

Cultures, Chance, Electroacoustic
Spaces: Exploring performance
aspects of Cage's _____,
_____ CIRCUS ON _____.

Jean Penny & Andrew Blackburn



- Performance as process: The Cagean performance
- Articulating spaces of performance as
heterotopias

CAGEAN PERFORMANCE

- ▶ a space of possibility
- ▶ a process of continual experimentation
- ▶ an unpredictable and self-transforming experience
- ▶ an encounter that allows things to emerge
- ▶ a place of multiplicities and juxtapositions

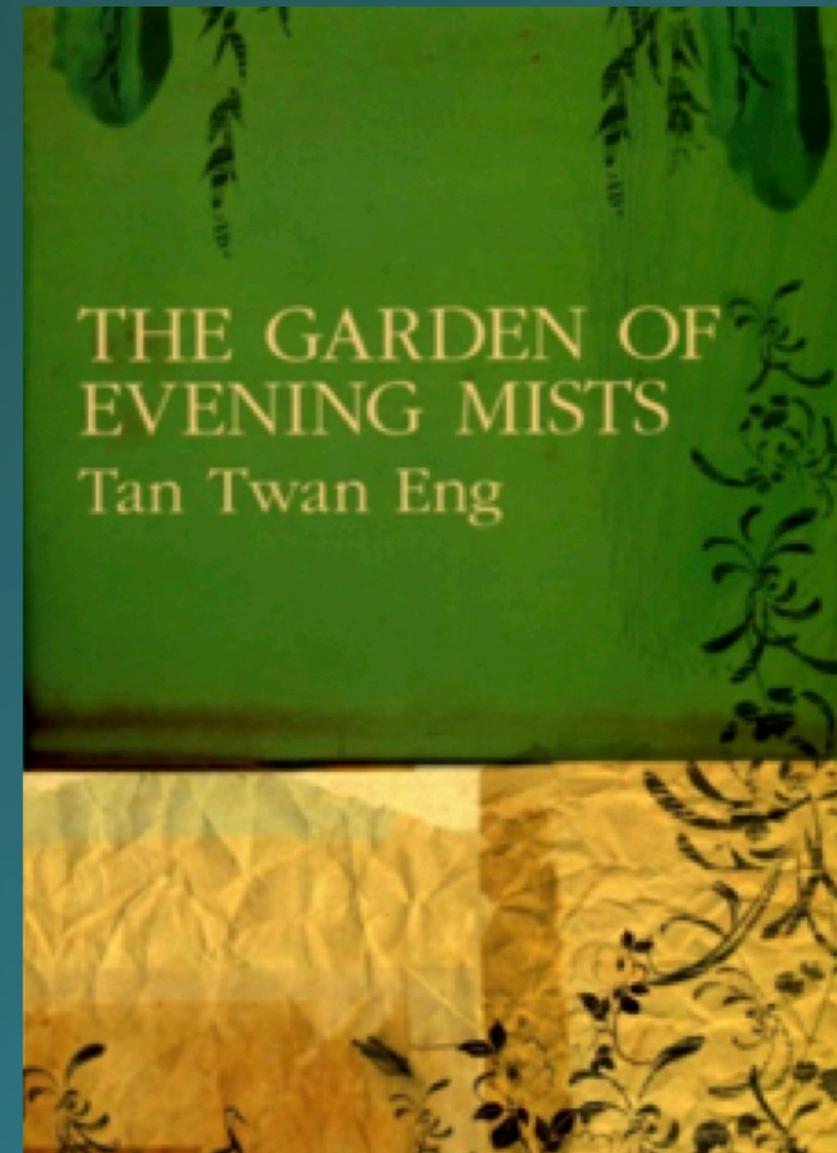
THE SCORE (SUMMARY)

- ▶ 1. Choose a book
- ▶ 2. Write a series of mesostics based on the title of the book...
- ▶ 3. Make a list of places mentioned in the book
- ▶ 4. Make a list of sounds mentioned in the book
- ▶ 5. Collect as many recordings as possible...
- ▶ 6. Using recordings...make a chance determined total program...
- ▶ 7. Reduce collection to single multitrack tape; combine recorded and live performances in any combination

Memento Memori: A Malaysian Circus on The Garden of Evening Mists

[A novel by Tan Twan Eng]

