellations* (New York: Something Else, 1968), n.p.

³⁰⁵ Mary Ellen Solt, ed. *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 10.

³⁰⁶ Goldsmith 2011, 58-9.

³⁰⁷ Goldsmith 2011, 37

³⁰⁸ See Bory's page on UbuWeb: <http://www.ubu.com/historical/bory/index.html>. Last accessed 5 May 2018.

³⁰⁹ See bpNichol's "eyes" at: <http://www.ubu.com/historical/nichol/nichol2.html>. Last accessed 5 May 2018.

³¹⁰ See Pignatari's "bebe coca cola" at: <http://www.ubu.com/historical/pignatari/pignatari1.html>. Last accessed 5 May 2018.

³¹¹ Goldsmith 2011, 50.

³¹² For an extended discussion on the sites and exchange of concrete poetry see Jamie Hilder, 2016.

³¹³ Goldsmith 2006, 50.

³¹⁴ Goldsmith 2006, 51.

³¹⁵ Young 2006, 48.

³¹⁶ Guevara 2014, 11.

³¹⁷ See Andrews' works *Divestitutre – A*, *WhDiP*, *a sequence from White Dialect Poetry*, and *Libretto from White Dialect Poetry* here: <http://www.ubu.com/ubu/>. Last accessed 5 May 2018.

³¹⁸ Cite specific pages in Introduction and Chapter 1.

³¹⁹ See Appendix 3: "... we were left in the wake of Language writing. Like, well, these guys got the last word in on Modernism, what the fuck else is there for us to do? And then, fortunately, oh, the digital came. That's our response. We got a response and we went with that. I think a lot of people, like, conceptualism has been – I said this to Christian the other day – I said, We've been on the stage as long as Language poetry was on the stage when we got there. And we just

wanted to fucking shred that stuff.” On poetry and agonism, see Harold Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

³²⁰ In a 2014 interview with Francisco Roman Guevara, Goldsmith states: “While many people feel that Conceptualism challenged the dominance of Language Poetry, time will show that Conceptualism is, in fact, an outgrowth of Language Poetry, one which extends a century-long investigation of radical poetics. On many levels, they’re the same project, with Conceptual writers adapting time-tested avant-garde strategies for the digital age” (Guevara 2014, 24).

³²¹ Guevara 2014, 14.

³²² Wershler 2008, 12.

³²³ Wershler 2008, 12. Also see Appendix 3: “Well, the ISP I still have is the ISP I’ve had since day one. Zarcrom. It was set up by this guy in France, Chris, who did Zarcrom. I don’t know why, I’ve just stuck with this guy for twenty years. Internet Service Provider. When you have a website you have to host it with someone. No, because it’s the Internet. You can be anywhere. No, no. I had done an art project called StadiumWeb. Do you know Stadium? It used to be, I think I gave it to DIA, but it was an early online artist project site, and somehow we hooked up with Zarcrom and that must have been 1994 or something like that.”

³²⁴ Wershler 2008, 12.

³²⁵ Appendix 3.

³²⁶ Bergvall 2005, 89.

³²⁷ Appendix 3.

³²⁸ From “Open Letter Creely Edit.rtf,” an unpublished document that appears to have been headed to the journal *Open Letter*, which I found on Kenneth Goldsmith’s hard drive, 28 May 2015.

³²⁹ Wershler 2008, 12. Goldsmith, in dialogue with Bergvall, declares that, “I got fired for letting everybody play videogames on company time” (Bergvall 2005, 87).

³³⁰ Gitelman 2006, 130.

³³¹ Gitelman 2006, 130.

³³² From the file “Open Letter Creely Edit” [*sic.*], dated 21 April 2000, on the 2015 copy of Goldsmith’s hard drive. I am uncertain whether or not Goldsmith published this text.

³³³ From the file “Open Letter Creely Edit” [*sic.*], dated 21 April 2000, on the 2015 copy of Goldsmith’s hard drive. I am uncertain whether or not Goldsmith published this text.

³³⁴ From the file “Open Letter Creely Edit” [*sic.*], dated 21 April 2000, on the 2015 copy of Goldsmith’s hard drive. There, concerning the effort and labour on UbuWeb, Goldsmith writes: “UbuWeb grew piecemeal over the years with the help of many hands and on many machines; through stolen moments at various jobs and through periods of full-time dedication. Over the past year and a half, I had a job where I got paid very well to do nothing. I was placed in front of a very fast computer connected to the web on a very fast connection. All I did for 50 hours a week during the course of that year was to tweak and grow UbuWeb. In particular, the sound poetry section became an obsession of mine. Every day I’d bring in sound poetry CDs to work and spend the day ripping them into wav files, converting them to RealMedia, ftp’ing the files up to Ubu and then scribbling the html.” Interestingly, at the end of this text, Goldsmith notes that this loss of UbuWeb has inspired its next incarnation: The Ubu Center for Technologically Advanced Poetry, in conjunction with Coach House Books, then under the editorship of Darren Wershler. Though never realized as a project, this idea no doubt fed into developing the /ubu editions series that would later be published on UbuWeb.

³³⁵ From the file “Open Letter Creely Edit” [*sic.*], dated 21 April 2000, on the 2015 copy of Goldsmith’s hard drive. I am uncertain whether or not Goldsmith published this text.

³³⁶ Goldsmith 2014, 255.

³³⁷ In a 2005 application to the Warhol Foundation, found on the 2015 hard drive of materials related to UbuWeb discussed in this chapter, Goldsmith writes in a mission statement on UbuWeb: “UbuWeb (ubu.com) is the internet’s largest site dedicated to the free distribution and dissemination of avant-garde and related materials. The site currently features over 5000 artists from dozens of countries and hosts nearly two terabytes of media materials.”

³³⁸ As Wershler (2008, 12) notes: “UbuWeb’s video was and is mostly culled from elsewhere by others and sent to Goldsmith rather than being directly ripped by him, so the variety of formats has always remained rather large and miscellaneous rather than being standardized into a single codec: MPEGs, QuickTime movies, AVI, etc.”

³³⁹ Wershler 2008, 7,

³⁴⁰ Wershler 2008, 12.

³⁴¹ It is worth noting here, in all the correspondence I’ve looked through regarding UbuWeb, that Goldsmith rarely, if ever, took responsibility for the backup of UbuWeb’s files.

³⁴² Email from Goldsmith, dated 5 May 2004, in Bernstein’s digital correspondence, preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

³⁴³ Email from Goldsmith, dated 31 May 2005, in Bernstein’s digital correspondence, preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

³⁴⁴ Email from Goldsmith, dated 18 October 2004, in Bernstein’s digital correspondence, preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

³⁴⁵ Email from Goldsmith, integrated into an exchange dated 30 May 2005, although the date of Goldsmith’s original sending is uncertain, preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

³⁴⁶ Email, from Kenneth Goldsmith, 28 June 2005: located in both the 2015 hard drive of UbuWeb materials, and also in Bernstein’s digital correspondence, preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

³⁴⁷ Email, from Kenneth Goldsmith, 28 June 2005: located in both the 2015 hard drive of UbuWeb materials, and also in Bernstein’s digital correspondence, preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

³⁴⁸ Personal correspondence with Darren Wershler, 4 September 2018.

³⁴⁹ The period roughly follows the path from the Goldsmith issue of *Open Letter*, a small press journal of writing and theory, to the release of Goldsmith and Dworkin *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (2010 – which grew out of Dworkin’s anthology of conceptual writing for UbuWeb in 2003), published in between Goldsmith’s curation of conceptual writing and flarf poetry in *Poetry Magazine* (July 2009) and his reading and teaching of uncreative writing at the Obama White House (May 2011).

³⁵⁰ Darren Wershler, personal email, 29 May 2018.

³⁵¹ Appendix 3.

³⁵² Darren Wershler, personal email, 29 May 2018.

³⁵³ Guillory 2004, 110.

³⁵⁴ Kirschenbaum 2008, 97.

³⁵⁵ Kirschenbaum 2008, 88.

³⁵⁶ Appendix 3.

³⁵⁷ Wershler 2008, 4.

³⁵⁸ Appendix 3.

³⁵⁹ It's worth noting here the fact that the editors of all three digital repositories generally rely upon antiquated forms of Web production in building their sites.

³⁶⁰ Appendix 3. All Wiley Agency exchanges are documented, additionally, on the 2015 hard drive discussed in this section.

³⁶¹ Appendix 3. All Wiley Agency exchanges are documented, additionally, on the 2015 hard drive discussed in this section. (The use, in examples of this latter tone, of all-caps is notable.)

³⁶² Appendix 3.

³⁶³ Appendix 3.

³⁶⁴ Wershler 2008, 5

³⁶⁵ As of 28 February 2005, UbuWeb – as part of the UbuWeb Foundation Inc. – has had 501 (c)(3) status.

³⁶⁶ Appendix 3.

³⁶⁷ Echeveria would later curate Goldsmith at her gallery LABOR for his 2013 project *Printing Out the Internet*, see figures 2.29 and 2.30.

³⁶⁸ Appendix 4.

³⁶⁹ Appendix 4.

³⁷⁰ Appendix 4.

³⁷¹ Appendix 4.

³⁷² Wershler 2008, 1-2.

³⁷³ Appendix 4.

³⁷⁴ Exchange rate based upon that of 30 May 2018.

³⁷⁵ Personal email from CENTRO information and technology manager, Serio Rios Casas, dated 2 March 2015.

³⁷⁶ Appendix 4.

³⁷⁷ On the “digital real,” see Tom Boellstorff, “For Whom the Ontology Turns: Theorizing the Digital Real,” *Current Anthropology* 57, no. 4 (August 2016): 387-407.

³⁷⁸ Personal email from CENTRO information and technology manager, Serio Rios Casas, dated 2 March 2015.

³⁷⁹ Personal email from CENTRO information and technology manager, Serio Rios Casas, dated 2 March 2015.

³⁸⁰ http://revista-animal.com/current_issue/la-economia-creativa/the-creative-economy/. Last accessed on 2 June 2018.

³⁸¹ http://revista-animal.com/current_issue/la-economia-creativa/the-creative-economy/. Last accessed on 2 June 2018.

³⁸² http://revista-animal.com/current_issue/la-economia-creativa/the-creative-economy/. Last accessed on 2 June 2018.

³⁸³ Although the *ubu-mirror.ch* address does not appear to be attached to any specific organization, the *memoryoftheworld.org* URL address does: it matches, in name, with a program designed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which, according to its Wikipedia page, is “an initiative launched to safeguard the documentary heritage of humanity against collective amnesia, neglect, the ravages of time and climatic conditions, and willful and deliberate destruction.” Yet, the Memory of the World that appears to host the majority of UbuWeb’s rich media files at the time of this writing (June 2018) does not

appear to be the same Memory of the World that is sponsored by UNESCO. In fact, upon contacting the Memory of the World that hosts UbuWeb to ask about their relation to the UNESCO program, they write:

³⁸⁴ <http://custodians.online/ubu>. Last accessed 8 June 2018.

³⁸⁵ <http://custodians.online/ubu>. Last accessed on 2 June 2018.

³⁸⁶ <http://poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2011/04/ubuwweb-at-15-years-an-overview>. Last accessed on 2 June 2018.

³⁸⁷ Goldsmith 2014, 251.

³⁸⁸ <http://www.ubu.com/resources/>. Last accessed on 8 May 2018.

³⁸⁹ Farge 1989, 147. Trans. Scott-Railton 2013, 123.

³⁹⁰ Cabri 2007, 3-4.

³⁹¹ Wheeler 2008, 22.

³⁹² Wheeler 2008, 52.

³⁹³ Wheeler 2008, 87.

³⁹⁴ Cite page span of Works Cited for Wheeler.

³⁹⁵ Eichhorn 2009, 184.

³⁹⁶ Eichhorn 2009, 184.

³⁹⁷ Bernstein 1998, 7.

³⁹⁸ Eichhorn 2009, 188.

³⁹⁹ Eichhorn 2009, 189.

⁴⁰⁰ See Middleton 270.

⁴⁰¹ Eichhorn 2009, 190.

⁴⁰² Furr 2010, 10.

⁴⁰³ Furr 2010, 4-5.

⁴⁰⁴ Furr 2010, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ Allison 2014, 37.

⁴⁰⁶ Allison 2014, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ Allison 2014, 4-5.

⁴⁰⁸ Allison 2014, 5.

⁴⁰⁹ Allison 2014, 5.

⁴¹⁰ Snelson 2014, n.p.

⁴¹¹ Snelson 2014, n.p.

⁴¹² Snelson 2014, n.p.

⁴¹³ Snelson 2014, n.p.

⁴¹⁴ Snelson 2014, n.p.

⁴¹⁵ Fong 2014, n.p.

⁴¹⁶ Fong 2014, n.p.

⁴¹⁷ Fong 2014, n.p.

⁴¹⁸ Bernstein 2009, 964-5, emphasis mine.

⁴¹⁹ Fong 2014, n.p.

⁴²⁰ Fong 2014, n.p.

⁴²¹ Though not initially intended for playback, in 1860, Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville's attempts to capture the human voice with his phonautograph – a machine meant to record sounds visually – offer up two instances of poetic recitation: the first – “Au clair de la lune / mon ami Pierrot / prête moi” – from the French folk song; and the second – “S’il faut qu’à ce rival

Hédelmone infidèle / Ait remis ce bandeau! Dans leur rage cruelle / Nos lions du désert, sous leur antre brûlant” – from Jean-François Ducis’s translations of Shakespeare’s *Othello*. See Jody Rosen, “Researchers Play Tune Recorded Before Edison,” *New York Times*, March 27, 2008, as well as “Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville’s Phonautograms” on *First Sounds* for details about how researchers would develop methods to play back these phonautograms:

<http://www.firstsounds.org/sounds/scott.php.ac>.

⁴²² W.H. Auden. 1944, x.

⁴²³ John Picker 2003, 126.

⁴²⁴ Picker 2003, 122-3

⁴²⁵ Bernstein 1998, 4.

⁴²⁶ Ong 1971, 1977, 1982; McLuhan 1962, 1967, 1968; Goody 1977; Havelock 1981, 1986, to name only the most widely-cited examples.

⁴²⁷ See Sterne 2003; 2011.

⁴²⁸ For example, Wheeler 2008, an often-cited resource for works in this field.

⁴²⁹ See Derrida 1967 a, 1967 b; see Sterne 2003. 14-19.

⁴³⁰ See Furr 2010.

⁴³¹ See Appendix 6.

⁴³² See Nardone 2014

⁴³³ Evans 2012.

⁴³⁴ Kahn 2001.

⁴³⁵ Chopin 1979

⁴³⁶ See Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 19.

⁴³⁷ Thomas Edison, “The Phonograph and Its Future” in Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, Tony Grajeda, eds., *Music, Sound and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema and Radio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 29-32.

⁴³⁸ Link to Moten:

⁴³⁹ As no version of this talk has been published in written form, all transcriptions from it – and therefore any errors – are my own.

⁴⁴⁰ Alexandra T. Vazquez, *Listening in Detail: Performances of Cuban Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 15.

⁴⁴¹ Vazquez 2013, 23.

⁴⁴² Vazquez 2013, 24.

⁴⁴³ Vazquez 2013, 20.

⁴⁴⁴ Appendix 6.

⁴⁴⁵ Goldsmith 2007.

⁴⁴⁶ For an extensive listening to this recording, see Michael S. Hennessey (2007). There, Hennessey writes: “We know very little about the text of “1–100”: the poem has never been published in any of Bernstein’s books, and its sole appearance is as part of *Class*, a 1983 cassette release by Baltimore’s Widemouth Tapes,” and then notes that “it is not large stretch to think of “1–100” ... as operating within the tradition of Dada – and more proximally, of Fluxus – performance pieces” (68). During our conversations on PennSound, Bernstein actually came upon the reel-to-reel tape on which he initially recorded “1–100” in October, 1969, and documented his finding on *Jacket2* here: <http://jacket2.org/commentary/1-100-1969>.

⁴⁴⁷ Appendix 6.

⁴⁴⁸ See: <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Bernstein-1975-76.html>.
⁴⁴⁹ Appendix 6.
⁴⁵⁰ Both works are available as facsimile PDF editions via the Eclipse Archive. *Asylums*:
<http://eclipsearchive.org/projects/ASYLUMS/html/contents.html>; and *Parsing*:
<http://eclipsearchive.org/projects/PARSING/html/contents.html>.
⁴⁵¹ Appendix 6.
⁴⁵² The Ear Inn reading series continues today if one considers the series format – usually two paired readers, taking place on Saturday afternoons – as continuous from the original Ear Inn readings through its migration into the Segue reading series and its various sites: HERE Café (1998), Double Happiness (1998-2001), Bowery Poetry Club (2002-2012), Zinc Bar (2012-present).
⁴⁵³ Kane, 2003, xv
⁴⁵⁴ See Sica, Deb, “tapes_index.doc: Annotated Bibliography,” published as Appendix 8 in this dissertation.
⁴⁵⁵ <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Live-at-the-Ear-1994.html>
⁴⁵⁶ <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Live-at-the-Ear-1994.html>, 20 May 2016.
⁴⁵⁷ <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Ear-Inn.php>, 20 May 2016.
⁴⁵⁸ <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Buffalo.php>, 20 May 2016.
⁴⁵⁹ All LINEbreak recordings are archived here:
<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/LINEbreak.php>
⁴⁶⁰ Bernstein 1992, 1.
⁴⁶¹ Bernstein 1992, 2.
⁴⁶² Bernstein 1998, 3. Quoted from Spicer, *Collected Poems*, 373.
⁴⁶³ Compare, for example, Spicer’s discussion of the poetic reception of language in his first Vancouver lecture (1998) with Bob Perelman’s “Language Writing, Language History” (1996, 33) in which he details a process in which “reading and writing, hearing and producing words were so jammed together, to emblemize an important collaborative element of the beginnings of the language movement.” See also Davidson, “Into the Breach,” 2012.
⁴⁶⁴ See Perelman 1998; Hejinian 2000; Watten 2003.
⁴⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, “What Is a Minor Literature?,” *Mississippi Review* 11.3 (Winter/Spring, 1993): 13-33. 18.
⁴⁶⁶ Hejinian 2000, 323.
⁴⁶⁷ Bernstein 1998, 2.
⁴⁶⁸ Bernstein 1998, 21.
⁴⁶⁹ Bernstein 1998, 5.
⁴⁷⁰ Bernstein 1998, 8.
⁴⁷¹ Bernstein, “MakingAudioVisible-TP-with-addendum.doc,” (1 July 2007) 1.
⁴⁷² Bernstein 2011, 112.
⁴⁷³ Bernstein 2011, 113.
⁴⁷⁴ Bernstein 2011, 114.
⁴⁷⁵ Bernstein 2011, 115.
⁴⁷⁶ See: <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/deformance.html>. 22 May 2016.
⁴⁷⁷ See McGann 2013, 2014.
⁴⁷⁸ O’Neill 2001.

⁴⁷⁹ This is the class that, in 2012, would become a “massive open online course” or MOOC available via Coursera, and discussed in detail in Kristina A. Bicher’s “The Web Poet’s Society,” *The Atlantic*, January 7, 2015: <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/01/web-poets-society/384283/>.

⁴⁸⁰ See Appendix 6.

⁴⁸¹ E-mail, 28 November 2001

⁴⁸² E-mail, 15 November 2002. This talk, given on a panel with Marjorie Perloff and Johanna Drucker at the Society for Textual Scholarship (2003), would be an initial version of Bernstein’s essay “Making Audio Visible: The Lessons of Visual Language for the Textualization of Sound” (2009).

⁴⁸³ Emails, 7 January 2003; 18 February 2003.

⁴⁸⁴ Email, 16 February 2003.

⁴⁸⁵ Email 3 March 2003.

⁴⁸⁶ Email 3 March 2003.

⁴⁸⁷ Email 3 March 2003.

⁴⁸⁸ Here, it is worth pointing out that the MP3 was, at the time of Bernstein’s writing, a proprietary format. The majority of MP3 patents expired in the US between 2007 and 2015.

⁴⁸⁹ E-mail, 3 March 2003.

⁴⁹⁰ For example, in an email dated 28 September 2003, Filreis writes to Bernstein that poet Sally Van Doren’s issues accessing PennSound’s files through her telephone modem – she had expressed her excitement over the collection and also her frustration that it took over eight minutes to open and download a two-minute MP3 recording – could be alleviated if that file were streamable on the site through RealAudio.

⁴⁹¹ Sterne 2012, 1-2.

⁴⁹² Sterne 2012, 1.

⁴⁹³ Email 3 March 2003.

⁴⁹⁴ See, for instance, the US Library of Congress’s “Recommended Format Statement” here: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/audio.html#independent>; or the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives’s “Key Digital Principles” regarding file formats here: <http://www.iasa-web.org/tc04/key-digital-principles>.

⁴⁹⁵ Appendix 5.

⁴⁹⁶ Appendix 6.

⁴⁹⁷ E-mail, 5 December 2003.

⁴⁹⁸ <http://writing.upenn.edu/welcome.php>.

⁴⁹⁹ Email, 8 December 2003.

⁵⁰⁰ Email, 9 December 2003.

⁵⁰¹ Appendix 5.

⁵⁰² Ron Silliman’s Blog, 5 January 2005: <https://ronsilliman.blogspot.com/2005/01/blog-post.html>. Last accessed on 8 June 2018.

⁵⁰³ Ron Silliman’s Blog, 5 January 2005: <https://ronsilliman.blogspot.com/2005/01/blog-post.html>. Last accessed on 8 June 2018.

⁵⁰⁴ Email, 23 May 2016.

⁵⁰⁵ Email, 23 May 2016.

⁵⁰⁶ Email, 23 May 2016.

⁵⁰⁷ Email, 23 May 2016.

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- ⁵⁰⁸ Sica 1996, 94.
- ⁵⁰⁹ Email, 23 May 2016.
- ⁵¹⁰ Latour and Woolgar 1986, 51.
- ⁵¹¹ Law 2004, 20.
- ⁵¹² <https://news.upenn.edu/news/pennsound-all-free-poetry-you-care-download>.
- ⁵¹³ I have archived most of these transcriptions here: <http://soundobject.net/projects/jacket2/>.
- ⁵¹⁴ Filreis 2006, 128.
- ⁵¹⁵ <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/1960-Symposium.php>
- ⁵¹⁶ Through my research into these subjects, my interlocutors named numerous institutions, such as Dia Art Foundation, that have extensive repositorial holdings of media related to their programmings, the majority of which is unpermissioned and therefore largely inaccessible to users.
- ⁵¹⁷ Galloway 2012.
- ⁵¹⁸ Barthes 1966, 55. Translated by Katherine Pilcher Keuneman (London: Continuum, 2007), 28.
- ⁵¹⁹ <http://mcpres.media-commons.org/plannedobsolescence/>. Last accessed on 28 June 2018.
- ⁵²⁰ Farge 2003, 31.
- ⁵²¹ Michel Foucault, “La vie des hommes infâmes,” *Cahiers du chemin* no. 29 (January 15, 1977): 13.
- ⁵²² Here, I draw on the work of Werner Hamacher, in particular his *Minima Philologica*, trans. Catharine Diehl and Jason Groves. (New York: Forhdam University Press, 2015.).

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Appendix 1

A Dialogue with Loss Pequeño Glazier on the Electronic Poetry Center

This dialogue with Loss Pequeño Glazier is an edited transcript from three days of conversations at his University at Buffalo office, 6–8 June 2016. In it we discuss the construction of the Electronic Poetry Center through the lens of Glazier's commitment to experimental poetry and the history of its publishing practices, bibliography, as well as his numerous explorations of code and computer programming languages.

Michael Nardone: *Going back to your Digital Poetics book, I find it incredible how relevant it still is, how the book charts out so much that has become central to various discourses on the digital, literature, archival activity, pedagogy, and what has become since then the digital humanities in general.*

Loss Glazier: Yes, I find it interesting, too, all the things that didn't happen. Or maybe have not yet happened. Some days I find myself more positive than other days. I guess I tend to be an optimist. I saw a clear trajectory from Black Mountain and pre-Black Mountain and the practices of Cage and Duncan and Creeley – you probably know that I arrived here when Creeley was here. I guess from there I moved to Language poetry. Charles was here. That was when I started working independently and without any peer in the world on the Electronic Poetry Center. Then, I felt that the natural movement would be from poetry into technology and beyond. I'd like to speak openly and honestly about all of this. I feel like your interest merits the utmost directness. I also feel like we're at a major turning point...

Will you say more about this "turning point"? I ask because I feel like there is a big shift happening too, and I am curious about your sense of it.

Well, on the aesthetic level, it may have been a great missed opportunity that poetry didn't meld with computing. There are people I can name and you can find them in little magazines of the period when Charles was here. Charles was a transformative figure here. So was Bob Creeley...

Who had a deep interest in technology and computing, which is something that is rarely discussed in terms of Creeley's work.

Yes, he did have that interest, and he was totally behind the EPC. Did you ever read his blurb about my poetry book?

No, I haven't.

I have two blurbs. One is from Charles and the other is from Bob. “Loss Pequeño Glazier is perhaps best known as the brilliantly particular master of poetry's new home in cyberspace, Electronic Poetry Center, with 10 million users in 90 countries.” That would have been written around 2005, so the numbers are from that time. “A veritable Pied Piper of possibilities, his own transforming works, here collected, are without question at the cutting edge of it all. So dance to the pixels and enjoy.” So, for a person who was at that time probably already into his seventies, it was pretty visionary of him to have this support for me and for the EPC. Charles would have been maybe in his fifties when he came here.

Charles was born in 1950.

Okay, he came here in 1989, so that makes sense. He mutated toward the digital field, and mutated it in a way that is incomparable. So the one missed opportunity was at that point – well, I don't know if he was comfortable with code, you can ask him, not that code is everything, but it's ironic after works like LIFT OFF and some of the other works VEIL, and his work with Hannah Weiner, where code is something that is apart from language and yet part of language. So it's that interesting dichotomy that makes so many things work. It makes love work, friendships work. It makes human relationships possible. You have two similar things that are things that are sort of similar things but are different things.

So, he never quite could adapt to code. We spent many, many hours together working on things. When I started the EPC, I started before 1994, before the Internet was turned on, so I wrote it in this code and had some programs that would convert it to HTML.

What was the code that you wrote this in?

In PERL scripts. There was a master PERL script that would take out the Gopher commands – because it was a Gopher system – and turn it into HTML to be able to put it on the Web. So, for a few seconds, I had the largest web site in the world in 1994, and it was poetry.

What sort of things were you collecting at that point?

Well, that brings up two issues. One is the archival issue, which might be more what you are leaning towards. So, I have three kind of main areas of interest. One would be archival–bibliographic. The other area would be poetics, or perhaps poetics-slash-new science. Then the third area would be the content. On the content, my idea was this, and I think in retrospect I saw... Wait, have you seen my book on small press?

I know of it, but I have not been able to track down a copy.

This is it.

This is your first book?

Yes, well, my first scholarly book. This is an annotated bibliography.

I know you did a Masters of Library Science at Berkeley.

Yes, in 1986. I come from an ethnic background, and never really had the opportunity or the funding to do a PhD, so I went to Berkeley and I got a Masters in Library and Information Studies, where I specialized in bibliography, which appealed to me enormously, and at the same time a Masters in English. With Robert Pinsky, he signed off on my Masters dissertation.

What drew you toward bibliographic studies?

It's a very specific kind of bibliography that I did with this book on small press. I was interested in the role of the little magazine and small presses – for example, Creeley's Divers press – and the mimeo revolution of the 1960s where people could publish books that were non-corporate and not subject to review.

This is a difference between the Electronic Literature Organization and e-Poetry, which is the series I've done of digital poetry festivals – it's that they have a board of directors of twenty or so people. Okay, it's fine that they have this, but when you get twenty people to agree on something, it's a different thing then when you have, for example, a gallery. With a gallery, you have one person who might be a bit loopy because their spending all their time and money on this thing, but they love it, and that person has taste and the gallery functions by their taste.

This makes think about how I was just in Mexico and I went to some bookstores and in each one the selection was magnificent. They are not big bookstores, but each one is particular and has its own specific interests. You could never go through enough catalogues and find this many amazing books. You have to go to the bookstore and partake in the taste of the bookstore owner. It's about curation.

As opposed to the MLA, which is like Did you know Milton had three moles on his left finger and because of that there are three chapters in Paradise Lost where a mole is a significant aspect of the narrative, and twenty people agree, Oh, yeah, that's interesting, man, that's scholarly.

We only have so many years in life. Right? What are you going to do with your life? Are you going to study the three moles on Milton's finger, or look at Eigner's first book which was published by Creeley's Divers press in Majorca, Spain? I mean, there's no value judgment – I could be totally wrong. Maybe it's more interesting to do the Milton thing, but all I can say is for myself – considering my limited amount of time on this planet – that I will go for the Eigner.

In thinking about Eigner's book published by Creeley, do you think there's a certain preservational impulse that guides your interest toward including a book like and other small press works in a bibliography?

For me, it's like archaeology. I focused on bibliography because I love the precision and I love the detail of doing that kind of work. This ties into my love of code, too. In code, one comma could make all the difference between something functioning and not functioning. I love this kind of detail.

My first job, after my MLIS, was as a curator for a literary collection in Los Angeles, one like the Poetry Collection but it was much more limited in its range and mostly dedicated to LA authors. LA authors weren't that interesting to me, because this collection really focused on screenwriters and that kind of thing.

Where was the collection?

At USC. They have a fabulous collection of screenplays there. And they had some interesting poetry, too, but it wasn't exactly what I was interested in. When the job came up in Buffalo, I knew Creeley was here and I decided I needed to go, even despite the climate.

What year was that?

That was 1988.

Creeley came here before the Poetics Program started as a professor, is that right?

Yeah, Creeley. I don't know his institutional history, but I know they wanted him here. There was a time when Buffalo had a lot of money and they wanted to build a good English department here. Cook was the Chair and he did everything possible to have Creeley be associated with Buffalo, including paying Creeley when he lived in Bolinas for a number of years when he was listed as a professor here and had some duties that he would come and do each year. In any case, it worked out later that Creeley settled here. He needed to settle down. He was, like I said, in his 70s. Then, when he came and Charles came, they then hired Susan Howe, and all three decided to make the Poetics Program. It was the first poetics program. It included Dennis Tedlock. At the start of the Poetics Program, I was one of the core faculty, because at that time I had created the Electronic Poetry Center, which I originally saw as a kind of central organ for a lot of different poetic projects, and not so much as an archive, although my impulse has always been archival.

Bibliography I like because – to get back to that earlier statement about it being like archaeology – in doing it you can see the trails of influence and so on. That's different than a critical point of view. I'm not so much interested in when Creeley met Dorn and what might have changed in his work. I'm in it to find this quality of exuberance and this fragile moment when two or three

things meet. I like tracing the history of these confluences. So when I came to Buffalo and librarians are on a tenure track here. I was also attracted to Buffalo because you can do a PhD here as a librarian. They give you one course a semester. So you can do your PhD here on the side, which is something I always wanted to do. Instead of doing something on small presses – there was just too much you could do in that field – I did my book as a bibliography of books about small presses. I did an annotated bibliography, too. As a librarian, you're not allowed to be creative or scholarly. You're supposed to be, I don't know, service-oriented. But I made all my annotations creative, so that I was doing creative writing but I was providing them with all the data and factual stuff about the books, but I would take off and improvise on certain ideas about a topic.

What year did you end up publishing this?

In 1992. This got me tenure here at Buffalo.

One thing about bibliography is variant editions and alternative editions, and this is something that has fascinated me with digital poetry – how you can code a single poem so that it can be composed in a different way each time you go to the Web page where it's published. Each time you get a variant version. Making poems using computation in such a way is one direction I thought poetry would go. I mean, there are a million ways it can go. This is just what I do.

Yet poets kept on producing little books from presses called Rot Dog Press or Mutt's Ear Chowder or something like that. That's good and all, but I'm not sure what it's for. I actually have read a few books from more major presses like Wesleyan, and I have to admit that it's very good poetry. But nobody reads it!

I'm half-Mexican, and I spend a lot of time in Spanish-speaking areas. I was in Buenos Aires last year, and in Costa Rica, and I was just in Mexico last week. And, for seven years, I was in Cuba often, and I've also spent a lot of time in southern Spain. One thing I learned by being in all of these places is that poets were very important people and poetry was a very important cultural activity! A public cultural activity.

One thing I know that relates to poetry in a lot of these locations is how widely the works of poets were circulated.

Right, that's the other issue. Who reads it? When did people stop reading poetry? Maybe it happens with the rise of consumer culture?

What happened with the computing end of things for me was that I saw this as an open platform. I would allow no advertising. I would use no proprietary software. It was all open-source software. Which, by the way, a lot of digital work that people are attempting to reconstruct now from previous programs that are no longer profitable, most of them are impossible to reconstruct. Everything I've ever written and coded works because it's all vanilla.

There's something important to using the open source software that allows for the formats to be continuous or have a greater longevity with changes to a site, correct?

Yes, that's true. Everything on the EPC that ever worked works still. As long as you have the link, the target of the link is still there. Everything still works. I have maybe 30,000 files.

You started writing the EPC in PERL scripts in 1992, you said?

Yes, 1992-1993. So, in 1994, I converted everything to HTML. But I was always writing everything in UNIX. Which you try to write it on a Mac or on a PC, if you're not using a native text editor, it's always putting stuff in for you to the point that it will add the links. So I always use native generic text editors. People who use out-of-the-box software, as does the new Poetics Program, which is the McCaffery program, which has since the very beginning totally rejected the EPC and decided they were going to make something bigger and better and have nothing to do with the EPC.

There's a general shift toward privatization--

You know what they're using? What's the site that everybody's using?

WordPress?

Yeah! They're using WordPress! They don't even own their stuff, because the second that you put your stuff on one of those machines, it's theirs. And if they go bust, you lose your product. You lose your material. Whereas I have every single bit of my stuff carefully backed up.

To speak about the content of the EPC, I had a lot of these little magazines and new a lot of the earlier editions with poems.

Did you own the materials yourself, or did you have access to them through the Poetry Collection?

Normally, I owned everything because the Poetry Collection wouldn't give me copies. Anyway, I was able to put together some histories of little magazines and had some early copies of things like The Four Horsemen. And when Charles came to UB, he's probably someone who has been to more poetry readings than anyone you and I will ever know. Probably ten thousand! And he has a lot of them all on tape.

