

DIGITIZING THE 'SOUND EXPLOSIONS' OF ANGLOPHONIC CARIBBEAN PERFORMANCE POETRY

FONT: MONTELETTENS

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THE INTERNET OFFERS NEW PERFORMANCE PLATFORMS FOR CARIBBEAN POETS WHO PRIORITIZE ORAL EXPRESSION. ONE GROUP REALIZING THIS POTENTIAL IS THE YOUTH-LED ARTIST COLLECTIVE THE 2 GENES MOVEMENT, BASED OUT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WHO CIRCULATE THEIR VIDEO POEMS ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES. THROUGH THEIR DIY APPROACH, THEY ARE BUILDING A BROADER YOUTH AUDIENCE FOR THEIR WORK. MORE GENERALLY, CARIBBEAN POETS ARE OFTEN UNDERREPRESENTED IN ONLINE POETRY RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY IN INSTITUTION-BASED INTERNET AUDIO ARCHIVES. THIS ARTICLE USES THE 2 GENES MOVEMENT AS A PRELIMINARY MODEL TO UNDERSTAND HOW INTERNET AUDIO ARCHIVES CAN BE REDESIGNED TO AMPLIFY THE TOTAL EXPRESSION OF CARIBBEAN POETRY. HOWEVER, THE 2 GENES MOVEMENT OFFERS A PARTIAL SOLUTION TO A MUCH BIGGER PROBLEM; HOWEVER, THIS ARTICLE DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF EXAMINING POETS' ENGAGEMENTS WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO DEVELOP BETTER ARCHIVAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES IN SYNC WITH THE POLITICS OF THE WORK.

INTRODUCTION

IF LORICE BENNETT, THE PROMINENT JAMAICAN ARTIST, WERE STILL ALIVE AND PERFORMING TODAY, HOW WOULD THE INTERNET FIT INTO HER CREATIVE PRACTICES? WOULD SHE POST POETRY RECORDINGS ON FACEBOOK? WOULD CHILDREN PLAY WITH A MISS LOU APP? WOULD RUSHT MONSIEY DELIVER MASON VIA TWITTER? SINCE SHE EMBRACED EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES TO REACH HER AUDIENCE ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE JAMAICAN LANGUAGE,

social media likely would have played a prominent role in her education activism. She turned to performance early in her career to build an inclusive audience, and her media projects for the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation—her children’s television show *King Ding* (1976–82) and her radio program *Miss Lou’s Words* (1986–88)—gave her an expanded terrain to develop her call-and-response poetics. Unfortunately, searching for Louise Bennett online today yields few actual sound recordings of her poetry. Bennett’s underrepresentation online—or, more aptly, her silence, since her words can be found but rarely her voice—is characteristic of Caribbean poetry more generally. This article stems from concern about who has the power to define poetry in virtual spaces and whose voices receive notice. As Kamau Brathwaite established in his groundbreaking lecture *History of the Voice*, Anglophone Caribbean poetry should be celebrated for its “sound explosions,” yet it has remained relatively quiet online.¹

Internet audio archives for poetry have flourished in recent years. Websites such as PennSound, The Poetry Archive, the Poetry Foundation, the Academy of American Poets, and PoetNet have provided excellent resources for contemporary poetics. These twenty-first-century open-access collections offer both live and studio recordings, notable discussions of poetry, lectures, and taped interviews. While these digital platforms promote democratization, they often repeat the exclusions of print archives. Many of these collections, which now determine the content of poetry syllabi in university classrooms, reinforce the United States as the dominant center of Anglophone poetry in the Americas.² <http://www.pennsound.com/pennsound/news/pennsound-translators-non-poetry-talent-world-over>. For example, the Poetry Foundation has 1,680 author pages, almost half of which are devoted to US poets. The site features only eleven poets from the Caribbean region, excluding many major voices from the region, including Louise Bennett. Of the eleven Caribbean poet pages, none include audio poems and only seven of them include actual poetry texts; the other four just feature short author bios. Not only are Caribbean poets underrepresented in these curated collections

¹ Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* (London: New Beacon Books, 1984), 22.

² See “PennSound Translators Non Poetry Is Talent the World Over,” *Penn News*, 26 June 2016.

but their online presence is often sparse, limited to random YouTube videos.³

Despite their underrepresentation in well-known audio collections, many contemporary Caribbean performance poets have embraced digital technologies to reach their audiences. These new digital poetries offer a solution to what Lawrence A. Buettner has characterized as the "half-life" of Caribbean performance poetry.⁴ According to him, readers unable to attend a poet's live recitation are always at a disadvantage, because things like tone, gesture, and the poet's relationship with her audience also determine meaning. In terms of distribution, digitized poetry recordings, hindered by copyright fees and trade tariffs, out-pace print books in their international portability, making them more accessible to Caribbean diasporic communities.



FIGURE 1 A GAYTS NOVENARY POET

³ For a discussion of race in digital canons, see Amy E. Kallman, "Can Information be Unraptured? Race and the New Digital Humanities Canon," in Matthew K. Gold, ed., *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Open Access Edition, <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu>. Kallman notes that "we need to examine the canon that is, as digital scholars, are constructing, a canon that opens toward traditional texts and explores critical work by women, people of color, and the GLBTQ community."

⁴ Lawrence A. Buettner, "The Half-Life of Performance Poetry," *Journal of New World Literature* 3, no. 1 (2006): 20.

This article examines one of the best examples of innovative digital poetry in the Caribbean: the youth-led artist collective *The a Genz's Movement*, based out of Trinidad and Tobago, who use social networking sites to circulate their video poems. Students at the University of the Southern Caribbean started the movement in 2010, and their activities have strengthened youth enthusiasm for spoken-word poetry. Some of their activities include island-wide school tours, open-mic nights, slam contests, television and radio broadcasts, video production of poems, and student poetry workshops. They present themselves as a movement to align their poetry with social change. Their digital recordings become modes of production, publication, distribution, preservation, and community activation. Their populist approach builds on the vernacular pedagogical dynamics of performance established by figures like Louise Bennett. By using these technologies to integrate creative and political practices, *The a Genz's Movement* realizes Brathwaite's theory of nation language and his argument that sound reproduction technologies can be used to reintegrate Afro-centric oral traditions.⁵

Brathwaite identifies how nation language poets challenge the way that paper records were used to discredit oral ways of knowing and uphold institutional power during colonization. When a poet like Linton Kwesi Johnson recites definitive works such as "Reggae Common," lines such as "foot-drop find drum, blood story / and history is a nothing / is a nothing else story" attack print-centric forms of knowledge.⁶ He builds on a history of Caribbean people using performance to circumvent the print archive to produce, record, and transmit knowledge through embodied acts.⁷ Such knowledge depends on the interaction between the performer and her audience. The format of Bennett's *King Ding*, where she would invite children from the studio audience to join her on stage to recite poetry with her, exemplifies this well. Such communal pedagogies also extend to adult audiences. For example, Odu Oduora defines the goal of her poetry as consciousness-raising: "It also mean to stir out the ions and emotions and to stir consciousness into the people's own heads."⁸ Performance creates

⁵ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, 22.