- ▶ Book
- ▶ Composition
- ▶ Performances
 - ▶ Cage 101 Conference, Tanjong Malim, Malaysia (August 2013)
 - ▶ Melbourne (May 2018)



SOUNDS

“The call to prayer unwound from the minarets of the Jamek Mosque across the river to echo through the city.” (p.16)

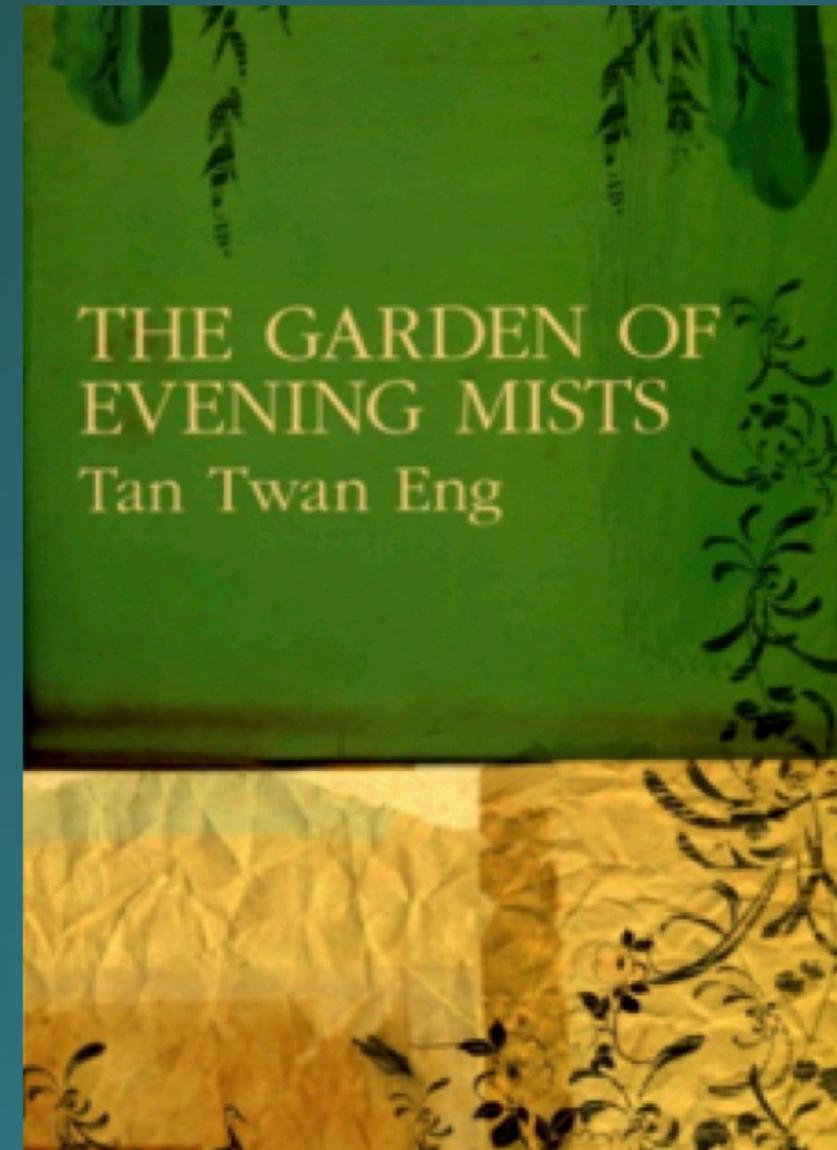
“A frog croaked. A few other frogs took up the call and then more still until the air and earth vibrated with a thousand gargles”. (p.20)

“Insects ground out metallic, clicking sounds. The cicadas wove a mesh of noise over everything. Bird calls hammered sharp, shiny nails into the air...” (p.81)