I've been writing about his tape collection! I believe he had them all up and organized on a wall in his office?

Yes, he did. Just over there in Clemens Hall. I mean, that's something to keep in mind: everything started with the EPC. Charles started his collection of sound recordings on the EPC. They became PennSound. When he moved to Penn, he took his section of the EPC with him. So, PennSound started with the EPC. And with UbuWeb, I went to New York and met Kenny and helped him set up UbuWeb. Everything came from here.

Nobody was catching on to this technology at all. No one was interested in coding, although I spent many hours with Charles trying to help him learn coding but it didn't work out. Although, he does some coding.

Yes, I believe he does some of the PennSound coding.

Then, I began this thing called the e-poetry Festival. There were people all over the world doing this kind of work, so in 2001 I started this festival. Charles helped fund it and he spoke at the first one. I've done one of those every two years since. They're very creative. At some point, the

ELO started to imitate me and then try to run me out of business even though I didn't have a business. And they're trying to run a festival every year. But their criterion is that the more people that do it the better. They are raking in hundreds of thousands of dollars in running their thing... My e-poetry festivals were done out of joy, as a literary pleasure. There were many beautiful moments during those events. I had one here, one in West Virginia, one in London, one in Paris, one in Barcelona, then I think we came back here, and then one in Buenos Aires. The next one is up in the air, even though it's listed on the site as Poland. These events unified the e-poetry communities in a certain way.

The ELO just got this multi-million dollar grant to make a database of literature. It's a total travesty. It already existed on the EPC! But the ELO person wanted to make a European equivalent or something. Rather than collaborating, it was a matter of competition for them.

Who does the ELO?

Scott Rettberg is the person who originally started it. At an electronic literature event in Los Angeles in 2002, he questioned me and got a lot of ideas – he stole the ideas – and then backdated his site so it started in 2001 instead of 2002, so he could be the person who started it, but he's not. He's not really a writer and not really a scholar. He's more like a fundraiser.

This is something that people ask me: Why don't you raise money? I mean, it's a completely different line of work! It's not what I do. Kudos to those who do. But anyway, if you go and look at his site – it's called ELMSIP – it's full of errors. People appear in things where they actually didn't appear. Users enter their own data. Often, you'll find it's erroneous. It's worse to have erroneous data than no data.

In crowdsourcing it, it sounds like he doesn't have the editorial capacities to go through and edit everything.

I do believe in editorial presence.

That's an important part of the EPC, the fact that it is edited and curated.

Right, and I get numerous requests each week from people who want to be added. My only problem is that Jack Crick, who has been really helpful – he thinks it's completely absurd that I want to keep a balance of women and men poets. He got really upset last time that we discussed it. He keeps adding men! I'm not being politically correct, I'm just saying...

It's important. It's fundamentally important to have that factored into the editing.

And I would say that there should be a balance of ethnically diverse authors, too, which I have accomplished in my E-Poetry Festival series, but not on the EPC.

A friend of mine was in touch with Jack Crick recently to set up an author page for Kevin Davies.

And yes, bear in mind that there are many authors that should be up there. You just gave a perfect example of someone. I'm not in disagreement with that, but I was simply saying, Great, and what woman are you going to pick, too?

I think everything with the EPC is in a crucial stage right now, which is what makes this a very timely occasion for you to do this work. I hope that it points toward a solution. That's what my dissertation tried to do. My dissertation was about how to create the Electronic Poetry Center. My dissertation had a real role in literary culture.

I'm actually planning to head over to the library later to look at your dissertation. I've seen it before, while I was going through Charles's archives at Yale. He has a copy of it in his papers there. But I want to go back for a second to this 1992-93 moment. You're writing these things in PERL scripts, you put them up on the web in 1994 and everything is written in HTML. I think 1994 is the start of the Poetics List as well?

We set that up for Charles in 1993, I think. I started the Poetics List – I did the programming for it. There was a bit of uncertainty as what really started when, but at some point we just decided Poetics List in 1993 and EPC in 1994.

So, you were involved in setting up the Poetics List?

Yes, if you go into the archives which are still up on the EPC, I have some statement about it's launch. The other thing we did at the same time that bridged Charles's collection with the Web version is LINEbreak, which was a series we did with Martin Spinelli. What I had to is that they really didn't believe you could do sound on the Web, so I had set up a server using two different kinds of software and then we made LINEbreak with Spinelli. He was a radio guy, so he did the actual interviews with Charles. But that was the break that got Charles interested in the possibility of sound and the Web.

My small press background became important in that I hated the idea that if you wanted to see, let's say, *Credences* number 6 with a certain poem by Ed Dorn in it, you needed to have the money to come to Buffalo to actually see the journal. And even if you do, the Poetry Collection is only open from 9 to 5. What I wanted to do was to make an online Special Collections. All the little materials that I had, I started putting up. And Charles, of course, had access to hundreds of authors, and he started putting things up. And that's how we started the major thing that we have now on the EPC, the library.

Presently, the library is mainly PDFs, but originally it was HTML, correct?

Yes.

So you would get one of Charles's Credences number 6 and you would get that and start copying poems out of it?

Well, there's a permissions issue. If it's a single-author work, then it's really easy. So, our stuff is built on that. As far as *Credences* goes, if we get the editor's permission – they'd usually just say, yeah, sure – and we'd put it up. Technically, we're supposed to get every author's permission. But we didn't ask for that, and so we'd just put the whole run up. And nobody has ever complained. Well, there have been complaints and I've removed those works. It was really a matter of making those authors available to the public and having a way to teach them, et cetera.

Can you recall some of the works you were copying and putting up on the first iteration of the EPC?

No, but I wonder if I could figure out... I think I started out basically with the Web pages of people I knew. That would be Charles, some stuff of mine. Oh, and Kenneth Sherwood and I did *RIFT* magazine.

I know Ken. We worked together on a project down in Austin, Texas.

I guess we had a kind of falling out. I didn't mean it to happen. He had a different philosophy. Perhaps being a librarian is in part being a control freak. He simply liked to link things so that when you'd click something you'd jump somewhere else and you didn't know where you were. At some point, I suggested the EPC and he went along with it, and I said let's set it up. He went with his wife to Spain for a semester and I did all the work. When he came back he just started linking all this stuff, and I got freaked out and I cut his permissions to the site, and I don't think he's ever forgiven me for that. It was without malice, but it was simply a different concept for the project. I could see how his concept might work. You would read something, say, the word "lemon" in a Gertrude Stein poem and it would be a link that would lead you to some other poem by someone else. That just wasn't my attention. Maybe I should publish some note of apology to make sure that is on the record.

And I started with other people, like Amiri Baraka, who was a friend of the family – the family being Creeley and Charles and Susan. So I had those four, some stuff from Ken Sherwood. We had maybe a core of twenty people at the start. With Creeley, we got access to some Olson stuff, too. That was enough to work on, with no staff and no funding.

Would you just start copying the books and put them up there?

No, I started everything in HTML.

So you would hand-copy everything in the book and write it in HTML so it would appear on the site?

Yeah.

That's an intense amount of labour.

After a while, it became impossible to do that anymore.

Scanning is also an intense amount of labour, too. I'm thinking of the PDF and how that format functions on the Eclipse Archive, which has also melded with the EPC at various points.

Yes, Eclipse also comes out of the EPC. Dworkin was a student here, probably in the second generation of Charles' students. Anyway, yes, it's all an incredible amount of labour. One thing you wanted to talk about, too, were the servers, right?

Yes, where are the servers?

I have servers here but I'm in a constant battle to maintain them – well, because computing people will often throw something away when it is superseded. I mean, I get it – you maybe don't want a lot of earlier versions of Microsoft Word on your computer. They don't really see the difference, though, when it comes to poetry. Every year I get a document from computing that says there are hundreds of pages that have been on the server since 1998. Would you like us to remove them?

The answer is no!

Exactly.

Do you tell them that you do bibliographic work and this is part of it?

It's an archive!

They would have to understand that.

They have been good in that there was some intrigue or politics at the higher level of the computing center, which I think Charles was part of, so I got in touch with the guy at the head of the computing center and I think they got the instructions to be hands-off. We're bigger than any website at UB, which we should be! It's an archive too. So, they look at the websites, for example, of the volleyball club.

The nice thing [with my relationship with the computing centre and using the UB servers] is that it's backed up every day. Then every week it's backed and those days are gone. Then every month it's backed up and those weeks are gone. So there's a whole trail of back-ups. Even if one computer breaks we're pretty much guaranteed to have back-ups. This, though, is pretty much set up for while I'm alive. I asked the Poetry Collection if they might be interested in taking the EPC under their wing, and they are not interested. They want me to do it forever. But I can't because I'm not going to live forever. The other option would be to give it to Charles, but ... I think it has more of an impact in being distributed than in being in one place. All it takes is one person to press one button and everything gets erased. Now, we're talking about probably a million hours of work.

So, I was doing all the work in HTML – I'm sorry, perhaps I changed abruptly from that point – but at a certain point I had to use PDFs. They are the free PDFs though. Now, people send me books as PDFs and you have to get a registration number and register yourself as a reader of PDFs so they can find out what PDF books are in your library. They know how many copies you have and on which devices you are reading them. Our PDFs are like a stack of papers in the hall, you take one – I may not know who you are – but you are free to take it.

I believe a number of the PDFs that are on the Eclipse are ones that have all been scanned by students and research assistants.

Charles will tell you that I resisted PDFs because it's a corporate format. As it turns out, you can still retain anonymity while accessing the format.

It's become an important format. After I finish my dissertation, I'd love to propose to Danny Snelson – whom I believe you know – that we write an essay together on the impact of the PDF on contemporary poetry. In your Digital Poetics book, you talk about how the materiality of works is something that not only affects distribution and circulation of works, but it also has an impact on the actual act of writing. I feel like the PDF has done that significantly.

When I started the EPC, I did it as a gift. I guess that is something that Charles and Kenny, in his own way, have done. These sites are a gift. The difference with Kenny is that his stuff is illegal.

It's still a gift! Even though it's illegal...

It's true! A lot of it should be legal. I mean, I have no issues with the stuff he puts up on UbuWeb. That's sort of the third side of all this. I don't know what it means to be legal or not. You have famous examples with Paul Zukofsky and quoting his father's works, and it impacts the works to the point that people can't access it or read it. I'm sure Louis Zukofsky loved his son, but I'm also certain that he wrote his works so that people could read it.

It's to the point that grad students can't even quote Zukofsky poems in their dissertations for the risk that he will pursue some kind of litigation over that.

Exactly. He's written nastily of grad students quoting his father in their research.

I've talked it over with friends that I'd like to scan the collected works of Zukofsky at some point and put them up on Troll Thread or Ubu or somewhere like that.

It's interesting that in Cuba – because many things are illegal there – what they do is that they have certain bricks that don't fit and people will put digital versions of books on thumb drives and hide them behind bricks. Then you would tell your buddy, Hey, there's this Zukofsky book or whatever hidden behind the third brick in the house at this corner. They also have something that's called El Paquete, which is – for example – when Obama came to Cuba, they would not broadcast his speech over the radio or on televisions in Cuba – so people order El Paquete, which is that people in the United States record the news and put it on a thumb drive and there is a secret distribution network that will get it to you in Cuba so you can at least watch or listen to the original speech.

You would have launched in 1994 on HTML. What was your position at UB at that time?

I was a librarian. First I was in Lockwood Library. I was the American and British literature bibliographer. Around 1990, I figured out how to do the Internet with TelNet and Gopher and FTP programs, so I started teaching the librarians and giving classes on that. Then I was

transferred to the head librarian's office. I didn't know what they wanted me to do because they hired a programmer also who was at odds with everything I wanted to do. So then, I moved to the Dean's office at the College of Arts and Science for a couple of years. Then, after that, I moved to Media Studies in 2005. The short end of it is, I became a professor at that point and I could teach.

What relationship did you have with Berlthof, the head of the Poetry Collection, when you arrived here?

He never felt warmly about me or the projects I was doing. That would be something interesting for you to ask Charles. He knows the whole story. Berlthof and I, I think, had a fundamental difference in philosophy. He felt like he owned the Poetry Collection, and I was always more in favour of a special collections without walls, if you know what I mean, which is really what the Internet is, except that it turned commercial or consumerist. So, I never really got along with him. I always got along with Michael Basinski, the current head of the Poetry Collection, who was at that time Berlthof's assistant. One thing to remember about the Poetry Collection is that Berlthof was not a librarian and he did not think a librarian should be in charge of the collection. Basinski is not a librarian.

That's interesting. I believe Jim Maynard, who is Basinski's assistant, is a librarian.

He's the one I wrote regarding the future of the EPC. He's very nice. He said, I can't imagine the EPC without you, and that he'll have to think about a possible relationship between the EPC and the Poetry Collection, but he never got back to me.

Perhaps it's worth contacting Nancy Kuhl – who I believe was here at one point? She's now a curator of the poetry collections at Yale, and she's bought Charles's papers amongst other collections. They have an amazing digital archivist there named Gabriella Redwine, who I've been working with occasionally. They do solid work archiving digital objects, so perhaps that's something to keep in mind.

That would be a good contact. Part of my responsibility as the person who created it is not to die and leave the project hanging.

It's a fascinating thing to think about – how to preserve these digital objects, how to maintain them over a long duration of time.

It's interesting, too, because in the early days of the EPC it would have taken a magnificent amount of disk space to save it. But now it probably fits on a thumb drive! There's so much history there.

I've kept every aberrant file that I've ever added to the site. It's all there – an archive within an archive. It's an archive about the archive. You can still find these files online, because I wanted the site to be able to tell its own story, too. I didn't want it to be, you know, you make a new web page and then throw the old one away. I didn't do that. I have hundreds of web pages, hundreds of versions of the front page, backed up in different years so that people could, if they ever wanted to, could see what the EPC looked like at this time or that time. You can see what this author page looked like in 2011 and what works were there at that time, and then compare that to the present time. You can also see how I organized the pages at different times.

Can you talk a little more about the organizational structure of the EPC? In the sense of developing protocols for the site, perhaps, for developing the sections and the page names and their URLs. When you began the EPC, did you have a clear sense of what the protocols would be or did you develop those over time?

No, but a lot of them have been abandoned over time. It started out it originally had categories of Mags, Presses, Authors, and Connects (to other sites), something like that. We had to cut out the Connects because other sites were so transient, you couldn't keep up with repairing them. At some point, we added Library, because that was the only addition we could really stabilize. We always made the Authors page very logical so that Helen Adam would be under Adam. It was all alphabetized – as was the Presses page too – so that you could guess easily where everything was. The URLs were simple. To find Kiosk, a journal from here that I don't think is linked on the present site anymore, you'd just type in "Presses" and then "backslash" "Kiosk," and there it is – the page is still available right there. That was the structure for the URLs. And I had that rule that it had to be native text.

What exactly do you mean by native text?

Well, certain computers and certain programs add additional characters in word-processing that get added when converted into HTML. So, you have to be careful that it's pure HTML.

How did you become interested in this kind of computing? Because now we might take it for granted that it's attached to bibliography, that it's attached to doing a form of library studies because libraries are so attached to developing their digital interfaces now, but that wasn't the case when you began being interested in it.

I always wanted to be a writer so in high school I took typing. It helped a lot in terms of doing papers at Berkeley. Then when the little computer came out, I started using a computer because it was easier than correction tape obviously. And I published a little magazine for a few years.

What was it called?

Oromadre, which is "mother lode" in Spanish. After Berkeley, I took ten years off to travel the world because I didn't know what I was going to write about if I had only been in college. When I came back I started Oromadre. That got me interested programming because you had to use dot codes and things like that to make it work because it didn't have formatting, because it was text-only and all that. While I was at Berkeley, they changed the program from Master of Library Science to Master of Library and Information Science, and we got to learn mainframe programming. We did programming on the main frame with the cards, which I liked that sort of work.

The cards would have been the punch cards, correct? The ones that were the centre of several student protests in the late 1960s?

Yes. One time, I wrote a program and then dropped the cards when I was going into the classroom. Since it was an assignment that was due, I just picked up the cards and put them into the computer and it actually broke Berkeley's mainframe. It melted it down.

Your first poetic work!

Exactly!

But before I went to Berkeley, I did a lot of work in what was going to be Silicon Valley, setting up all the computer systems and stuff. So I learned a little bit of programming there. Then when I went to Berkeley I studied PL/I, which is like the mother of all programming languages in a certain way. Although it has a lot of mothers. After I got here, I became aware of TelNet and that sort of stuff, it became interesting just to see what I could do.

The interfaces for working on these things are fairly basic as in they don't have many graphics, it's text-only that you're working with – it's quite a different digital environment than what we think of today.

Yeah. That's something that I'm interested in with UNIX, for example, because UNIX has no control characters. It's all just raw text. I feel like that's true liberty. Any time you use WordPress or something like that, they're embedding stuff and they're reading stuff from your machine. They're representing stuff.

When you're first putting up these writers on the EPC, are you trying to put up portions of books, individual poems?

In the beginning, we started with whatever we could get. I would it was largely poems and chapbooks. Each page would be a photo and then a bibliography and then we had links. We would have some sample poems, some prose or critical writing, and then usually some photos of the book or something. The idea was more to introduce people to the work as opposed to archiving things.

It's not an attempt to replace a library...

It was meant to be like an anthology you might get that's generally about American poetry and you could look it up.

I've been reading this book by Jeremy Braddock on Modernist collections and he writes about the similarities that a library and a collection have with the anthology.

I think it was like an anthology that opens outwards. Any time you make an anthology, even *In the American Tree*, you're defying somebody and restricting them. What we were trying to do is make some examples and encourage users to connect to other sites so as to read wider. We wanted to be anthology that widens as opposed to define a singular ground. The moment they put you into the category of New American Poet, you're locked into that.

When you speak about the EPC as a specific object, what do you call it? Do you call it an archive? Or a repository? A collection? Or is it simply site?

I like the idea of a centre. I say that keeping in mind that everything has multiple centres.

I'm interested in what this medial object is called from a library sciences perspective. People always refer to UbuWeb and PennSound as "archives," but I don't think that's what they are as specific objects. One can call it an archive – they do archival work – but the object itself is something else.

I think you would call them collections, because an archive would, strictly speaking, have very specific parameters, which is good and bad. An archive, if you had strict parameters, might ask: Do we collect things that have sound? And it may have strict parameters interpreted to not focus on sound and therefore an object might not be in the best interest to collect.

Talking with Filreis about PennSound and the important of it being situated through the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, and also at the Kelly Writers House, the concept of a "centre" is very important to him too. The centre as a site for interaction.

I like the idea of the centre, of centres that overlap. To bring it back to politics for a moment, these fringe areas where there is disagreement over is this mine, is this yours, and we need to know that this is ours, and to learn how to make it ours.

Can you and I go back to the moment in which you began to develop the EPC. I know you had been in Buffalo for a few years by that time and were involved in a number of projects going on at the library and in the Poetics Program as well. You and Ken

Sherwood began a digital poetry journal called RIFT and I'm curious about its relation to the EPC.

I was a librarian, the English and American bibliographer, at the Lockwood Library and Ken Sherwood actually came to my office to ask for some help with some research or something like that. That's when we got to talking about *RIFT*. The idea for it came out of that initial discussion.

Would you say that RIFT was conceived prior to the EPC? Did it happen around the same time?

Well, there was *RIFT*, the EPC Live and the chats involved with that, and also the Poetics List – all of that happened at once in a certain way. The Poetics List allowed for people to talk in a certain way. EPC Live allowed for people to talk in a live exchange. *RIFT* was a way to be able to present new work on the Web. You have to think of it in terms of text-only, because everything we're talking about is text-only at this point. Sound files came on to the site, starting with Martin Spinelli because Martin and Ken were good friends. So, there was a coming together of all those energies. I honestly can't recall what came first, but I do recall that summer when Ken had went away, so maybe we decided to do *RIFT* before then...

This probably would have been the summer of 1995? I was reading the first EPC newsletters you sent out and I believe the ones during the summer of 1995 are signed "Loss Glazier on behalf of you and Ken Sherwood." I believe the March and August newsletters in 1995 are signed that way.

That's right. I remember doing those newsletters... Right, there was a time when he was a way, and a time when he was really out of contact. He got certain people to contribute to *RIFT*, and so did I. And then we got Charles involved with it at some point. Then, it occurred to me to make pages for each of these people contributing to the journal, so that people could click on their names in the journal and go to their pages. That's how that came about.

The author pages happened a few months into the initial EPC, is that correct? It wasn't one of the initial things?

I couldn't say for sure.

I read in the second newsletter yesterday, you wrote "Introducing the Authors."

It would be interesting – and it's there, because I never have deleted anything that's on the site, as we mentioned earlier, much to the chagrin of computing people – the original homepage would be still available. So, it would be interesting to see what is there. I think there were various uncertainties to see if the EPC was going to be a sort of interactive magazine circling around RIFT or whatever.

One thing about the hidden treasures of the EPC that are still on the Internet, have you seen Danny Snelson's paper?

I know about the paper, but I haven't read it.

He got in and found all of these pages that were either never linked or were in progress and wrote about those. It was great. And this reminds me, I wrote to Nancy Kuhl at Yale about the EPC, because the future of it really does concern me. And I think about you and Danny, and know you are both writing about it and see its importance. It really was, without a doubt, the first digital literary project. And now we have this whole thing called the Digital Humanities and Digital Literature, which all happened afterwards. And the EPC did nurture the biggest projects in their nascent states – PennSound and UbuWeb. Then, I consulted other sites like the Poetry Center website, because of my work on the EPC. In not wanting to lose an important part of literary history, I think it's absolutely essential that the project be cared for in an appropriate manner.

I wrote to the people at Yale and gave them all the details of the project. It would be the greatest thing if they were able to archive it. If you think about it, it's kind of like the first printing press used for literature in the digital era. You and Danny are really on the ball in tracking this history. We know that the means of production and dissemination are reader reception all ties in together.

Those are really strong concepts right at the start of your work. Right from the start of Digital Poetics, and even reading your dissertation yesterday, you are focused on the

material production and dissemination of poetic works. They are central concepts to the way that you were thinking at that time.

Yes, they are. And I would say that's important from the librarian point of view as opposed to various post-structuralist literary theoretical perspectives. In other words, production is a whole issue that you could get into through a Marxist analysis, but maybe I'm interested in it in more of an Emersonian way, in that you make things and then you give them out. You pretty much give them away. I don't really think about this activity through an economic model or structure. But I do think of the exchange – here's my work, here's your work, and so on. I mentioned Creeley and Divers press earlier, and he knew he wasn't going to make money from it. I saw what I was doing, I came to it as an innocent. I saw the Internet as a new way to make works happen. Not so much collectively, because I haven't really been personally involved in collaboration, but in terms of having more spontaneity and exchange, as well as cutting down the costs. Even before, in doing small press projects, you have to pay the printer, you have to pay the postage, et cetera. If you send manuscripts somewhere, you have to pay the return postage. I don't know what books make profit. I mean, maybe Creeley's books made him some money. My books make a profit, but it's like a hundred or so dollars a year, which is far from a living wage.

Can we discuss your interest in code and computer programming languages? I know it's a field of study for you that long pre-dates the creation of the EPC. I'm curious of how you became interested in coding in the first place.

You can't say anything the same way in another language. In Spanish, for example, all the pronouns have gender. I love it when you can talk about an onion as *aya*, as she. It makes perfect sense to someone who speaks Spanish. Code is a form of translating, too. Growing up, my mother spoke Spanish and my father prohibited it as a language spoken in our house. But I secretly took it in from my mother, and then I studied it during university. There were certain things my mother would say to me in Spanish when my father was around because it was more safe. Code, to me, has always been a creative act. When you mark things up, you can't transfer anything. It's not black and white. You're always twisting and turning and shifting and inverting language. That, for me, is writing. Code has always been for me a form of writing.

I work with the mark-up language Array, in which you can write something like "My favourite food is," and then write a series of things in parentheses, or you can write "My favourite food is" and then use a different form of mark-up language and put everything in a list. Well, ever hear of concrete poetry? It's a totally important decision. You are designing your poem.

I learned UNIX, which is possibly the hardest computing language in the world. You start with a blank screen. There's nothing there. You type something and little by little you build something..

Where did you learn that?

As a librarian, I took workshops on these things.

Did you do that in California?

No, here in Buffalo. It wasn't so strange, though, because I had done that in PL/I. PL/I is very hard. The grammar is very structured. It would be like classical music, whereas UNIX has a lot of plug-ins and, in a way, is more like improvised jazz. You can plug-in riffs from other things.

How many computer languages do you think you know?

Probably six or so. Then I've had some familiarity with others. Now, I primarily work in JavaScript, but we'll see what limitations that has in the long run. Probably it's sufficient. I like it because with JavaScript you can look at it on the screen and you can read the code and you can copy code. That's the thing – it's a communal thing. If you find somewhere where something is happening the way you'd like it to, you can copy that bit of code and put it in yours and it works. You can even put in a comment line that this bit of code is borrowed from or taken from so-and-so. Whereas, with Java, which is similar to JavaScript but different, it's a complement language, which means you write it and then the machine crunches it into machine code and it's just illegible on the screen. It's zeros and ones. And then it runs. So, I decided in the end to work with an uncompiled language.

The place of computer languages in literature departments, I think, is finally starting to change. For instance, I read recently a piece by Alexander Galloway advocating the need

for comparative literature departments to include computer language or machinic language.

That's true. It's like mathematics. A person can be from El Salvador or South Korea and they can speak the language of mathematics. Coding is an admission that language is a limitation. Language has its advantages. If I need you to hand me something over there, language is helpful. It's not the only means of understanding.

So that's why I think that it was in that state of pureness that I saw the EPC beginning. That's why I like the text-only, and why I liked the HTML. It was free. You could talk freely and there were no commercials. No commercial interests there. Here, I'm thinking of those EPC live events. You could literally give it away. You were free to print it out. Obviously you weren't going to print it out or sell it. My feeling of it was that it was a utopia. Maybe I had experienced something like it before, growing up in San Francisco in the late 1960s and early 70s, with music, when there such things as free concerts and the idea of community and free expression. Before the music industry showed up, it was an exploratory social space. I guess that was the hope I had in terms of literature. By that time, literature itself had shut down and its only shut down more since in terms of print literature. I say this as someone who loves books.

This is something I've never thought about in terms of writing the history of these repositories – this moment, in the late 1990s, when there's the rise of these giant bookstores like Barnes & Noble and Borders. This moment when the corporate bookstore takes over, as opposed to the knowledgeable spaces that occur when bookstores are run by people who actually care about books. It's something that comes up often in the Poetics List and also in the EPC newsletters as well. I never really thought about that as a backdrop to the construction of these sites. I mean, these mega bookstores become the paradigm somewhere around five to ten years before an entity like Small Press Distribution even has a website. So, this work of making consolidated sites or references or simply linking and listing to these literature traditions that are carried on the small presses – it's truly important.

The news quality aspect, too, of the EPC is also very important and perhaps we can talk about more. It really is a hub in the sense that you can access these authors and libraries and books, and get information on all these things prior to Wikipedia. So, the EPC is serving that important function as a hub. I mean, while looking through those newsletters and reading the obituaries for Eigner and Brainard – it probably was one of the few places where people could share and discuss this important news.

I don't know if you saw these articles I did? There is one is called "O no Orono" about a conference at Orono, and there is another about Eigner, and then there's another one for Amiri Baraka's birthday, another for Creeley's birthday. I did photo essays about each of these things and had them up on the site.

Proto-blog posts, essentially.

Yeah, with the difference that they're done in native code.

What is Wings? It comes up as part of the URL when you access portions of the EPC.

Wings was the original server for the Web for UB. It's wings because its a cheap pun on Buffalo chicken wings.

Oh, gosh.

And then there's the whole metaphor that it takes you places.

That's both awful and hilarious.

So you go to the library and you can read these reports. There's a Vancouver report, too. You see how they're simply text-only documents. I should put dates on them. Here's a date – June 1, 1995. So these are early posts. And this is one way I imagined the EPC – it's text-only, any machine can access it. I mean, at this time we're talking about 1200 bot modems, which would take forever to download a big thing. This is different than even Jacket2 – I don't mean to be critical, but it has a kind of product feel to it to me. It has this feeling of being bound by academic parameters. To me, the small press ethos is all about giving, and that's what this was

going to be. You don't come here and say, Who is going to publish my marvelous work? Instead, one author or small press offers their books, then another, and you offer your own. We serve our community. That's what community is. That's why I've spent twenty-two years doing EPC. To make poetry you need to make community, and to make community you give to the community. That's what I had in mind. No interface – I wasn't going to pay for software. UB was providing the server space. Poets make the documents.

All of this is really tied up with dissemination, in that it's factoring in that people are accessing these pages over phone lines and the tech is slow, so you want to make these easy to get to and to read.

I would also use these animated GIFS, which take up hardly any bandwidth at all. They're simple but it's also a piece of art.

That's interesting. Talking with Kenny about UbuWeb, the GIF meant a lot to him too when it first came out. He saw in it a possibility for developing a mode of concrete poetry.

Do you keep permissions from authors that are on the EPC? I ask because Charles is fastidious about this with PennSound, but I get the sense that you only put things up that you collaborate with the authors on and therefore permission is implicit.

That's right. I guess I'm in the middle ground, between Charles's acquiring of permissions and Kenny's disinterest in permissions. Though we do know Kenny hasn't put up any of Zukofsky's books.

He did at one point. I believe it was on the Poetry Foundation blog, but then it was taken down, I'm guessing after Paul Zukofsky contacted the Poetry Foundation...

We had this guy Harvey... I can't remember his last name, but he was famous in Buffalo for publishing editions of books without permission. Frontier Press it was called. He published Duncan's HD book. This happened years or maybe decades before Berlthof – who was a hoarder, he would not let anyone see certain things. I mean, you should talk to Lisa Jarnot, who was

working on Duncan. There were people whose entire research depended on accessing specific materials that Berlthof had in the Collection, and if he didn't like them he would say that the documents they were looking for didn't exist. That's probably him at his worst. Normally, he was just not very helpful.

He didn't like Lisa Jarnot?

I don't believe so.

She does fantastic work... I know that her Duncan project got extended for many years.

My impression was that she did not get on well with Berlthof, and, because of that, doing the research she wanted to do was very difficult. Berlthof controlled all the permissions to the work. I mean, the point is – it's Robert Duncan. He died and we love Robert Duncan. We have much to learn from Robert Duncan. Give us Robert Duncan. Why did Robert Duncan exist? He existed to give us this stuff. And Robert Berlthof as a curator is blocking our access to that stuff. Because he could and because he liked the power!

It's interesting to think about how Charles's precedent of doing quite a lot to make sure the materials he works with are able to move outside the confines of the university setting. In having worked over this last year with his papers and archives and even through his email correspondence, two things struck me: his kind of mania for organizing and archiving his own materials, and for creating ways for those materials to be disseminated in whatever way possible into as many different contexts as possible. I know the EPC is founded in a similar spirit in terms of both collecting and dissemination. And it's interesting to frame this up against the proprietary nature over the materials in the Poetry Collection at the time you and Charles are working on the EPC.

Yes, I'd say our interest and development of these things was certainly symbiotic. The beautiful thing about the development of the EPC it is that the more people give, the more there was, and the more there was, the more people would give.

How did you think of the EPC in terms of its relation to the Poetics Program? And maybe I'll qualify that further, because it related to this sort of construction of a commons – when Charles talks about the Poetics Program, he often brings up the precedent he started in terms of collectivizing the funds of the Program's professors so as to sponsor as much poetic activity as possible. He wasn't interested in supporting one or a few particular students, but focused instead in collecting and then dividing all of the possible funds so that any student who was interested in pursuing a specific field or research and/or publication, that each one of those students would have access to the same amount of funding. In doing that, he was interested in sponsoring an entire ecology of poetic activity as opposed to one or two particular endeavours.

Exactly. That was another renaissance I had the great fortune to live through, the Poetics Program. The prior renaissances in my life might be UNIX, and then small press poetry publications. But the situation of the program then is far different than it is now. It seems apparent that Steve McCaffrey uses all of the funds for his own travels and for his own private library. But, yes, back then, the way the funds were managed when Creeley and Charles were here – it worked, it was a renaissance.

You actually document a digital culture in its early hours. Of the few people who do write about digital cultures, poetry, and poetics these days, many of them treat the digital as though it happened in a remove from culture, and economics, and institutions, and power. The utopianism that the EPC is founded in is interesting to me. This exemplar of collectivizing the funds to sponsor projects in the Poetics Program, as well as your altruism for undertaking such a project with absolutely no expectation for any kind of remuneration – I mean, have you ever been paid for working on the EPC?

I have never been paid. And I've never received funding. And we're talking over twenty-years worth of work.

So, UB pays for your server. But you've never had an assistant or anyone to support you with the construction of the site?

When Charles ran the Poetics Program budget, he always gave me a portion of the budget, which helped me get things like modems and things like that. But that was the only help I received.

And – I say this with absolute admiration for Penn and for the Kelly Writers House and what the Al and Charles are doing there – but they take a similar model of producing and disseminating resources and creating a culture through that production and dissemination, but they do it with an incredible amount of financial support from what the students pay to attend the school, to what donors give. If we expand that beyond Penn and think about the millions of dollars that are being invested into media and digital humanities laboratories at numerous institutions, and we situate the work that you simply do within that present context, it seems incredible to me that there isn't someone who recognizes the work you do and offers to support it to whatever degree you see necessary. I guess the thing about Penn is that it has resources...

It's true, that is the thing.

Al is someone who has big dreams and is exceptionally capable at bringing people together in order to realize them within and through the institution. In doing so – and this is something I admire so much – he creates this para-institutions or what I think of as being semi-autonomous spaces within the institution.

And there's the twist, too, that Penn allows them to explore and develop areas of study that most other universities would not be interested in. That's a nice thing about Buffalo, too, which is one reason I'm still here, I think.

It's historically a very experimental place, this university. I was talking about this with Tony Conrad and Paige Sarlin a few months ago and hearing stories from Tony about when he first arrived here, and it sounded like this kind of utopia for experimental sound and video and music and poetry and performance.

It was in the air here.

To come back to your question about the EPC as a centre, I saw it almost as a space age centre, like a mothership that people could come to and dock and have interchanges and connect and then float off. I saw it as a way to create a space of interchange similar to the Vancouver Poetry Festival--

In 1963?

Yes, and the Berkeley Poetry Conference--

1965.