⁶ Linton Kwesi Johnson, *As Revolutionary Turn* (Knox, NY: Anansi Press, 2006), 22.

⁷ Here I draw on Diana Taylor's analysis of how she calls the repertoire to circulate and how performance acts create cultural memory in the Americas. See Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

WHAT BRATHWAITE CHARACTERIZES AS "TOTAL EXPRESSION," ENCOMPASSING A SPACE FOR COLLECTIVE, POLYVOCALIZED VERBALEARNED CONSCIOUSNESS TO TAKE SHAPE:

THE OTHER THING ABOUT NATION LANGUAGE IS THAT IT IS PART OF WHAT MAY BE CALLED TOTAL EXPRESSION. . . . READING IS AN ISOLATED, INDIVIDUALISTIC EXPRESSION. THE ORAL TRADITION ON THE OTHER HAND DEMANDS NOT ONLY THE CHOICE BUT THE ABSENCE TO COMPLETE THE COMMUNITY: THE NOISE AND SOUNDS THAT THE NARRER MAKES ARE RESPONDED TO BY THE AUDIENCE AND ARE RETURNED TO HIM. HENCE WE HAVE THE CREATION OF A CONTINUUM WHERE MEANING TRULY RESIDES.⁸

ALTHOUGH BRATHWAITE SEEMS TO BE ARGUING HERE THAT THE FULL EXPERIENCE OF THE SONIC CONTINUUM DEPENDS ON LIVE INTERACTION, HE ACTUALLY EMPHASIZES THE OPPOSITE. A CENTRAL POINT OF HIS TEXT, ORIGINALLY TITLED "AN ELECTRONIC LECTURE" FOR HIS 1970 HARVARD PRESENTATION, HIGHLIGHTS THE POTENTIAL OF SOUND REPRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES TO CREATE NEW PARADIGMS FOR TOTAL EXPRESSION. FOR HIM, THEY INTENSIFY "THE DETONATIONS WITHIN CARIBBEAN SOUND-POETRY [THAT] HAVE INFUSED US INTO NEW SPACES AND CONSCIOUSNESS OF OURSELVES."⁹ BRATHWAITE'S CONNOTATION DETONATIONS OF "DETONATIONS" AND "EXPLOSIONS" REVEALS HIS PRIORITIZING OF ELECTRONIC SOUND. AS JONATHAN STERNES ESTABLISHED, "ALL SOUND-REPRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES WORK THROUGH THE USE OF TRANSDUCERS" THAT CONVERT ACOUSTIC WAVES INTO ELECTRONIC IMPULSES.¹⁰ BRATHWAITE SUGGESTS THAT THESE ENERGY CONVERSIONS AMPLIFY TOTAL EXPRESSION RATHER THAN WEAKEN IT, WHICH THE *The a Gento Movement* SUBSTANTIATES.

SO MUCH SCHOLARSHIP FOCUSES ON WRITTEN DOCUMENTS AND TECHNIQUES FROM THE PAST, YET MANY CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIPS ARE EARLY ADOPTERS. THEY ADDRESS THE PAST, THEY INSURE COLLABORATION, THEY MOVE US OFF THE PAGE, AND THEY ARE TO BUILD THINGS FOR THE FUTURE. INSPIRED BY THIS APPROACH, THIS ARTICLE USES *The a Gento Movement* AS A PRELIMINARY MODEL TO UNDERSTAND HOW INTERNET AUDIO ARCHIVES CAN BE REDESIGNED TO AMPLIFY THE TOTAL EXPRESSION OF CARIBBEAN POETRY. ALTHOUGH, *The a Gento Movement* OFFERS AN INCOMPLETE SOLUTION TO A MUCH LARGER PROBLEM: HOWEVER, I ARGUE THAT WE NEED TO BEGIN BY EXAMINING POETS' ENGAGEMENTS WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO DEVELOP BETTER ARCHIVAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES IN SYNC WITH THE POLITICS OF THE WORK. IN THIS

⁸ Quoted in Beverly Smith, *To Knowen He Speaking: and Other Essays* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), 26.

⁹ BRATHWAITE, *HISTORY OF THE VOICE*, 16-19 (quotes in original).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹ JONATHAN STERNES, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 22.

collaborative spirit, I also invite readers to click on the links as they read this article, to immerse themselves in what's already online, and to think about how we can build on this virtual world of Caribbean poetics.

Part of what makes Bratman's *History of the Voice* an important catalyst for building digital archives is that he avoids the tendency in oral scholarship to fixate on the live event. For example, Hugh Moseley stresses the difficulty of studying performance poetry, lamenting that he typically examines only "the textualized trace of it."⁸⁸ He considers sound and video recordings as texts, because he argues that the total expression of the live event does not get captured on them. Similarly, Peggy Phelan claims that what she calls "ephemerality" disappears in recordings of a performance.⁸⁹ As Sterne puts it, this attitude regards "face-to-face communication and bodily presence" as "the paradigms by which to measure all communicative activity" and "define[s] sound reproduction negatively, as negating or modifying an undamaged interpersonal or face-to-face co-presence."⁹⁰ Bratman's takes a more innovative approach to sound reproduction technologies by highlighting their capacity to challenge print-centric aesthetics. The 2-Cents Movement demonstrates how digital technologies provide even more opportunities for this through their use of audio videography and microblogging. However, what Bratman's envisioned over 20 years ago through "recording tape[s]," eight tracks, and LPs has yet to be fully realized in the broader terrain of our research methodologies and poetry resources.⁹¹

Critical approaches to performance poetry have been slow to develop because of the Western assumption that "the text of a poem—that is, the written document—is primary and that the recitation or performance of a poem by the poet is secondary and

⁸⁸ Hugh Moseley, "Poetry and Overturned Cans: Why Performance Poetry Can't Be Studied, (and Why We Should Study It Anyway)," in Susan Givens and David Roy, eds., *Listening Up, Writing Down, and Looking Beyond: Interferences of the Oral, Written, and Visual* (Morgantown, OH: Westview/Lantern University Press, 2012), 96.