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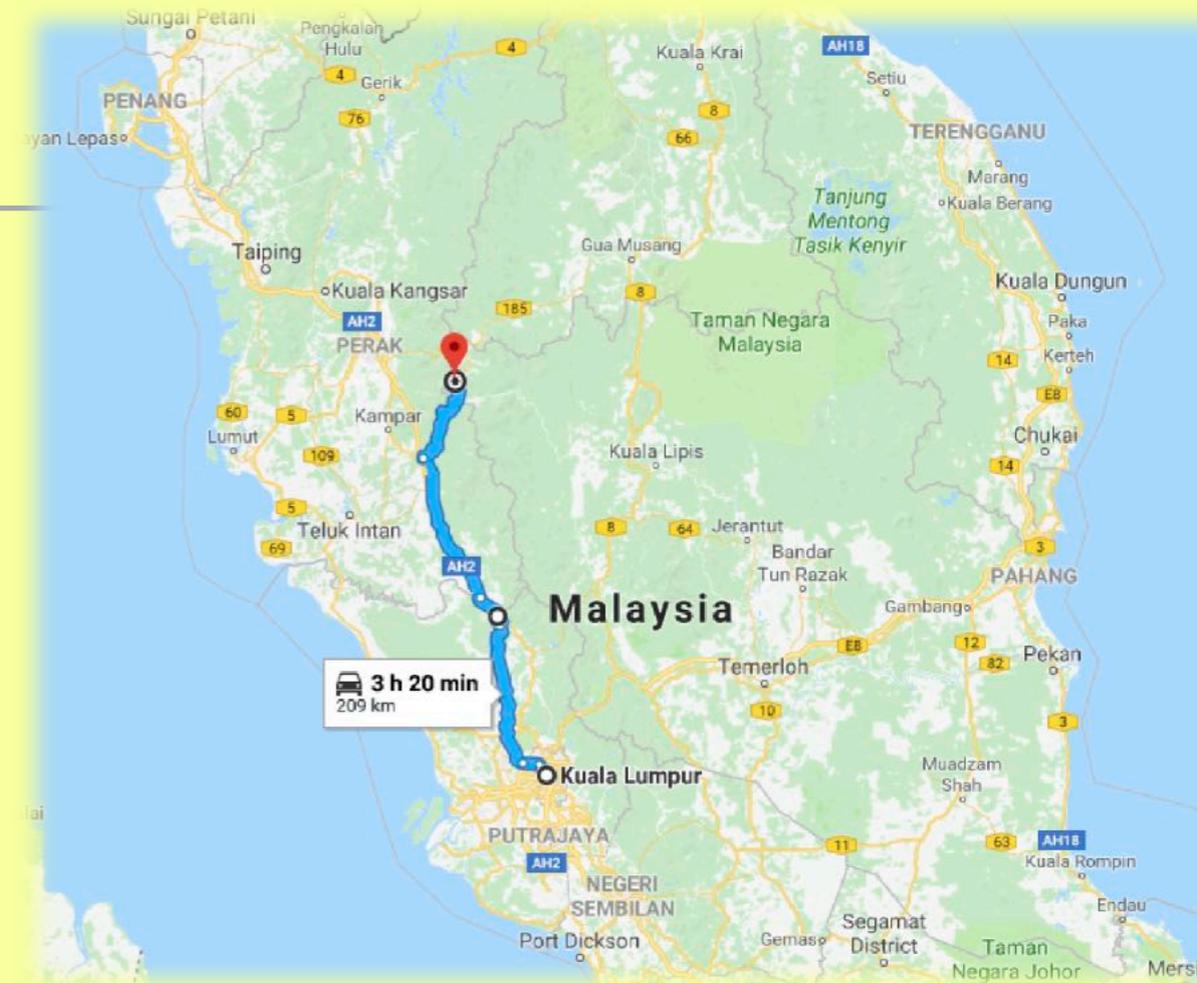
MEMENTO MEMORI PROCESSES

- ▶ **correspondences**
- ▶ **gathering of materials**
- ▶ **devising the mesostics**
- ▶ **construction of composition**
- ▶ **construction of performance 1 - live musicians (traditional Malaysian and Western), narrators, dancers**
- ▶ **construction of performance 2 - live musicians, narrators**
- ▶ **continuum of experimentation**



GATHERING THE MATERIALS

- ▶ Images and environmental sound recordings from Peninsular Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Tanah Rata, Titiwangsa Mountain Range, Cameron Highlands, Tanjong Malim, Muzik Fakulti, indigenous Orang Asli musicians)