Those were my models. There were spaces where minds came together, exchanged ideas, and entire new ways of making things were realized. Everyone came away richer – not monetarily. And there was this sense of celebration on the side of it, too, in coming together. That was the idea. I created the EPC in the tradition of those festival spirits. I wanted to do that in an online environment.

This is great to know, to hear from you. I mean, it makes absolute sense, but to hear it from you is another thing.

And so, to come back again to your question about its relation to the Poetics Program, I'd say there was a great symbiosis between the Program and the EPC. Of course, there is Charles's benevolence to me and the project of the EPC. His open-mindedness toward the project was certainly a part of it as much as my vision of code.

So, yes, the EPC was related to the Poetics Program. In a way, it was an official organ of the program for many years, and Bernstein did fund it, although the EPC always had its own life, too.

And I find very interesting what you say about Penn and the Writers House, and its something that extends to the Poetry Foundation in Chicago or the Poets House in New York. It feels as though if you want to enter those spaces, you really have to be someone. They're lofty institutions. I was never so lofty in my life. In comparison, maybe the EPC is more like a farming collective.

I can see that. And I also see the EPC as being related to the kind of small press, mimeograph cultures that you've been interested in for so long. And despite the loftiness of the institution of Penn – which is definitely intimidating in a particular way, even if the Writers House tries to disrupt that privileged institutionality in particular ways – but Al often cites the importance of small press, especially mimeograph, culture on the design and use of PennSound. He didn't want PennSound to be attached to the library at Penn, and he didn't want each recording on PennSound to be filtered through the library's system. Instead, he wanted a more anarchic or free-forming organization that felt organic to the project itself.

I think they've done a remarkable job with what they've built there. But it is of a different PhD , and has a more elite status. I can't fault them on that, and, overall, perhaps these objects are safer there and will endure there better than anywhere else.

In terms of the various periods of the EPC, one of the most challenging periods of time was when Charles left Buffalo. I'm aging, you know, and because of that I have less energy, which is an unfortunate thing. I mean, you make up for it in knowing what you know. But it really knocked the wind out of me in terms of organizing the EPC, especially with Steve entering the program since he had always been hostile toward the project.

I'm curious if, in approaching the end of our conversations, for now at least, if we can return to a line of thinking we initiated in our exchanges prior to meeting, and that is with regard to a poetics of the EPC – will you discuss what you see to be the core components of the site's composition?

Well, simply put, poetics means making. With regard to the EPC, that means a lot of things. What does it mean when you make a poem? Poetics is what's involved in your motivation, your thinking, your positioning, the materials you use, your conception, what you've read, how you've prepared, how you project, and how the work continues from you. It's how this thing, the poem, functions in the universe. What does it mean to make in that context? If you're going to make, then how does that object get disseminated and distributed? Making is also a form of interacting. The poetic object is something you are interacting through, a means of interacting. So, poetics

involves dissemination and distribution, but if its going to enter a community, poetics also has to do with generosity. In other words, you can't expect a community to serve you.

As articulated by the EPC, I like it as a knowledge nucleus. I like the idea of it being virtual – because it doesn't really exist. It's not on paper. I mean, you could print it out, but no matter what, if you did that it would be a replica of only a small portion of it. It's an abstract concept that you can keep adding to and subtracting from. It's a form of you communicating in an altruistic manner in that you don't have to pay to use it. These ideas came up along – why don't I charge people to use it, offer paying subscriptions, why don't I sell ads? That defies the whole point! The point is that the site offers up these poems and all this information about poetry.

I'll admit that it's been disappointing that I've never been recognized here at UB or even paid for doing the EPC. I'm even paid less because of it in a certain way. I never get relief time for doing it, nor do I get any support to do it. So, that's been difficult through the years, and when Charles left, that was a sad moment because like I mentioned earlier, you just simply lose some of the energy and with that the motivation. When I began this project in the 1990s, I was lucky that I had a lot of energy. It was exciting to do.

But I do feel sad that it didn't catch on more, and that there aren't more poets doing coding. To me, that kind of knowledge and poets and different authors, it s

One thing I wanted to say though about whether or not the EPC caught on with new generations of poets is that – I believe I mentioned this to you when we first began corresponding – I never had actually studied poetry or poetics in an institutional setting. I had studied philosophy and was, a certain moment in time, particularly interested in linguistic philosophy following from Wittgenstein when I came upon an essay – it was by Marjorie Perloff, whom I had never heard of before this time – on the EPC about Wittgenstein and some contemporary innovative poets. I thought, Wow, this looks fascinating. There are all these essays and writings here, and info about all these authors. That's how I began learning about contemporary poetry. I guess I should say, too, that this was happening while I was living in the Canadian arctic – in a small village called Fort Good Hope. Fast forward a number of years, once I had begun to write and

publish and become involved in a number of communities, both in Canada and in the States through Lemon Hound and Jacket2, I met that a lot of the people with whom I felt a bond in terms of aesthetics, and it turns out they had a similar education in poetry and poetics in that they became interested in the field through repositories like the EPC and Ubu and PennSound. I guess that's a main reason why I have undertaken this research, to track the history of these collections.

It would be nice if you could make a note of that in your dissertation, because that's the point of the EPC. I mean, early, on, I was getting letters from people in Uzbekistan who were reading the materials on the site. From being a special collections library, I knew that people weren't getting access to these materials and that's why I had to put them up. That way lots of people who never had been able to get their hands on books or writing like this could read it. They were works that you'd never even be able to find in a bookstore or even to order on the Internet at the time that I was putting them up there.

For sure. In the moment we are in now, we assume an easy accessibility to such materials, to a reproduction of every cultural artifact. The difference from now and even ten years ago when this is absolutely not the case at all, it's a completely different terrain and I guess that's part of what I'm trying to historicize in my writing.

This brings up a couple of interesting questions in terms of what comes after... with Facebook and SnapChat and Twitter. I mean, they are all forms of erasing writing.

Especially since it's all being done within proprietary formats.

At a certain point, the format becomes the content.

The format becomes the content...

That's what I've been trying to do with the EPC. I'm constantly working in order to develop a non-proprietary space so that the content of the materials and their form meet.

Appendix 2

A Correspondence with Kenneth Sherwood on the Electronic Poetry Center

Date: June 6, 2017 at 13:31
From: mdn@soundobject.net
To: sherwood@iup.edu

Hi Ken,

I'm curious if at some point you and I might be able to correspond about some of the dynamics around your work on RIF/T and the EPC, and your working relationship with Loss during that 1993-1995 window?

I think you know that I'm writing a media historical dis on the EPC, Ubu, and PennSound. I'm rushing to get it done with the research I have now, but I keep being struck by the fact that I need more info regarding that moment.

Loss spoke very fondly of your meeting and shared enthusiasm in developing RIF/T. He admitted, too, to being a bit of a control freak (my interpretation of his words) when it came to developing the EPC and that he should have handed it better.

I have at least a few questions for you, and I thought I would simply see if it is something you'd be willing to discuss.

If so, let me know and I'll send them on, and hopefully I'll be able to integrate some of our exchange into my dis if that's alright with you.

I hope this finds you well!

Michael

Date: June 6, 2017 at 18:00
From: sherwood@iup.edu
To: mdn@soundobject.net

Michael:

It's good to hear from you; I knew generally of your project in relation to Pennsound but didn't know that you were dipping into the early history of the EPC. I'm glad to provide information and perspective on that. It was an exciting and formative time for me (and I think in terms of the foundation of born digital literature).

I wish I could remember our precise meeting and how we learned of a mutual curiosity about electronic publishing. I do remember a first meeting in Loss' then bibliographer's office in the Lockwood library where we shared ideas about the paucity of contemporary poetry to be discovered online -- the format then was Usenet and Gopher. While Loss had his MLS, we were both graduate students in the Buffalo Poetics program. I had some prior experience in programming but, Fall 1992 (?), was just discovering listservs, Usenet, IRCchat and some of the possibilities of networked text. For me the crucial contexts included an awareness of the role that publication networks (i.e. Others magazine, the Dial, Contact, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E etc.) had played in poetry we valued decades previously, the importance of circulation or dialogue among writers (the Olson /Creeley correspondence as a prime example). It was also crucial that it seemed every poet in the program at that time was editing a small magazine, launching a chapbook series, etc.

For myself, this marked a first real access to a literary network and to the emerging electronic network that has now become so ubiquitous. (I was familiar with Compuserve and learned of dialup BBS but had no prior exposure until hooking into the Buffalo infrastructure.) Important, or just a curiosity? , that RIF/T is born before the web and first issue was distributed via listerv as ASCII text and then subsequently archived to be accessed via Gopher. Loss I think had other inputs as well, including his prior work on small presses and little magazines which meant, in effect, that perhaps without realizing quite how transformative the technology would become, we were nonetheless animated by a joint desire to engage in a literary network, correct the deficit of then interesting (to us) poetry accessible, and to essentially jump on board what seemed like the mimeo revolution of our moment.

So we set out at first, as I recall, to launch a magazine / collaboration vehicle. (I can't presently locate the pre-publication fliers, although I remember sharing them at the New Coast poetry festival along the time Joe Amato was launching a discussion space called Nous Refuse? It emerged that GRIST launched about the same time as RIF/T, but I think that was a kind of online republication of archive material from a print journal at first. Anyhow, I think our initial masthead indicates how we were thinking along the lines of magazine but also more: "AN ELECTRONIC SPACE FOR NEW POETRY, PROSE, AND POETICS" So it was a magazine but also, within the constraints of the medium, envisioned as a space or place with extensions, derivations, riffs.

Ironic now to remember there was some suspicion of electronic publishing at that moment. I remember conversations about copyright and theft, the legitimacy of virtual publication, etc. But

also an excitement of discovering how to think about an audience, a community of contributing writers, and the format opportunities in electronic distribution. For instance, we set out the idea of magazine with virtual chapbooks while playing with the instability of these in file form. We were keenly aware of how regional literary networks operated in social contexts, at bars and galleries etc. So the notion of working on a different field was very engaging. You know Perloff's Futurist Moment? I think we felt a glimmer of that in terms of linking of readerships across space.

I suppose I was also bringing something of an improvisational or live music spirit to the notion that the issues and poems might be transformed and revisioned on an ongoing basis. Our numbering system (issue 1.1, 2.1, etc. was initially meant to envision not volume and issue but future versions of each issue where they would mutate.) You'll find some mini-features and calls in some of the issues that allude to this. So for instance, I did a remix of a Kostelanetz submission, there were some "Derivations" in a few of the issues. See also the editorial note to volume 2, etc.

The dynamic, visual and multimodal elements are almost too slight to notice after Ubuweb or Brian Kim Stefans, but I think it's worth remembering the first issues were set in ASCII text and we had no means of embedding files in the txt files. Similar to typewriter concrete poetry. See the ASCII art title pages to the chapbook extensions. (In the versions on EPC now, you can see some added graphics once we went to html, but that was subsequent.) An early effort to articulate that was the Riffs entry I wrote for issue 1. You'll also see there some interesting efforts to introduce a hyperspace jumps through embedded links to other parts of the magazine, as a kind of editorial intervention, etc. Again not really legible now but perhaps interesting in its moment.

As we went forward, I remember Creeley observing that we ought to aim for a more nimble, daily/weekly kind of publication. He was interested in the speed. I guess I was then interested in a kind of constructive editing in a new environment.

In June 1995, Loss and I wrote companion pieces which he brought as a back to back, printed chapbook, to the Recovery of the Public World Robin Blaser poetry festival in Vancouver. We co-published those pieces in RIFT05. I think they remain interesting companion pieces illustrating the ways we were on the same page (and not), using both page and electronic space. At that point, I was also working and sharing a house with Martin Spinelli, who helped me in making recordings of readings of those poems. I don't know if anyone has noticed, but each poem has two readings (i.e. alternate takes).

I don't know if Loss will remember the emergence of the EPC as an allied and then a separate project in quite the same way. But we were initially circulating RIF/T as a file through listserv. But we had no place to host it; perhaps we had the first issue on the e-server at Virginia? But then we had trouble getting them to mount the second issue in a timely fashion. As I recall, that prompted Loss to explore the possibility of local hosting on a Buffalo server (wings). His institutional connections served and we gained space, eventually a dedicated domain etc. (Remember there was no GoDaddy in 1995!)

I proposed a kind of archive wing called "Bilblioteca" and we housed or re-purposed the longer form poems from RIF/T:

<http://epc.buffalo.edu/biblioteca/>
<http://epc.buffalo.edu/biblioteca/bibinfo.html>

Quickly, though, I think Loss as archivist etc. saw the need an interest in hosting other publications, archiving files etc. We began the author section as a kind of contributors' index of RIF/T authors, but then author directories emerged as useful for centralizing other documents. I think writers began to see it was useful to have a space (a virtual center) to share documents. You'll find some dead links to author spaces that no longer exist from RIF/T contributors, but that's how I recall it emerging:

<http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/huddleston>

If you haven't used Wayback or browsed the EPC back files, there are some original documents still accessible and of interest:

A early RIFT call/welcome:
<http://epc.buffalo.edu/admin/epc-orig/welcome>

An EPC announcement
<http://epc.buffalo.edu/admin/epc-orig/announcement>

By 1995, Loss was putting significant work into the EPC wing of things. I was primarily responsible for RIF/T:
<http://epc.buffalo.edu/admin/epc-orig/epcnews1>

The call posted on PMC in Jan 1994 also contextualizes the project:
<http://www.pomoculture.org/2013/09/24/anouncements-advertisements-2/>

At that point, I think Charles was providing moral support, perhaps his imprimatur, etc. but more as an advisor. OF course, the poetics list was at its height and loosely associated with EPC.

But notice the URL for the EPC news circa 1995:
<http://wings.buffalo.edu/internet/library/e-journals/ub/rift>

And also, as Loss hadn't yet moved into Media studies as faculty, you can see it's very much snuck in as a side project of a library e-journal initiative. With the epc living under rift, which is under Buffalo e-journals, etc.

I love this from the circa 1995 call for papers:
"Placement of papers on the EPC would not in any way preclude their publication in print, in a collection of essays, etc. Our idea is to allow them to circulate while the ideas are fresh."

Here's a 1995 mission statement page:

<http://epc.buffalo.edu/display/old/9512.mission.html>

After this point, you can see Loss listed as the main contact for EPC, while I'm coordinator of the e-poetry list and lead editor of RIF/T.

<http://epc.buffalo.edu/display/old/981301-development.html>

Michael, this may be much more or much less than you wanted to know! Come back with any questions, or if you'd like to chat at some point, I'm glad to think about other aspects of the growth and development of online writing and the EPC.

Appendix 3

A Soliloquy by Kenneth Goldsmith on UbuWeb

25 May 2015 – Manhattan

Steve Giasson? Yeah, of course. He's got a good art thing going, which is great. He's a sweet guy. Who? Kerstin? The Austrian lady? Did you meet her? She's great. Kerstin Scheuch, Shoosh, Shouk. I like her. She's great. It's a whole new group that's at Centro now. My contact guy there was Manuel Alcalá. I thought he was in Oaxaca, but I can't keep track of Manuel. If you want you can open up your laptop if you want to, the network is open. How are those cookies? The network is Goldsmith or Goldsmith 5G. I'm not sure which one you're on. The password is F I N N – all small – A N D C A S H. The cookies are good. The corn one is marvelous. They're from Momufuko. Have you been, Alec, to Momufuko? It's amazing. Well, maybe your hair isn't right. However, with Momufuko, you just got to hit it at the right time. If you go there for lunch and the doors open at noon, you'll get a seat. If you go there at one, forget about it. I can't remember. This is a question you wanted to ask me, I believe. So, Alec is doing a kind of survey of my work for the *New Yorker*. A longer piece about it. We haven't gotten to UbuWeb yet. I haven't even mentioned it to him. All of this is new for him. He's going to listen to us. So there are things you know that I might re-state for his sake. Yeah. Are you a student of Darren's? And are you Canadian? Wow, nice. What year are you in now? And are you ABD? Alright, so let's start. Alec, you should know that UbuWeb was started in 1996. I started it. I had seen Netscape in January of 1995 and the ways that the images were loading in Netscape those days were interlaced GIFs, and to me it looked like a flipbook. The way they'd come in it looked like a flipbook of concrete poetry or something. Well, do you remember how an image would never come in full? In the old days. Well, no, it wouldn't start at the top. That was a JPEG. The GIFs were lines. They'd come in like lines. A line would fall and it was like a Venetian blind effect. And I thought to myself – because I had seen some of the sequential concrete poems, and I thought they really should have been flip books – I thought, wow, concrete poetry would look really good on the Internet. That was after my visit to the Sackner's, where my mind was blown by their collection. I was a text artist. I knew nothing about the world of concrete poetry. And I

saw their collection and my mind was blown. Have you seen their collection? It begins with the Russian avant-garde. It's in Miami Beach. Yeah, and it's, the range, they have everything from classic concrete poetry to 20th century Russian constructivism to Jenny Holzer to me. If it's got language on it, it goes in their collection, even if the main focus of their collection is visual concrete poetry. So, I went to the Sackner's and my mind was blown by this stuff, and I began collecting all the old books. In those days, you could pick them up for nothing. And I began scanning them. On the same Epson scanner I have today. I've only had one scanner. Everything I'm doing today is the same thing. I write it in BBEdit. And I code by hand. And it's always been the same for twenty years. I don't do anything different. Nothing. Are there a million new ways to do HTML? Well, still. I have been obdurate. Nobody does what I do anymore. It's a crafted, hand-coded thing. It's all done through blogger or through interfaces. No, I code by hand. And I work of templates and those templates are twenty-years old. They are the same exact templates I've been using for twenty years! Like a template for a page that has an image on it, that has sound on it. I've been building off those. I don't know any new HTML. I know the same HTML I learned in 1995. I needed a job and I was studying AutoCad and the Internet was happening, and there seemed to be a lot more opportunities with the Internet than there were in architecture at that moment. So, I learned basic HTML and that's all I know. So, I just started scanning these old books of concrete poems and I just put a few online. I said, Those look amazing. Because everything was flat, modernist and flat, backlit by the screen. Suddenly these dusty old books had a beautiful... they had a new life. I've written about this. You've read that. The original ones were GIFs, of course. JPEGs weren't available yet. There's no PNG, no PDF. No, no. No, I don't know. Those all come later. A GIF can be animated. JPEGs are never animated, I don't know why. Well, a GIF is a photograph too. It stands for Graphic Interlaced Format, and I believe it loads differently. These are the first images that they put on the Internet. I'm not sure why or how – I don't know the history of that. So, I just scanned things and threw them up on to Ubu. I always had, my businesses, the many businesses I've had have all been called Ubu. This goes back to the mid-1980s. I was, I had, I made sculptures for a very famous artist, so I had a plaster mould and casting studio. His name is Alan McCollum. Do you know Alan's work? Come, I'll show you his work. You'll know it when you see it. They are all skewed of course. Did you ever see those? They're plaster. I would make the moulds. Take it and feel it. No, that's a piece of dirt. His signature is on the back. These are super valuable. They are very expensive. Yeah, this is a

specific series. Is it secure? Is it on there? It's a specific series and he gave this to me. He would give me a lot of things as he worked. So, yeah. He made millions of dollars selling these things. McCollum. He's really well known in the art world. Oh, no. He has a whole production studio. And he has a lot of people. He makes thousands and thousands of objects. And I'd make things for him, or have people make them, and I'd send them off to the painting studio and people would paint them. And he'd bill me, well, on my taxes, it was Ubu Plastering or something like that, with a Jarry spiral on it. I've always used that image. I always called everything Ubu, so when it came to building a web site on the Internet, I thought, well, I'll call it UbuWeb. That's all. No, it launched in November 1996. Well, the ISP I still have is the ISP I've had since day one. Zarcrom. It was set up by this guy in France, Chris, who did Zarcrom. I don't know why, I've just stuck with this guy for twenty years. Internet Service Provider. When you have a website you have to host it with someone. No, because it's the Internet. You can be anywhere. No, no. I had done an art project called StadiumWeb. Do you know StadiumWeb? It used to be, I think I gave it to DIA, but it was an early online artist project site, and somehow we hooked up with Zarcrom and that must have been 1994 or something like that. This is a little granular. No, jump in, jump in! He can hear it. That happened soon after I had started UbuWeb. Charles offered space on the EPC servers. And that was fine until Bruce Conner, who is normally in a coma, found out that some of his films were up there and sent an insane letter to the president of the University who shut everything down. This is much earlier than the Frameworks stuff. Because after EPC it went to WFMU, where I was a DJ. They hosted it for a couple years until it got too big for them to host. Yeah, then it went to York. It went to Darren's project at York in Toronto. I think we were there for about five years, and then, finally. No, no, it wasn't an IP issue. It was just too popular. The stats were drowning everything else on that project and they hated it. So they just said, Rosmarie said, That's it, we're done. And that was when I went down to Mexico for that conference at Centro and Kerstin offered to host it. It was almost seamless. You should talk to Rosmarie about why she kicked it off. Coomb. You can find out about her. She always seemed very nice to me, but then she turned on me because the site was taking up too much space. That's the problem with Ubu, it's so big and it's so popular that it dwarfs everything else around it. And people hate that. For a little while, it was on PennSound and Charles was like, Get it off here. I can't see anything else. It drowned PennSound. This has all been free. I just kind of bounce from server to server. It wasn't legal issues. Nobody ever had a problem with it being illegal. Never. I

was never kicked off because people said, That's illegal. Well, maybe the Buffalo thing was the only time. I have not a clue what happened then. I have not a clue why it got hacked. It was... I can't remember. I can probably dig up emails why it was damaged. I never found out who did it. Then there was that celebration on the Frameworks site over the hacking. It's the avant-garde filmmakers' listserve. Its still going, Frameworks. So, then this list, these people who hated UbuWeb were cheering on this list that UbuWeb was gone and our world can return to its natural order once again. And I just couldn't believe it. Yes, it's a resource and it's promoting their work for free. What's not to like about it? Well, filmmakers feel like they're taking a huge hit because they've gone from something the size of this room to something the size of a postage stamp. And, like so many things that we've been talking about, guess who is to blame for that whole problem? Me. In terms of conceptual poetry, the digital, all this stuff. All the blame that comes on me, from the poetry stuff that we were talking about this morning. Why me? Because UbuWeb had single-handedly destroyed their milieu. And Goldsmith is... They don't like that I did it without permission. They don't like that the films are small and are low-resolution. Of course, or course. All they have to do is write me and tell me to take it down. But they did like the fact that I was promoting all their stuff for free. But it came back to Goldsmith – it's the same thing all around the Michael Brown thing – Goldsmith is stealing from us for his own benefit. And by the way, I've never touched money for the what I've done on UbuWeb. I've never taken money. I got the same accusations around the Michael Brown thing. You're stealing our identity. You're raping the body for your own profit. Profit? Really? Scheuch? Shoosh, swoosh, Scheuch. She is this powerhouse Austrian-German lady who is in Mexico and is just kicking ass. Mexico is pretty laid back and she is like bap bap bap! Kerstin Scheuch. She's awesome. There she is. She looks like someone out of a Lina Wertmüller film. Let me get my glasses. Oh, Pamela. She's just amazing. This is the woman who runs LABOR gallery. She's awesome. No, I love Mexico, you know. But now there's all this trouble with Heriberto. Heriberto Yopez, yeah. Is Jorge the guy who wrote the Conceptualism in Latin America piece that's been attacked? I believe so. His name is coming up a lot lately if I'm thinking of the right guy. He's a very tall guy. Yes, very tall and gaunt. Check him out. I believe he's all over the place in the midst of this whole mess with what's going on with Latin American conceptualism. What a mess, what a mess. Okay, anyway, let's stay on Ubu. Well, that's another conversation. I mean, Alec and I have certainly been talking about this. Not about the whole Latin American conceptualist element, but let's just leave

it. Okay, what's next? No, there were no models for UbuWeb. They didn't exist. Yeah, it was just me scanning books and then when RealAudio came, I ripped some vinyl or CDs and made some RealAudio files. I just went with whatever the Web was doing. Okay, now they have sound, so let's put some sound up there. Then when MP3s came... Then when Flash video came, I thought, Well, let's do that. No, I haven't saved back-ups of the site. I have some old HTML. I have some funny old HTML. I can pull up what UbuWeb looked like, but I blocked it from the WayBack Machine. I took Ubu off of Google. It doesn't exist on Google. If you search for Ubu on Google, you can find links to it, but you can not find it. UbuWeb.tv, yeah, that's a backdoor to it. That's a weird thing too. Oh, yeah. But I removed UbuWeb from Google years ago, maybe five or six years ago to get the copyright trolls off my back. And it's been incredibly effective. It's been a great thing. So, the way it looks, if you search for Vito Acconci, the first thing you get are his officially distributors and not UbuWeb. Before you used to get UbuWeb. I'm happy that people go and buy the stuff from them. If it's available, they should buy it. But if you know about Ubu, well. So, in that way, it's underground. It's hiding in plain site, but it's underground. That's cool. I like that. It's completely open but you got to know about it. Sure. Keep it going. If you play fifteen seconds of Throbbing Gristle it wouldn't sound anything like this. Oh, uh, Genesis. Genesis P-Orridge. Did you see The Ballad of Lady J? It's really interesting, really interesting. It's about his love affair with this beautiful young girl and then they had plastic surgery to look like one another and then she tragically dies. She gets cancer and she dies. And he's left looking halfway evolved into a woman, they had wanted to be the same person. It's a really interesting, he's a really interesting person. He's here in New York. He lives in Flushing or something like that. Yeah, yeah. Kind of an amazing guy. Throbbing Gristle, you know, was, yeah, anyway, I had trouble with Throbbing Gristle when I put those twenty-four hours of Throbbing Gristle up. People hated the fact that I put them up there. That twenty-four hours, yeah, those are cassettes. Yeah. I thin he's a he. He hasn't been through an op. So, I actually think he's a he. Well, I mean, Throbbing Gristle were like, Fuck you, you're ripping us off. Keep your hands off our shit. But of course it's long out of print. It it it it was available some time in the early 90s for some ridiculous price and then it was long out of print. And if it's out of print, I figure it's fair game. So, I retweeted their hate-tweet at me, and everybody was like, Dudes, if you made it available, we would have bought it. Make it available and we will buy it. Until then, UbuWeb is doing the right thing, so go fuck yourselves. You know, we love what you do and this thing has been our of

print for twenty-five years. It's it's been, and that's another thing, you know. UbuWeb's been an education for a generation. It's been around long enough that there's very few artists or poets who have come up and have not learned their history from UbuWeb. Now that's wrong. That's fucked. That's weird. Because I don't know what I'm doing. So, that's a big fucking thing on my shoulders. But I don't care because it's a Wunderkammer. It's not a, it's not a. I'm a poet. I have a BFA in sculpture. I don't know what I'm doing. But, because it's the only site that's done what it's done and broken the law and broken copyright, it's become the gold standard. And if your work is not on UbuWeb, for many people it does not exist. So, it's been weird that way. When UbuWeb has gone down, the art schools around the world have panicked. Universities have panicked, because they use it for teaching material. Yeah, yeah. There are a few of these archives that are all friends of ours. Craig runs a thing called the Eclipse Archive, which puts up old avant-garde very obscure like the books I was showing you before, you know. Bruce Andrew's works and so on. I don't know what qualifies to be a part of Ubu. It's how I feel. I don't know what the avant-garde is. But one thing that I can say about it is that it is a reclamation of a term that was not, that was discredited. You know, when I was coming up in the 80s, you weren't allowed to use the term avant-garde because of its militaristic and patriarchal connotations. And, like the word queer, or the word nigger, I figured I would pick that up and dust it off and do it wrong and correct it. So, UbuWeb is the most impure form of the avant-garde available. And so it includes all sorts of strange things like outside art, outsider music, found poetry, novelty records, I don't know. Yeah, it's outsider, strange, weird stuff that never fit into a canon of the avant-garde. But I don't know I could make those weird connections between something poppy and something really avant. Well, it's built communities. It's built these giant communities around the world. And no matter where I go, you know, I show up in Oslo for a talk on UbuWeb, and it's filled with friends although I've never met them. We've all had sort of seen it, seen the world in the same way. And the numbers are probably fairly small locally, because there may be nobody else who is interested in this stuff in your town, let's say. But take globally, the numbers are pretty impressive. The twitter feed for Ubu is what, 75,000 people? Something like that. It's big. It's one metric. I don't look at any other stats. Not really, no, no standout moments because Ubu's been such a continuum. I work on it every day. Every day. Every night. I worked on it before I saw you today. I've got an hour, great, I can work on Ubu a little bit. It's like gardening. I have to, you know, grow this and trim that. Weed that and fix that. It never ends. If you work

on something a little bit every day, you end up with something that is massive and that's what Ubu has become. Twenty years, every single day working on it. Yeah, so it's hard for me. It's not been about peaks and valleys. It's been about a daily engagement and a daily practice that I feel every time I shut the computer down after working on it from after putting my kids to bed, from 10 pm to 1 am, I feel like I've made the world a better place. It really is my community service. It's all underground stuff. It's underground material. And it just deals with one to one personal moments of transcendence. That's a good story because that's what it does. And I think that's all art can do. Art never functions on a big scale. Art only changes lives on a one to one basis. Exactly what happened to you in that moment is all we can hope to do, we can hope to do with anything. There, well, you have to go to a section. If you go to, say, the Film and Video section, or the Sound section, then you get a giant list of all the artists that are in that. On the left hand side, um, sound. So, go, yeah, yeah, yeah. And then a big list of filmmakers comes up and if you click on their name, you get their films. Sometimes it's only one, sometimes it's it's it's dozens. It depends on what's there. Do I have something by Streb? Oh, no, I don't. I will. She'll end up in my dance section at some point. Dance is building. It's growing, yeah. Yeah, that's the Christopher Walken thing. That was from a thing that came out of the ICA in Philly of, it was included in an exhibition of dance videos. Dance with Camera. So, they put in classical dance videos and they put in the Fatboy Slim piece, which is great. But that's, that's, that's my idea of UbuWeb. That's dance. What Walken is doing there is dance. And you know, it's avant-garde. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Those are nice. That's a very popular series. On film and video. Under Greenaway. Or Monk. Well, but those are very popular. You know, the big things that are popular on UbuWeb are Greenaway, Robert Hughes. Shock of the New is big. John Berger, Ways of Seeing is big. You know. Cage is always big. It's predictable, almost. It's all male, it's all white. It's not all that way. No, no. It's not all that way, but most of the popular stuff is. Yeah, yeah. It's a history I deal with. It's not my problem. I deal with mostly the twentieth-century avant-garde, and guess what, it was male and white. Or at least the way it was presented was male and white. And since I don't get any money from anyone, I don't have to listen to to arguments of inclusion. I don't give a shit. If the work is good and it's made by a black person, it goes in. If I think it's good, it goes in. But I'm not going to pull in work that I think is bad because it's made by a black person. That's the history that I'm dealing with, it's fucked up but that's what it is. That's what the site is. If I asked for money, I would have to change that attitude.

And that's one of the reasons why UbuWeb could be what it is. No, no, I can't. Because it's so pure. If I took money for Ubu, I'd have to pay all these artists. If I was making money on all this, I'd be obliged to pay the ten thousand artists on Ubu. And then I'd have to hire an accountant and set up back accounts and transfer money and set up royalty statements, all that shit. No, I'm not going to pay anybody. There's no way. I'm not going to do any of that. I'm going to grab, I'm going to pirate a video, and I'm going to throw it online because I can, and let it be. But no, there's an ethics to Ubu. There's a real ethics. Yeah, it is, but the pirate often enriches himself. I don't enrich myself. It's the Robin Hood ethic, not the pirate ethic. Sometimes, I do it here. I have a little office in the back of the loft. I just do it myself, everyday. Oh, those are fun. Click on one of those. They're nutty flyers that were found in Chicago. So they sent them to me. The Ancient Order flyers. I love that! See, to me, that's avant-garde. The Ancient Order flyers, they're really weird and wonderful and strange. They don't make sense. They are Joycean, those things. I like, I like craziness. Well, I think it is an archive. I think UbuWeb is an archive because I think the difference between a collection and an archive is that a collection is one's personal taste. An archive, because I went from a collection to an archive, and so the archive makes an argument. A collection doesn't need to make an argument. That's my distinction. It's not stable. It's not stable. It's a very unstable archive, but it is an archive because it is a public argument. It makes a public statement. And that is the difference between a collector and an archivist. And sometimes, you know, for me, it flipped over into being, my collection flipped over into a public archive. I don't equate archive with stability always. It will be. It could be gone any time. Sometimes I figure that I will shut it down after twenty years. Why do I need this? Why do I need to do this? Why do I need to put, to have all this risk on me, everyday, being worried about getting sued? No, when I move it, I just mail a hard drive. They're too big, they're too big to move over the web. So a hard drive is mailed and then loaded. But the structure was the same, so I just do a search for "york.ca" and replace it with "ubu.centro.mx." There it all is. Things get lost along the way, but it's pretty much there. I've never met them, no. No, I don't know them. Last time I was in Mexico City, I wanted to get together with Kerstin but she never responded to my emails. That was for Printing out the Internet. I wanted to get, to be with her there. We had breakfast in New York a few years ago. I don't know, I like her. It's important to me that we keep a good relationship. But, I have to tell you, I'm migrating now all of the videos now on Ubu to Vimeo. Cause I couldn't get them, I couldn't get them, I couldn't get them to stream properly. They're too slow. They they

they stop. It's on there now, A to M right now is done. Mostly. There are patches that aren't done, but A to M is done. You see, you won't even know the difference. You won't notice the difference. It's invisible. And yet, the downloadable file is still on Centro, but I'm not streaming from Centro anymore. Now, from N to Z is still fucked up. I couldn't get it right. Yeah, a pro. No, no, I picked Pro. It's two hundred dollars a year. And I'm paying two hundred dollars a year to host that, and that's that. It's alright. No, it's fine. We can go there. Alex, you don't have to stick around, I mean, if we want to get, get, get micro. If we want to get micro or anything than, well, anyway. Please feel free, I know this is far beyond your... Oh, that's a great one, yeah. Ling Ling. Ling Ling. Yeah, no, those are good. These are wonderful. These are all, I collect all of these. Self-liposuction. I'll show you, I'll show you. I've got, I've got an ongoing collection. I'll bring up the latest. They're usually in the basement but. Yang Yang, how about that? This is. This is just. This is just the most recent. I collect them all the time, and uh uh these, this is probably the last, these are probably the last uh I don't know year or two of stuff I've been finding on the street. Sure. No, that's all down in the basement! Those are old. These are the newest ones! Yeah, that one I think is probably in there, yeah. Oh no, just here. I mean, there, shit, you can just throw them around but they're just just just crazy stuff. This is a good one! Here, just one sec, this. At some point, I don't know when I'll get to them. Yeah, I scan them all. Oh, this is a great one! Look at this one. This is brilliant. Sometimes they're... Sure. This is a great series. This guy. This is a series. This guy, here. This guy, he or she, does these beautiful drawings. I've got a lot of them. I just keep finding them. Beautiful little drawings that that that they post around. I've got tons of them. Look at these. Little stories and great stuff. It does look like Cheryl, doesn't it. We've been talking, we've been working through. Yeah, and then this was a whole bunch. I have no idea what these things are. They're good. They're funny. Anyway, in the basement, I've got giant posters. I've got all sorts of things. You know, it just goes on and on. Some of these big ones are real funny. What is this one? Oh, Kony 2012, with Castro, Hitler, and Kony. Somebody had to make that poster and put that up on the street. Kony 2012. I don't know why this was essential to post on a wall, but someone had a need. Yeah, well, that I was what I said at Documenta: Ubu may be my greatest work. Nothing, nothing, yeah, Alec, that comes up. That came up at Documenta. They wanted me to claim UbuWeb as a great artwork, which I did. I said, Oh, you want me to claim it, I will. But I don't like to. Sure, I mean it's had much more influence than anything of my own work. I mean, you know, in poetry I've had some influence.