⁸⁹ As Phelan describes, "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance." Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 100.

⁹⁰ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 20.

⁹¹ Bratman's, *History of the Voice*, 20.



Figure 2 Audience Interaction

cents by expressing their views on current issues (ranging from marijuana legislation to homophobia) through spoken-word poetry. In an interview, he explained that they chose "to go into the digital habitat rather than trying to reach people through events alone," in order to attract a youth audience.⁸⁸<http://www.guardian.co.tt/entertainment/2013-07-16/not-afraid-to-put-their-voice-2-cents>. Their best-known projects are the Interscol and Verses national slam competitions, held annually as part of the Bocala Lit Festival (Verses was recently renamed the First Citizens National Poetry Slam). The two different slams-Interscol features high school teams, and Verses features prominent poets who compete individually-reflect their mentorship structure. The 2013 winner of the Interscol slam, Michael Logie, got to pick a 2 Cents Movement poet as a mentor to work with him for a year to help him develop his poetry.⁸⁹<http://www.guardian.co.tt/lifestyle/2013-04-01/logie-picks-schools-spoken-word-interscol>. The 2 Cents Movement has also collaborated with the Trinidad and Tobago Radio Network on the Free Speech Project, where young artists recite their poems weekly on the radio. These poems are also

⁸⁸ Quoted in Bocala-Lee Dixon, "Not afraid to put in their '2 cents,'" *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, 16 July 2013.

⁸⁹ "Logie Picks Schools Spoken Word Interscol," *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, 1 April 2013.

PRODUCED AS VIDEOS AND ARCHIVED ON THE NETWORK'S YouTube channel. The majority of the movement's activities are coordinated and advertised online, and major events like the slam contests can be live-streamed. They exist solely through freely accessible sites and do not have their own server or domain name, which suggests that a lack of resources does not need to be an obstacle to building an online presence for Caribbean poetry. In addition to reaching youth in Trinidad and Tobago, they have gained an international following by circulating their poetry on social media.

Their Twitter and Facebook updates for their 2014-2015 Courts Social Speak Out Tour of more than fifty secondary schools demonstrated their use of these platforms to enhance audience interaction. During this tour, some of the nation's best performance poets mentored high school students as they wrote and performed their own works through performances and workshops. These school visits provided a way for The 2 Courts Movement to promote the Intercol slam competition. Photo live-tweets of their tour performances often focused on the students actively participating in the audience rather than on the poet performing. In these shots, the camera points at the audience, often catching only the performer's back or the corner of her shoulder.²⁴

The online viewer gets to stare out at the auditorium filled with students, which allows her to occupy the performer's gaze but also view a student's face as a mirror, inviting her to identify with both the performer and the audience. This resonates on the pedagogy offered during the tour, where the poets' performances provide students with a model for their own poetry aspirations. Visually, Twitter and Facebook followers become situated in the continuum of total expression-in the reciprocal exchange between performer and audience.

High school students who attended a 2 Courts Movement performance at their own school could then follow them on Twitter and Facebook and connect these images to their own participation in the live event. The photos (and the movement as a whole) downplay individual author celebrity in favor of building a student-focused collectivity. The 2 Courts Movement uses Twitter and Facebook to create "a constancy of presence" to link together different high school communities in Trinidad and Tobago.²⁵

²⁴ See their Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/2CourtsMovement>. See also their individual updates on their Facebook page, where some of their school tour photos are collected. For example, see the album "Five Rivers One - Speak Out Tour 2014 - Day 27": <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10906666736664.107074904.1233>



FIGURE 3 AUDIENCE INTERACTION



FIGURE 4 POET PERFORMANCE

²² ORLANDO GUNNAY, *Twitter: Social Communication in the Twitter Age* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015), 22.