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sTains	palleT	To
sikH	tHough	Hanging
mE	hE	positionEd
enGlish	anGin	tiGhtened
recAlled	cAmps	regAined
fRom	moRe	Rites
haD	Difficult	beaDs
hE	kEep	twinEd
sleNder	caN	arouNd
fOrties	yOu	Of
oF	For	From
thE	mE	thE
inVariably	moVing	paVilion
askEd	soundlEssly	havE
questioN	carNage	beeN
dIscovered	hIdeyoshi	dellghted
beeN	aNd	heroN
chanGi	breathinG	wiNgS
Malaya	froM	theM
In	evenIng	echoIng
hideyoShi	guardS	treeS
goT	flighT	waTer
hiS	Steps	bird'S

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PERFORMANCE AS PROCESS

CONSTRUCTING PERFORMANCE 1



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PERFORMANCE AS PROCESS

CONSTRUCTING PERFORMANCE 2

*Repeated performances are not to be reproduced, but re-enacted in continual variation ...
All performances are different...a fresh experience*

► La Mama Courthouse, Melbourne



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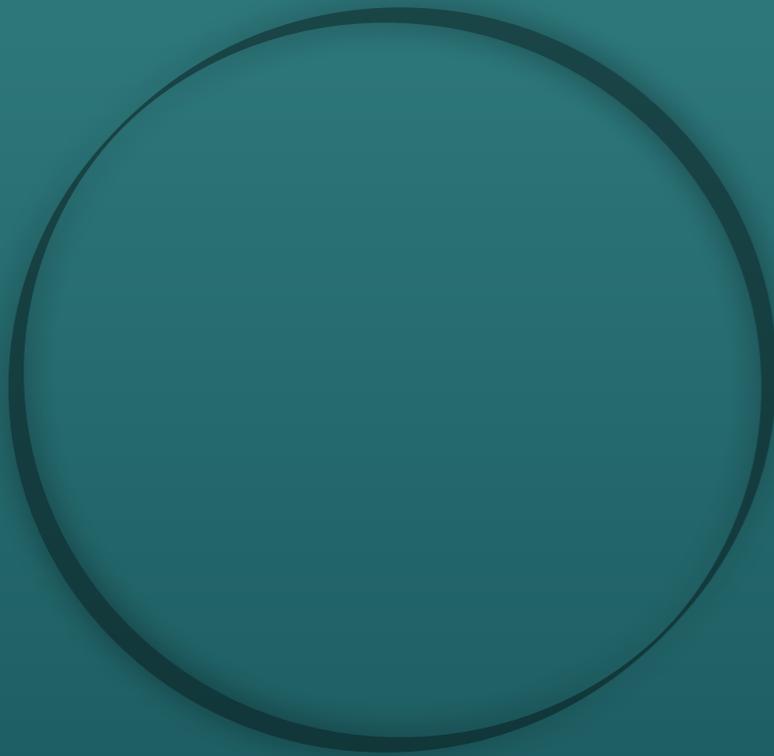
Continuum of Experimentation

Cage: "the performance will have '... untested ideas' and the music will by adherence to the score itself be 'not yet established or finalized'"