But Ubu is much bigger. Most people that are out there don't know who I am. I have on my personal Twitter something like 13,000 followers. On Ubu, I have 75,000. They don't know who I am. They don't care. They don't give a shit about my own work. It's small compared to what Ubu is. So, I, it's, I don't posit it as an artwork, but somebody might care to see it that way. Sure. What you call my archival practice and my writing practice are both giant accumulations of pooled material. Materials that go into convolutes or go into folders, and are presented as is, without comment. Exactly. It's the exact same thing. And *Capital* was ten years of work, and UbuWeb has been twenty years of work. I mean, these are very long projects. So, yeah, everything's been about collecting and collections and housing them and what does the newspaper look like in the form of a book. Yes, I was interested in collecting before the Web. I have a giant record collection. I have a giant book collection. I've been a collector my whole life. So, it just, when it became possible, all that collectors want to do is to be able to share their collection. So you, you get online and you find a community of folks that are interested and it's Oh, look what I got. Oh, look what you got. And that's why I thought Napster was so great, because it connected all us insane collectors and it's like, Oh, wow, you have all those rare John Cage records that I've been looking for forever. You should see my Xenakis folder... That kind of thing. Yeah, the web has been great for collecting more than we'll ever be able to use. And I I I don't watch anything anything that's on UbuWeb. I mean, I I I have watched almost none of it. I just know it's good. I know it's relevant. But I don't know it. How can I know it? Well, because I've been doing UbuWeb, I'm a member of some good private file-sharing communities. Private ones. Like Kargara, which is a giant repository of illegal material. A lot of underground cinema, a lot of independent cinema. It's very hard to get a membership to Kargara. It's very controlled. So, again, eight people maybe have access to it and I pull it off there and make it available to the entire world. Yeah, yeah. They know who I am. That's why they invited me. Everybody wants to share their work. But it's at great risk that I do this. Sure, whatever you want to talk about. No, no! No! Absolutely not! Mexico is part of NAFTA! I'm on the hook there, too, in Mexico, as I am anywhere else. No, I don't do that. No, I don't think they have different IP laws. No. Well, but, our attitudes toward shared culture have evolved and it's not like what it was in 2008. It's much looser. It's much more relaxed. People are much more relaxed with things being on the web. It was weird at first, but now it's normal. People want to be on UbuWeb now. The fact that everything is out there anyway in some weird way. You might as well have it in a contextual, in

a sympathetic context. Like Archive.org is full of good things. But you can never find them, and nobody ever bothered to put it all together, so it's a fucking disaster. And so the context of, the curating is contextualization, and making sense of these things. Because if artifacts are available, then they acquire their real meaning through education constructs. You've made it. And that's okay, and that's why people cut me slack. It's pure, and I don't get money from it. And I'm not, it's the most pure thing in the world. And yeah, I try to keep a real ethos on that. Yeah. Well, it depends on if you're a producer or a consumer. Consumers are always happy to have things out there. But it's become the norm for something you make to show up, like Jim O'Rourke just released his first record since like 2008, and it appeared on file sharing that day. Of course it did. Jim O'Rourke will not receive the royalty cheque that he received, for example, for Eureka, which I bought on CD. But he's got to know that. It just, it's just the way it is now. You know, if you don't want it copied, don't put it on the web. Don't do it digital. But even the vinyls will get digitized. It's a it's a it's an archive it's a world archival impulse. Everything that people have, they want to digitize and share it. It's really wonderful. It's giant. I have some. Sure, sure. My favourite one, favourite cease and desist letter was from the Wiley Agency on Burroughs. You've heard me, have you heard me talk about this? How you doing? Yeah, granular. So so shall we pick up again on Tuesday? Let's pick up on Tuesday. All what stuff? All the notes. I think the last thing we have to do is, the only thing left we have to do is *Capital*, which I haven't talked to you about. We haven't done *Capital*, we haven't done MoMA, we haven't done the White House, we haven't done Printing out the Internet, and we haven't done the pedagogical stuff. We've been working for a week and just got through the book basically. So next week is fine. And I know you don't want to work Wednesday, so Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Let me get them for you. I'll do that now. Alright. Do you want me to give these to you know. Alright, email? Yeah, sure. Yeah, you too. Okay, so yeah. We have three days next week. Yeah, we're getting it. Oh, Friday, we're going to meet with Christian. And Thursday, we're going to meet with Andy Shau from Verso, if you want to sit in on a meeting with Andy. About *Capital*. We're doing *Capital* and I have to meet with him and I'm not quite sure what we're going to talk about, but just details about the project. That's a big conversation. I think we should have that first thing on Tuesday, the conversation about *Capital*. Okay. Oh, I've got everything. I've got everything. We haven't even talked about that or MoMA or Wasting Time on the Internet. Penn we haven't even mentioned. No, yeah. It's ridiculous. I'm sorry. It's too much. And everything has a good story.

I'm going to tell you things about MoMA that I've never told anybody. There are big secrets there. And I will tell you. Because I've just got to get them out. There are things about Printing out the Internet that I've never told anybody. But I want to tell you because I'm sort of sick of having these inside me. Alright, Alec! Have a great have a great weekend! I'll see you Tuesday at 10, here. Bye! I'm doing fine. No, I'm happy. Hey Alec, do you want to take some of these cookies? Okay, I'll email you. Is it okay that I email you? Is it okay if I email you this weekend with some stuff? Okay, bye. Christian is coming on Friday. So he wants to talk to Christian as well. I think he should talk with Christian because he can really talk. He really must talk with Christian. Oh, so I was going to show you these cease and desist letters I have. I'll show you my favourite one. Hold on a second. Let's see where it is. Here it is. I'll send you this whole thread. Here, read that one. But the funny thing is, I'm looking at this and I'm like, I'm like, Oh, okay, let's go to Raphael Rubenstein's papers. Burroughs. Let's search that. One mention of Burroughs. "Talking about Kathy Acker's story of New York City in 1979, taking a cue from William Burroughs, whose books were patched together from his own cut-up mash-up..." They do not own the fucking quote. They, they, they. What they did was they threw the name William Burroughs into Ubu's search engine, and cut and paste every single thing. And then my favourite part of it is, "Please note that these works are protected by copyright." Maybe they are... Maybe you don't own the copyright. "I work with the copyright holder..." This is my favourite one. "Under penalty of perjury in the United States, I state that the information contained in this notification is accurate and that I am authorized..." Well, my dear, you've already just perjured yourself and I've got a counter-suit against you. Right? But this is the way, this is the way that people use copyright. Like a sledgehammer. And most people don't know that, and they get this letter and they say, Oh, no! You know? Now, so, I wrote her back, ha, and then I forwarded this to Darren, and that was my response to Myers. Look, I don't, I'm not, I'm not gonna get hostile with her. It's okay. I won't touch Naked Lunch. I will not republish that book because I know that's where your money is. But a, but a, but a reading of Burroughs from Saint Mark's Church... That's Cheryl! This is Michael. This is Darren's student. He's writing his dissertation on Ubu, and Alec was sitting through, but it got, it got too geeky for him. So, he left. He's, he's only got six to ten thousand words, he doesn't want to get involved in this. That's white fish salad from Eisenberg's that really good. Yeah, it's delicious. I just couldn't eat the whole thing. I couldn't, I couldn't eat the whole thing. It's delicious. It's really, really good. So, let's see what happened

here. Then, she said, "Dear UbuWeb, thank you for your swift..." blah blah "...I was sent the links by a concerned party..." So she didn't even look! Then, "All the best, Lindsay," now she starts to get friendly and it turns out it turns out that she's maybe a secretary or an intern at fucking Wiley. She doesn't know what she's doing, but she's making some big claims that are fucked up. I don't want to get her in trouble and I don't want to make enemies out of Wiley Agency. I like Burroughs. I think his estate should make millions of dollars on those properties that make millions of dollars. You see it goes on. Ah, oh, anyway. What I ended up saying, I can't find it. Then she sent another one to me, uh, uh, uh, let's see what this one is. Okay, so now she went in. They went in. And it was, it was, you know, they were claiming... At some point I had those works up there. At some point I did. But the problem with it is is that, with the Giorno-Burroughs records, the copyright is with John Giorno. It's not with Burroughs. As a matter of fact, with just about everything they've listed, the copyright is with someone else. And so this is wrong too. People, you don't know what you're doing! You don't, you really have no clue here. Dial-a-Poem poets? No, no, no, no, no. This is John's. So, finally: "I hereby request that you move, disable, under penalty of perjury" – again. She's wrong again. This is when I finally send – and after this, I never heard from them again. I wrote to Grauerholz. I said, "Dear Mr. Grauerholz..." Read it. And we never heard from them again. Never. And when was all this? What year was this? I don't even remember. This is 2010. So, five years later, I've never had trouble. Sure, sure. It's alright. Just take the whole file. What do I care? Uh, just forward this one, and then go back and forward it yourself. I'm going to use the bathroom. Use the back bar and you'll probably get to the one. Cheryl, the sink looks amazing, doesn't it? He did the whole thing. It's like a new sink! It's amazing. At 7:30 tonight, we can use it. Did you find the other one? Did you send it to yourself? Those are really good ones. But I've got another, I've got some really good ones also. The other great story is that, so, when we hosted Aspen Magazine way back when. Yeah. I didn't initiate that. Do you know the story behind that? Oh. Uh, I get this email from this guy and it says, Hey, check out my Duchamp site, understandingduchamp.com. Do you know this story? Yeah, Andrew Stafford. And I look at it and say, Oh, that's nice. Cool site. And he says, Well, I have something else, for you. And he sends me a password, and it's the whole Aspen magazine. Everything. I'm like, Why, why is this behind a password? He said because the estate of Duchamp sued him for including the word Duchamp in their, in the URL. So, he was like, he was like, Wow, I got sued for one name in a URL? There's no way I'm putting this stuff

out, but if you want it, you can have it. I said, Fuck yeah. I don't care. I deal with this shit all the time. I mean, I've given myself a degree in copyright law. I mean, not really, but I know enough to know that I can stop the Wiley Agency. I know enough. I said, Look, I'll take it. I put it up and the New York Times wrote it up. I have it, but you can go find it in the Times. Aspen Magazine, 3-D Magazine Comes Online, something like that. And it was a long time ago. It was 2002 or something, I can't even remember when it was. It was a long time ago. And in it, they asked Merce Cunningham, or maybe the Merce Cunningham estate, something like that, What do you think of, Mr. Cunningham, what do you think of the fact that your words are up there without your permission. And Cunningham, or maybe his representative says, maybe says, you know, The value of, The educational value of having my words out there far outweighs any monetary value I get from having my words out there. It's both a statement and interview on Aspen magazine. And I was like, Well, that's a great, that's a great endorsement. Merce says, That's cool. So, I was really happy about that. And I've always told that story to brag about it. Well, after Merce dies, I get a very nasty letter from the Cunningham estate saying, Take those Aspen magazine things down! You don't own them! So, I'm like, well, I write them back and, In the New York Times, you guys said, Merce said, the same thing with Burroughs, William says, Merce says, Come on, folks. We're not making any kind of money. The same kind of letter. No, no, no. Take them the fuck down! They start getting angry. So I call, I email Andrew Stafford, and say, Andrew, where is the copyright on this record, and he sends me scans back, Copyright Aspen Magazine, 1967. And I send them that, and I think I was very mean, I think I just said FUCK YOU, you don't own this copyright. Go fuck yourself. I was very nasty about it because they were getting nasty with me. I don't like to be nasty, but I know, I know I'm right, and you're getting aggressive with me. So, okay, shut up. But, then I had a situation where Yoko Ono's people got in touch with me about her films being up on Ubu, and they said, We're not happy about that. And I notice that when I start to talk to these people back and forth a little bit, they get a little nicer, they get a little more human. You know, like, All the best, Lindsay. At first it's a wall, then they see I'm a person, then they're a person, and we start to talk, and it's nicer. And when I start talking with the lawyer from Studio One, I say, Look, I'll take the films down. I get it. She doesn't want them out. I'm not going to mess with Yoko's money machine. But, I say, we have these MP3s on Aspen, they're really part of a historical archive, and it would really rip the heart out of that archive to take them down. We don't make any money and they're not

commercial things. I said, Would you ask, Ms. Ono, if it is okay that we keep them up? Yeah, like, like, yeah, Let's go out in the snow, you know, No bed for Beatle John. It's stuff that shows up on some of the records, but nobody's going to buy the stuff. Radio Play. And so, in the meantime, I ask Stafford, Andrew, where does the copyright exist, not that I even want to start to go down that road with Yoko Ono's people, I don't want to, with her lawyers, but I'm, Andrew, what is it? And Andrew writes back with the scan and it's Copyright Yoko Ono and John Lennon. It wasn't Aspen magazine! They were on this in 1966. They were on it. So, I had no recourse. Okay. But, he wrote back and he said that he had spoken with Yoko, and she says that it's great to keep them up there as long as you can't download them. I was like, Oh, no problem. But of course you can download them. And I never heard from them again. I took the films down. I don't want to mess with that. You know, when there are estates, like CBC, they came after me for Gould, finally, all those Herschfield's I had. They were very nice about it. The legal department at CBC, we communicated back and forth. They said, We get what you're doing but we're going to have to ask you to take them down. I'm not going to mess with CBC's legal department. I know there's big money and I know Gould makes a lot of money. And I'm like, Okay, thanks for the loan. That was nice of you to loan us those for a while, we'll take them down. And often times, people will reclaim things. And I'll be like, Okay, thank you for letting us host that for a little while. It was lovely while it was there. You know, again, I've been tangoing with the Cage estate for a really long time, and recently C.F. Peters wanted me to take all these materials down from Cage's page. It's his publishing company. Again, I said to him, Oh, right, I mean if there is stuff that is violating your copyright that's in print, but you have to send me a list of what you want taken down. I'm not going to take down a German documentary about Cage, or the Peter Greenaway on Cage. Yeah, yeah, it's great. It's really good. You don't own that copyright and don't tell me you do. But if there is an orchestral piece that you own the copyright to, and I'd have to go look at the copyright, well, show me what you want. I can work with you. I don't want to rape you. I know you have a business model. It's better if it stays there. But I can send you these letters. Everything has been, it's always been a little bit different. And then, often what happens, enough time goes by, and then I put it all back up. Because they don't know. INA in France once sent me a very formal legal letter, you know, in the post, and I got a little bit scared about that. I was like, Fuck, this looks... But then for a while I took it all down, and then I put it all back up. I don't think they even know. They're trolling and they find it, and

then they send something, and most people would take it down. So, a lot of the resources on Ubu get dimmed, and sometimes they come back. When somebody dies, they come back. For example, Harun Farocki. The great leftist filmmaker. He wanted his work off of Ubu. He was a total fucking capitalist asshole about it. Right? Well, what happens is that a lot of these older artists – like Michel Audaire, there's a number of them – who have been really scraping by all these years, even Giorno, but John's not like that, but it's a similar case with Giorno, you're a guy that's been ignored forever and you're 70 years old and suddenly everybody rediscovers you, and you get an art career and you start making some money, and so then you want to kind of pull all your stuff back and say, It's mine. But don't tell me you have a leftist politic, then tell me you want to take it down. I don't like that. So, Farocki died. When I have a moment, I will put all of those fucking films back up again. Because it's like, Fuck you. Everybody used to say to Farocki, Why did you take your films down from Ubu? Ubu's great! His wife would say to him, Why did you take your films down from Ubu? But he got this idea that he was an important artist, and he is an important artist, but he's important to people that can't afford to go to New York and who can't afford to go to MoMA. And you've heard from me how UbuWeb's collection is much bigger than MoMA's? Oh, man, you have to come to an UbuWeb lecture of mine. I tell all of these stories. It's a good lecture. Yeah, just let me turn a few of these lights out. When I was working with Alec, it was very bright in here. Uh, well, uh, this story was which one? What was I going to tell you? We were talking about Giorno, talking about Farocki... Oh, MoMA. So, the question is, like, you go to MoMA's website and there's not artist films or videos there. There's nothing. They'll tell you what's on at the gallery and what they're serving for lunch that day. Some educational MP3s, you know. Education is allowed to put those things up of people who do lectures. But you can't see, say, an Andy Warhol film up there. Or any of it. So, I've got like three or four thousand films up on Ubu, and tons of audio, primary source material, and MoMA has nothing! So, UbuWeb is much bigger and much more important than MoMA in some world, in some parallel universe. I get the works from Kargara or a friend or whatever, I heave it up to a server, quickly rattle off the HTML, and post it. Done. If MoMA wants to put up a film or a video on their site, they've got to begin to, well, the first thing is that they have to contact the artist and get permission. Then they have to get their lawyer to work with artist's estate or the gallery, and there are people who broker a contract for how much someone is going to be paid, is it per stream, what kind of revenue sharing plan, et cetera. Even if it's free for them, they have to

do a contract and get lawyers involved. Then, after that, comes the digitization, and they have to follow very tight standards. Matter of fact, there's this guy, Ben Fiddiradden – did you see that thing I tweeted a while ago? He's come up with this incredible archiving system at MoMA, do you know this thing? Oh, oh, I mean, oh my god, it's the coolest thing. He's a friend. He's kind of a guy on the ground, someone you should really talk to. Let me find it, it's on the Ubu feed. Um, here it is. Binder. MoMA archiving and digital preservation system. This thing will blow you away! It's a, here, I can just send it to you. It's just, it's just... I mean, it's amazing. And the coolest thing about it is that's it's open-sourced. So anybody can use it. It's a gorgeous thing. I tweeted about it on Ubu. I don't know. Oh yeah, I know that. I think you guys are doing a great job with Amodern. I mean, really, I love that. I think it's so smart. Do you want this at the soundobject email? Okay. Yeah, so this is, anyway, getting back to MoMA. So, if MoMA wants to put something up, they have to broker with the artist, then they have to do all the file format stuff, they've got to pay for somebody to transfer it probably. They've got sixteen file formats. So, that's more money. And after that, god forbid, that, you know, in the film there's a snippet of radio playing from a 1966 and it's Jumping Jack Flash going. Well, then they got to contact Mick Jagger or The Rolling Stones, and then they have to pay royalties for every little snippet of music. And that would, and and. They've got to clear all these permissions and get all this stuff, so by the time, and that's just for one film, that some guy made with a sixteen millimetre camera back in 1970. At that point, with all of that, it's got to be ten thousand dollars just for that object to even go online. Where are you going to get that money? If you had to rebuild Ubu properly from scratch, it would take untold millions and millions of dollars, just to do this. It's intimidating. That's why it never gets done. People just can't, you can't deal with it. Except for stuff like PennSound or the EPC, but less so with the EPC, because it's just weird poetry. But on PennSound, we used to store a lot of Ubu's stuff there. People Like Us is still up there, Vicki Bennett's stuff is still up on PennSound. But I had the 365 Days Project up on there. And Charles was like, No, there are Disney files in there, and we can't expose, we don't have permission, and we can't expose Penn to that problem. Everything has to be permissioned. So I had to move 365 Days back to the Ubu server. Well, and it's true. But but but. But Ubu's not an underground network. Ubu is an open website for all. You know, it's not. You don't need a membership. You don't need to go to the DarkNet. You don't need to use a Tor browser, which I could have put the whole thing, I could have put the whole thing onto an Onion. But I'm not into that. I'm into being

open. It's a little hard to find. But it's there. There's no password protection. And that's the radical politic behind UbuWeb. All of these people are telling me my politics are fucked around the Michael Brown thing. That I'm a racist, that I'm right-wing. All this stuff. I'm like, People I have been fucking beyond copyleft for 20 years. For decades! I have been doing community work and you don't know anything about me. Ah, ah. It's so narrow and so stupid. I've been radically left, giving away culture to people with no money for twenty years at great risk to myself. All of my texts are available and open. Don't tell me I'm right-wing. Don't tell me I'm a fucking racist. What are you? You fucking idiots. That is not acceptable. Anyway, I don't want to go down that road right now, but to tell you that, you know, I've, you know. I'm astonished. After all this I've done, you're going to tell me that my politics are, that I have no politics. I'm not even a Marxist because that's too centrist for me. I won't put this under Creative Commons, because Creative Commons is another form of copyright. I don't want any law! I'm beyond anarchy with this. I don't want anything. I don't even want money. I want to give this, I want to give culture to people for free that don't have access to culture. I can't imagine a more politically radical position than that. But no, it's just Oh, he hates black people. I, I, I, I, it's that I killed Michael Brown for a second time. Okay, don't get me started. Fuck. Fuckers. Okay. I'm going to continue what I do. Okay. Anyway, so that's why Ubu outstrips MoMA. I always say, Why aren't there sixteen UbuWebs? Because nobody, everybody is scared of copyright. And I've learned that copyright is not a black and white things, it's really grey. And mostly I've realized copyright comes down to money. If something's making money, they're going to come after you. If something is really having a hard time making money, people are not going to throw good money away for no money. Mostly. I mean, it hasn't happened to me yet. It may, it may still. And, uh, sometimes if I get my head a little above water, with someone like Glenn Gould, who I do consider, those radio plays are really avant-garde, but he's a multi-million dollar seller, and they want to reign that stuff in. I get it. You know, but, like, Salvador Dali makes million dollar paintings, but I have his television ads up. So, why can't we put the Herschfields up? I know when to back down. I know when it's a big organization that's not going to relent, and I got to back down. I also know there's assholes like Andrew Wiley Agency who are just trolling, and without anything. You know, that's the most powerful literary agency in the world, Andrew Wiley. Who, by the way, comes up out of Telegraph Books. Andrew Wiley, Victor Bakris, and, uh, uh, I think it's Gerard Melanga – they ran Telegraph Books, which published Patti Smith's Seventh Heaven, you know, Telegraph

Books. No, no, it was Aram! Aram, Aram Saroyan. Aram, Victor Vakis, and Andrew Wiley who were behind Telegraph Books. You know, freaks. And Wiley turned into the primo, turned into a giant literary agent. Whatever. And now they're coming after me for Burroughs stuff. That's why he handles Burroughs, because he comes out of that culture. So, you know, UbuWeb, people are afraid of copyright. When we saw the MP3 blogosphere meltdown around MegaUpload a couple of years ago, everybody took their stuff down because they got some DMCA take-down, which doesn't mean that you're getting sued. But if you're a kid and putting up some obscure tapes that you're ripping, and you get a DMCA takedown, you think you're getting sued. That shit looks scary. It's a real thing that looks like a legal document. You're not getting sued, it's a warning. You get to play with it and they have to show proof of ownership, and all sorts of other stuff. It's not bad, but most people get that and they say, Fuck, man, I'm getting sued! Take it down. And that's what happened. That's the culture of intimidation. And that's why the blogosphere got... There was a time that I thought, around 2009, I asked myself, Why I am even bothering with these servers? Like in Mexico. Why, when I can just put everything up on MegaUpload, or RapidShare, why not? Fuck it. Maybe I'll just use RapidShare, or make a big torrent. People always say, Why don't you make a big torrent and put all of Ubu on it. You know, it's not that big. I mean, what is Ubu? Ubu now is two terabytes? Two terabytes? But not even. It's not even. Their cap is two terabytes. Well, that's one of the reasons why I've started thinking about moving it away. I don't know why they don't give me three terabytes. You know. I mean, but at this point, so, I'm, I'm, I've deleted Flash. That was a giant thing. That was a giant thing. I got an iPad and I was like, Fuck, I can't watch my own stuff on an iPad. This is beat. I got to do something about this. So, two years ago, three years ago, I think put something out on the Ubu twitter feed saying, Help! Can somebody help me do this? And this kid in London converted everything to MP4s that could be embedded. And this other girl stepped up to program the pages, and I converted all the pages. Finally, two years later, I got the drive delivered with all the MP4s, and the girl wrote the code, then I had to go into like a shell command and go in and transfer everything. It took a fucking year. And when I got it up there, I realized that they are not good. Like a 750 megabyte file is just never going to stream. So I had to go in there and I had to re-rip all the guy's files that were over 500 megabytes. I had to crunch them down in a program. And this took a long time, too. You'll see a lot of the time now, at the end of a downloadable file, it says .iphone.m4v because it's the smallest thing I could get down

to stream properly. The quality is still okay, and I don't care about quality. I hate good quality. I'm not about good quality. So, it kind of degraded a little bit, but I didn't give a shit. I need to get them small so they'd stream. Now I've got everything down under 500 megabytes per file. And they stream okay. But they don't stream as good as Vimeo does. And this is not my problem. Now, it's not my problem. Because Vimeo will always keep up with the latest technology. And they have little copyright things like, Do you know you can't upload this? But nobody's ever said anything. Nobody's ever had Vimeo take something down. Well, but SoundCloud did go after people at some point. They're going after Madonna. They're going after Lady Gaga. They're not going after John Cage, you know. I mean, you know, it's really going to be hard for them to do that. Also, I've hidden everything from the Vimeo community. Everything's private. And the only site it shows up on is Ubu. I have, I look look looked into it, with the Pro account, it's invisible. You didn't even know they were on Vimeo, did you? I think that's great! Right. Here, I'll show you, I think maybe, maybe Jack, I think I put Jack's video up. Now, this comes up on mine. But if I do it here on your computer, there's no sign of it. And it streams like a Vimeo. It streams gorgeously! It works, it works. And you don't know that it's Vimeo, and it's downloadable all the same. You know, it's great. And now, it was really hard to fast-forward on my things. Now Vimeo does that. That's what they do. And if, if, if the formats change, if the file formats change, Vimeo is obliged to make all of their stuff compatible with the new formats. So, I don't have to worry about it. And it's two hundred dollars a year for unlimited bandwidth. What, what. Now, you really want to geek out with me? This is fun. Yeah, I pay it out of my own pocket. It's two hundred bucks a year. So, so, this is it, you know. They're all private, so nobody knows about them. They're not on the web. They're not googleable. Nothing. It's all private. 1,516 videos thus far! I'm up to M. I just started, today I just uploaded the Ns – Robert Nelson, Warner Nix, Negativland. I just got up a couple of Bruce Naumann things. I got them up there. So, so, every week they give you 20 gigabytes that you can upload. So, it's Friday, and on Monday night, I can start all over again. I can only do twenty gigs a week. I can sign up and get second account and get 40 gigabytes a week, but I don't want to pay \$400 a year. I'll pay 200 bucks and it's going to take another three months. I've been going for three months and I'm halfway there. Every week I've been uploading my allotted bandwidth. Then I work on it. So, A through M is sort of done. I mean, there are a lot of holes in it. There are a lot of things that haven't been done. But I'll get there. Meanwhile, it works. The videos all work. They're not great, but they work.

And, slowly, every week, more and more come up. So, that has been my solution now. I'll barely be using their bandwidth now. I'm going to remove every file that's over 500 megabytes from their server to clear out more room. I don't, I don't. And, all the Flash files, I'm going to erase all the Flash files. That's, that, I can't remember the size of the Flash folder, but it's pretty big. There's a lot of stuff up there. I don't even know what kind of file Vimeo uses. You can find out. I'm not sure. But there's MP3s on Ubu, PDFs – which I'm nervous about. See Flash was a real bummer. It was a bad move, but it was so exciting for so many years. I put all of this work into Flash, and it, and, and it didn't work after a while. I was like, Oh, shit. Now, with Vimeo, it's just not going to be my problem. And I think that's worth \$200 a year. And it's beautiful! I can stream these things on my phone now. Ubu's on the fucking iPhone. It's taken a while, but we got there. It's really good. I'm really happy. No, but that's because you invented it and you didn't use a pre-existing system. I've always said, Don't trust the cloud. Go independent. I'm contradicting myself now. I'm changing because they know the stuff, that's their problem. So, you have to inhabit it and make sure it's invisible and make sure it's seamless. Which all of them are, because that's they're business model. They've got a lot of people that pay them \$200 a year – it's not a lot of money for me, and I get unlimited videos. There's no cap on this thing. I can keep going with it. I haven't had any problems with it. It's been really good. Nobody's even noticed. I thought I'd get some tweets saying, Oh, UbuWeb's moved to Vimeo. What about Goldsmith and don't trust the cloud? But nobody's ever said anything. Maybe by the fall the whole thing will be up and working the way it should be. The other recent thing about Ubu is this, which I love. This thing. I don't know what it is, but some guy just put this player in, and it works on mobile media as well. Sometimes I have these recordings, you know, like the History of Electronic Music in Sound, which is 54 hours. Some of those Stockhausen recordings have like ten or twelve files on them, and you'd have to click this one then that one, and this guy was like, No, actually, I'll just give you this player so you can stream the whole page. So, if you go look on the Terry Riley page, you can just listen to probably seven days of Terry Riley non-stop. It's really, this has been a good one. I love that. So, I'm into incorporating newer ideas. And the pages now. I don't even understand the pages. This girl wrote this thing that made HTML5 video pages. This thing? The audio player? Oh, I can find out. I probably started using it a few years ago. Oh, I like this, you can hide the playlist. It's wonderful and it works beautifully. It really works. I think it's a great solution. On the phone, on the iPad, it all works. And it's not SoundCloud. Now, if we look at the

page here and do something like I've just done, let me show you. So, I had all of this code. A lot of this is ancient code. I don't even know. Like the Flash stuff. It's all still stuck in there. See, what happened was. This is what happened. This is one of the things that really got me was that I realized FireFox would not load MP4s. It was, it was a, it would not do an MP4 player. It was not compatible. Firefox was not compatible with MP4s because some legal dispute. So what this person wrote me was a Flash fallback. People would be like, I can't see your thing on my computer. I can't see it, because now it's an MP4 interface. So, it has a sniffer somewhere in here, so that if it detects Firefox, it will fall back to a Flash player. Now that I have Vimeo, I don't need it. But all that code is still in the pages. It's all there even though I don't use it anymore. And I don't know, is this HTML5? This must be her HTML5 stuff, which I guess is in there and I keep it in there. Okay. What a page used to look like, um, uh, where, where do I keep that. Yeah, a girl named Meredith. Meredith. I can't look her up in my email. Meredith Finkelstein, she wrote the code. She's really cool. You can talk to her. She's so nice. She has a very successful business. I'll send you her thing. She wrote the code for HTML5. She was cool. Let's see if I can find out how I did this. Oh, I changed everything. Damn. No, that wasn't it. Okay, so I take this, the php. And let's say I want to insert an M4V into it, and this is the file, and it's up the server now, and it would pull down, it would create a new one, so I'd have to do this. This is not going to be right. But I just put this in there and it would show up right there. Oh, well, anyway, it's not working now because it's all done. What the code used to look like before that was in Film Deposit. These are the old Ubu pages. It's not in the order. That would have a big ugly Flash thing in it. I suppose that still would run. The Flash ran really beautifully. But you know, it's not in the folder anymore, not in the CSS and all that stuff. But you understand what's happening here. But this, this page was, you know, I wrote this page. I understand this page. I rally kind of get this one. This one, the HTML5 page, I sort of don't get. I plunk in or I put in the parameters. I drop in the names. I put in the Vimeo with a number on it, the Vimeo number, then an Ubu description. Then I look at it, and I'm like, Oh! Because it's loading locally, it won't show. I don't know if they're always working correctly, so if I really want to see it I have to go to Ubu, then to Mekas, and then suddenly there it is. So, it won't even load on my local machine. It only loads on ubu.com, and there it is. Well, I've had a lot of trouble with Mekas on UbuWeb. He does not want his stuff up there. One of my great, one of my great, one of my great enemies is this guy called Pip Chodorov. He runs the Frameworks list, and he's also the guy that runs a film

distributor of avant-garde films in Paris called Re:Voir. He's been a great enemy of mine. He hates UbuWeb. But meanwhile, he often pirates things and then sells them for money. He hates me. So, I get an email from the children of Stan Vanderbeek. Do you know who he is? A film artist guy from the 1960s. Cool stuff. His kids are in the art world, this girl Sarah and her brother, and she says, Hey, I want to put all of our dad's films up on UbuWeb. And I say, Wow, cool. Send them on. I'll show you. I'll show you. Stan Vanderbeek. Look at all these films here. This is great. All of these films. So this guy contacts me who runs the Frameworks and says, You motherfucker, I see you have all the films of Stan Vanderbeek and I'm selling them, and the proceeds are going to support his children! You want to starve his children by giving your shit away on UbuWeb! How dare you! And I can find that email for you. I had to write him back and say, Pip, actually we got the films from his children. So go fuck yourself, you fucking asshole. Go fuck yourself. But, you'll notice, I'm not such a bad guy, because I actually put a link to his site – Distributed by UbuWeb, EAI, and Re:Voir. You know what, I'm like, I hate you, but I'm a nice guy. I want you to succeed. I want him to sell these things. He hates me but I don't hate him. If anything comes back to print that's on UbuWeb, I usually take it down. Like the Catherine Krista-Hendricks Electric Harpsichord, which I had up on UbuWeb. It was out of print forever. I get an email from a little company who is putting it out saying, You know, we're putting this out. And I say, Oh, great. I'll take it down, and I'm going to put a link to your site so that people can buy that from you. No, I don't do that. I won't give people my statistics. But, I have a great story with EAI. I've know EAI forever. Cheryl's films are distributed with EAI. I get a call one day about five years ago, and it's from Laurie from EAI and she says, I want to have a meeting with you and Video Data Pool and we have to talk about UbuWeb. I'm like, Fuck. I've got a lot of EAI stuff up on Ubu. And this woman Evita from VDP and Laurie bring me into this office and they scream at me for a half hour. They're like, You fucking fuck, you are fucking destroying us. How can you do this? Screaming at me. Then when they were done screaming, they said, But we need you. We need to figure out a way to work together. And I'm like, Well, why do you need me. They say, Because all the free culture people love you and they hate us, and we love them. You know, we're on their side. But the gallery people hate us, because we distribute things for very little money. So, gallery people hate EAI. Free culture hates EAI. Free culture loves UbuWeb. Gallery people maybe know UbuWeb and maybe don't care. So, they're like, we need to win back their love, because they are part of our community. So, I said, Okay, how can we work