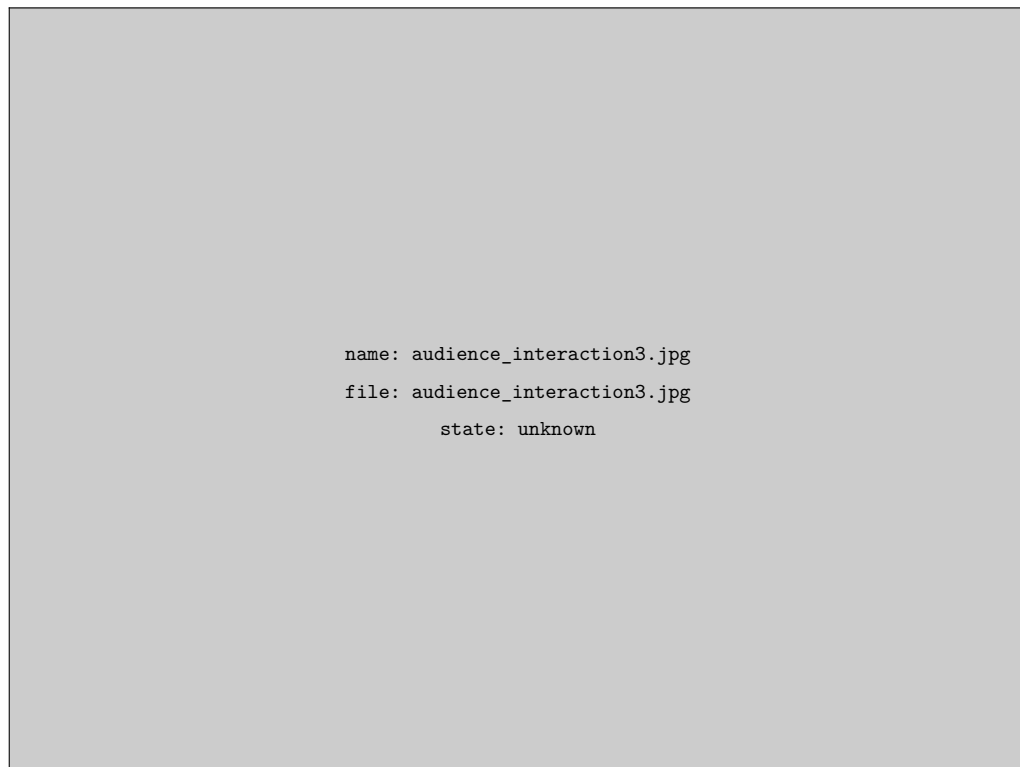


FIGURE 3 Audience interaction

ALTHOUGH THESE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS COVERED BY THE COMMERCIAL NEEDS OF US-BASED MULTINATIONALS CERTAINLY HOLD LIMITATIONS, HISTORIC SCHOLAR KEVIN ADOONIS BROOME STRESSES THE POSSIBILITY FOR SUBVERSIVE ADAPTATION. EXAMINING CARIBBEAN INTERNET USERS' CHATTING, BLOGGING, AND VIDEO-SHARING PRACTICES, HE ILLUSTRATES HOW USERS ADAPT EVERYDAY VERGECULAR PRACTICES TO ASSERT THEIR PRESENCE IN DIGITAL PUBLIC SPACES THAT OFTEN RENDER THEM INVISIBLE. WHILE HIS ARGUMENT RELATES TO INDIVIDUALS' EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS ONLINE RATHER THAN LARGE-SCALE DIGITAL PROJECTS, THE PARALLELS HE ESTABLISHES BETWEEN "A CARIBBEAN DIGITAL INTERACTIVE" AND THE INTERNET AND INSIGHT INTO THE 2 CENTO MOVEMENT'S ADAPTATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO EXPLORE ON THE POWER OF TOTAL EXPRESSION IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS.²⁴ RATHER THAN VIEW CARIBBEAN FOUR CULTURES IN OPPOSITION TO DIGITAL FORMS, BROOME VIEWS THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF BOTH AS PART OF WHAT MAKES THEM COMPATIBLE. HE DEMONSTRATES HOW COMMERCIAL VERGECULAR PRACTICES EASILY TRANSLATE TO AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE THEY EMERGE OUT OF "A HISTORY OF ADAPTABILITY" NECESSARY FOR "THOSE WHO HAVE HAD TO FIND A WAY OR MAKE ONE WHEN NONE SEEMED

²⁴ KEVIN ADOONIS BROOME, *THREE VERGECULAR: HISTORIC, POPULAR CULTURE, AND THE ANGELOPHONE CARIBBEAN* (PITTSBURGH: UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS, 2015), 120.

available.”⁴⁵ For example, in the colonial era, musicians’ invented styles and ornaments to get around the ban on using actual drums and dances to make noise in a colonial environment that aimed to silence them. Corporate social media platforms also contain creative expression through their circumscribed structures. Such restrictions often reinforce the majority voice, yet Facebook and Twitter have also proven themselves useful for the growth of subcultures and movements.

Media scholars have identified how Facebook’s interface encourages users to adopt neoliberal values. The anthropologist Alex Fattal draws a connection between a user’s desire to gain as many likes and friends as possible and Facebook’s corporate desire to become the most dominant social network in the world, characterizing this as “the unspoken logic of accumulation and curiosity that undergirds” the platform.⁴⁶ To what extent can this “logic of accumulation and curiosity,” which sounds eerily similar to older imperial impulses, be disrupted? By using social media to augment their performance events, The a Gents Movement intersects this logic of accumulation by bringing users into the dynamic of total expression. While scholars often criticize Facebook for weakening face-to-face sociality, The a Gents Movement reveals how it can be used to deepen social connections.⁴⁷

Through social media, they also make their performances part of everyday life. People browse Facebook as they ride the bus to work, or as they wait in line at the grocery store. The a Gents Movement often depicts the performance dynamics of such quotidian spaces in their audio-produced video posts available on YouTube. For example, their most popular video poem “Make Man Teaching School Style” (originally titled “Teacher’s Song”), by Crystal Greene, takes place on a Chicago street and on a bus. Greene addresses her concerns about LGBT allies generally preying on underage schoolgirls by writing a poem in the voice of a teenage girl who refuses their advances. Similar to earlier women poets like Alice Lou and Jean “Binta” Breeze, she uses the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁴⁶ Alex Fattal, “Facebook: Corporate Masters, a Million Users, and the Geopolitics of the ‘Social Graph,’” *Anthropological Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2010): 601. See also Anna Carson, “Go-Friend My Heart: Facebook, Promiscuity, and Neoliberalism in a Neoliberal Age,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2010): 667-91.

⁴⁷ For a critique of Facebook as a community building force, see Jon Haidich, *Facebook Democracy: The Architecture of Disclosure and the Threat to Public Life* (Middletown, Ohio, UK: Algorite, 2012).

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE TO GIVE VOICE TO WOMEN WHO ARE DENIED RESPECT IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE. THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA HER VIDEO BECAME EVEN MORE IMPACTFUL BECAUSE A VIEWER MIGHT BE IN THAT PARTICULAR SOCIAL SPACE AS SHE WATCHES THE POEM AND EVEN BE WITNESSING WHAT GREETE DESCRIBES. THIS RESTORES AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF CARIBBEAN ORAL TRADITIONS, WHERE POEM PERFORMANCES BLEND INTO EVERYDAY PRACTICES RATHER THAN BECOME ISOLATED SPECIAL EVENTS. MISS LOU HAD A SIMILAR AIM IN HER MARKET WOMEN POEMS, YET HER ABILITY TO CONNECT HER AUDIENCE TO HER SETTINGS WAS OFTEN RESTRAINED BY THE ARTIFICIALITY OF THE THEATRE STAGE. BY CREATING A VISIBLE BOND BETWEEN THEIR REAL-LIFE SPORES AND THE MEDIATED VOICES IN THEIR POEMS, THE 2 CENTO MOVEMENT INVITES SPORES TO DO MORE THAN MERELY LIVE THEIR STATUS UPDATES AND CONTINUE SCROLLING.