FOUCAULT'S HETEROTOPIAN PRINCIPLES

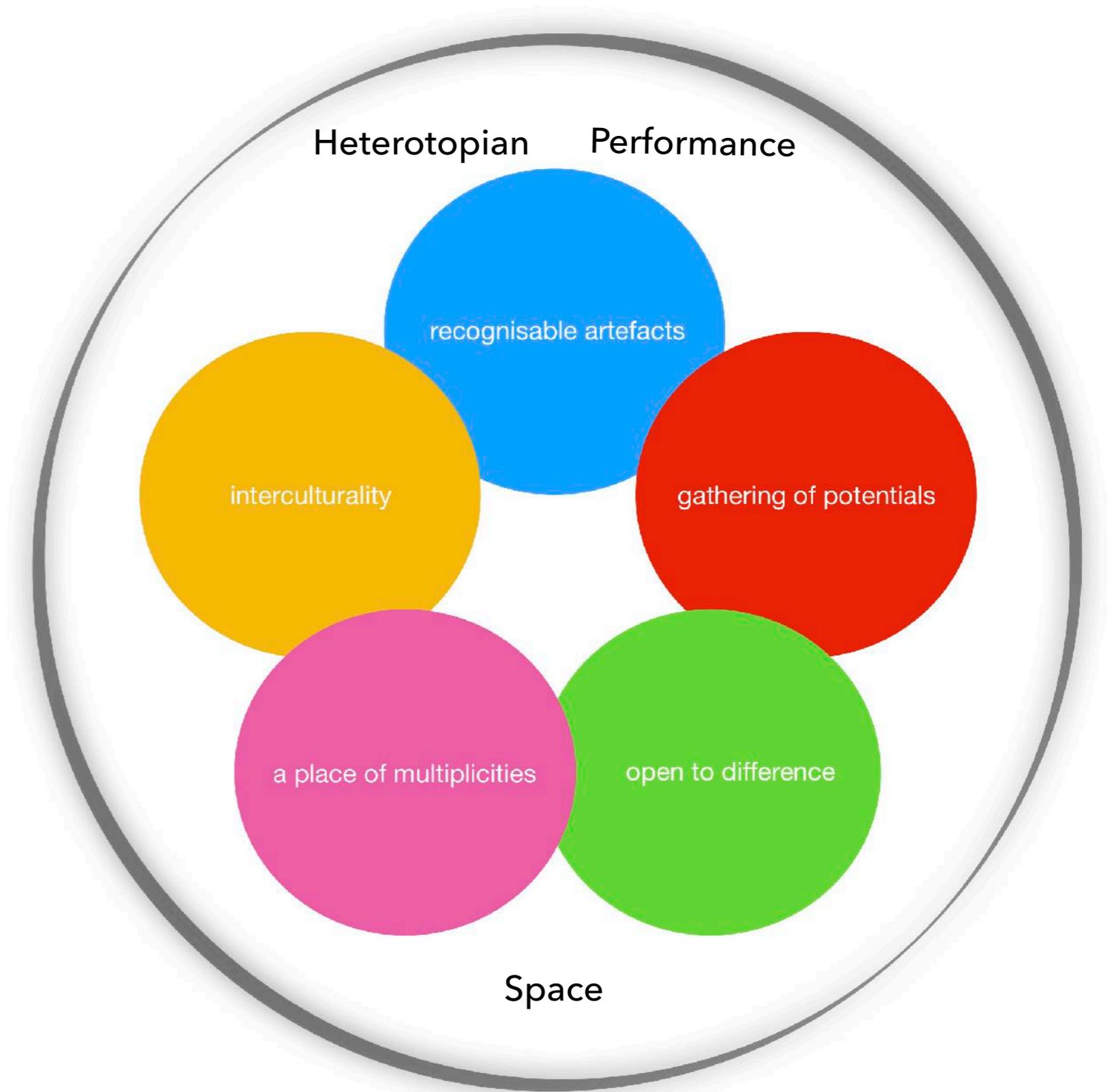
Connections to

- ▶ real places
- ▶ in all cultures and societies
- ▶ juxtapositions of spaces
- ▶ linked to time
- ▶ a system of opening/closing
- ▶ functional/illusory space



CULTURES, INHERENT INTERCULTURALITY

Foucault: “each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.” (1967/84)



JUXTAPOSITIONS

- ▶ Juxtaposed Spaces in Memento Memori:
 - ▶ actual space: performance space, sonic presence and spatialisation, performer's presence)
 - ▶ literary space: text, mesostics, multiplicity of voices
 - ▶ enclosed space: belonging to participants, and the collaborations between active partners - the interactivity and negotiations)
 - ▶ open space: audience, responders, informers, and contributors
 - ▶ cultural space: artefacts, expectations, interactions
 - ▶ mediated space: the flexible, multi-layered, and transformed space, electroacoustic space, new experience/thought space

OPENING, CLOSING

To get in, one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures (Foucault 1967/84)

- ▶ performance: continual flux of in and out, encounters...
- ▶ open: to difference, unpredictability, risk taking, chance
- ▶ audience: acceptance and understandings
- ▶ closing: misunderstanding and ambiguity

FUNCTIONAL, ILLUSORY: ELECTROACOUSTIC PERFORMANCE SPACE

The last trait of heterotopias is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory. (Foucault 1967/84)

- ▶ Reimagined spaces
- ▶ Multiple heterotopias
- ▶ Sonic realities and illusions

CLOSE



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THANK YOU!



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