together? They said, We came up with an idea. We're going to poll all of the artists we have on EAI and VDP and whoever wants their stuff taken down, would you take it down? I said, Sure. I don't care. They sent me a list and it wasn't very long. It might have been ten or twenty people. Nobody even noticed they were gone. Nobody even knows who these people are. I took them down and we continued to go on. Then, I've never heard from them. I see Laurie and every time I see her, I'm like, Laurie, are we okay? And she's like, Yeah, we're fine. And so, EAI has actually said, this is a recent statement that they said, they said this to Cheryl during a meeting, they said, We are a back-up for when UbuWeb goes down. Well, you know the story about the Lincoln Center film thing? No, god. I've told these stories a million times in lectures. So, the Film Society of the Lincoln Center invited me to do a night of UbuWeb. It was in the Walther Reed Theatre, the most important screen in New York. You know, that giant one, the big one. I was like, Okay. I said, But, the only way I will do it is if you show .AVIs from the site. You may not get hi-res copies. And they agreed. And it was the worst two hours of cinema. And I said to the people, I'm going to show you something and you're not going to like what I'm going to do tonight. And the pixels were the size of this table. I mean, it broke up completely. And by the time it was over, the place was empty. They were gone, everybody left. I said, You're going to leave because this is going to be a terrible experience. What I want to say is that UbuWeb is no threat at all to your business model. We are distributing .AVIs. There is nothing that is replacing cinema. Cinema is a social experience. We are here together. I'm here to prove to you that UbuWeb is not your enemy. It may seem like we're destroying you, but we love you and when you need the copies to play in a palace like this, you will go to EAI and you will pay the money and the artists will get paid and everybody will be happy. Yeah, because you want to see the real thing. But, but, but most people can't afford to be in New York City or they are stuck with elderly parents or working bad jobs or have small children and live in the countryside like you used to. How hard would it have been for you to come down to New York and see a film. That is the real thing. The degraded thing is the real thing now for many people. The shit artefact is the real artifact. And, you know, we don't care about resolution anymore. We care that we can actually see some version of it. So that was the real thing for me. It used to be like painters, there was a thing about how oil painters all used to, at a certain point, ones who lived outside of urban areas, had glossy surfaces because the only thing that they were ever seeing was photographic reproductions on glossy paper, and they thought, Oh, okay, paintings are really shiny. That's,

that's the same thing that's going on now. But, yes, but people, but in the internet economy the image, the .JPEG or the Instagram, has much more power than the actual object. You've got to get the best Instagram of it in order to sell that thing because it's all traded based on images now. Anyway, that's the kind of thing that we need to think about with this type of material – that, actually, the Lincoln Center thing is no longer the real thing, it's a version of many versions. And I can still say, I think it's a better experience, but it's a privileged experience. You have to, you have to talk about, you have to have the money to come to New York. And, you know, that's also the other thing. MoMA has a great education department but in order to access that education department, you have to got to come, you know, you have got to come to New York, come to MoMa, be able to afford the \$25 to get in, somehow, if you're going to stay overnight, you have to afford the hotel, you have to afford to get here somehow. Well, maybe it's not so free. I'm telling you what I'm giving you on UbuWeb is free. Free, totally free. For you, in the arctic. There you go! No price of admission, no barrier. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's what it does. There are many versions! Not just one. This is why Frameworks backed down. And they did back down, those motherfuckers, because I said, Go ahead, man, do it better. Put us out of business. Why do I need to do this? Why does a poet who knows nothing about avant-garde film need to handle the weight of avant-garde film? There's no other repository where avant-garde film is cited as much as UbuWeb is. I don't know what I'm doing. Who am I? You guys know it! You do it! But the minute anyone is challenged to do something, then, then suddenly they shut the fuck up. And I noticed that after that thing, they never mentioned UbuWeb again. Sometimes I even go back and look on it and they never mention UbuWeb. I shut that list down. And then I got an email from one of the haters, one of the worst haters on the list, one of the guys sent me an email and said, Hey, listen, I'd love my films on UbuWeb. And I said to him, Oh, great. I'd love to put them up on UbuWeb. Okay. I want to make friends with you. I like you. He was the worst one. I can dig it up, I don't know. But first we have to have a conversation. I need to know why you changed your mind. You were really mean to me. You were really adamant about hating UbuWeb, and now you want them up, so you have to tell me about this. He never wrote back. I told him that we had to have a conversation before we put your films up and I was happy to support his work. I love avant-garde artists, I love avant-garde film. I'm happy to support it but we must have that conversation. Sure, sure, sure. Well, but, but, that's the thing. Everybody says the Web is no good anymore. It's owned by Facebook, it's owned by Google. But it's not. You

just forgot, dear blogger, that you can be independent. Ubu's still there. It's the same as it's always been. They've just forgotten that it is possible to do something that is alternative to Google and Facebook and Twitter. I mean, I use those things, too, but... Ubu's never suffered as a result of Google, or whatever. It goes, it goes, it goes, it goes. So, that's ignorance, to me. I find that ignorant. No, I never met Aaron Schwartz. Our paths never intersected, but when I'm in the room with big Internet people – like when I was at a conference in India with Peter Sun from PirateBay before he got arrested, and Peter watched my presentation and said, Oh my god, that's amazing, I never knew about UbuWeb. So, Schwartz maybe never, these people probably know nothing about UbuWeb. This is our world, it's not theirs. They're activists, they're hacktivists, they're political people. They are in some other world. They don't know about UbuWeb. It's not on their radar. When Peter found out about it, he said, Wow, that's cool, but we never really stayed in touch after that. It wasn't his world. But Schwartz, I was very moved. It was a tragic story. And I loved the idea that he was plundering from JStor and all that stuff. That has more with, I think Schwartz has more to do with my artistic practice than it does with UbuWeb, though they are all the same. The convolutes for *Capital* are, well, it's the same thing. I pool everything into categories. Sound, and this and that, the same thing exact shit. It's all this idea of accumulation and collection. So, uh, Schwartz, I admired him, but I never really knew about him until he died. It just wasn't my world. I'm an activist for art, my artistic activism is political, but I'm not, well, I don't have any illusions about anybody, except for about six people who are our friends, caring about this stuff. That was also the mistake that I made at Brown, assuming that I was just in a room with six friends who knew what I was doing and why I was doing it because they know Kenny and they know the work. I had forgotten that there was a little thing called Twitter that was going to spread this thing out that was decontextualized and it was all like, White guy reading an autopsy report as a poem to Michael Brown, what are you fucking kidding me? This twenty years or thirty years of theory that goes behind that action, and here it is just a headline of some fucking guy getting up there. Probably if I didn't know it either, I would have been like, That's kind of weird. Well, what I feel ultimately was that I didn't express it properly. An autopsy, reading an autopsy report is simply not a poem. The argument was not as racial as it was aesthetic. It was a rejection of conceptualism. You cold motherfucker, you're going to read an autopsy report, and you're going to call it a poem? That's not a fucking poem. That's an autopsy report. How can you call that a poem? And even people in our community could not see

that as a poem. Even people that know that theory jumped on that bandwagon, that hating bandwagon and suddenly like, Hello, I wrote a whole book called Uncreative Writing about identity. There's a whole chapter where I talk about why identity poetics or identity poetry is limited and how we can probably think about identity poetry in a different way, but nobody's ever read that book. So, that's the, but, you see, I have this weird illusion that it's small. I'm learning that maybe, well, it is small the people who understand. UbuWeb, I think, is a small community. It was in motion before this. They were waiting with knives for me or for Vanessa or Christian to make a misstep because the inevitability of all this is something I've been talking with Alec about all week. There is this inevitability with conceptualism – they are going to kill the messenger, but I have to tell you, in the digital world, your lyric poetry just ain't going to be relevant anymore. I said that a long time ago and everyone hated me for that. And it's, it's really, the whole thing is an aesthetic problem. But it's inevitable because we're in the 21st century and we're all working on this machine. You can keep your head in the sand and you can keep on saying that I'm going to work on this precious lyric, my little therapeutic poem, but it doesn't, you don't matter anymore. It's an anti-humanist stance. It's inevitable. So, everybody had to take it seriously and then, you know, they're waiting to reject it because they want to kill it. It's inevitable. I know there is this generation that came up in the wake of conceptualism but they can't speak. They are not permitted to speak. Yeah. Yeah, but Tricia's piece was about me as a teacher and hating me, and needing to hate me the way she hates her father. I mean, I have to deal with that, I have to deal with Tricia Low doing an Oedipal read on my work, which I hate. I mean, Tricia was a really good student of mine. And she's very self-aware with that thing. She starts with her parents, her mommy Vanessa and her daddy Kenny – and I hate them, and I hate what they did. But, also, Michael, the thing is, the statement of conceptualism was so huge and so convincing that it leaves another generation wondering, well, What's our move? Just like we were left in the wake of Language writing. Like, well, these guys got the last word in on Modernism, what the fuck else is there for us to do? And then, fortunately, oh, the digital came. That's our response. We got a response and we went with that. I think a lot of people, like, conceptualism has been – I said this to Christian the other day – I said, We've been on the stage as long as Language poetry was on the stage when we got there. And we just wanted to fucking shred that stuff. And we did. So, I get it. I can feel personally hurt by Tricia, but I said to Cheryl last night, though, I said to Cheryl, I guess I've produced really strong students that need to kill

me in order to find out who they are. I understand the self-consciousness in that. I get it, because I wanted to kill my fathers. I wanted to kill Charles and Bruce. I just wanted to get in there and, fuck, man, Ron. Ron, I wanted to kill Ron. I love you and you've done something amazing, but it's enough already. We had the same, Christian and I sat around the table, this table, talking about how we are going to wrestle this thing away. You know, I think that's okay. I get Tricia. What is that? I can't set my foot again the poetry world. By the way, I'm done. I can't do it. I'll be a poet, I'll just be a poet on another level. I can't go to a place like that, I'm too scared. People really hate me. This has been very scary for me. I can't go into a room with poets. It was Charles's 65th birthday a couple of weeks ago. I love Charles. I said to him, I can't walk into that room. They fucking hate me. I just can't do it. Maybe two years from now I can return. But I can't go there now. You don't understand what I've been through, the hate that I've been through. But where is it? Is Ara in town? Whose books are being launched? Danny has a book with Make Now? What book? That's wonderful. I mean, my primary books are with Make Now. Those are good, those three books are really good. That was a long time ago with Ara, and he's a good guy. I would normally be there, and I even know that you guys are all my friends, but there are going to be people in that room that aren't my friends, and I'm going to get yelled at. I don't know if you saw that thing that Cassandra Gillig passed around about how to disrupt my readings? I'm like, Oh my god. People are after me, people are going to come after me in public for readings. I, I don't know what to do. I'll have a profile in the *New Yorker* – and I'll be one of those people now, one of those people whose feet don't touch the ground because I can't be on the ground anymore. I don't want to be that person. But it's funny that this comes. I need, I need Alec's profile, it's a giant profile, in the *New Yorker*, like Ashbery got. I need that, because I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. I don't what my next move is. I've got *Capital* coming out, and I've got this *New Yorker* profile. I've got to do my work and I keep UbuWeb going, but I just feel so horrible. I didn't want to hurt people. I didn't mean to hurt people. There were problems with the piece. I should have seen things. I didn't see things. I didn't intend that. Exactly. It can map power. And that's what the Michael Brown piece was. It was a critique of the institutional structures around the death of Michael Brown. And everybody's saying, Oh, that poor boy. But it wasn't that poor boy, it was the poor boy's body that had been massacred by a system. In that document, I didn't write, it was written by teams of forensic people. It's Foucault – the whole apparatus, the whole collective. It was a collectively written document that then I read. I mean,

it's a good piece. It had its problems. I mean, with *Seven Deaths and Disasters*, we know how we feel about all those people. That's history. But this also shows you how hard it is to capture the contemporary. It's emotion, man. And I wanted to see if it could do it. And it blew up. It was real hot and it blew up. I don't know if it's possible. I tried to do something. It turned out something else. It's a blur. Yes, it has proved the thinkership idea because nobody's even seen the fucking piece. Nobody's even read the piece. Yeah, it does everything I've always wanted my writing to do. It generated a giant conversation, a thinkership about an empty centre and an apparatus, which is, by the way, what conceptualism really is. I didn't want to come to those conclusions, though, through other people's pain. I'm not into causing people pain. I'm not that kind of person. It hurts me that people think I did this to cause people pain. I'm traumatized that I caused people pain. It's not my intention. So, maybe we should finish with *UbuWeb*. I said to Fitterman, I said, Rob, well, maybe this is it. Maybe the wheel has turned. I said this to Christian, too. Maybe a new poetics needs to come in. It's not what I want, it's not what I think is good. But maybe it's time for the wheel to turn and different voice to take the stage because we've had that stage for an awfully long time unchallenged and it was kind of getting a little obnoxious. I mean, I wanted to kill myself, kill my persona. I'm getting tired of saying those same things over and over and over. I was sounding like a broken record. I was sick of the whole thing myself. I said to Christian five years ago, after *Against Expression*, I said, Conceptualism is over. It's done. Now maybe there's post-conceptualism or neo-conceptualism, or, or, but enough already. Christian is an artist. Christian Bök is an artist. Nobody ever called Sol Lewitt a minimalist by the time he died. Sol Lewitt was Sol Lewitt. He emerged out of minimalism. Christian Bök emerged out of conceptualism and now he's the artist Christian Bök. Can't we just be the artists that we are that emerged out of a movement, which is or should be dead. How long did minimalism and conceptualism in the art world last? Not very long. Not as long as we have. But poetry moves a lot slower, maybe a decade. Then what starts to happen is that the Lewittian grid, the next generation wraps the grid in cloth and then, suddenly, you get an organic grid. And then, the next year, people start to hang maybe kachina dolls off that grid so that you get an ornamented soft grid. Things keep getting piled on it and the grid gets buried, and it's still a substructure but it's got an organic feel. Then, people forget that the grid is there and then you're back to expressionism. And I see it playing out just as it did in the art world. All the identity stuff that's coming in now, I mean, Sol Lewitt and André, all those white guys, they didn't tell stories. They

were cold. When all of the identity issues began coming in in the early 1970s, feminism, and Indigenous cultures, and story-telling and narrative, they are all sort of structured through the grid, but by the late 70s all of that is gone and it's back to unmediated expression. And the grid is finished. The 1980s proceeds on to what's called neo-expressionism and neo-figuration. Then, years later, it swings back to neo-conceptualism. It's gone back and forth so many times now that we don't know where we're at, we're confused. But I see the parallels are exact, except for the time lag. What happened in five years in the art world, happens in fifteen years in the poetry world. So, I see it, I could have told you this was coming. Yeah, you see it in Troll Thread and in the Gauss works. The grid of conceptualism is there, but it's also really crazy and really baroque and really wrong and really impure and really expressive. It's really dirty conceptualism, yeah. Who came up with that, you? Because there's dirty concrete, too. Lori Emerson talks about that, dirty concrete, about the movement from the press type, the clean de Campos type of concrete works, and then the typewriter, and the messiness of the typewriter. It gets really dirty and gritty, and also really democratic – anyone can make a concrete poem with a typewriter. You don't need access to a typesetter. So, Lori's got a chapter in her book on dirty concrete. So, yeah, it is, it's dirty conceptualism. And it's cool. My own works has gotten dirtier. I mean, *Seven Deaths*. That's an emotional book. *Capital* is a deeply emotional and very literary book. And and the Michael Brown piece is really a hot piece. I'm into hot, I'm not doing anything differently. I'm just training the camera from something that's like *Day*, something stupid and banal, to something like *Seven Deaths and Disasters*, something that's really hot. I produce an emotional text by turning camera from here to her. Lewitt did that, too, because Lewitt's later work is baroque and colourful and organic, but it's all still made by a machine. It's made the same exact way that the fucking early grids are made. He's just throwing different shit into the parameters. If you look at all those parallels, you'll see that's exactly what we're doing. You can go to the grave, like Carl André, and do your blocks forever, or you can juice the machine a little bit and come up with something different. Or you can evolve. There are many ways to go. I'm not young anymore. By the time, Lewitt was my age, he was already long disassociated with minimalism. Lewitt is born in the twenties and by the time he's my age, it's the late 1970s or early 80s – it's a decade and a half after minimalism. I was old when all of this started. When I met Darren and Christian, I think I was 39. I was already really old by the time this thing got underway. Those guys are ten years, or five years younger than me. They are five years younger than me. Darren's

49 and I'm 54. Next year I turn 55 and they turn 50. Yeah, that's great to hear. I think Darren's a brilliant guy who has really put aside his own artistic production so that he could be a great teacher. Yeah, yeah, he's a wonderful guy. He's a super talented artist, too. Would you like to split a mango with me? I'm just, I'm in the mood for a mango. Do you have any other questions? We can maybe take another half hour to talk more about Ubu, if you like and then I got to go and pick up my son. I bet they didn't have any mangos in the northern province! Is that right? What? What? Do they have vegetables? And they're expensive? Like for a head of broccoli? How do people afford that? Oh, like oil people? Wow. Rare what? Rare earth minerals, oh. So, do you have any other questions about Ubu? It's interesting. EPC was great. It's kinda dead though now, and Loss kind of lost interest. Did you meet Loss? He's cool. I mean, I was in with that early on, but I think e-poetry never really went anywhere. Remember how nasty I was at Banff about the e-poets. They hated me. Like I said at that Banff thing, You guys are really telling me this is the cutting edge? They were all so... And Funkhouser, I really like Chris and think his theoretical work is great, but that e-poetry, give me a fucking break, people. I stopped hanging with that, you know, I moved out of that thing. Well, those are interesting conversations to have, the archival element. That's why you should look at that MoMA thing because they can come up with this amazing archival system. But that's always been the problem: NetArt are always had money, e-poetry never had any money. NetArt had the same problems as e-poetry, but they often had a lot of money to at least try to do something. They didn't make anything better than e-poetry, but e-poetry was always impoverished. And also, with e-poetry, because nobody was able to hire any programmers, you had to be a designer, you had to be a programmer, and you had to be a poet. Each one of those is very hard to do. So, Brian Stefans was the only one – with The Dream Life of Letters – he was the only one with the chops to be a good designer, a good programmer, and a good writer. And then Brian gave that up because the game was moving too fast. He was the only one that had that skill set. It's hard to be good at any one of those things. Yeah, so. Net art went nowhere. But but things like post-Internet art, I think, are really interesting. Like The Jogging, and that whole group. It's dead now, but all of that post-Internet art was, I think, better because it was using the mechanics and the apparatus of the Web without having to have had the technical chops. Previously, it was the domain of programmers and not artists. Yeah, there is something more punk about it. It's artists fucking shit up. It's deskilled. That's the difference, the tradition of deskilling in visual arts. The programmers in net art and in

e-poetry were very skilled programmers. They needed to be. But the best art in the 20th century was always founded upon deskilling – the out of focus camera, Duchamp pointing, the conceptual art. That's been the way it goes. So, you get a highly skilled artisanal practice, and the art world is not going to care about it. Interesting, right. You were in Mexico for two months, why? Really? Wait, you were in Mexico City for two months, what? Where were you living? That's where Pamela and I got robbed, in Roma. That was horrible. Well, she's got the best gallery in town. We got tickets to MoMa but then we couldn't get in. By the time we got there, the museum was filled to capacity, so we went and had dinner instead and that was much better than seeing Björk. So, you lived in Roma and you just lived there? Wow, was it fun? Were you alone? It must have been really interesting to do that. Like Burroughs. Where are you from? In Scranton? And where did you go to school? Yeah, well, I did my undergrad at three places. So you went to Brown, Boston University... Wisconsin, in Madison? You lived in Varanasi? You lived a year and a half in Varanasi? Fuck. You're interesting. Really? What was it like to live in Varanasi? I've been there a couple of times and I like it, but living there? Did they have, like, a campus? So you lived in town? Oh, right in the middle of that, you lived near the burning ghats? God. God, what life. What an interesting life. I'd love to be able to do something like that. Not that I have a bad life, but, but I've never lived anywhere but here. I've lived here for twenty-five years. I've lived in this space for twenty-five years. And of my 54 years on the planet, I've lived 50 of them, half a century, within twenty minutes of where we're sitting. I don't think I'll ever live anywhere else. I love that you lived in Varanasi. And how old are you now? God, I admire that. I wish I had that life. I never did. I was always an artist and I'll always just wanted to be in my studio. I've been with the same woman for 32 years. I've never lived anywhere else. I'm so sheltered. I travel a bit, but living somewhere is different than traveling. We should do something at Centro. Why don't you head up something. I'll come down for it. They have money. They'll bring people down. One thing I didn't tell you is that I'm afraid of losing Centro. Why would they want to keep this? They don't seem to get anything out of it. So Centro is not liable? It's some shell company that's liable? So, if someone sues me and I can just say that I'm not hosting it, I'm just linking to it? Do I have that defence? So I'm clear? You should speak to, I'm sorry to interrupt you but I want to say this while I have it, but there's a lawyer in New York, a very famous lawyer named Amy Adler, and she, she – there are several people you should talk to in the law field about this – maybe write their names down as they've been really helpful to me. I

can also write this to you. Amy Adler. And the other guy who has been really helpful to me is Peter Dercherney, and he's at Penn. He's a film historian. Peter hooked me up with a guy at Georgetown, Peter Jaszi, who is a copyleft defender. Basically, what all of these guys are saying to me is that if I ever have trouble, we are going to defend you. Peter and this other guy, and I believe even Amy, see this is as, they see UbuWeb as a case of Fair Use. They say this is a clear case of Fair Use. And I'm kind of like, Really? In good faith, maybe, but legally? And they're like, No, no, really, we actually have a case for it as a case of Fair Use. I actually have lunch with Amy on June 2nd, and want to hear more of her ideas about it. Peter has written on UbuWeb. Peter has written on UbuWeb and legal circumstances. But this is great for me to know because I've often thought about how we should curate Mexican content on Ubu so we can make this indispensable at Centro. Wow, I'm really moved by that because I'm always thinking, well, they're not getting anything out of this and that means I'm going to get thrown off their servers and I'll have to go in search of some other thing. I mean, you need to go interview Rosemary Coomb, because she pulled the rug right out from under me. Oh man. Yeah, Coomb, yeah. Fair dealing and stuff. Here's an email: Server taken offline, oh, the reason the server has been inaccessible is because ... noticed a significant increase in bandwidth usage ... saw many of the files were moving ... they took it down and had to open up an investigation. David Meuer, do you know who this guy is? Oh man, David Meuer. David Meuer was an admin and he made everything so difficult. FYI Confidential, there you are, I'll send that to you. I mean, it's years ago, 2006. But I was wondering what the fuck was going on there. Here's Darren's offer to me, Al, Ken Friedman from WFMU – here, I'll forward you this. I mean, this is really elemental stuff. That's from 2005. Bill Kennedy is someone to talk to, too. He was sort of an admin for a while and was building this thing. Here's David Meuer: I spoke to Bill and Rosemary last week and we're in favour of reducing time spent on transfers, which supports moving your files over to Archive.org. Oh, I had been in touch with Archive.org about moving everything over there. And they wanted to do it, but they had the most arcane system of the way things had to go. And then, their bandwidth is so slow that nothing could stream. Rick Prelinger, do you know Rick? The Prelinger Archive? He's been a big part of Ubu's history. He's a free culture guy. Maybe you'd even want to go interview Rick and visit his library at some point. He's a remarkable guy. Here, here, read that one from Rosemary. Fuck, my heart was breaking. Isn't that an incredible letter? Isn't that an incredible letter? I was like, Fuck you. Well, you know, look at my own artwork,

like retyping the New York Times. What's labour? The labour of transcribing it. I like that. I'm a visual artist, and visual artists work. I used to cut wood. I used to sand wood. I used to colour in letters. I used to make things out of plaster. Artists only know how to do labour. Visual artists. That's what we know. So, it's weird that I took all that into writing and into coding. It's just the way I go. You know, it's all material to me. It's labour intensive. And I think it gives it value. I think that the labour aspect – and this goes for Christian, too, it's why we get along very well – it's not that it's really conceptual, it's that it's constructed. It's laborious and constructed. We both work on projects for over a decade. Christian's been working on the *Xenotext* for over a decade. UbuWeb is a 20-year labour project. I don't have much help. McLaughlin used to get me videos. Steve had a membership on Kargarga. Steve used to help me a lot, but not everybody is Steve. Steve is very rare. And there's the whole labour thing around unpaid interns that's been going around, I don't want to do that. I don't want to exploit people. Anyway, interns are always more trouble than they're worth. I take more time training people. But, you know, Danny curated the /ubu section. People help out but then they don't stay around very long either. I had a kid named Jeremy Fischer who worked with me for a long time. He was a Wesleyan kid. Jeremy was the person who worked with me the longest. He did a lot of coding and helped me out a lot. Once in a while a guy will get excited about this. Whatever I have you can have, of course. I haven't been so archivally oriented. If it sits in my email, then I have it. No, there's not much. I can show you some early interfaces of what Ubu used to look like. They're not, again, everything might be a little funky because I've moved things into another directory, but I have some funny stuff like that. Yeah, so, like some of this stuff dates back to, wow, look at that, 1996! September 1996! Look at that, the resources icon. That was an Ursonate GIF from September 1996. This is the earliest stuff. Yeah, these are the first categories at the time when I was making them. I mean, it's all the same. The fonts are all sans serif. It's September 1996, yeah. I thought that I had, yeah, I launched the thing in November. So, all of this stuff, it had its look already. I was like, oh, well, it's going to look like concrete poetry. I was also working. I worked in the dot com during the 1990s. I was a dot com person. I did this commercially. I would sit in offices all day. I was a creative director and I would sit in the office all day and work on UbuWeb. I'd be like, Kids, make sure you're doing your work, and I was just sitting there with a fast web connection working on UbuWeb. So, I was being paid a good salary to sit at a desk in the mid 1990s, mid to late 90s, doing this stuff. I was trying to make beautiful things. Yeah, that organization is long

gone. Look at this one, it's a RAM file from 1997. These things can't even be played. How is it that nobody has ever made an emulator for RAM? Look at that? How is it that nobody's been a Real Audio emulator? Isn't that crazy? That can't be that hard, can it? If I put that into VLC, will it play? No, because it points to a, no, it points to an RA, which is somewhere, well, it was on an early server, 207, 207, you can actually trace that back, that was an early media server which I had, I'm trying to remember, the early media server I had for Ubu was in the Berkshires somewhere. I can't remember the place. The first media server was in Amherst, Massachusetts. I used to flip FTP things to this number, this 207. I can just give you all of this stuff, if you just give me a thumb drive, you can have it all. Because it's not... This is interesting. This is a November 2nd resources, yeah, that was the Wallace Berman thing. I had to take that thing down because everybody was offended by her tits. Sure, sure. How big is this? This little thing, it's 16 gigs. Isn't that amazing? That's the other thing about Ubu. I've always made it, you know, this thing started on a 9600 baud modem. Everything on the top pages loads instantly. All the pages are really light. But if you look at these, when is this one from? Yeah, 2001. It would pull an image and then resources were here. These are all things that were just recently added in 2001. *The Dream Life of Letters* by Brian Kim Stefans, for example. Yeah, it's still on there. Most of this is all still on there. This is what would have been available then. The old artist index was so pretty. I'll show you the old artist index. But, let's see what some of these other ones are. They're fun, they're fun to look at. You can get a better sense of them if you load them this way, and you'll have these files yourself so you can look explore them. Here, if you go to index, old. No, that's 2015. That's not interesting. I have all of these crazy old indexes. Where's that one? Oh, ha, that was the front page for a while, which had everything, a lot of new stuff on it. So, this was the new and historical. Winter 2001, that was pretty. I just kept changing it. And all the new stuff that would come up would appear here. It was pretty. I still like it. I still think that looks good. Let's look at the one above it from Fall 2000. Look at how primitive this all is. It's early JavaScript. Let's see, let's see. Ah, I'm sorry that you can't see these things! Well, if I move this directory back into Ubu, let's see what happens. Oh, there it is! That was it! Then, every time I would reload it, it would be a different image. It's all there. It's so pretty. That's so beautiful. Ahhh. You know, it had a script that was varied and it would just pick a different image each time. Then there's early Fall 2000, four years into it. That one's nice, isn't it? That's right, that's fun. I like this kind of thing! Let's do another one, this is fun. Let's see, the other ones I can do

are under index hack. That was 2010 that UbuWeb had been hacked. Let's try this one. Oh, it's the same one, but this one drops down to the bottom. They're really small, because you had a teeny screen then. But it still looks good. I don't see things that look this good anymore on the Internet. This is all pre-Blogger. I think it looks great. Let's see what this one is, Index working 2. That was a nice one. Ginsberg. That picture was taken in the Bunker. So this was it, not much going on there. But that starts to get where we're at. This was all the front page. These are all index HTMLs, so I put pictures of my heroes there. That kind of thing. This is fun. Let's do another one. This is fun. Winter Blues, what do you think that is? This is not too long ago. This is 2008? Oh, just in time for the holidays, our latest biannual crisis. WFMU servers had died in 2005. So, now we're going to move to ArtMob and the move should be done... So, 2005 was when I moved to Canada? There you go. You can just dig through all of this. All the material is there, even if the images aren't there. You know, I can just give you the whole of Ubu. I can give you all of UbuWeb. Would you like that? How big is it? I don't even know. I don't know if we have time. Yeah, it's 14 gigs all of Ubu. I'll just give you everything, then you can play this game on your own. But again, to me this is all a lark. To me, this is all a hobby. It means nothing. Honestly, I know it means something to other people. In a way, it's therapeutic for me to do this. I really like doing it. I believe this stuff has changed my life. I really like this stuff. I really love these artists. And I just want to share it with people. That's all there is to it. I don't take it seriously like an institution. Even though it is an institution, it's sort of not an institution. Margaret Wertheim, yeah. Feral institutions? A feral institution, yeah. They are smart, those sisters. Oh, I love those yarn things. She's really brilliant. They're really beautiful. And Christine is brilliant. But anyway, to me, it's like, I have to diminish its importance in order to continue to do it. The minute I get self-important about anything, and this was also part of the problem with the Brown thing, I figured, who am I? I'm a poet in a little room at Brown. It was a little room with a bunch of my friends. Nobody cares about this shit. Nobody knows me. I mean, my friends know me. You know me. Our little world. It's not that, it's not that. I have to fess up that UbuWeb kind of is something major, that I actually am a poet of some repute. I can't do that though because I could never, I could never do what I do because I'd become either self-important or self-conscious. And if I'm either one, I can't take risks anymore. If I care what people are going to think about me, then I can't do my work. I just got to pretend, Oh, it's fucking poetry, nobody cares. And I surprised when people do care. Or, you know, even someone like

Colbert or the White House, that's an anomaly. That's an anomaly. Those are weird anomalies. Even the *New Yorker* thing, I'm thinking, you know, I'm just some weird poet that my friends know about. I'll be treated in the *New Yorker* as a curiosity. You know, people will say, That's not real literature. They won't take it seriously. They'll be like, Oh, that guy. So, it's a defence mechanism that I need to continue. Ubu, nobody knows about Ubu, it's just us and our friends – then I can continue to steal everything I want and put it up there. I'm sorry, I have to go get my son! Cheryl, have you seen my bag? My silver bag? I think I've misplaced it. Don't forget your recorder.

Appendix 4

Three Dialogues with Pamela Echeveria, Kerstin Scheuch, and Jorge Bolado on UbuWeb

1. Pamela Echeveria

Pamela Echeveria is the founder and curator of LABOR in Mexico City, Mexico. She is a curator working at the boundaries of post-conceptual art, social practice, performance, and new media arts. Her long-standing interest in UbuWeb led her to invite Kenneth Goldsmith to a conference in Mexico City in 2010, at which Goldsmith first connected with the community of people who would then begin to support the site there. I spoke with her at LABOR in Mexico City on 28 February 2015.

Michael Nardone: So, from all the sources I've spoken with regarding UbuWeb, I've heard that you're the person who initiated everything to bring Ubu down to Mexico. Will you tell me how that came about? I'm also interested in background information regarding how you became interested in UbuWeb in the first place.

Pamela Echeveria: It's a very nice story actually. I got completely hooked to a computer in 1996. My dad bought a computer and set up the Internet at home and I was the kind of kid who had just left school, abandoned it, canceled in the midst of a semester, and lived my life basically hooked to the computer. I'd keep boxes of cereal close by so I could just stay right there... And for me, it was awesome. It was like What? Who are you? where are you? Venezuela? It was fantastic being connected to all of these people all over.. So, yes, I do have an addiction to the Internet that I wasn't planning on solving at all. I love it. And I first became aware of UbuWeb right after people started having access to art galleries online, when the MoMA, for example, and the Met began to launch their archives online.

At a certain point, I became interested in thinking about works of art and copyright, and I became more interested in UbuWeb then. I was always wondering: How is this site working? Then some time passed and I was reading the Top 10 Lists that would be published each month on the site and I was like, Oh my god, maybe Kenny will ask me some day to write one of those lists. What would I include on it?

That's funny, I've had those same exact thoughts. I loved those lists.

Then I started working for museums and I started curating and doing this and that in art circles here. When I opened the gallery I knew that I didn't want it to be a typical gallery showing products.

When did you open LABOR?