Figure 3 Embedded video. YouTube url: <https://youtu.be/0AacloP7eM>

IN ADDITION TO MONOLOGUING THEIR PERFORMANCES, THE 2 CENTO MOVEMENT'S VIDEO POEMS, LIKE GREETE'S "CLASS LAD," DEMONSTRATE HOW AUDIOVISUAL RECORDING TECHNOLOGIES CAN BE USED TO ENHANCE THE COMMUNAL DYNAMICS OF TOTAL EXPRESSION. THEIR VIDEOS CHALLENGE THE IDEA THAT POETRY DEPENDS ON PRINT PUBLICATION, SINCE MANY OF THEIR WELL-KNOWN POEMS ARE AVAILABLE ONLY IN THIS FORMAT. BY GETTING US OFF THE PAGE, THEIR VIDEOGRAPHY EXPANDS THE POSSIBILITIES FOR HOW WE MIGHT EDIT AND ARCHIVE PERFORMANCE POETRY. RELEASED IN 2013, GREETE'S VIDEO WENT VIRAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND RECEIVED MORE THAN 35,000 VIEWS ON YOUTUBE.²⁵ HER POEM EXEMPLIFIED THE 2 CENTO

²⁵ CORYNNE GREETE, "CLASS LAD Teaching School Girl," YouTube video, 3:27, posted by The 2 Cento Movement, 25 June 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AacloP7eM>.

Movement's approach, in that she initially attended one of their workshops as a medical student and she is now a leading poet in the movement. She won the 2015 Verses Poetry Slam with her performance of this poem; however, the popular version on The 2 Cento Movement's YouTube channel is a studio recording made by BeatQueen Productions with videography by Demitry. Rather than aim to recreate the experience of the live performance event, the video invites a viewer to feel included in the street scene being depicted. Through their synthesis of the dramatic monologue form and the music video genre, Oseete and The 2 Cento Movement team cultivate a sense of audience connection and encourage dialogue beyond the space of the poem.



Figure 7 Class and cast

Oseete dressed in a government school uniform to play her character in the video. Her embodiment of the character created a dialogic relationship between her persona and her words because her recitation critiqued the behavior that she acts out. The dramatic monologue's implied addressee is another high school girl who is quoted by a classmate's advances. The speaker warns her that "these free rides are going to end in horror / trust me / with that nine-month sentence things does go down."⁸⁹ Oseete's

⁸⁹ Oseete, "Class Cast" (hereafter cited in text). Since I transcribed the quotations from a recording, any inaccuracies are mine.

CONVERSATIONAL STYLE, ENHANCED BY THE VIDEO EDITING AND CAMERA ANGLES, ENCOURAGE THE VIEWER TO FEEL AS THOUGH GREETE IS SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO HER. STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET, GREETE BEGINS WITH THE LINES, "FOOTING ON EVERY STREET CORNER / THIS IS THE RESURRECTION OF 'JEAN AND DINAH'... NO FANNIES HERE / ONLY JEAN AND CONDUCTOR." REPERCUSSING MICHAEL BARRON'S CLIPPO AND "JEAN AND DINAH," ABOUT HOW THE PRESENCE OF A WORLD WAR II US ARMY BASE LED TO PROSTITUTION IN TRINIDAD, SHE DRAWS ATTENTION TO HOW GIRLS GETTING FREE AND RIDES FROM JEAN ARE FOR SEXUAL FAVORS RECREATES A SIMILAR DYNAMIC. THROUGH AN INTERGENERATIONAL CALL AND RESPONSE, SHE SITUATES HER POEM IN THE TRINIDADIAN ORAL TRADITION. GREETE'S POEM EXEMPLIFIES HOW THE 1 CENTO MOVEMENT AIMS TO CONSTITUTE A SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS FORM OF LEARNING THAT VALUES VERBALESCULAR LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE.

SIMILAR TO MUSIC VIDEOS, GREETE'S RECITATION ALTERNATES BETWEEN A VOICEOVER AND HER CHARACTER SPEAKING ONSCREEN. BY PLAYING WITH THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN DIEGETIC AND NON-DIEGETIC SOUND, THE EDITING CAPITALIZES ON SOUND'S PERMEABILITY, ENCOURAGING HER VIRTUAL AUDIENCE TO FEEL A CLOSER CONNECTION TO HER WORDS. GREETE'S VOICE EXTENDS BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE VIDEO AND INFILTRATES THE LISTENING SPACE, COLLAPSING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE ONSCREEN PERFORMANCE AND THE AUDIENCE'S EXPERIENCE OF IT, ESPECIALLY IF THEY HADGET TO BE IN A SIMILAR SETTING.

IN THE NARRATIVE THAT UNFOLDS, THE CAMERA ANGLES ASCENTUATE GREETE'S ENCODED PERFORMANCE. WHILE CONVENTIONAL MUSIC VIDEOS OFTEN SEXUALLY OBJECTIFY WOMEN'S BODIES, THE JUMP CUTS BETWEEN MEDIUM SHOTS, MEDIUM LONG SHOTS, AND CLOSE-UPS (OFTEN FROM A SLIGHT LOW ANGLE) EMPHASIZE GREETE'S POWER AS SHE ORCHESTRATES HER CHARACTER'S SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND ENCOURAGES OTHER GIRLS TO DO THE SAME. GREETE'S WORDS COMBINED WITH THE CAMERA WORK CHALLENGE THE MALE GAZE TO CREATE A VIRTUAL SPACE OF FEMALE COMMUNITY. THIS REACHES ITS PEAK WHEN THE SPEAKER SITS IN THE BACK OF THE VAN RECITING HER CRITIQUE AND A REVERSE SHOT DEPICTS THE MALE GAZE GLARING AT HER IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR. HIS GAZE IS LITERALLY REFLECTED BACK AT HIM, WHILE THE SPEAKER VERBALLY REFUSES HIS OBJECTIFICATION. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE VAN, A GIRL FLIRTS WITH ANOTHER MALE GAZE. THROUGHOUT THE POEM, THE SPEAKER SEEMS TO COMPLETELY CONDEMN THIS BEHAVIOR; HOWEVER, THE POEM ENDS WITH A SURPRISE TWIST. AS SHE GETS OUT OF THE MALE GAZE'S VAN, SHE TELLS THE AUDIENCE, "THIS BROWN-SKINNED GYAL / GOING HOME AND INTO ONE CAR," INDICATING THAT HER ADVICE IS BASED ON HER OWN NEGOTIATIONS WITH A MALE GAZE (GREETE). THIS SURPRISE ENDING SUGGS THE SPEAKER'S AUTHORITY (NOT BY SEPARATING HER FROM

her community but by underscoring her participation in it) and encourages schoolchildren watching the poem to trust her advice.