In 2009. I had a curatorial background and I had worked for a commercial gallery for a long time, and I decided that I had to do with what I had in my hands. I wanted to use the platform of the gallery to put forward a certain discourse. And I thought, Okay, I want to engage with the communities here, and I thought of making this day of talks on copyright, so I invited Kenny and some other colleagues and friends. Danny Maclean was there – he is a copyright lawyer in London. From there, it was just natural. Kenny is a seductive person in the world and when he met the dean of Centro, Kerstin Scheuch, while he was down here, she immediately saw the potential of how she could boost the prestige of her school by having this archive.

Do you know what the status of Ubu was at that time? Was it down?

I don't think it was completely down. But I know that it was always in a risky state and that Kenny was often receiving phone calls from lawyers about copyright infringement.

What year did you bring Kenny here?

That happened in 2010, for sure. It was around September.

That was when the series of talks took place on copyright?

To tell the truth, it was all about where people can get information and where can they learn. For free. That's what the gathering was about. Centro is the school that has Ubu. It's completely private and funded by this shishy mega-rich lady—

Kerstin Scheuch?

No, she's the dean. Or maybe she's like the CEO, I think. She's very smart. I don't know how

much she's involved in the content of the school, but I know she knows people like Hans Ulrich Obrist, and other art world people. She actually worked with Obrist a long time ago. It was actually in that talk when Kenny was saying "When I get in trouble..." – and we started talking about money, because in the end it's all about money. I think that's what saved him a lot for uploading this content. He was like, you know, I can take it down. I'm not making profit from it. I'm not charging a single cent. And that I think is incredibly important. When he achieved having the information based here, I was so happy. Because I know what Ubu means.

But who is the person who funds Centro ?

Gena-Mariez Barroso

So, this person is UbuWeb's patron in a sense?

Yes, but maybe she doesn't even know she is funding Ubu.

You were saying, you know what Ubu means...

Yes, I know what Ubu means for people that have no money to pay for an education. Like in the States which is completely crazy right now. But what does it mean to be able to watch all of Vito Acconci's videos? What does it mean to have everything? Because you have everything. I know that people have done their masters thesis with materials that they could find on Ubu, because a lot of it you can't get in libraries.

Especially things like film, videos from certain times, performance art.

Exactly. One time Francis Alÿs and I were talking and he told me one day, You want to know something funny? I have this video for which I lost the master. I have a copy from which I can make masters. Certain artists they know how to make a mark on the good tape. Kenny has the good version of the tape on Ubu. He couldn't believe it, and he was just like I'm going to download this copy!

He, in the end, ended up uploading all of his videos onto his own website instead of sharing them on Ubu, though I think two of them are still up on UbuWeb.

With Ubu coming down to Mexico and being based on servers located here, do you know if it's simply the case that the intellectual property laws are more lax here?

I believe so, yes. I don't know how much longer that is going to last though. I know this new government has brought back to life the idea of regulating the Internet and even attempting to control content like they do in China. I think it's also interesting that it's private money that is backing Ubu. If they have problems with Ubu, though, I know where to go.

Do you mean you know where to base Ubu if Centro falls through?

Yes. I know the person to whom I should pass the hard drives for Ubu and who would be willing to host it. That thing needs to be there forever. It has to.

The Printing the Internet show you did with Goldsmith, when was that exhibition?

It was in 2013. That was the most amazing show. It happened right after Aaron Schwartz committed suicide. I called Kenny and asked him if he would be interested in doing a show and talking about these issues. I asked him: What do these things mean? And that's when he came up with the idea for the show. Nobody really knows how much data that was. It's impossible to process. It was impossible.

Do you have that project stored somewhere?

We have the most important and interesting and the most cool documents from it stored here

From the exhibitions I've seen that you've arranged here at the gallery, it made sense that you would have a relationship with Kenny. But it's fascinating to learn of this personal history, of your engagement and interest in thinking about copyright and intellectual propoerty and the Web.

In the end, it's knowledge. That's the thing. That was what really shocked me when Schwartz died. What's the message that this is bringing out to the world?

It's an interesting situation in that a lot of the people that I am involved with in terms

of more radical leftist literary circles are exceptionally critical of Goldsmith, and I have a difficult time with that in the sense that their critiques are always focused on his kind of public persona and never on the actual distributive elements and service he does with UbuWeb.

I think that's ridiculous because if you pay attention to the contents of UbuWeb, it makes available such important works of US and Canadian and European culture. He's doing this free archive. He is preserving culture from his particular latitudes.

I was happy when he agreed to upload some of the videos of an artist from the gallery. I think it was one of the first Latino artists he had actually.

Has he had any push to include the works of Latino artists now since that it's based here?

Yes, one initiative came from one of the former profs who left Mexico, a professor at Centro who wanted to make UbuMexico. I don't think he got really active into putting stuff up there. You really have to work to get the materials up there. It takes a lot of time.

I mean, it's a remarkable amount of non-remunerated labour.

That's another thing. He should be able to deduct that from his taxes, for example.

Do people know about UbuWeb here in Mexico City?

Yes, young people do.

Do they know it's based here?

No, they don't. I don't think they know. It's funny when you click on something it takes you to these weird links that have .mx in them, so it's obvious that it's based here.

2. Kerstin Scheuch

Kerstin Scheuch is General Director of CENTRO, the first higher institution in Mexico to focus exclusively on creative studies, focusing in particular on design, cinema, and television.

Originally from Austria, Scheuch has worked for private and governmental institutions – such as Sotheby's, the Austrian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, and KPMG London – in the fields of art, public relations, and consultation. In 2001, she helped develop CENTRO's strategic plan and supervised its every aspect from implementation until the university's inauguration in 2004. In 2010, when Kenneth Goldsmith came to speak in Mexico City about art and intellectual property, Scheuch organized and implemented the movement of UbuWeb to be based at Centro. We spoke at her office at Centro in Mexico City on 5 March 2015.

Michael Nardone: I find it amazing that Centro hosts UbuWeb and is, in a sense, the patron of the site. Everybody in Canada and the United States knows about UbuWeb. It's a central hub and archive for so many artists, scholars, students, writers. I've been talking with some of the people involved with bringing UbuWeb to Mexico City – Sergio Rios, and some of the tech guys at Centro, and Pamela Echeveria as well – and I wanted to meet with you because I believe you were here and involved in the process of hosting the site here, is that correct?

Kerstin Scheuch: Yes, basically Ivan and I have been working together since the very beginning of Centro. We developed everything, actually. Before the university even opened, we were here working on the plans for it. We opened in 2004, and then Ivan – who, apart from working with us, he has his studio and does his own works – he left for a while to work on his own projects, and I stayed here to build the institution. And the important thing, I think, in your question is really why are you doing this, and I think it's because of the directors involved at Centro. We have seven directors that run the programs at Centro, and we are, I think, a rare breed of educational institution. When we did our research internationally, we found that educational institutions are a sort of animal that likes consistency, everything needs to be solid and more looking back than looking forward. Obviously there are exceptions, but this institution was built at a time when change was already the main driver of what's happening. I think, between the twentieth century and the twenty-first century, there is a major change in the attitude of how we work and what we do. Now, everyone is a mega-city, one where things are at the same time crazy and perfect, not planned but functioning well. Everybody is somehow like that. Every project is somehow like that. In a way, being built in that time was very useful because the

people you hire and the way you build the whole thing, it is built upon this idea of constant improvement where we are constantly revising things again and again. Nothing is ever really finished. Everything is always moving, growing, under construction, and moving into other areas. I can't remember a time when anything ever felt finished. This process inflects the culture of an institution in that we believe that you can't live solely in a single, strict subject area. There needs to be a concept of general culture, which, these days, is not a general idea at all. Here, I think, one of the components that unites all of the directors here, and is a core belief of the university is that you have to be aware, that you have to be involved, and that you need to have access – and that is why UbuWeb is so important – to cultural output in all sorts of forms and at some level of excellence. This is so crucial to all of the areas we are concerned with and developing here at Centro. It is a mindset we are trying to create. Everyone these days seems to be concerned with how exactly is this helping your profession. I think we have it the other way around. If you are having a personal life, if you are a personality that is fed with good food for the soul and mind, you will do good work.

How did the process happen that you came in contact with Goldsmith and with UbuWeb? Were you aware of it before it came here?

I was aware of it only through Kenneth, when he came down here to give a talk. There was a person, too, who was here before Ivan. His name was Manuel Alcalá, and he ran this department before Ivan, and he brought Kenneth to speak and to talk here. And then, the head of the cinema department, Jorge Bolado, thought UbuWeb was fabulous. We found out that UbuWeb was having some problems and that there were some issues hosting the site. And I said this is something that, in the big picture, its vitally important. I mean, it costs money, but it's not a lot of money. So, while we are doing it I would like to say because we are absolutely convinced that it needs to be done, but it's also not this incredible sacrifice.

Do you know how much it costs annually to host UbuWeb here?

I can find out in three seconds. Hold on... Okay, it all costs us 3,400 pesos per month.

Thank you for looking. That's super helpful. It's interesting to me, too, because everybody, I think, assumes that it is this free thing that one accesses without costs

because it costs nothing to maintain. People forget the support that's needed in terms of financing its technical infrastructure, and also all of the labour that goes into it... I mean people forget that UbuWeb is not really an institution – it's a guy in New York adding things from his laptop.

I can not believe there are not one hundred institutions that are saying absolutely we are going to support this. But see, this is the Centro spirit. In every other institution you would have to complete a study to prove that this is completely useful to one's professional outcome and only then could they finance it. Here, it's a general belief in the essence of what UbuWeb does and good it offers, and that's why we are doing it. It doesn't need to go through a five year process in order to authorize the sixty-thousand pesos – I can't remember exactly what the number is – that is needed to support it. It's not something that all the other institutions couldn't do, it's just that they've made the process for making such decisions too complicated.

I believe that the students here use UbuWeb in a general way, but – I was saying this recently to Ivan and to Jorge – that it would be great to develop some special teaching around UbuWeb. It would be great to have two or three teachers who are more like leaders in terms of getting the students on board with the materials on the site. With the students, it's like everything – they have resources in the library and there is this 20/80 rule where twenty percent is really used and eighty percent of it is not really used. I think that applies to Ubu as well. I mean, it's a fantastic idea, and resource. And I think Ubu and Kenneth are inseparable. It goes with the person – the way he is, his kindness and generosity. When you meet someone like that you also have to be kind and generous.

What year exactly did it start being hosted here?

I can check the actual details for you. The finance department will know all of the specific details. I think it must have been three or four years ago.

I remember there being this big episode in which UbuWeb was hacked.

Exactly.

That created quite an uproar, and for a while the site was down. And at that time UbuWeb was in a kind of limbo—

There was a problem.

I remember this happening. I was actually living in the arctic part of Canada at the time. I should say, that my whole interest in UbuWeb stems from this time of living in remote locations in the far north of Canada...

How did you get there?

My ex-partner is an arctic geographer.

Oh, fabulous!

I met her in Berlin, and we moved to the northern part of Canada with her and we lived all over the arctic for a number of years.

That's a great story!

And while I was in the north, I always craved access to things I could read – literature, theory, writings on the arts – and this was a time when UbuWeb became very important to me, because there were no libraries or bookstores or things like that. It's part of the reason why I'm writing this work on UbuWeb as well.

And what do you usually do?

I'm writing my doctorate right now—

Where at?

At Concordia University in Montreal. And I'm a poet and editor for a number of journals and magazines. I also write on art and literature as well.

I'm so envious. I mean, can we switch lives right now?

I'd gladly come down here!

My life is all so operational at the moment.

Yes, I wanted to ask you about your background before coming to Centro.

I studied history of art in Vienna, and then I worked in contemporary art. It was very nice – I worked in a lot of site-specific installations and things like that. But I realized that it's a system in a way, and that the system is very limited. It's the same people. One of the big exhibitions I worked on was with Hans Ulrich Obrist. And, you see, all the same people are still there doing that work. But I was interested in how other worlds work. Then I did a masters in business, and then I went into consulting in London. That was an interesting period, really. There is so much money around and, I have to say, I worked so little. I was earning more thirteen years ago than I earn today. Imagine that! And I had basically no responsibility. There are all sorts of processes and things to fill in, but I went home on Friday and I never thought about work until Monday. I read a lot. I went to thousands of exhibitions. But the thing is, in the end, and in going back to the philosophy of Ubu, well, it's your life. In a way, Centro is a life project. Centro is something that is this never ending desire to make education something of today, of the now, of everything that we have presently in terms of the people, and resources and pedagogies.

That's why you have to leave your information here. You have to do a class here. Jorge Bolado is designing a class that will integrate a lot of the resources on UbuWeb. He is the guy who shares the responsibility of having and keeping UbuWeb here with me.

Wait, who is this person?

Jorge Bolado. I will see if he is around. You will fall in love with Jorge Bolado! He is also who is interested in poetry – I don't know if there are people who no more about poetry than him.

Amazing.

He is presently organizing a class that is on poetry and design.

That's great.

And it will be focused on the creative process in general. But you could come and teach a module of this class! Doesn't that sound like it would be something that would work so well?

I'd love to. I mean, this is what I'm interested in, thinking about poetry within the expanded terrain of artistic practices – including cinema and design and concrete poetry.

Perfect! Wait a second, I have to see if he is here... Okay, if you can come around 1:45, he will be here. I think the two of you need to meet one another.

Great, I will stay here. It would be great to hear about his class.

You know, this is what happens to us all the time, we go completely off track, particularly once we start discussing poetry. But I really believe – and that is why I am so happy that this class will happen – I think we should have eight classes of poetry and I think that would have an impact on how students do everything. I really think it will have an incredible impact. Because story-telling – in a short form, or in a concise way – storying telling in a short form is poetry. Not only in a short form but in an inspiring and imaginative and sensitive way – that is poetry. If people really knew about poetry, then the ads would be good. Imagine! Wouldn't that be great.

Poetry is also in this interesting place right now, because many traditions are very design-oriented in that they play with contemporary media. Instead of poems that are simply on a page, poets design works that are entire atmospheres or digital environments. It continues into expanded sculptural practices and even things like sculpting texts, ones found on the internet or in magazines, and so on.

Because I can't sleep at night, I often read books of poetry. It's something I do. And I was reading last night a book of haikus on love – on early love, middle love, and late love. It is so great and so funny and so sad, all at the same time. I'm reading this and in three lines – in ten words! – you recognize the poem so perfectly. You recognize yourself, the emotions. If people understood that, everything would be better.

It really is an art, right down to the minimal details of punctuation or how a sentence falls across lines.

Yes.

One thing I wanted to bring up is that Sergio mentioned that Ubu is actually hosted at Centro.

No, it's not. That's why we are paying for it.

And he mentioned that, in terms of the university, that UbuWeb was listed as a "critical service."

What do you mean by "critical service"?

I'm guessing because it was something that was held in great import at Centro.

Well, we were scared that we couldn't guarantee that it's always up on the university server. Kenneth, when he came here, was very clear about how so many people from all over the world need access to it. So, we said, if we put it up here, we can't be certain about it. I mean, the technology is always getting better, and we get better in terms of being able to handle these things. But at the beginning, we weren't the top people to handle these things and we had a small amount of space to make sure these things run correctly.

Now that we are moving to a bigger university space, and now that we are expanding the server, maybe we could even host it at Centro. Basically, it was very clear that it had to be accessible and safe, so we are renting the server space for it. That's what all our costs are for supporting it.

It's interesting, because at one point UbuWeb was hosted in Canada for a while...

Yes, exactly, but there was a problem somewhere there. I remember hearing this story.

Yes, because of intellectual property, I believe.

Yes! That's it. That was the issue.

Which has been a big issue for the site, and the fact that it was hosted on a university server led to all sorts of institutional issues about intellectual property and the institutions that support it fearing they could be sued or held liable for hosting such a site. And I'm curious if any of those issues come up here?

No. That's the beauty of Mexico. People don't worry about such things too much.

Do you think various people in the administration at Centro would worry about such matters? Are they even aware of it being a possible issue?

I think that the idea of intellectual property is an extremely complicated one. Kenneth actually came down here because we had a symposium on intellectual property. That was the whole point.

Was that a LABOR gallery?

No, his exhibition at LABOR was later. The intellectual property symposium was here. There were four or five people who came here. Pamela was a part of it and co-hosted this event with us, but it took place here at Centro. If you want, I can track down for you some images from the event.

That would be great, thank you.

Great. Gabriela will be coming to find you shortly with all of the information for you

Thank you so much. I realize that you're extremely busy in moving campuses at the moment, so I thought I'd ask you just one more question. Could you speak about how you envision the relationship with UbuWeb in the future?

More than UbuWeb's future at Centro, I think about it's future in Mexico. You mentioned that in the States and in Canada everyone knows about it. But I think here not that many people know about it. I think that part of us moving to this new location is also about... well, when we started this project, Centro came about in a time when no one spoke about the creative economy here in

Mexico. Very few people thought design was a big thing. People thought we were incredibly crazy to build an entire institution focused on this subject. Now, while we've been very successful and as we build a substantial campus not on the outskirts of the city but, instead, right in the centre of Mexico City is because we are giving creativity and what we do a certain importance. We are going to have this huge place where we are already talking with other people who are doing augmented reality, maker labs, and so on to come there and work there and create there. This space will also give us the opportunity to make exhibitions, seminars, and conferences. For example, with Ubu, I could easily imagine doing something with Kenneth on poetry and creativity. We could do a whole thing on that. That would be really great! In this circle, Ubu could expand here. We will have a bigger presence physically with the new campus, but it will be important to translate that into a bigger presence on the net. I believe that is the direction we would like to go in. I'd like to do all I can at the new campus to support Ubu and Kenneth, and programming events around the materials there, and using this connection to think deeply about the subject of creativity.

3. Jorge Bolado

Jorge Bolado is a filmmaker and professor of cinema at CENTRO. His interests in UbuWeb led him to find a negotiating a way for the site, after a number of infrastructural issues, to be hosted in Mexico City. We spoke at Bolado's office at CENTRO in Mexico City on 5 March 2015.

Michael Nardone: *So, you're the person who asked for UbuWeb to come here?*

Jorge Bolado: Yes, basically, I enjoy UbuWeb a lot because over these last years it has been very difficult for me and people I know to have access to avant-garde films. Fortunately, I can see most of the important and historic avant-garde films but only through a great effort to make that viewing possible in order to track down the materials. And even then, I feel that it is a shame that often you can not revisit it, or it's difficult to. It's very hard. Suddenly, I discovered UbuWeb.

Do you know around when that was?

Really, I don't remember. I've had a lot of confusion these last years. I'm getting old. And these

last years, everything has been a big block, these last ten or fifteen years. But when I first checked out UbuWeb, I said, Oh, wow, this is a wonderful thing. It continued to grow. In the beginning it was not so big but it is a permanently changing site. Some things disappear. I've checked and things do disappear there. And then something else appears, et cetera et cetera. And in the years that pass, Kenneth came here to Centro to have a kind of conference. And after the conference, because he said during his lecture that he was in need of a lot of help and probably the site would close, all of those things.

Yes, there was a big issue in 2010 when the site was hacked. It was shut down for quite a while actually.

Yes, he described these situations, and afterwards I approached him and I told him: I want to help. I want to give you what you need. I can give you the money and support you need. As a personal thing, you know. Not as an institution. And he put on this face, I think of it as an American face when an American is confronted with a political thing, you know. He made this face, maybe went a little white in his face, and said No, no, no, no, no. I don't receive money. It was as if I were saying something wrong. And I didn't catch that at first. I said, Maybe you don't understand me. You say you need help and I can give you the help. I just want to help. And he replied, No, no. I don't receive money for UbuWeb. Never. I think that he felt that he was person that needed to be very cautious, and he needed to do the correct things around money, and that what I was offering was a kind of trap. I realized this not at first, but in our second exchange. So I said, well you just said this – and I repeated at that moment, I don't remember the exact words, and I have come to do that. If it is not money that you need, then tell me what you need. I really want to help because I enjoy UbuWeb, and think this project needs to continue.

Were you teaching at Centro at the time?

Yes, I was the same – I was the director of cinematography and I was a teacher. I told Kenneth that this is a school and maybe we can help as a school. He said something to the extent of that any university in the United States did not want to back the project because of legal questions, because of legal problems. So I told him, we are not in the United States, we are in Mexico and maybe we can help in that way. You just tell me what you need. And he said to me that he needs

a server. And I said, Really? Okay. Then I asked what were perhaps some bizarre questions because I don't understand very well things about servers. And I said to him, Okay, can you give me five minutes? I asked for five minutes because I saw Kerstin and I wanted to discuss this with her. I went to her and I said: Kerstin, I have this case. She understood because she was at Goldsmith's lecture. I think that we can help and I think it is the most important thing that Centro could do in this moment.

This is great.

She said, Yes, let's resolve this now. Then in that moment we had another director who is no longer working with us, but he was working on new media and digital works.

This is Manuel Alcalá?

He knew very well about these topics such as servers and sites, et cetera. He was a part of the conference as well. And I said to him, let's ask him if we can do this, if it would be a big issue. Very quickly, he replied, Oh, no, it's not a big issue. It all happened in five minutes, ten minutes at the most. Then I returned to Kenneth and I say "I think everything is resolved. We can do it for you." He made a face like What happened? That was very quick. I told him, I'm not the expert. I'm not the man with money, but I am the oil...

To make the interaction go smoothly.

Yes. Then I told him that everything could be set up and that all he needed to do was talk with Kerstin and Manuel. I brought Kerstin and re-introduced them, and they talked, and then Manuel came and said yes everything is okay. You just tell me when you need something. After that, well – I'm not sure if it is correct that I say this to you, but you look like a very responsible man – because the implications of being a university and the various legal things that we don't know, we decided to open a new company. It's not directly set up at the university of Centro, but it's a company beside the university. If in any case that we have problems, the problems go against this company that we have started and not Centro. For this new company, Centro chose it because I told Centro that I was not interested in doing the bureaucracy around this issue. I'm not a legal person in my own life. Then Centro made all the things and I just signed them, and

Manuel signed them too. We are the CEOs or something like that of this new company.

It's part of Express Hosting. I talked with Sergio Rios about this yesterday--

I don't even know! I just know that in the end any problem that might arise, the problems and the jail comes to me.

Do you use UbuWeb for your teaching?

A lot. We have a class that is in the seventh semester on experimental filmmaking that uses UbuWeb a lot. They use Ubuweb a lot during that semester, but in the fall semester I teach History of Cinema. We have a Mexican Cinema history, then silent film history, then mine which is on the history of cinema that is quite vast and I do it over two semesters. In that, I make the students in the final work to use UbuWeb, and to use it as a device not only for film. Using UbuWeb, they need to make a work that selects three filmmakers who have work on UbuWeb, and then 3 artists who are not filmmakers but are also on UbuWeb, and on them they need to make a final work. In many classes, they make a film as a final project. But in the history classes, they make a written work talking about UbuWeb. I really want the students to know about UbuWeb because we don't necessarily promote it in the earlier classes. I was thinking that we need to but because of all these legal things I thought it might be better and to assign this work to more mature students. Some of them begin to use it as a regular tool, for pleasure or investigation.

Have you spent time with Kenny after this moment?

No, I'm very – how do you say – unsocial. I know I may appear sometimes as very social but I'm very much a kind of hermit. I'm very bad with public relations and this sort of thing. I don't like telephones. I never answer the telephone that you see is connected there. I don't use a cellphone. My relation with the world says that everything in this world is public relations and public events and you don't have time to read, for example. I'm reading less now than when I was much younger. It's not feeling guilty, it's feeling bad. I really enjoy to have these things. And at the same time I'm very freaky with the personal relations and sometimes I feel Kenneth is also this way. He and I, we don't need to be friends. I just want to help his project. It is great. I'm very bad

at developing professional things. I don't like to do it. That's the reason I tell him that okay, I've put in the oil to get this going, and you have the connection, then he can work with Manuel who is very good at these kinds of things.

Manuel has left? He's in the United States?

I think yes. I'm not sure. He was going through a divorce.

Anyway, it's an incredible thing that you were able to act so quickly so as to support UbuWeb.

I tell this to my students sometimes, I tell them to remember that the most important thing that I have done at this school, and probably will do at this school, is to help UbuWeb. They say, Really? And I say, Yes. Everybody that is in the world who is looking at UbuWeb, it's because Centro is helping. It sounds pretentious, but I think it is a thing to be proud of. I tell that they their tuition is supporting UbuWeb. You need to feel happy. And they say, Okay, okay.

You mentioned that Goldsmith was at first reluctant to agree to the support you offered. Will you describe that further ?

Kenneth was quite paranoid about allowing other people to support UbuWeb. And I thought if he is paranoid, he probably has a pretty good reason, and so I've tried to keep a pretty low profile with this thing.

He knows the site is important. Even though he is a big personality – people see him as a kind of poetry boss – and even though he is the person behind UbuWeb, I think he realizes the site is something much bigger than him as an individual. It's interesting because there are people who are quite critical of him, yet they often refuse to engage with what he has done as an archivist and what he has created with UbuWeb. They take that aspect of his work for granted or ignore it altogether.

I think that is a wrong perception because, knowing him, I think he has more the profile of a poet or an artist, and not a manager or businessman. As I said to you, he did not take my offer at first, he was sceptical. He took his time to consider what I was proposing to him. Now I feel more

interested in helping because he is not a businessman. I said to him, I can give you money to support UbuWeb, and he said, No, no, no, I do not want money.

So, the money that goes to support UbuWeb, Kerstin mentioned it was a specific sum around 3400 pesos a month—

I don't really know--

Does it come out of your department? Does it come out of Centro?

It's a kind of mix. Kerstin manages these things. She tells me that she will take some of my money for UbuWeb, and I say go ahead and take it. In the end, I'm not sure how we count this. I think it is a special thing. Probably, we can have more money in the department if we didn't support UbuWeb. But we simply don't count this money as a loss. Everything goes toward a good thing because we are a university and we are interested in developing our ability to teach the arts and design. In the end, too, it's not just from my department. Then it would look like a special thing for my department, so money comes from other areas too. We try to make it clear that UbuWeb is not just good for the Film Department. It is good for other departments as well like New Media, Fashion, and Architecture. But we never even count the money spent on UbuWeb in my budget. I don't know the numbers, and I don't even want to know. It's as I say to you : Let's do it, okay, we've done it, and I move on to the next thing.

Appendix 5

A Dialogue with Charles Bernstein on PennSound

This conversation with Charles Bernstein took place over two sessions – the first on 1 May 2015 at his home in Brooklyn, the second on 12 October 2015 at his office at the University of Pennsylvania. In this abridged and edited version of our conversations, we discuss the creation of PennSound through the frame of Bernstein’s engagement with instituting commons for accessing poetry and poetics materials. The dialogue ranges from the social contexts and protocols for developing PennSound to Bernstein’s personal sound recording practice, from institutional ideations of the archive and its uses to a theorization of the poetic text as being implicitly defined by its exchange and circulation.

Michael Nardone: There are many aspects of PennSound I’d like to discuss with you, and I want to bridge that discussion to digital repositories of poetry and poetics materials in general to discuss the production and circulation of works. Perhaps we can begin at a granular level and discuss the specific protocols for PennSound with regard to how it makes available recordings of poetry, as I think it sets an important precedent. Through that, perhaps, we can move to a more general level and discuss the construction of the repository and its social contexts.

Charles Bernstein: Robert Creeley is partially responsible for the development of PennSound’s system. The day we announced PennSound, Lawrence Lessig wrote us a note and said, “This project is great. You should use the Creative Commons licenses that specify different kinds of permissions.” We toyed with doing that initially, but Creeley said something very simple:

“Get the copyright from the copyright author who, in all these instances, is the poet. Don’t make any special licenses that will confuse people, whereas they understand copyright. Simply say: ‘We are getting copyright for you for people to access the recording for non-commercial and educational purposes. People can download it in the sense of listening to it. Everything will be downloadable. But we are not giving any other permission of any kind. You own the copyright just as if it was broadcasted on the radio or in a book. We are simply making it available. Any questions with regard to permissions would go back to the copyright holder.’”

And that's worked well because it's easy to understand. For instance, presently, strangely, I'm working with the Frost Estate, as well as with the estates of Langston Hughes, and Pound, and with New Directions, and it's simple to explain to them: They continue to own the copyright. We just make it available.

The other main thing is that we pay nothing and we charge nothing. That has to be universal. You can't make an exception. On the other hand, we will put some funding into preserving and making the digital copies of recordings. But we will never charge or pay anybody for any kinds of rights.

The copyright is simple. We take the view that nobody has any permission to give us except the author or the author's estate. We don't have these long contracts one signs to be published in a small magazine in which you assert that nobody else has rights over the work. Our permission is simpler. I think the more elaborate permissions are, the more problematic they are, because they usually take rights away from the poet. Publishers will insist they can use a poet's work for this and that. We can't use it for anything. We don't have permission to use our materials for anything other than letting people listen to the recording.

The poetry records that Caedmon distributed were compilations brought together from many different sources, like PennSound. One has the sense that Caedmon records were their own productions, but they were compilations. For instance, the Vachel Lindsay recordings that Chris Mustazza has recently put up on PennSound. The original recordings were made at Columbia University in the early 1930s. Caedmon did not make or own those recordings. Caedmon originally got permission to use the recordings on their record "Vachel Lindsay Reading" from the Lindsay family. When we wanted to put the Lindsay recordings Chris found at Columbia up on PennSound, we asked Nick Lindsay, the son, and he was pleased that we were interested in making them available.

The Caedmon history is interesting to think about in terms of PennSound. It was founded by two young women who were undergraduate students at Hunter College, I believe, in the 1950s. I know the first record they made, the one with Dylan Thomas, they produced

in a studio with Thomas. But afterwards, yes, most of the records they made were compilations of previously recorded materials they recirculated in a new format.

They did a great job. They contacted different poets and they got different kinds of recordings. Did they control the rights? Mostly no, they did not, since most of the recordings they published were in existence prior to Caedmon, for example, the Gertrude Stein recordings.

Initially, in developing PennSound, I had hoped that as we were putting up all of these recordings, one that we were copying off of records and so on, that we would ultimately have better quality recordings. Often enough, though, the third generation recordings we acquire or are making – dubs directly off of records and cassettes – often they are just as good as the other versions you can find. Sometimes, the quality of the copies are even better than the extant originals. For example, the original recordings that W. Cabell Greet made of Gertrude Stein in 1935: the original aluminum records of the recording have been cleaned and because of that you can't hear the crackle of the record, like you can hear on the 1956 Caedmon recording that was compiled from the earlier recording. Many people might prefer the crackle of the records and not want them cleaned. Chris Mustazza put both versions up on PennSound.

There is no holy grail of clear sound recordings. That's the interesting thing about archiving and distribution. The distribution and the making available of the recording – using whatever means you have available to you – this creates the best archive. It doesn't create a secondary archive, contrary to those who prefer to lock up their recordings.

It's something I keep returning to as I write on archives and as I research in archives, this consideration of materials that are locked-up and out-of-use. It seems especially the case with audio recordings, too, in particular, because they are challenging objects for archivists to organize and to make of use. Too often the recordings are put into boxes and sent to storage where their actual materiality slowly decomposes. Perhaps there will be some indicator of their existence on a collection listing, but beyond that they remain silent. There seems to be a problem at an institutional level, a general ideology that defines and maintains archiving sound as a privatization of the materials as opposed to opening them up for listeners to hear.

You know, we applied once to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for PennSound. Only once. We applied only once because Al said it's a waste of time to apply to the NEH. We put a lot of time into the grant we wrote and made a fantastic application. We wanted funding to support getting up on the site a lot of recordings that we now have up on the site, like all of the Belladonna recordings, which are an amazing collection. We got the highest rating from all the reviewers. In fact, I've had to review several applications to the NEH if they are poetry recording-related proposals, and every one cites PennSound as a model. But the chairman the NEH denied our application and did not give PennSound any financial support.

Was it because of issues concerning copyright?

No, it wasn't because of copyright. The explanation that we received was that they view PennSound being more involved with distribution than with preservation. Well, we are main preserver in the world of poetry audio materials. All the other poetry sound recording projects that the NEH has funded are tiny subsets of what we do. When people actually make the distribution of these materials possible, the NEH thwarts that. They protect and support those institutions that are not interested in distribution, and in doing that they support the privatization of the materials. It's surprising, if not shocking, that PennSound did not get the ten thousand dollars that we requested.

What year did PennSound apply to the NEH?

We applied in 2010. We met with the NEH after the review process in 2011 and we heard that we received the top review of all the people who were under review. But PennSound's application was turned down by the top person at the NEH.

For someone outside the world of the NEH, it might seem like the NEH is a benign organization. During the Bush administration, the NEH was run by Lynne Cheney. The wife of Dick Cheney was the head of the NEH! People talk about "the decline of the humanities" or the desiccation of the arts. Yet, instead of projects that actually reach millions of people, millions of listeners, they consistently fund exceptionally narrow, arcane projects. Then they attack the arts for not

thriving. I think the NEH speaks loud and clear for privatization, for archiving that is opposed to people actually being able to listen.

The University at Buffalo (UB) received a substantial amount of money to preserve their audio recordings under the basis that it had to have a public distribution. Al and I both reviewed the Buffalo NEH grant and we both said it needed to have public distribution. But if you look at the archive, you can't access the materials. The materials that they've digitized are still not public. Even then, it is still a small fraction of what we've made available through PennSound.

By the University at Buffalo, do you mean specifically the Poetry Collection?

That's correct. They did receive an NEH grant. A lot of that material is now online, but it's not available to the public. You have to have a UB card to access it. So it's not public. It's available as a research collection for people in the university community. Or, presumably, for people who come to the Poetry Collection. They have done a good job in the sense that they document what every thing is. It's a massive job and there's a lot of great stuff.

A while back, Naropa received a great deal of attention for their audio archive project. There were even a couple of articles about it in the *New York Times*. Naropa did make their audio available through archive.org, but, initially, they had no such intentions to do that. Al and I reviewed their application as well for the NEH and we insisted the materials be made public. Still, you can't compare any of these individual collections from one institution to what PennSound is trying to do as a model, globally, for how to make materials available.

We've worked a lot with the Library of Congress. We've finally received the first recordings that we requested from them three years ago, some Wallace Stevens readings. They want to work with us to make their recordings accessible. It's taken them three years to get these recordings to us even though they have had many of them already digitized. Not long ago they made public about 15 recordings, the work of 15 poets, short poems by them, and the *New York Times* writes a piece on that! The *Times* wrote another piece when an archive in England – one that *sells* CDs – made two of their recordings public. Two poems from a single poet, and the *Times* writes an article on that! Yet, they refuse to acknowledge PennSound – and we *have* sent them press releases – when it has the biggest audio collection of American poets.

What do you think is at the root of such matters?

A lot of it comes from a deep hostility from people who pretend like the alternative tradition does not exist. You can be sure if it was Robert Lowell or Elizabeth Bishop, they would roll over themselves to support it. Because it isn't Lowell and Bishop, because this tradition clearly represents an unruly and unregulated group of people challenging those mainstream literary values, they refuse to acknowledge it. Also, there are people who don't think such mainstream values don't exist. They think of PennSound as being dominant or mainstream. In an alternative world, you'd think we were mainstream. But there is an actual conservative world out there. There is a kind of insularity. There are moral values in an unstated way.

And these moral values impact what receives support. I think of the Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) as one example of a project that, I believe, never actually received support, and yet it is foundational in terms of the impact it's had in terms of the construction of digital archives and repositories of literary materials.

That's right, we could never get any funding to support the EPC. We applied to Lannan and all the main foundations, but we never received funding. Ultimately, it was a crisis for us, because we never had anyone there to help. It was really just Loss and me and Jack Krick helping. Other than the servers, we didn't even receive support from the university, even though at one point the EPC was recognized as being the most important electronic resource at SUNY-Buffalo. We couldn't even get a work-study person or any actual administrative support. I was able to support Loss because I had a chair at Buffalo, but that's it.

The foundations that we applied to for support told us that we were not serving the public because we didn't have works like *The Poetry Almanac* by Garrison Keilor, or any of that *Introduction to Poetry for Idiots* kind of thing. It's as if they have no sense of what a library is and think that every time someone takes out a book it has to be an introduction for a third grade reader. So we never received funding. But, ultimately, the model that we created was picked up by the Poetry Foundation and Poets.org, groups who have millions of dollars of resources. We never received a dime of resources. It is striking that the private foundations that supported

poetry, they would tell us that the EPC didn't have an accessible site and that was a reason why they would not give us support. They said this and at the very same time they would be saying this, we had the greatest number of users of any poetry site on the Web. So, they are saying that the site is not accessible even though it had the greatest access. Where is the W.S. Merwin page that has a little introduction to him, or whomever they think of as being accessible poets. *That's* what *they* mean by *access*.

Yes, that's it. There is this ideology of access and of accessibility in dialogues on poetry in which the term is always meant to mean "a clear and unadorned communication of a universal and relatable experience." I mean, I realize I don't need to hash out with you all of all people all the reasons why this is problematic. But such dialogues ignore what I think is the important aspect of accessibility, which is the creation of infrastructures that allow for works that are rare or difficult to track down because they are out of print or no longer distributed to be read and shared and circulated, to be used. These infrastructures impact and become important resources for whole communities of poets.

Yes, our primary concern with PennSound has been not with any individual poet no matter how great they are, but, instead, with documenting the larger field. What we do is much more related to ethnography or anthropology, and, say, the field recordings of Alan Lomax, than it is to what they imagine poetry to be. Let's talk about Charles Simic's courageous stand as a moral figure and then have a poem of his. *This* is what they mean by *accessible*. But to have hundreds of items and magazines, in their opinion, is of no interest. Or, it's counter-productive. Because, as you probably know, all that stuff that people produce – what are they called? poets? – the community of poets, that's what's destroying the scene for poetry, because what we really need is to have one or two *great* poets and have people read *them*. Having an expansive view into cultures of poetry, this is what really turns people off from poetry and turns them to Taylor Swift! That's why she has all those millions of people listening to her, because *there* is a singular great voice. The idea of poetry as a culture that can be documented is of no interest to these regulatory bodies.

“Poetry as a culture that can be documented” – that’s a good way of putting it, of emphasizing the practices of poetry over the obsessions with the singular poem and the individual poet.

We have now statistics for PennSound that I can give you. For a while, PennSound had a kind of gap where we weren’t getting our statistics, and even now these do not incorporate video because we weren’t able to integrate that. Previous to this most recent count, we had rough estimates, but when I looked closely at them, they were counting things that were too short, little fragments and such. So, we wanted to track people who are actually using the site. These numbers are more conservative. At the moment we have 40,000 audio files and 1000 video files on the site. Based on the first quarter of this year, we average – if you annualize the numbers – we have 4 million individual downloads per year, and a quarter million unique visits per year. This is a conservative number. It would probably be more like 5 million if we included the streaming audio and video. But, you could say our user base is something like a quarter of a million people.

We don’t have great information regarding the visitors, because most people use non-nation-specific access, but of the ones who do, it’s notable that we have users from all over the world, except for central Africa and Antarctica. The number of users from South America, Europe, and Asia are about equal. There is a substantial use all over China. So, the work on PennSound is not specifically geared to one area.

Taylor Swift, whom we mentioned earlier, gets these kind of download numbers for a single album. So, when you compare these things to mass culture, it really doesn’t compare, because a single pop record or song can be the equivalent to people listening to our entire archive. But, if you compare this number of listeners to, say, what one might imagine to be the general readership or listenership to poetry, that’s also not comparable. We consider poetry books to sell somewhere between 500 and 5000 copies. Usually, those numbers are in the low hundreds. 500 copies sold would be good. 1000 would be outstanding. 1000 would be a best seller at Small Press Distribution. So, when we’re talking about millions of downloads of individual poems, millions of listenings, I mean, there is nothing that isprecedented at that scale.

To go back to those silly articles that I often make fun of, the ones about how the poetry readership is declining and that poetry is dead – well, how do they define readership? Do they take into account the active participation globally? Do they consider the different contexts of poetry – what it is and what it includes – in cultures historically? No, they do not write about poetry in these ways.

With PennSound, we are talking about a catalogue that would be considered hyper-literate work produced through a kind of commitment to literary innovation and not necessarily popular or not mass culture verse, but rather art and art-writing. It's imaginable that there are 250,000 people, individuals – or individual sessions I guess it could be – come and listen to the archive. That's a lot of people listening to the kind of material we have. It's why this issue of making the material available is an important one.

Actually, the Library of Congress wants to make their materials available like we do. They're just very slow to do it.

Why are they so slow? Is it the bureaucratic process?

Yes, it's the bureaucracy. The day that we met with the Library of Congress there were ten people in the room, including a lawyer. It was striking to me that the Library of Congress could see PennSound as a model, whereas they should be the model. After all, they are the people who made available all the amazing Smithsonian recordings. They had a number of concerns regarding interface. Often, it's an issue that interfaces are so difficult to navigate. But it's not complicated to make a simple interface. This is one of the basic Loss Glazier-driven conceptions of making these sites more comparable to a library catalogue so that it is more accessible and you can immediately find things.

They also had concerns regarding permissions. While we were there, I found out they had two recordings of the poet Babette Deutsch. I wanted to put those up on PennSound, and I told the Library of Congress people I would have permissions by the end of that day. I know Deutsch's grandson, Ben Yarmolinsky – a friend of mine. I've done this set of operas with him. I wrote Ben and the same day I gave the Library of Congress permission from the estate to make the

recordings available. After that day, it took the Library of Congress five years to make those recordings available to us. I just recently received them, so we are going to put them up on PennSound shortly, maybe later today. This is the first time since our meeting five years ago that they made something available to us.

Does PennSound have any kind of partnership with the library?

We originally were going to work with the library at Penn but we ended up not doing that. Originally, we had a link, and they were going to do a catalogue. The catalogue was going to be quite interesting – each individual MP3 would have had to have been entered. Each individual MP3 would have needed a catalogue entry. I envisioned the materials as something you could look up in the card catalogue and you'd find these sets of recordings. The library didn't have, though, the kind of resources to do the level of cataloguing that they wanted. They actually developed a beautiful catalogue tool for us. For the catalogue, you type the name, where it was from, the date, the name of the poem, you put all the data in and that would be the catalogue entry. In the end, though, a simple local Google search worked as well as what they were going to do. So, ultimately we didn't do anything with the library. I do donate to the library the original physical media, because we have nothing to really do with that once we finish with it. I have a lot, still, in my office that I need to bring over to the library.

You said earlier that you preserve original digital files. Do they end up at the library?

Not the digital, but the original media: the cassettes, compact discs, DAT tapes, the reel-to-reel recordings. They end up at the library.

How do you preserve the digital files?

The digital is different. Do you mean the MP3s?

Yes.

So, we make MP3s. We set a relatively high standard for quality MP3s. At first, we were digitizing a lot of cassettes at PennSound, and now we have original digital-borne recordings. In the last couple of years we have set up a WAV depository. So we do have that. Steve

McLaughlin, in particular, thought that we should do that. We couldn't have done it originally because we didn't have the storage space.

That's the problem I have with institutions where everything is oriented around the idea that an archive has to have higher quality recording materials than the ones we actually use. PennSound is an archive of MP3s. That's what it is. It is conceivable that an extensive process where back-up each recording in WAV form might offer something that our cassettes don't offer, but the point is they are not the values that I can hear myself. I mean, the recordings themselves are generally such limited mono recordings. But now, when we make digital recordings, or when we digitize cassettes or any other materials, we do make WAV files. When I do my radio show on my digital recorder, for instance, I will keep either the raw copy, or sometimes it's an edited version, and put those WAV files up on a remote server. I can put them up myself. It's a dedicated server of WAV files that we can all access with a certain amount of nuisance through the interface. The files are stored at a physical WAV file depository at Penn.

Now, I wonder if anybody will find any use in this WAV file depository. It doesn't do us any harm. The storage space wasn't expensive, so we could set it up as a back-up. I like it as a back-up in case recordings gets lost or something else happens. I like redundancy. Whether or not someone is actually going to need the WAV files is another matter. It seems unlikely to me what the value of the WAV file would be compared to a high quality MP3, which sounds perfectly professional. There's no additional information that is not included in the MP3 but is in the WAV that really anyone would be seek out. Audio people tend to disagree with what I am saying, and I've often been nervous about making the wrong decision about this because the implications are large.

In certain ways, the MP3 is actually a better method of archiving than OGG and WAV files because the latter formats are difficult to circulate and access. Inaccessibility doesn't preserve. It depends on how you think of preservation.

So, to go back for a moment, as I want to trace out the movement from the Buffalo, from having your tapes located there to the construction of PennSound, what year did you come to Penn?

2003.

And PennSound launched in 2005?

The first day of January in 2005.

Did you have plans for the project before you arrived here?

The summer before I arrived at Penn, the summer of 2003, Al and I came up with the idea that we would do PennSound. We started working on immediately after and began to digitize recordings. We took over a full year to do that, and then made the actual announcement of PennSound at the start of 2005.

I've begun to work through your correspondence with Al Filreis as the two of you plot out and begin to construct PennSound, and I'm curious to hear your own thoughts about the ideas behind PennSound and its particular articulation as a repository.

There are two things that I think are important, ideologically, with PennSound. There was never a study, never a report, no bureaucratic document of any kind before we launched PennSound. Al was able to get education technology people involved at the very start, and they gave us unlimited server space. I still remember the meeting when I first arrived at Penn at met with the head of IT. I asked, How much space will you give us? And he said, We will give you unlimited space. Al and I thought this was both amazing and hysterical because I'm not sure this person understood what I had in mind with unlimited space! In a certain way, it doesn't matter now. At that time he couldn't understand that we wanted to put up entire videos and films up, but now that's irrelevant because space is not an issue as it was then. They made that commitment to us, and it was a commitment we needed.

That was the only thing. We had that one meeting. Otherwise we never had any feasibility study. We never applied for any grants. Now, that's partly because Al is a genius in respect to how to use the university to serve interests outside the university. "The university without walls," we used to call it. He not only has that vision, he also pulls people at Penn along with that vision. Working with Al has been transformative. He does what needs to be done. He is responsible for setting up the infrastructure here – from establishing the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW) and the Kelly Writers House (KWH), to organizing with all of the information technology people so we have a solid engagement to deal with any kind of technical issues. Together, Al and I share a view of how to put this stuff up and make it simple and accessible.

The other point I want to make about PennSound is that nobody funds it. When Al fundraises for the the CPCW and KWH, PennSound becomes a part of that whole thing. So, he's able to get support from Penn alumni. Al is able to raise money from a number of people who are predisposed to help Penn, and that money can be directed to our projects. It's not as if PennSound costs much money. It's, overall, a very small capital expense. But that little part that Al is able to bring in is of immense value and has enabled us to do what we do.

Every once in a while we pay for sending out reel-to-reel to have it digitized. We're talking about hundred of dollars, though, hundreds of dollars over ten years for the digitizing. Otherwise, we do have to have work study students, so that requires some funding. We pay students and sometimes we have interns too. PennSound is a large collective organization in which many people digitize material and contribute it to us. I don't think people fully understand from the outside how much of a collective it is. In this way, it relates to the EPC, but, it's quite different, and it's radically different from UbuWeb. We work with many different organizations. Sometimes they are able to digitize the materials, sometimes they're not. The Belladonna archive, the most important organization sponsoring women writers in New York in the last two decades, is a good example. I've had one work-study student for many years who has worked directly with them. They would send all of their recordings. We digitize what needs to be digitized, but often they put their recordings up on PennSound. They determine what is on the Belladonna page. They, of course, pick the people who are reading in their series. Nobody is micromanaging. Our constituents and collective groups decide what goes up on PennSound. We

don't. Once we say that we're going to put Belladonna's materials on PennSound, then that's it. We don't determine or pick and choose from that materials. And, of course, we receive donations from people. Ashbery, for example, he doesn't do anything in terms of digitizing or coding the recordings. They literally hand us over an unsorted box, and we go through it.

So, one other thing I would add is that no matter how valuable you imagine the individual files on PennSound to be – listening to Gertrude Stein or listening to Jeff Derksen –they are great, but the greater value is the making of a public space for these materials to be available for free. In other words, the intellectual property part is the most important part. We have established a model where there is a huge archive of publicly available material, and you can have the full complete collections, not just snippets of them. Listeners are able to make these materials available to anyone and everyone else on the same basis. Within this economy of exchange, poets will happily contribute materials because it benefits them. It benefits the poets and it benefits the listeners. It benefits the institution, as well, in this case Penn. It benefits the students and teachers, too, here and elsewhere. All the benefit comes from making it free.

If we hadn't have made this intervention, you could be sure that perhaps not Jeff Derksen's recordings but Gertrude Stein's, for example, would be available from some kind of conglomerate like Ebsco or Amazon, which would market these materials and charge you a dollar every time you listen to it. Then the Gertrude Stein estate would get something like fifteen or thirty dollars a year as royalties, and the conglomerate would get all the retail end. Poetry – the poets – would always be on the low end of this exchange. A thousand people might listen to them, but the poet would get a royalty check for five dollars. What would be the point of that in the case of poetry? You would just have a third party making money and you would limit the listenership by ninety-nine percent. The individual poets and the poets' estates would receive no gain.

Privatization is its own menace. People like privatization for the sake of privatization. That's what I'm saying about the NEH, as well. They prefer privatization and they don't even recognize that that is what they are doing. They think libraries should not be accessible. They think the scholarship that they are funding should not be available. There are many people who say, Well,

if the NEH funds something, then it's got to be public. I am hardly a voice alone in this. And it is this point that unites what we are doing a PennSound to a much larger group of people interested in this, like Lawrence Lessig and others, people who might not necessarily be interested in poetry. I think this precedent we've set in terms of making the materials freely available remains an absolutely crucial part of what we've done.

Even if you look in other areas or disciplines – in music, in art – nobody has managed to create this much of a public space for the free exchange of cultural materials. That can not be said to be secondary from the practice of poetry. That exchange is why poetry is one hundred years ahead of the visual arts. The visual arts are all about privatizing. Yet, distribution is not secondary to the content of the work. That is something a lot of people do not understand or refuse to acknowledge. Distribution is what the work is. It is exchange. It isn't the beautiful poem that is significant. It is the distribution and exchange that is significant. It does not mean, for example, that you and I prefer one poem by Jeff Derksen to another. That's not the main issue. The main issue is the distribution of the whole Kootenay School of Writing archive on the KSW site, that you can come to it and find and listen to that work and engage with it. That is the most significant aspect.

Were there models you had in mind when you were thinking about PennSound and its model of distribution?

The EPC was the model. It's a very specific development of PennSound from the EPC, which involved people like Martin Spinelli, Kenny [Goldsmith], Loss, and me. It also involves RealAudio and the fact that we were able to put these streaming files up on the site. Spinelli would be an interesting person for you to talk to.

He was the person who produced the LineBreak show?

He was the person who did LineBreak, yes, and he had his own radio show called Radio Radio. His dissertation was partially on sound too. He was the person in Buffalo who knew all about audio, and he was a very important person for me. He would know everything about early EPC and issues regarding sound. LineBreak was certainly part of the model for PennSound, too.

Did you two make LineBreak for the EPC?

LineBreak was entirely Spinelli's creation. He was the producer. He was working for WBFO, which at that time was the NPR affiliate in Buffalo. LineBreak was the first program of its kind that was distributed by satellite. So, actually, initially it was made available to local stations through a satellite feed and they could download it and play it. So, the initial distribution of LineBreak was satellite distribution. Spinelli had been very interested in radio and so this was an intriguing project for him. He kept recordings of the show on DAT tapes, and we converted those into RealAudio files for the EPC. Those were the first sound recordings that the EPC had. We had very little other audio on there.

Martin, Kenny, and I also had the idea that we would have something – I forget all the names we came up for it – but it essentially be like a poetry radio that we would stream. We have that now, both PennSound and UbuWeb has that now, but we definitely had in mind at that time that we could do poetry radio. I remember endless conversations about how we would do that. RealAudio was a propriatry product and that was always a problem for us. We had telephone modems at that time, so it was not very easy to imagine how you could distribute downloadable files. But the minute the MP3s came in, then we could consolidate a way to do that with PennSound, and we had the idea to move all the recorded materials off the EPC servers in Buffalo. All the sound recordings would be at Penn, and all the text would stay at the EPC.

Charles, I wonder if we can shift our discussion toward a different direction, as I've had the pleasure over these last weeks to begin working through your personal tape cassette collection and, through that, I've begun to understand your engagement with the sonic aspects of poetic practice – from Close Listening to PennSound – to emerge from your personal history of recording. Will you talk about when and why you first began to make these tape recordings?

I began recording on one of those common early tape cassette recorders. It cost like thirty-five dollars. You press the button and it made big clicking sounds. I made my early Tape Works

pressing those buttons. It had like 4 buttons and it was rectangular, about half the size of a laptop. You know what I'm talking about?

Yes, I do. I often used my grandfather's recorder like this when I was a kid.

They were standard things. The recordings I made were using that until the time that I got a Sony Walkman Pro, which recorded in Dolby (stereo). I must have had it by the time I arrived in Buffalo in 1990. I got it whenever it came out. So, the earlier stuff from the 1970s and 80s, I made on the simple mono recorder. This would include a lot of the Ear Inn recordings. Then, in Buffalo, I used my Sony Walkman Pro. After that, there have been a number of different recording devices, but I don't record so much now.

Why did you start recording?

I began to record, well, I was a pre-adolescent taper. I had – I think it's in the collection at Yale, one of the tapes there – I had recordings of all the themes from TV shows. I had an entire tape collection of those songs. I was maybe 12 years old at the time, maybe even 11. One of the first things that I did was to tape all the theme songs one after the other, and inside the reel-to-reel box, I have a track list of all the themes with their footage indicator number. But I've always kept a tape recorder close. That's one thing I always remember from that time.

Then, when I was in Santa Barbara, in 1973, I did a show called Mind and Body on the UCSB radio station. I think I still have a couple of those recordings. I was working in the alternative health care movement as a health education coordinator. We were involved with groups like Planned Parenthood. It was also a kind of proto gay male health center, pre-AIDS. I would interview people about issues regarding prostitution, drugs. It was really quite radical.

When I came back to New York, I did those Tape Works. That must have been some time between 1975 and 77. This was really before I was writing poetry. I mean, I was writing poetry, but in a certain way, I was making these recordings as much as or more than I was writing poems during that period. I was using overdubs and was able to do some basic editing of the recordings.

The tape works were pre-LANGUAGE magazine. I think that was when I made the bulk of them. Around that same time I was making the poems in Asylum and Parsing.

I didn't begin recording until the very first reading that Ted Greenwald and I put on, which was the Ashbery and Lalley reading in the fall of 1978. That was the first Ear Inn reading. The recording is not so good, but I remember a huge crowd came. It was out the door. I recorded all the readings that we did at the Ear Inn, then the subsequent Segue Way readings, and then all of the Buffalo readings, too.

How did people respond to you recording?

It was unobtrusive, so no one really minded. A lot of people did it back then. This is something we learned in starting PennSound, that there were all kinds of people with shopping bags full of recordings of poetry readings. People would record readings – but not just people, universities and institutions. Dia [Art Foundation], for instance, had a whole video crew that came and filmed their events but they refuse to put in the time and energy into making those recordings accessible. What's the point of spending the money in the first place? They hire a video crew to come in and then they abandon the recordings? I never understood that disconnect, especially if you're going to go to the trouble to record something in the first place.

The fact is nobody really knew what to do with these recordings. It wasn't usual that people made recordings – I mean, some people did and others didn't. I think people made the recordings and gave them to a friend who missed the reading. Or they recorded it and kept it as a keepsake. I'm not sure if they thought of what they were doing archivally. But I always kept my recordings in boxes. Then, when I went to Buffalo in 1990, I brought all of these tapes and put them all up in my office on the wall. Then we catalogued them.

I accumulated a lot of other tapes over the time. People sent me cassettes of them reading their own works. I also had the Caedmon records. Chris Mustazza has gone back now and found the original recordings of from which the Caedmon LPs were made. But originally, I'd just dub tapes from the records. There was not really any other way to do it. At a certain point, these

things that seem like they are tertiary copies – there aren't necessarily better recordings of them. The whole key is archiving it. The original is often elusive.

The NEH is wrong about MP3s. They are wrong about cassettes. They have some imagination that the sound of the poet reading is irrespective of where it's taped and the medium, and the actual ambiance, the acoustic materiality, isn't important. I know I'm preaching to the converted, so I'll stop there. But it's an interesting issue. It's idealization versus materialism.

This moment of your tapes in Buffalo, once they are catalogued and arranged on your office wall, it strikes me as being a kind of foundational moment for thinking about PennSound. It's a first instance of the recordings entering into a kind of "public space for free exchange," to quote you earlier. I know some of these recordings began to find their way on to the EPC once you and Loss began to include sound on that site, so I'm wondering if we can perhaps shift to a moment to talking about the EPC and its relation to the Poetics Program as a way of getting back to PennSound and its greater ecology at Penn. First of all, I'm curious: what is the relationship between EPC and the Poetry Collection?

None.

Is there any kind of antagonism between them?

Loss Glazier used to work for the library, and when he got his PhD, which was a theorization of the EPC and poetry and the Web – I directed his dissertation--

His Digital Poetics book?

No. There are parts of it that are sort of like that book. It's an early imagining of what digital space would be. It talks about the earlier systems of networking, Gopher and things like that, and how it would be interrelated, and how you can think about code as writing. In ways it is like the *Digital Poetics* book, but I think much of what was in the *Digital Poetics* book was new. This was actually written before any of that and it envisioned what the EPC would be.

The library didn't really support Loss for the EPC at all. This was before the library itself became digital and had its own online system. It was not interested in the digital kind of stuff that we were doing. So, we supported the EPC through the funding we had with my chair. This goes back to the question you asked before about funding of the Buffalo stuff. Loss will be able to tell you about this in detail, but it was ironic that the head of the libraries wouldn't support the EPC at all. It was completely uninterested in the EPC, even though Loss was the pioneering person at that university in terms of making things available digitally and digitizing resources.

It was frustrating. Ultimately, he moved to media studies. He had a job and I had a job. Even as it became a very prominent thing at the university – it was noticed, there were articles written about it – there was still no money from the library to fund it, or from the deans to give us any extra support. In my division, in the English department, we had more resources than other parts of the humanities, but Loss was in media studies and couldn't even get a research assistant or a work study or even the most basic support. I had a work study student that I used from my funds to help me – not directly with the EPC but who helped me with my tapes. That was always a problem, the lack of personnel to help with the EPC. Maybe it was also an advantage, you could say, because everything on the EPC was originally done by Loss or me, then subsequently Jack Krick, and then a few other individuals helped upgrade pages. Yet it all had to be uploaded by one of the three of us, basically. The site maintained a local, small character.

The Poetry Collection is not the library. Loss worked for the main library. He was the humanities specialist. The Poetry Collection was run by Robert Berlthof at that time, and there was no real connection between what we were doing and the Poetry Collection, in the sense that there was no overlap. They were involved with digitizing some Joyce stuff and so on, but it was not something that had anything to do with our project. It really never came up. After, when Basinski took over, there was still no real support from the library. Loss might have more details about the EPC's connection to the Poetry Collection and the library. The Poetry Collection tended to be quite proprietary with their materials, especially under Robert Berlthof. He was not a person whose primary focus was opening things up and making things accessible. Most librarians nowadays are interested in information technology and making things accessible digitally, but certain kinds of curators with special collections focus on collecting objects that are in vaults. It's a very

different conception. So, we never managed to have – Loss even tried several times – to get some technology, like a digital camera, from the Special Collection, but there was never any rapport between what we were doing and the special collections.

The other thing about the funding of the Poetics Program is that when I came there I had a specific amount of money that was tied to my chair, the Grey Chair – Creeley had a certain amount of money with his Capen Chair, Tedlock had a certain amount of money in his McNulty Chair, then later, Federman in his Jones Chair, Raymond Federman – who was also part of the original founding group. There were five of us who founded the poetics program, with Susan Howe. Tedlock, me, Creeley, Howe, Federman, with Berlthof being a co-conspirator from the library. A lot of people use those research moneys for a number of projects – publication, travel, research, equipment, secretarial support. I thought why not try and use that money collectively to support the poetics program. I was able to pool money from time to time so that different chairs would match money or each would contribute something. The concept that I had was, rather than have anything official, which I don't like, but what I was interested in was what Joel Kuszai said one time during a talk – “many Indians, but no chief.” Rather than having an official publication and you could become the editor of that, starting something that people could contribute to – the radical decentralization was that Dennis, Bob and I would each contribute a certain amount to the poetics program for publications, let's say. There was a set amount and it wasn't that much money. It was 5000 dollars or something like that. Each of us would contribute 1500 from our budget, or something like that. Then anyone who applied would get some money, 500 dollars maybe. If we had 5000 dollars we would give out 10 500-dollar grants, which was more than we needed. We weren't like, "So, what do you plan to do with this money?" I don't like proposals.

If somebody wanted to do a magazine, then we would pay the bills up to that specific point, and tried to give about the same amount to each person based on their project. Some people spent less, some people spent more. There were some things that were slightly more expensive, and in those cases Bob or Dennis probably funded the sort of more expensive ones. There were a couple of glossy things done. They paid for that because they liked the idea of having more expensive stuff. Like *Chloroform*, that was probably paid for by one of my colleagues there. I tended to just

give the maximum amount to everyone equally. Everybody was free to do whatever they wanted, but they both were very supportive of this base level funding, then they could fund something more or something else if they wanted. Same thing with speakers.

That's really what allowed the proliferation of stuff. It's amazing how little money was involved. We did a number of other things that cost us somewhat more money in terms of having resident scholars for a semester, such as Arkady Dragomoszenko and Wystan Curnow. That was too much trouble. We were amazed - we each pooled maybe like 5000 dollars each, so we had 6 people and each one of us were going to give 5000 dollars to someone – we thought it would be someone like [a young scholar doing research], but then we had Arkady D apply, Wystan Curnow from New Zealand. The people who applied for these residencies were so astounding. They just wanted to be in Buffalo. There was really insufficient money to support them to come – [poets from Belgrade] ... It suggested to me an enormous need. It's far easier to arrange and support this kind of thing at Penn. But there, well, we never did it again because it took hundreds of hours of work to get the visas, the work permits. It was very difficult, but it was fantastic to have those people come. So, that was another way where we pooled resources to make things happen. We also paid Steve McCaffery's graduate stipend – he was admitted, but the graduate program didn't want to support him because he was "special." So, again, Federman, Creeley and I – they gave him a tuition waiver and we came up with what he would have gotten as a graduate fellow. That was only for a couple of years. This was Federman's actual initiative.

EPC never really required a lot of money, but once again, when I left, there was no money given to Loss for the EPC. Now it's been 10 years, because he couldn't get money from ... we weren't around. He does not get money from current people who are working there. He doesn't get support from them at all. They don't see the value of it, and they've cut it out of the whole poetics program. That's been difficult to say the least.

I'll admit that part of my interest in doing research on the EPC is to support finding for it its proper archival afterlife, as it's such a foundational digital object.

Creeley and I were big supporters of the EPC. When I left in 2003, it was very hard. The person who came in after us, Steve McCaffery, it's fair to say, had no interest in the EPC. He had his

own research thing. Though the EPC did have a page for him, and PennSound has huge McCaffery resources, it was never something that he was in any way committed to. I was there at the same time as him. He and Loss were not able to develop a working relationship. Loss can tell you the story. I always like to be polite about it. Loss could discuss this in his way, because it was a disappointment to him. He requested support for this and that, but it was not forthcoming. You know, somebody coming in could spend their money the way that they wanted. The fact is that this money that I'm talking about – the holder of the chair doesn't have to spend it on anything other than their own research and travel and secretarial or clerical support. They don't have to give it to something else. If they choose to support something, then that's fine. In the case of the poetics program, when I was there – 1990-2003 – in order to have that program be what it is, to me, it seemed necessary to use that money to generate the kinds of stuff that we did. And Creeley was enormously supportive of that. In fact, in many ways, Creeley was a visionary in his own Black Mountain way, and had it in his mind that we should secede from the English Department. He was much more radical than me. I wanted to be in the English Department, but he would have done something that was completely independent. I don't think it would have been as good for the students, not to get English PhDs. But he was into it. Bob loved the EPC. So that was great. When we all left, Loss didn't have those relationships. What was the EPC in 2003? I'm not in any way sympathetic to the lack of funding by the way – I'm just trying to give you a sense of how it could be looked. You work at a university too. When the people are not there who are supporting it – Loss had no benefactors anymore. So it fell apart and there wasn't that sense after Bob and I left that the EPC was a significant part of what the people there wanted to do or were interested in. A lot of things changed then. You didn't see the same magazines either.

It was such a moment there, and you see this whole field of different poetic practices emerging out of what was taking place. Its something that resonates still very strongly, and I think about it often as being foundational to the creation of the contemporary poet-critic. I sometimes write to Juliana Spahr to ask her about the dynamics of the program at that time. I'm always curious to find out who was conspiring with whom and what they were thinking about and making during that time.

You're quite right to mention Juliana and her company who created that atmosphere. It was that group of people. That sense of collective activity also migrated elsewhere. There was a kind of diasporic Poetics Program, the Poetics Program was picked up in many different places by other people doing others kinds of things over time – so, you can see Lori Emerson, Darren Wershler, Christian Bök as being a part of that. There were a number of ways in which people were involved. But, yes, in Buffalo, Peter Gizzi and Juliana Spahr and Ben Friedlander were all here. Martha Werner, too, actually doing her Dickinson stuff. All this was happening then. I think by 2003 something else was happening. You could say that PennSound comes right out of that moment and extends aspects of that activity.

I want to think about that statement you said earlier about "distribution not being separate from content." That's a rich idea to consider further in terms of the poetics of creating these infrastructures. And it extends a particular line of thinking, again via Creeley, working off his dictum concerning the relation of form and content. The distribution is part of the form of a work external to the text, the social form of a work. And I think it's always fascinating to consider a work's content in relation to this sense of form.

Things that occur in excessive singularity and are outside any kind of circulation don't exist at a certain level in the contemporary. It's when they enter the social space of exchange that allows people to hear things and participate in things and find out. The individual poem, as significant as it is, is no more important than many other kinds of echoes of that poem that somebody hears even in their own perception. You may say that those individual poems that are great are part of the constellation, but it's really how people apprehend them and interact with them that creates the work. That's why imitation, or even an imitation of an imitation of something, can be just as great for someone coming into it, because then they enter into it there and they see the dialogue and the context and so on. People don't always understand the context of what poetry is. Poetry is not singular. It's actually constant collective formations and productions. If you begin from that position, then you can go back to consider individual poets and their work.

Joel Kuszai is another interesting person to consider in this context, too. He's still here in New York, teaching at Queens College. His interests are certainly focused on distribution, production,

process within a very specific radical education and anarchist context. When Joel came to New York, I'm not sure he was even interested in the poetry community here, but it was because of the Buffalo community and people like Juliana, who had more radical political anarchist interest that he got involved. Also, Martin Spinelli is another person who got pulled in, as he was interested in radio and production and distribution. People like Joel and Martin became interested in poetry because of what we're talking about, because of the elements of utopian distribution and the implications of the Web, and not because they were interested in creating individual poems. It's not that they were not interested in creating individual poems, but that wasn't what galvanized them. It's that they were able to pull in a number of people who would not have been involved in something with respect to poetry. I think that was what created the great moment in Buffalo too. I think that's true also at Penn.

People get interested in it because of the social context that we can create through the work. It's not necessarily the way people imagine it will be – that they read some great individual poet, they love Wallace Stevens and so they know Al Filreis through his work on Wallace Stevens. That's actually not the way it often works. In fact, Al's work on Wallace Stevens is to resocialize Wallace Stevens into a political context, too. It goes throughout. It's creating that synergy among different people to pull them in that creates the difference between that phase of the Buffalo poetics program that we were involved in. This also fits into Creeley's interests as well in terms of what he wanted for Buffalo when Susan and I came. It also explains what is interesting in terms of the sites that you are talking about – the EPC, UbuWeb, and PennSound. The EPC itself really set up for people globally. It founded a certain model for how you could make stuff available for exchange. The EPC was an object of attention wherever I went in the world. In Finland, for instance, they were interested in it because it had Robert Creeley poems. But that wasn't primarily what they were interested in it. It's not simply because it has the poems – it has to have good stuff to make it valuable – but that was not the main point. It was the fact that the site made available a certain kind of possibility of noncommercial exchange between people and works, that it made the work available – that was crucial element. That's what I mean by distribution. Distribution is a different way of saying, in a more traditional sense, exchange. It has to do with exchange. Exchange is what makes poetry possible.

Appendix 6

A Dialogue with Al Filreis on PennSound

Al Filreis is Kelly Professor of English, Faculty Director of the Kelly Writers House, and the Director of the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing at the University of Pennsylvania. With Charles Bernstein, he founded PennSound in 2003. Our conversation on the development of PennSound, its pre-histories, and its institutional context took place in Filreis's office at the Kelly Writers House on 10 September 2015.