In the live performance of "Black Man Teaching School Girl," Greene's critique of sexual harassment is clearly powerful; however, the video format allows a viewer to experience with greater clarity the associated experience of resisting sexual harassment on the street. For female viewers who went through something similar, the recreation of the scene and its provocative ending deepens their identification with the speaker. Like a choir, Greene speaks for a community of young girls, or rather speaks with them, as her performance encourages them to bring their experiences into their interpretation of the poem.

Unlike many poetry recordings available online, which are taped at live events, The 2 Cento Movement engages technologies as part of the artistic composition of the poem through their studio-produced forms. By borrowing from music videography, they invite us to see performance archives as something more expansive than as a place to simply store copies of "original" live events. This move is more beyond what Sterne characterizes as the reproduction with fidelity, which advertisers established early on in sound reproduction history. Sterne reveals how "sound fidelity is a story that we tell ourselves to state separate sonic realities together." It maintains the illusion of "reproduced sound as a mediation of 'live' sound;" however, "the 'medium' does not necessarily mediate, authenticate, create, or extend a preexisting social relation."⁵⁵ Rather than only view an archive as a space to preserve former instances of total expression, we should also view them as an opportunity to encounter new forms of it. Rather than use recording technologies to recover or preserve a lost history of the voice, they can be used to actively construct a history of the voice—to create a sonic reality where new social relations can take shape.

REDESIGNING INTERNET AUDIO ARCHIVES FOR CARIBBEAN POETRY

The 2 Cento Movement's DIY approach to digitizing poetry illustrates that a lot can be accomplished by adapting existing platforms and with limited resources; however, the underrepresentation of Caribbean poetry online will not be solved solely through social media and the "free culture" of the Internet. Merely uploading more poems to YouTube will not be enough to

⁵⁵ Sterne, *The Audio File*, 220, 226, 226.

OVERCOME THE STRUCTURAL BIASSES THAT SILENCE (AND BROWN OUT) CARIBBEAN PERFORMANCE POETRY ONLINE. AS NICK FREEMANER ESTABLISHED, YouTube HAS BECOME "IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC, THE DEFAULT ONLINE MOVING-IMAGE ARCHIVE."¹¹ Yet it lacks many of the defining characteristics of archives that make them valuable, such as a focus on LONG-TERM PRESERVATION AND "STRICTLY CODED LINES OF CONDUCT" THAT HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY DEVELOPED THROUGH ACADEMIC PRACTICE AND INTELLECTUAL DEBATE.¹² THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF CARIBBEAN POETRY IN INTERNET AUDIO ARCHIVES IS ALSO SYMPTOMATIC OF THE GLOBAL DIGITAL DIVIDE, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY ACUTE FOR AFRICA-DESCENDED POPULATIONS.¹³ HOWEVER, GURHAN BERT POINTS OUT THAT "THE FIRST STEP TO THE NOTION OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IS THEREFORE THE FORMATION OF STRATEGIC SPACE. IT IS THIS STRATEGIC SPACE THAT OPENS UP AN AREA AND AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EVOLVING TECHNOLOGIES."¹⁴ TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF "THIS STRATEGIC SPACE," THIS SECTION OF THE ARTICLE EVALUATES THE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY EXISTING INTERNET AUDIO ARCHIVES AND CONSIDERS HOW A CARIBBEAN POETRY COLLECTION COULD BE ORGANIZED TO REALIZE TOTAL EXPRESSION.

A DISCUSSION ABOUT ARCHIVING POETRY RECORDINGS WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT A CONSIDERATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PENNPOD. AS THE LEADING US COLLECTION, IT HAS OFFICELY BECOME THE STANDARD FOR NOW TO CREATE A WEB-BASED POETRY AUDIO ARCHIVE. UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PROFESSORS CHARLES BERNSTEIN AND AL FLETCHER STARTED THE COLLECTION IN 2000 PRIMARILY FOR CLASSROOM USE. IT NOW HOLDS OVER 15,000 POETRY RECORDINGS AVAILABLE FOR FREE STREAMING AND DOWNLOAD. THESE FILES ARE DOWNLOADED ROUGHLY FOUR MILLION TIMES A MONTH.¹⁵<http://www.pennpod.org/pennpod/current/2016-05-20/features/penn's-rich-poetry-legacy>. FOR POETRY, THIS NUMBER IS ASTONISHING WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THE LIMITED PRINT RUNS AND BOOK

¹¹ Nick Freemaner, "The Appearance of Archives," in Peter Gammel and Zeynep Tufekci, eds., *The YouTube Reader* (Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009), 269.

¹² Frank Reuber and Niko Tobias Gasser, "Archiving YouTube: Constituting a Stereo Information Management System," in Gammel and Tufekci, *The YouTube Reader*, 277.

¹³ Matt F. E. Coates, "The New Dark: Black Agency in Stockholm," *Race and History Review* 37 (Fall 2003): 95. For a discussion of the global digital divide, see Peter Moroz, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Gurhan Bert, *The Politics of Caribbean Consciousness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1.

¹⁵ Tanya Barrientos, "Penn's Rich Poetry Legacy," *Penn Current*, 20 May 2016.

cases for contemporary poetry. Although US poets and avant-garde aesthetics tend to predominate, the site includes author pages for some prominent Caribbean poets, including Brathwaite, and A. J. Boucicault-Pierre. They also hold some of the few Bennett recordings available online. The site uses the following archival taxonomies: authors, series, anthologies, collections, groups, and classics, which provide the user with a variety of ways to study a poet's work. The PennSound Manifesto is worth examining because it has set the precedent for subsequent Internet poetry collections. They provide the following criteria for poetry audio: "It must be free and downloadable;" "It must be MP3 or better;" "It must be unique;" "It must be named;" "It must embed bibliographic information in the file;" and "It must be indexed."⁶⁶ <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/manifesto.php>. These criteria have proved successful in terms of encouraging widespread use, particularly on college campuses. They archive each poem individually (rather than entire events), because this makes them easier to find, access, and download, and it allows listeners to create their own playlists. In their own words, they adopt "a consumer-oriented MP3 file exchange approach" for a non-profit library.⁶⁷ By embedding bibliographic information in the file and naming each one, they uphold archival standards and ensure that future researchers will have access to information about the context for the recording, something a social media platform like YouTube does not always provide. Their straightforward interface, which lets users select from an alphabetized list of authors, also erases implicit hierarchies that come from the emphasis on accumulation in social media sites where voices are forced to compete with each other for likes and views.