Michael Nardone: So there are a number of things I want to discuss with you, Al, in particular the pre-history of PennSound and models you had in mind when you began to develop it. I'm also interested in situating PennSound in its particular ecology here at the Kelly Writers House.

Yes, it's not really understandable without that context even though people mostly just get it as an archive and they don't necessarily see the institutional context.

Just walking in here, it's such an experience.

I remember the first time you came here. I believe it was for the 1960 discussion.

Yes, which I ended up transcribing too!

That's right! You lived with those materials.

So, the PennSound studio is here now?

Wexler Studio, yes. You'll see it, because that's where we're doing the interview with Jerry. Chris Martin's office is next door at 3808 CPCW. He's there and he has a lot of equipment. Most of the stuff has moved over here since we opened the studio.

When did that open?

February through March 2015. But then it had to be re-done because of some acoustical issues. So it's just opening now officially.

Do you remember when the idea of PennSound began to be developed?

Well, it depends on what you mean. PennSound per se was something Charles wanted to do when he arrived. PennSound was something he wanted to do. It was his name for it. He talked about when we met when he was a candidate for this position that's he's in now. That's one way of answering it. The other way is that PennSound started when we glued together the institutional pieces that gave us through relationships the earliest forms of digital humanities, as they would be called now. The relationships that we had – that I had and others had – with the people in the so-called Humanities Computing, a division of the School of Arts and Sciences Computing (SASC) organization, which is where Chris Mustazza works.

He was one of the first technicians to work on PennSound?

He was an early technical editor on Pennsound, but that organization long precedes Chris being here or Charles being here. So that goes back to my archival mania in the earliest days of the MP3. When the Writers House opened in 1995-6, we immediately began to do recordings as a lot of people did on DAT tape and cassette and began to preserve an audio archive. Then we started to use RealAudio and RealVideo formats. We used RealVideo as recordings of live webcasts. We called them netcasts then. At first, we did a series of live audio radio-style Writers House programs in 1998-99.

Was Creeley here then? Or no, that was early 2000, I believe...

Creeley was recorded in the current process. But those were all those net casts, all the early Writers House fellows. We've recently converted from RealVideo to MP3, and to some degree to MP4. Creeley, I'm not sure, I think there might be a video, but there certainly is audio. We've extracted the audio from those early videos. So that's all been covered. But that was later. That was 2003 or something.

So in 1998-99, we began to toy with what is our format. In the summer of 99, I convened a group of poets – Kristen Gallagher, Sean Walker, Bob Perelman, and maybe one other person, maybe Jena Osman – to talk about "To Else," the Williams poem. So we have an hour and forty-minute discussion, and people called in – we set up a regular telephone line and people called in and we put the phone next to the audio recorder. It was an early version webcast. Early version ModPo webcast. So once we started doing that we realized that we needed to see it all as one. We needed to see the set piece single event readings as the same as convened symposia and conversations that had interaction – people calling in or sending emails in, like a talk show – to see this as the same as recorded teaching, the same as the radio style one-way that we started to fool around with (the so-called netcasts). All of that, it seemed to me at the beginning, was the same. So, I started building the course that I call English 88, or ModPo in 1994.

Aren't you doing something new where you are conjoining English 88 with—

Yes! How'd you know that?

I had drinks with Chris Mustazza last night and we discussed it.

Yes, next fall we are going to have the students, the face-to-face enrolled students, join ModPo and flip the classroom completely. We'll continue to meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays here, but it will be basically a discussion about what's happening on ModPo. The point I'm making though is that poetry class which I call English 88, as early as 1994, I was putting everything up online. Just after we switched from Gopher to the World Wide Web. So most people were using a non-graphical interface and we were using links. We were using a Telnet prompt and typing Lynx to create a view of the web that was an Ascii view of the web.

How did you get into this kind of thing? You don't necessarily focus on technology.

No, I don't.

You just taught yourself these things?

It was all just Rude Golberg stuff. The course could be accessed through a non-graphical browser through Lynx or through Mosaic or Netscape when that came out. And the students were asked –

most of them didn't have email accounts at that point – some of them did, but the school was not giving out email accounts to everyone, they would give them to people who asked. So I asked. Anyway, this material I began to collect was essentially all text material. Soon, around 1997, I began to add RealAudio files. The RealAudio files I made myself. They were mini lectures, they were conversations, readings. Then I stole some primitive recordings of maybe Robert Frost that were out there, or maybe Williams, converted from cassette, asked no permission – that kind of early stuff. That kind of behaviour that became central to UbuWeb – anyone of us who was doing this kind of thing in the early days of the Internet, was doing what Goldsmith has made into an aesthetic and an ethic. For me, it wasn't anything like that – it was simply what you did. It was a practical matter. My goal eventually was to go legit and to create a site. The reason why the English 88 pages get so many hits is that they've been there since 1995-6, so the search algorithms naturally promote them because they are old and they are stable. I'm not sure how or why that works.

This was a revelation for me, Michael. Once I began to teach the course to maybe 90 or 100 students here, and they were able to go home and access the texts, I stopped using an anthology really early. I started just reproducing stuff. There was some scanning. It was basically OCR poured into a pre-formatted HTML page. It was HTML then angle bracket pre. It was just the formatting of a Ginsberg poem. I still have some of those files, some of those webpages go back to the 90s. I remember “America” by Ginsberg in a courier, non-proportional pre-formatted font that had been a Gopher page, which had converted from Gopher to the Web in 1993 or 4.

It must look hilarious in Courier.

It's crazy. So, anyway, the revelation for me pedagogically and theoretically and poetically was that lots of people around the world were getting access to this course. They didn't have the virtue or the vice, depending on your point of view, of me guiding them through it. It wasn't a real course like ModPo is now, but it was a bunch of materials and it was the first one up there. I began to realize that my career, which I had thought of as local teaching and scholarly articles and books, which are slow to come out and only a few people buy them – I had that first revelation which is now a cliché which is that I realized that there was a community out there, largely a non-academic community, of people who were looking for this stuff. That's how I made

my first contact with Kenny. That's how Charles and I began to get to know each another, and a lot of other people. So what this means is that my anthologizing – and the course used to end with Language poetry in 1996 or 7 – it means that my anthologizing had much more effect and I became much more sensitive to my choices. I began to put the materials, the RA files and the text files in a single in the UNIX folder that we had on the server that we had. This is the old English server here at Penn. So, I had the beginnings of that, and I was pretty systematic about naming it, it was all there, but that's – in answer to your question – that's what PennSound was in my version of it, based on teaching and my own mania for collecting stuff that would help me to teach.

I know that you've done archival work for critical writing that you've done, but do you have any background in archival or information sciences.

No.

So, you learned it all ad hoc?

Yes, which is why PennSound looks the way it does. Because Charles is anarchic by instinct, and I'm just untrained. You know, the first years of Pennsound were Charles and I keyboarding in the middle of the night – segmenting, doing the html, with Mustazza converting things. Soon Mike Hennessey came along. We were simply building something. Charles had an incredible store of his own recordings. Then I had all these writers House recordings. So, we started out with thousands of recordings, and those days there really wasn't anything else going on, so people would just send us recordings or bookstores would give us their files. So we had more than we could deal with. We've had to build up more of an institutional going forward machine, which gets us to the main thing I want to get to – we may not have time to talk about it in depth today, but we'll continue these discussions. It is silly to think of something like PennSound, which is not based in the library, right, so someone like Jason Camlot or Steve Evans are rightly critically observant that the best way to do this is to have a really good architecture from the start, an archival architecture. We chose not to go with the library for a couple of complicated reasons. We had created a salon styled entity here that was a little more like the poetic free spaces that had developed in the bohemian ends of the poetry world in San Francisco and New York,

Cambridge and Buffalo, and so forth. We – I think it's an ideology – we didn't want – this is where we are more aligned with Kenny – we didn't really want to be absorbed into the library's wonderfully systematic system and therefore live forever. We wanted to play on the edge. So we have a relationship with the school of Arts and Sciences media server, which we've partly paid for and its huge.

And figuring that the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania is a pretty robust institution and is likely to last as long as the library in terms of online archiving, but then we decided to have the front-end interface look a lot like the DIY world that we were creating here at the KWH which poets come and go and there is a lot of serendipity and wow, look at the people in this room. So very much like the recordings themselves of Writings/Talks in Bob Perelman's Berkeley or the St. Marks Poetry community – many of the recordings that you actually hear on PennSound – the Vancouver conference – PennSound itself as a site behaves in a way that is similar to the less organized and more serendipitous recordings. Now that, what I just said, is a form-content jiving – is unheard of in digital humanities theorizing. It may be heard of but nobody is actually going to boast about doing that. Because Charles' anarchic personality and his dyslexia and all the other things that make him a disorganized person, and because he's allergic to five year planning, I who am a 5 year planner type and am interested in building institutional structures that survive, I am doing this because this is what is pleasurable. It is pleasurable to build a nexus of activities that all depend on human error, basically, or involve human error. The Writers House got created because people – students and poets and neighbours and staff members – an incredible combination of people who we call the hub, a planning committee – created the Writers House bottom-up. We squatted an old building. Its uses were determined by use as opposed to an architect who comes in and says this is where we will do X, this is where we Y, etcetera.

What was this building before?

It was a residence for the chaplain and his family. It hadn't been maintained. It was built in 1851, so it's a very old building. So, there's the Writers House. Then English 88 accumulated in that kind of catch as catch can way preceding the discovery that by the teacher that he was teaching

the world, and would take any medium to do it. It didn't matter what it was. New or old, soon to be obsolete. I mean we used a MOO – do you know what a MUD is?

No.

It's multi-object oriented... they are based on dungeons, like dungeons and dragons but they are chat spaces that are textual and nongraphical. They are made of askey characters. So, in English 88, in 1996, we had a virtual office hour. We had an office in this graphical interface that you got to from your Unix prompt, right. You could come and see me and we had a skating rink, a poetry slam room...

Do you have any of this archived?

Yes, we have some of it archived and maybe have screen shots. I could put you in touch with Susan Garfinkel, who is now in Washington, I think at the Smithsonian. She was the grad student in Comp Lit who helped build the Moo, we called it PennMoo. That was simply what I had at hand. Do you know what periscope is? The reason I brought this up is because this is an example of the new soon to be bought up by somebody, or not, maybe it's going to be awful... I'm going to use that for office hours, why not? I don't care if it doesn't get archived or nobody ever remembers it, etc. So there's the Writers House forming, then there's English 88 forming into an online community, then there's the various regular audio casts and webcasts, which started with the To Else webcast developed into a series of using the Arts Cafe here to interact with people around the world, which developed into brining Carl Rakosi at 99 years old or Cid Corman in Japan to come in by audio and then out to audio with people in the room...

So these various projects, and then eventually ModPo, which developed out of English 88, and then PoemTalk. So, you have a series of projects – a lot of them are about close reading, a lot of them are about pushing the work of interpretation out to non-affiliates, to readers, all this stuff develops the same time that PennSound does. So you can't see PennSound as apart from these things. If you see it as apart from all these other outreach pedagogical activities then you can easily PennSound is not systematic enough, or it's got this old fashioned HTML look to it, it's not database driven – did you know that?

Yes, I do!

There was a point where we could have retrofitted it into what the library was going to do. Now, if we were going to do that, we'd have to hire a shitload of people and frankly, I really want to ask as the doctoral guy who is writing about this a question I hope your book will answer: Why should we?

When it was time to decide whether or not we should just go into the library and use their indexing, their database, where basically a card catalogue would be filled out for every recording. Who would have found the 5 versions of the Creeley poem? You would have had to go inside Penn's online catalogue, which you can do even if you're not Penn affiliated, though with some limitations. The people we originally thought who would look for this kind of stuff were students who knew how to use libraries. But in fact, this thing called the world wide web was already set up and the search methods are monetized by other people who have the usual incentives to make it – I was going to say "a good search" but they have their own reasons for doing things the way they do – but when it's Robert Creeley's poem they are not deliberately suppressing it. We're not competitors. More or less, if you're good at reading the first two or three pages of a search result, you are going to get the Creeley and you're going to find your way to the Web page and you're going to use it just as well because that's the way people use it. So, frankly, the archiving function and the indexing function and systematizing function is done by the user who is pretty adept at finding what she wants to find. So, I'm not sure that it gives us any advantage so long as the repository's server which is holding the MP3s and the WAVs and the MP4s is stable and there are back up copies – I'm not so sure we're not in a better position than where we would be with the library. So, your dissertation has to answer why do archivists feel a need to set up a database-driven, informationally rich set-up?

You made shift in your terminology that I think is interesting. You began using the term archive and then, when you talk about the actual structure of the object, you began to use the word repository. I find that to be an interesting thing, this obsession with the idea of the archive in theory, in the humanities. But the archive means a very specific thing in library and archival or informational sciences perspective. If one

wants to make an archive, that's one thing. That's not necessarily what you're attempting to make with PennSound. You constructed it to be a repository, and I think the repository as a structure has a fascinating form and use that is not generally acknowledged. I'm interested in the "mess" of the repository – the fact that it is an ad hoc structure in many instances, that it is collectively constructed and doesn't necessarily have a clear intended form of organization, or it's one that is developed as one proceeds. It has duplicates, partial copies of objects, different versions. This is all part of the repository and something altogether different than an archive.

Right, it evinces the mode and approach and the aesthetic of the people represented in it. That may just be a silly avoidance of an irony not every body perceives.

There's an interesting moment in the history of this thing – Charles and I – Charles must have mentioned it because he is still irritated about it – we went to seek support from the National Endowment of the Humanities. The logic of the funding was for preservation and to archive. Our logic was outreach and distribution. When we went to see them face-to-face, I did everything I could to keep Charles from tirading and banging his shoe and saying we are about free distribution. Let people grab it. They are going to grab it and download it. They can change the ID3 tags, it doesn't matter how perfect they are. These files will migrate and there is no way we can control that. But we were applying for a grant that sponsors preservation. Now, we do preservation.

I believe you save WAV files of the original recordings?

Yes, and we save the physical media—

Where is that located?

The stuff that we have processed ourselves that we own goes to the library. So, Charles has brought them boxes of cassettes and reel to reel. When we borrow stuff like the Ashbery recordings, it all goes back to them. Same with the Creeley recordings. All of that. I believe the Creeley reels all went back to Will Creeley. I'm not sure. He brought them by – Will came up

those stairs with boxes of Creeley tapes that all went into my little closet, and we began finding things.

Did you digitize them here?

We send some of it out to a third party in North Carolina. Some of the stuff we were able to do ourselves. We didn't want to damage it.

Bob recorded Sunday afternoon operas, baseball games, a bunch of stuff from radio. So there is a lot of stuff that is not of any use to us at least. I'm sure there is some radio station that would love to have the archive... But, in those recordings, there were also lunches. He would turn his recorder on at his table in Bolinas and there would just be a lot of people talking. We have a lot of that in the archives.

That would be awesome to listen to.

It's there, it's on the Creeley page! A conversation with Joanne Kyger, she stopped by and he recorded the conversation in like 1971. Anyway, I guess you could say that temperamentally we fell into this mode, but it fit with everything else we were doing.

One thing I would love to hear your thoughts about is on navigating the institution and thinking about the placement of PennSound in its context. The thing about the Kelly Writers House that I find so interesting is that it functions as a kind of autonomous space. It's set within the University of Pennsylvania, but it appears as though it has its own regulatory feel or rhythm that's different than the university.

It is semi-autonomous.

And I'm interested in what it's taken create that space – with PennSound and also the Writers House as well as the CPCW – with regard to the regulatory systems within the institution, whether it's the English department or specific schools you are allied or affiliated with.

All of these projects are semi-autonomous. The Writers House is a Provostial and Presidential entity – it's not in the School of Arts and Sciences. It is non-curricular. CPCW is curricular, but that's in the School of Arts and Sciences. We raise money from private donors who are interested in supporting this. You can't do anything without that. By raising money you create a certain amount of independence. It's crucial to the whole thing that there is this feel that people can walk in and feel that this is not part of a traditional academy. That's also where PennSound comes from. Also, universities are giant bureaucracies and to be able to do things without having to go through all the processes is huge. Sometimes you do it and you get yelled at later. Sometimes you do it and you're in a space where you don't have to ask permission. It's not a very satisfactory answer, but the question is crucial. Because navigating the institutional aspects of the university that would tend to prevent innovation and avoiding that is probably 40% of my time – that might be an exaggeration but...

Talking with Charles and also with some of his students from the Buffalo days, I realize it's such an important aspect of these repositories and the contexts in which they've been developed. There is a certain trend for liberating resources from the university so as to create forms of publishing or circulation that extends well beyond the confines of the university. I see this as something the two of you share as a kind of worldview within the institution.

Yes, well, when Charles came here he was somewhat able to retire from the role [of raising and doling out funds for his students] because I was already doing it here. We have that in common. That's a crucial part of it to be perfectly honest. With the Wexler Studio now, which means we can just have people come in and we can record. All poetry places through honoraria form this kind of gift economy, not a gift economy because people are working for the money. If your honoraria are a little better, and your doing it for people who record for the archive – it means that the university's funds are getting circulated just as the recordings are getting circulated. It's not quite true to say it's a strictly non-profit, unremunerative, exploitative situation unlike the popular world where every thing is monetized. You think of the poetry recording world as totally unmonetized. Well, it is. But our hope is to stir the pot a little bit by putting some money out there. In a small way, but small in terms of numbers but theoretically significant way. People are

being funded for their travel and are given an honorarium, and we are able to preserve what they do. There's a tiny amount of redistribution going on.

The donors, most of them private donors, alumni and things – they are fully aware that that's what we are doing. We are making their alma mater a destination, not just for people who physically walk on to the campus or come to Philly, but for people who can say they've heard of PennSound: PennSound, that's my alma mater, and that's where these files originate.

Appendix 7

Concordia SPF Research Ethics Forms and Approval

SUMMARY PROTOCOL FORM (SPF)

Office of Research – Research Ethics Unit – GM 900 – 514-848-2424 ext. 7481 –
<mailto:oor.ethics@concordia.ca> – www.concordia.ca/offices/oor.html

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL RESEARCHERS

Please take note of the following before completing this form:

- You must not conduct research involving human participants until you have received your Certification of Ethical Acceptability for Research Involving Human Subjects (Certificate).
- In order to obtain your Certificate, your study must receive approval from the appropriate committee:
 - Faculty research, and student research involving greater than minimal risk is reviewed by the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC).
 - Minimal risk student research is reviewed by the College of Ethics Reviewers (CER; formerly the “Disciplinary College”), except as stated below.
 - Minimal risk student research conducted exclusively for pedagogical purposes is reviewed at the departmental level. **Do not use this form for such research.** Please use the Abbreviated Summary Protocol Form, available on the Office of Research (OOR) website referenced above, and consult with your academic department for review procedures.
- Research funding will not be released until your Certificate has been issued, and any other required certification (e.g. biohazard, radiation safety) has been obtained. For information about your research funding, please consult:
 - Faculty and staff: OOR
 - Graduate students: School of Graduate Studies
 - Undergraduate students: Financial Aid and Awards Office or the Faculty or Department
- Faculty members are encouraged to submit studies for ethics by uploading this form, as well as all supporting documentation, to ConRAD, which can be found in the MyConcordia portal.
- If necessary, faculty members may complete this form and submit it by e-mail to oor.ethics@concordia.ca along with all supporting documentation. Student researchers are asked to submit this form and all supporting documentation by e-mail, except for departmental review. Please note:
 - Handwritten forms will not be accepted.
 - Incomplete or omitted responses may result in delays.
 - This form expands to accommodate your responses.
- Please allow the appropriate amount of time for your study to be reviewed:
 - UHREC reviews greater than minimal risk research when it meets on the second Thursday of each month. You must submit your study 10 days before the meeting where it is to be reviewed. You will normally receive a response within one week of the meeting. Please confirm the deadline and date of the meeting with the staff of the Research Ethics Unit.
 - CER reviews, and delegated reviews conducted by UHREC generally require 2 to 4 weeks.

- Research must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, including:
 - The [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
 - The policies and guidelines of the funding/award agency
 - The [Official Policies of Concordia University](#), including the *Policy for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants*, VPRGS-3.
- The Certificate is valid for one year. In order to maintain your approval and renew your Certificate, please submit an Annual Report Form one month before the expiry date that appears on the Certificate. You must not conduct research under an expired Certificate.
- Please contact the Manager, Research Ethics at 514-848-2424 ext. 7481 if you need more information on the ethics review process or the ethical requirements that apply to your study.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS

- If your research is part of your faculty supervisor's research, as approved, please have him or her inform the Research Ethics Unit via e-mail that you will be working on the study.
- If your research is an addition to your faculty supervisor's study, please have him or her submit an amendment request, and any revised documents via e-mail. You must not begin your research until the amendment has been approved.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

- Please make sure that you are using the most recent version of the SPF by checking the OOR website.
- Please answer each question on the form; if you believe the question is not applicable, enter not applicable.
- Do not alter the questions on this form or delete any material. Where questions are followed by a checklist, please answer by checking the applicable boxes.
- The form can be signed and submitted as follows:
 - Faculty research submitted on ConRAD will be considered as signed as per section 16.
 - SPFs for faculty research submitted via the faculty member's official Concordia e-mail address will also be considered as signed as per section 16.
 - Both faculty and student researchers may submit a scanned pdf of the signature page by e-mail. In this case, the full SPF should also be submitted by e-mail in Word or pdf format (not scanned).
 - If you do not have access to a scanner, the signature page may be submitted on paper to the OOR.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Please submit any additional documents as separate files in Word or PDF format.

I. BASIC INFORMATION

Study Title: Poetics in a Networked Digital Culture [Provisional title]

Principal Investigator: Michael Nardone

Principal Investigator's Status:

- ☐ Concordia faculty or staff
- ☐ Visiting scholar
- ☐ Affiliate researcher
- ☐ Postdoctoral fellow
- ☒ **PhD Student**
- ☐ Master's student
- ☐ Undergraduate student
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Type of submission:

- ☒ **New study**
- ☐ Modification or an update of an approved study.
- ☐ Approved study number (e.g. 30001234):

Where will the research be conducted?

- ☒ **Canada**
- ☒ **Another jurisdiction: United States, Mexico**

2. STUDY TEAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION*

Role	Name	Institution [†] / Department / Address [‡]	Phone #	e-mail address
Principal Investigator	Michael Nardone	Concordia, Humanities	514.795.5632	mdn@soundobject.net
Faculty supervisor [§]	Darren Wershler	Concordia, English	514.848.2424	d.wershler@concordia.ca
Committee member	Jason Camlot	Concordia, English	514.848.2424	jason.camlot@concordia.ca
Committee member	Jonathan Sterne	McGill, Communications	514.398.5852	jonathan.sterne@mcgill.ca

Additional Team Members [°]				
N/A				

Notes:

* If additional space is required, please submit a list of team members as a separate document.

†For team members who are external to Concordia only.

‡For individuals based at Concordia, please provide only the building and room number, e.g. GM-910.03.

§For student research only.

||For research conducted by PhD and Master's students only.

°Please include all co-investigators and research assistants.

3. PROJECT AND FUNDING SOURCES

Please list all sources of funds that will be used for the research. Please note that fellowships or scholarships are not considered research funding for the purposes of this section.

Funding Source	Project Title*	Grant Number [†]	Award Period	
			Start	End
	Project funded only by scholarships.			

Notes:

* Please provide the project title as it appears on the Notice of Award or equivalent documentation.

† If you have applied for funding, and the decision is still pending, please enter "applied".

4. OTHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Does the research involve any of the following (check all that apply):

- ☐ Controlled goods or technology **NO**
- ☐ Hazardous materials or explosives **NO**
- ☐ Biohazardous materials **NO**
- ☐ Human biological specimens **NO**
- ☐ Radioisotopes, lasers, x-ray equipment or magnetic fields **NO**
- ☐ Protected acts (requiring professional certification) **NO**
- ☐ A medical intervention, healthcare intervention or invasive procedures **NO**

Please submit any certification or authorization documents that may be relevant to ethics review for research involving human participants.

5. LAY SUMMARY

Please provide a brief description of the research in everyday language. The summary should make sense to a person with no discipline-specific training, and it should not use overly technical terms. Please do not submit your thesis proposal or grant application.

This research, my doctoral dissertation project, aims to provide a material and cultural analysis of the entwined histories of the three major North American online repositories of contemporary avant-garde and experimental poetry: the Electronic Poetry Centre at SUNY-Buffalo, Kenneth Goldsmith's UbuWeb, and PennSound at the University of Pennsylvania.

6. SCHOLARLY REVIEW

As part of the research, will participants be exposed to risk that is greater than minimal?

Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of the risks are greater than those to which participants would be exposed in those aspects of their daily lives that are pertinent to the research.

☐ Yes

☒ **No**

Has this research received favorable review for scholarly merit?

For faculty research, funding from a granting agency such as CIHR, FQRSC, or CINC is considered evidence of such review. Please provide the name of the agency.

For student research, a successful defense of a thesis or dissertation proposal is considered evidence of such review. Please provide the date of your proposal defense. Scholarly review is not required for minimal risk student research.

☒ Yes Funding agency or date of defense: **SSHRC; and Concordia University's Graduate Mobility Award.**

☐ No

☐ Not required

Note: I will be defending my thesis proposal in late February.

If you answered no, please submit a Scholarly Review Form, available on the OOR website. For studies to be conducted at the PERFORM Centre, please submit the Scientific Review Evaluator Worksheet.

7. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Will any of the participants be part of the following categories?

- ☐ Minors (individuals under 18 years old) **NO**
- ☐ Individuals with diminished mental capacity **NO**
- ☐ Individuals with diminished physical capacity **NO**
- ☐ Members of Canada's First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples **NO**
- ☐ Vulnerable individuals or groups (vulnerability may be caused by limited capacity, or limited access to social goods, such as rights, opportunities and power, and includes individuals or groups whose situation or circumstances make them vulnerable in the context of the research project, or those who live with relatively high levels of risk on a daily basis)

a) Please describe potential participants, including any inclusion or exclusion criteria.

Literary scholars, media scholars, professors, archivists, institutional employees.

b) Please describe in detail how potential participants will be identified, and invited to participate. Please submit any recruitment materials to be used, for example, advertisements or letters to participants.

Each participant will be identified by researched knowledge of the various archives that I will be writing about, each of which is defined by the archives themselves on their sites. In some cases, I will follow recommendations made by interviewers to interview people they mention to be important with regard to the histories that I am documenting. I will not be using any kind of recruitment materials for these interviews and relying solely upon personal exchanges with the interviewers over email and during face-to-face interviews.

c) Please describe in detail what participants will be asked to do as part of the research, and any procedures they will be asked to undergo. Please submit any instruments to be used to gather data, for example questionnaires or interview guides.

Depending on the individual's role at the institution or archive, I will ask specific questions about what they do, have done, and the history of their activity with the archive.

d) Do any of the research procedures require special training, such as medical procedures or conducting interviews on sensitive topics or with vulnerable populations? If so, please indicate who will conduct the procedures and what their qualifications are.

NO.

8. INFORMED CONSENT

a) Please explain how you will solicit informed consent from potential participants. Please submit your written consent form. In certain circumstances, oral consent may be appropriate. If you intend to use an oral consent procedure, please submit a consent script containing the same elements as the template, and describe how consent will be documented.

Please note: written consent forms and oral consent scripts should follow the consent form template available on the OOR website. Please include all of the information shown in the sample, adapting it as necessary for your research.

I will write each participant and request their participation before the interview, notifying them of the project, its intended goals, and how their interview will be archived and (possibly) integrated into the research writing. Please see attached document, entitled “Informed_Consent Nardone.”

b) Does your research involve individuals belonging to cultural traditions in which individualized consent may not be appropriate, or in which additional consent, such as group consent or consent from community leaders, may be required? If so, please describe the appropriate format of consent, and how you will solicit it.

NO.

9. DECEPTION

Does your research involve any form of deception of participants? If so, please describe the deception, explain why the deception is necessary, and explain how participants will be de-briefed at the end of their participation. If applicable, please submit a debriefing script.

Please note that deception includes giving participants false information, withholding relevant information, and providing information designed to mislead.

NO.

10. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

a) Please explain how participants will be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time, and describe any limitations on this freedom that may result from the nature of the research.

Each participant will be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time in the consent form. See attached document. There are no limitations on this freedom that may result from the nature of this research.

b) Please explain what will happen to the information obtained from a participant if he or she withdraws. For example, will their information be destroyed or excluded from analysis if the participant requests it? Please describe any limits on withdrawing a participant's data, such as a deadline related to publishing data.

If an interviewee decides they would like to withdraw from participating in these interviews, I will gladly destroy all evidence, meaning: delete document files, shred documents, and erase audio files.

11. RISKS AND BENEFITS

a) Please identify any foreseeable benefits to participants.

Their contributions to the construction of these various archives will be documented.

b) Please identify any foreseeable risks to participants, including any physical or psychological discomfort, and risks to their relationships with others, or to their financial well-being.

I foresee no risk to the participants.

c) Please describe how the risks identified above will be minimized. For example, if individuals who are particularly susceptible to these risks will be excluded from participating, please describe how they will be identified. Furthermore, if there is a chance that researchers will discontinue participants' involvement for their own well-being, please state the criteria that will be used.

N/A.

d) Please describe how you will manage the situation if the risks described above are realized. For example, if referrals to appropriate resources are available, please provide a list. If there is a chance that participants will need first aid or medical attention, please describe what arrangements have been made.

N/A.

12. REPORTABLE SITUATIONS AND INCIDENTAL FINDINGS

a) Is there a chance that the research might reveal a situation that would have to be reported to appropriate authorities, such as child abuse or an imminent threat of serious harm to specific individuals? If so, please describe the situation, and how it would be handled.

Please note that legal requirements apply in such situations. It is the researcher's responsibility to be familiar with the laws in force in the jurisdiction where the research is being conducted.

No, this will not reveal a situation that would have to be reported to authorities, such as child abuse or an imminent threat of serious harm to specific individuals.

b) Is there a chance that the research might reveal a material incidental finding? If so, please describe how it would be handled.

Please note that a material incidental finding is an unanticipated discovery made in the course of research but that is outside the scope of the research, such as a previously undiagnosed medical or psychiatric condition that has significant welfare implications for the participant or others.

N/A.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY, ACCESS, AND STORAGE

a) Please describe the path of your data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal, including details on short and long-term storage (format, duration, and location), measures taken to prevent unauthorized access, who will have access, and final destination (including archiving, or destruction).

Data from my research will be gathered and stored as paper documents in files; digital copies backed up on a private computer as well as two personal hard drives utilized specifically for these research purposes. There will be audio files that will also be stored on the personal computer and backed up on these hard drives as well. I will allow only my supervisor, Prof. Darren Wershler, to have access to this information as data. All documents and files will remain in personal archives and I foresee no need to destroy the information, as it does not put any individual at risk. Finally, all consent forms will be personally archived and available to anyone upon request.

b) Please identify the access that the research team will have to participants' identity:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous	The information provided never had identifiers associated with it, and the risk of identification of individuals is low, or very low.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous results, but identify who participated	The information provided never had identifiers associated with it. The research team knows participants' identity, but it would be impossible to link the information provided to link the participant's identity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pseudonym	Information provided will be linked to an individual, but that individual will only provide a fictitious name. The research team will not know the real identity of the participant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coded	Direct identifiers will be removed and replaced with a code on the information provided. Only specific individuals have access to the code, meaning that they can re-identify the participant if necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indirectly identified	The information provided is not associated with direct identifiers (such as the participant's name), but it is associated with information that can reasonably be expected to identify an individual through a combination of indirect identifiers (such as place of residence, or unique personal characteristics).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential	The research team will know the participants' real identity, but it will not be disclosed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disclosed	The research team will know the participants' real identity, and it will be revealed in accordance with their consent.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participant Choice	Participants will be able to choose which level of disclosure they wish for their real identity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe)	

c) Please describe what access research participants will have to study results, and any debriefing information that will be provided to participants post-participation.

I will send copies of all documents and files that discuss interviews to participants for their editorial feedback as well as to fact-check or confirm the details of our interview proceedings. This will happen throughout the draft stages of the dissertation. When my dissertation is finished, I am looking forward to sharing a complete digital version of the entire document with each person who was interviewed in the research proceedings.

d) Would the revelation of participants' identity be particularly sensitive, for example, because they belong to a stigmatized group? If so, please describe any special measures that you will take to respect the wishes of your participants regarding the disclosure of their identity.

NO.

e) In some research traditions, such as action research, and research of a socio-political nature, there can be concerns about giving participant groups a “voice”. This is especially the case with groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed in their cultural location. If these concerns are relevant for your participant group, please describe how you will address them in your project.

N/A.

14. MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RESEARCH

Does your research involve researchers affiliated with an institution other than Concordia? If so, please complete the following table, including the Concordia researcher's role and activities to be conducted at Concordia. If researchers have multiple institutional affiliations, please include a line for each institution.

Researcher's Name	Institutional Affiliation	Role in the research (e.g. principal investigator, co-investigator, collaborator)	What research activities will be conducted at each institution?
N/A.			

I am the sole researcher on this project.

15. ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of your academic or professional association, please comment on any other ethical concerns which may arise in the conduct of this research. For example, are there responsibilities to participants beyond the purposes of this study?

No.

16. DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

Study Title: **Poetics in a Networked Digital Milieu** [Provisional title]

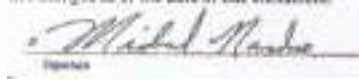
I hereby declare that this Summary Protocol Form accurately describes the research project or scholarly activity that I plan to conduct. I will submit a detailed modification request if I wish to make modifications to this research.

I agree to conduct all activities conducted in relation to the research described in this form in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, including:

- The [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)

- The policies and guidelines of the funding/award agency
- The [Official Policies of Concordia University](#), including the *Policy for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants*, VPRGS-3.

Principal Investigator Signature:



Date: 18 January 2015

FACULTY SUPERVISOR STATEMENT (REQUIRED FOR STUDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS):

I have read and approved this project. I affirm that it has received the appropriate academic approval, and that the student investigator is aware of the applicable policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of human participant research at Concordia University. I agree to provide all necessary supervision to the student. I allow release of my nominative information as required by these policies and procedures in relation to this project.

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____