While Penn Sound's open access model holds a lot of potential for Caribbean performance poetry, their prioritizing of free resources may not be as easy to achieve for Caribbean poetry. An extreme example of this free culture ethos is represented by Kenneth Goldsmith, the founder of UbuWeb, who for awhile maintained a page on the site called the "Hall of Shame," where he would publicly condemn any artist who asked for her work to be removed from the site by writing her name on the wall.⁶⁸ Unlike Goldsmith, PennSound strives to ensure that all of their recordings are "cleared for copyright to be distributed free for

⁶⁶ Charles Bernstein, "PennSound Manifesto," PennSound, 2002.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Anna Taton, *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age* (New York: Platoon, 2014), 151.

noncommercial and educational purposes.”¹⁵ While this democratic and anti-capitalistic approach may seem appealing for Caribbean poetry, in practice it may be more difficult to implement, particularly for poets who view performance as a central part of their artistic production. In the manifesto, Bernstein states that the debates about fair sharing in the music industry do not apply to poetry: “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.”¹⁶ Yet Caribbean poets such as Nofabarruta and Linton Kwesi Johnson built their careers through their affiliation with the reggae recording industry and make money off of their albums. The 2 Cents Movement offers their recordings for free; however, as a group of younger poets, they may be more willing to share their work online to build their reputation.

The subject of copyright and fair use for Caribbean performance poetry is a complex issue, which deserves its own treatment in a separate article. In terms of the current discussion, it offers another example of the persistence of print-centricism in poetry scholarship. The emphasis on free recordings implicitly upholds the idea that the artistic labor of poetry is more worthy of payment when it is print-based. Moreover, it demonstrates how we define poems as texts rather than as performances. The Poetry Foundation’s Code for Best Practices in Fair Use for Poetry underscores this point. A group of poets, editors, and publishers met at the Poetry Foundation’s Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute and collaborated with American University’s Center for Social Media and its Washington College of Law in 2011 to create the code. Although they outline their purpose as “identifying obstacles preventing poetry from coming fully into new media and, where possible, indicating how to remove or mitigate those obstacles,” almost none of their examples involve poetry audio.¹⁷ Yet for Caribbean poets a major stumbling block to “coming fully into new media” is a clear set of fair use practices for performance-based work. In the “Poetry Online” section, their examples pertain to the appearance of text on websites. The document concludes with a section on “Literary Performance;” however, it only addresses

¹⁵ Bernstein, “PenSound Manifesto.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Code for Best Practices in Fair Use for Poetry (Center for Social Media and the Poetry Foundation, 2011), <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/foundation/bestpractices>.

poets who incorporate poems by other artists into their readings. This document becomes completely irrelevant for groups like *The a Genre Movement* who mainly produce text versions of their poems.

This print-centricism also extends to the design of audio collections. I agree with Kate Eichhorn, who argues that most poetry sound archives (both digital and analog) have yet to realize the potential of archiving sound due to "the widely held assumption [in literary studies] that the archive is necessarily a space of writing and, hence, opposed to speech and other performative acts."⁸⁸ Eichhorn proposes that we need "to create a sound archive designed to recover and preserve the embodied, interactive, and present nature of the performed word."⁸⁹ In her assessment, archived poetry recordings too often become "flat and lifeless artifacts."⁹⁰ Although Eichhorn focuses on avant-garde poets, her arguments apply to Caribbean poets who foreground sound as an integral part of the poem's meaning. Such work accessible in an archive designed to distort our text-based conceptions of archival knowledge would undoubtedly lead us more absently into other forms of knowing rather than allow the digital to reconsolidate print paradigms.

One notable exception to the underrepresentation of Anglophone Caribbean poets in Internet audio collections is *The Poetry Archive*, supported by the Arts Council of England. This site features more Caribbean poets than most, because the Caribbean Poetry Project—a group of scholars and poets from the Cambridge University Faculty of Education, the Centre for Commonwealth Education, and the University of the West Indies—collaborated with *The Poetry Archive* to improve access. Out of the poets, twenty-three are from the Caribbean region. While this is not a huge percentage, it is considerably more than most sites, and every Caribbean poet page has sound recordings that can be streamed for free or downloaded for a fee of £60. *The Poetry Archive*, like many Internet audio archives, specializes in classroom resources. They have a special page for teaching Caribbean poetry with a selection of sound recordings and "A Guide to the Language of Caribbean Poetry." The Caribbean Poetry Project's work with *The Poetry Archive* demonstrates how cross-institutional and cross-

⁸⁸ Kate Eichhorn, "Flat Performance, Present Silence: A Poetics of Archiving Sound," *Poetics* 42 (2014): 157.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

Yet analyzing the design of the Poetry Archive audio pages reveals that we need to do more than add voices to existing archives. As Amy Barnaby cautions, for digital recovery projects for writers of color to be successful, we also must "theorize the technological with the same rigor as we theorize the content."¹⁵ If one compares the recording of Linton Kwesi Johnson reciting "Di Great Inconvenientman" on The Poetry Archive with a YouTube recording of him performing it at an outdoor festival in Venezuela in 2006, the total expression feels much more resonant in the YouTube version than on the Poetry Archive site.¹⁶ I make this comparison to illustrate how the design of the Poetry Archive page upstages the improvisatory tone of Johnson's poem about the Brixton Riots, not to demonstrate that the YouTube platform is inherently better at representing total expression. Obviously, the YouTube video allows one to see Johnson's body and facial expressions, which one cannot get from the Poetry Archive audio recording, but it is not as simple as video versus audio. Although the sound quality lacks the clarity of the Poetry Archive recording, the uneven audio levels provide a more authentic experience of what hearing this poem in a large crowd at an outdoor festival would have felt like. The spontaneity of live performances, including sound effects and background noises, becomes part of what Brathwaite characterizes as the "sonority contrasts" of total expression.¹⁷ As Ekehoma points out, "these intruders are precisely what sound technicians often seek to filter out as they prepare recordings for the archive."¹⁸ The Poetry Archive version of "Di Great Inconvenientman" follows the predominant sound-editing style for Internet audio archives. Martin Spinnell describes this style as "the seamless edit," designed to highlight the poet's voice and minimize all other distractions, including the recording scene (whether live or in-studio) and the "material elements of their production."¹⁹ http://www.bbc.com/culture/object/06_spinnell.pdf. Spinnell criticizes poetry sound editing for being too influenced by traditional , questioning why most archived poetry recordings present sound as though it is nonexistent (the seamless, invisible, invisible edit which obscures nothing

¹⁵ Barnaby, "Can Information be Untheorized?"

¹⁶ Linton Kwesi Johnson, "Di Great Inconvenientman," YouTube video, 2:00, posted by Oscar Danilo De Barros, 28 January 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUN6StPwz04>.

¹⁷ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, 46.

¹⁸ Ekehoma, "Poet Performances, Precious Silence," 100.

¹⁹ Martin Spinnell, "Audio Icons: A Poetics of Digital Audio Editing," *Object* 10: *Soundscapes* (2002): 46, *British Papers*, 16 May 2007.

, which interrupts nothing, which is in fact deployed to remove interruption , to remove distraction and to clarify) (26).

In addition to using conventional sound-editing, Johnson's author page follows the standard visual design that can be found on The Poetry Archive as well as other online poetry collections such as PoemSight. His page features an author portrait (rather than a performance action shot), a biography, and links to individual poem tracks. Beneath the poem title and author name, one can click the play button and listen to the recording. The Poetry Archive uses a simple audio player that allows a listener to start, pause, and stop the track. Johnson's author biography explains that his poems on the site were recorded from live performances and come from his CD *AND A CARIBBEAN LOVE*. Despite the claim that "the energy of his live recitals gives the recordings a unique electricity, interspersed with the laughter and applause of audiences around Europe," the seamless editing of "On Great Inconsequence" allows one to listen to Johnson's entire recitation before realizing that it is a live performance.⁸⁸ <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/anton-linton-johnson>. Once the poem ends, the only audible audience noises are a cough and polite applause that slowly fades out. Rather than convey "a unique electricity," the cough suggests a muted audience who tried to remain silent until the end of the performance. The page provides no information about the specifics of the event or who the European audience was, although it seems like it might be a poetry reading in an academic setting. The track certainly holds no trace of a communal "one consciousness."⁸⁹ By not clearly identifying the track as a single performance, the archive presents it as the authoritative audio version. In the left-hand margin, under the heading "About the Poem," it lists the themes as "social, current, race, and Caribbean" but provides no information about the Britain Notes.

Derek Furr notes that while online poetry collections devote attention to different aesthetics, what unites them is the idea that hearing a poet voice her own work is crucial to understanding the poem. Yet despite the interest in vocalization, collections tend to downplay the setting of the poet's performance by providing little information about when and where the reading occurred and why this particular event was recorded.⁹⁰ While certain sites,

⁸⁸ Anton Linton Johnson Author Page, The Poetry Archive, accessed 25 July 2016.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Jones, "In English We Speak," 25.

⁹⁰ Derek Furr, *Recorded Poetry and Poetic Reception from Sound Study to the Circles of Robert Lowell* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 5.

such as PennSound, make sure that all of the bibliographic info is embedded in the single file with accurate metadata, often all that this provides is the date and physical location of the reading. By divorcing the poem from its contextual setting, this approach erases the reciprocal relationship between the poet and her audience. Penn proposes that poetry recordings (both live and in-studio) become valuable because "when we close listen, we hear not only the sounds of the poem and the poet's voicing of them, but also the echoes of previous scenes of reading and listening."⁵⁵ Pennon heritage design and sound editing, *The Poetry Archive* emulates the previous audiences of "O! Great Inconceivable" so that the online user feels as though she is the only person in the audience. While *The 2 Cents Movement* illustrates how cinematic approaches can be used to deepen total expression, the Johnson example illustrates the value of preserving the ephemeral qualities of a live performance in a recording to enrich the listening experience. Penn borrows Charles Bernstein's term close listening to characterize how a user should engage with audio recordings. Based on his experience with PennSound Bernstein proposes close listening as an alternative to close reading, where one prioritizes the materiality of sound and the actual experience.⁵⁶ Yet, in practice, how much does close listening actually deviate from close reading on Internet audio archives?

Anne Murray and Jared Werschke, curators of *SpokenWeb*, a collection of recordings of a Montreal poetry reading series from 1966 to 1977, point out that while most Internet audio archives make listening the focus, their structure makes them multimodal. Accordingly, they stress that the visual elements of online poetry archives need careful consideration. They explore "what kinds of site navigation, audio visualization, design elements and functionalities could be offered by a Web-based spoken word interface, and how these might enhance the listening process and, ultimately, the scholarly endeavor."⁵⁷ <http://spokenweb.org/old/index.php/en/article/view/666/6107>. Because very little scholarship exists on how people engage with soundscapes, they acknowledge that their suggestions for "a sound archive 'recipe' that other cultural heritage institutions can follow" are based

⁵⁵ Penn, 100.

⁵⁶ See Bernstein, *Close Listening*, 3-26.

⁵⁷ Anne Murray and Jared Werschke, "Looking at Archival Sound: Enhancing the Listening Experience in a Spoken Word Archive," *First Monday* 17, no. 3 (2012).

than a communal experience."⁵⁵ Sound reproduction technologies have also encouraged our hearing to become more individualistic. Using headphones as his example, Sterne argues that such devices encourage listening to be "more orientated toward constructs of private space and private property," which encourages "sound to become a commodity."⁵⁶

In contrast, *The 2 Cents Movement* recreates the communal experience of listening to a poem, which is a key part of total expression. Their photo texts and poetry videos make online readers a part of their participatory audience. We have much more to do to figure out how to build Internet audio archives that recreate this communal experience of listening. Everything—including sound editing, interface, database design, navigation system and copyright issues—needs careful consideration to realize the digital potential of total expression. To embark on this work, it is crucial that we turn to the poets themselves and build on their education legacies.

No such of the history of the voice has already been lost, or noted, by the ongoing colonial bias toward nation language, as well as limited resources and funding. Caribbean poetry recordings that survive buried in dusty boxes in attics and library storage rooms sit silently waiting for new audiences to return to them "the noise and sounds that the names make."⁵⁷ Since these reel-to-reel tapes, cassettes, eight-tracks, CDs, and LPs are fragile media, threatened by technological obsolescence and (sometimes) the tropical Caribbean climate, we must make digitizing this vital record of Caribbean poetry history a priority.

⁵⁵ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, 16.

⁵⁶ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 21.

⁵⁷ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, 16–19.

