

Postmodernism, narrativity, and the art of memory

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This article explores an important difference between modernist and postmodernist music, specifically in the role played by memory and contemplation of the past. It analyses Pierre Boulez's recent revision of his song cycle, *Le Visage Nuptial*, with regard to the role of influence anxiety and juxtaposes to this analysis a discussion of postmodernist approaches to music of the past. Then, examining some recent music of John Cage and Pauline Oliveros, the article proposes a new aesthetic in some ways postmodernist, in some ways moving beyond the modernist-postmodernist dialectic. This involves the emancipation of memory, the interpenetration of non-aesthetic with aesthetic domains, and the exploration of connections the listener may come to understand through memory. To explain the relationship between perception and thought in these works, it discusses these works in terms of new kinds of narrativity. The notion of a memory palace serves as a model for understanding their open, non-traditional kind of structure in whose construction the listener plays an important role.

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KEY NAMES Pierre Boulez, John Cage, Pauline Oliveros

In Saburo Teshigawara's "Blue Meteorite [Aoi Inseki]", a man is caught between, on the right, an enormous wall of large glass panes representing the past and, on the left, a sheet of blue suggesting the future. His dilemma, as the Japanese dance company Karas presented it at the Los Angeles Festival in September 1990, is not unlike our own. "Standing before the huge present time, what can I do?" writes the choreographer and soloist, "I dance . . . Dancing is the present, come out and go away in each moment. The eternal present, that's my sense of time - sense of beauty."

Is this "white dance," "pure dance," one which formulates "a bold new vocabulary for the human body," as European critics have described it and the company markets itself? By citing such descriptions in his program note, Teshigawara places himself squarely in the modernist tradition. He seeks to "exponentially increase the possibilities for choreographic expression." The production itself, however, tells another story.

In front of the seductive blue screen on the left, as distant and illusive as the azur of a French symbolist poem, lies a field of broken glass three or four feet wide. The first sentence in the poetic program note explains, "The broken pieces of glass which are spread on the stage as shadow of the blue wall represent both crystals of light and fragments of time." As such, these transparent fragments

represent shards of the past, standing guard before the future and demanding reconsideration before one can move forward.

The hour-long work divides into three parts in which the dancer interacts with these symbolic elements. In the first part, he exults in his own presence. Then, moving before and behind the glass wall, flirting with the distance between spirit and body, he engages with each of his three doubles ("five years old, fifteen years old, ninety five years old"). In the second part, he approaches cautiously and then enthusiastically the glass field on the left "where as a white faun he dances." The glass shatters, dancer and audience alike wince. But as if to suggest that reliving the agony of past moments brings its own pleasure, the dancer begins to pick up the pieces and caress them. At the same time, the music modulates from electronically produced background sound to Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*.

When accompanied by Debussy's music, these caressing gestures are not "pure dance;" they recall those of Nijinsky who, at the end of his 1912 choreography for *Faun*, picked up and affectionately fondled a veil one of the nymphs had left behind. As Teshigawara lies down and thrusts his body into the glass pieces, trying to make love to them, the knowledgeable viewer cannot help remembering Nijinsky's similar gesture at the end of his ballet. In the manner of Pina Bausch, the choreographer calls on such references to clarify his meaning. Like the veil, which symbolized Nijinsky's memory of the nymphs, and like the Ballets Russes production of *Faun*, which harked back to ancient Greece, the shards of glass here suggest a past the dancer is desperately trying to hold onto, despite its being in fragments.

Unlike Nijinsky, however, Teshigawara rises after his ecstasy to continue the dance despite the piercing sound of the glass underfoot. In this, the third part of the dance, the dancer returns to center stage. From there, unable or unwilling to face the blue wall of the future, he repeats the same gesture over and over, reaching out and falling down, rising, reaching, and falling again in apparent despair. The work ends where it began.

Much of this work's choreographic vocabulary, its self-consciousness and pretense at autonomy from any specific context, its preoccupation with the past, and its final despair show modernist concerns; however, the dancer's attitude toward time amidst this spatialization of the past, present, and future is somewhat different. Although the choreographer may wish to confront the frontiers of expression, the dancer does not engage with the blue wall of the future. The modernist notion of progress is absent. He is willing to confront his past, to traverse the wasteland of his memory, to make sense of it, to enjoy it. But ultimately he does not escape the present.

The dancer's despair at the end of 'Blue Meteorite' invites us to reexamine our perception of time, not as an abstract Kantian category of knowledge or the flow that leads us into the future, but as an interactive experience involving personal and social meaning. In the postmodern era, as Frederic Jameson (1984, 64) has argued, spatial rather than temporal concerns dominate "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages";¹ interest is focused on the meaning lodged in our experience of the present, even the physical present, more than in our expectations about the future. In musical terms, the challenge this suggests for composers is not one of creating continuity or discontinuity within a work or

a tradition, establishing and fulfilling or subverting goals, but rather one of making or suggesting connections within a synchronic situation.² Despite (or because of) the world of satellite simulcasts, e-mail, conference calls, and growing interdependence among nations, many people feel increasingly isolated from one another. Connections are neither easy nor evident. An important tool for making them is memory. The past is not only something to embrace or reject or something upon which to build in spiraling toward the future; it is also the repository of memory. Whether private or public, intimate or collective, memory is something we all possess. It makes possible communication.

Before the written tradition became dominant, philosophers, rhetoricians, and preachers considered memory a powerful tool for reflecting on the world and turning sense impressions into understanding. In her book *The Art of Memory* (1966, 36, 33),³ Frances Yates examines how this concept evolved over the centuries. Plato believed our memories contain forms of the Ideas, the realities the soul knew before its descent. (For example, we perceive two things as equal because the Idea of equality is innate in us.) Knowledge of the truth consists in remembering, in the recollection of these Ideas. Aristotle went further. From his perspective, constructing images to help us remember is similar to selecting images about which to think; memory makes possible the higher thought processes. To explain reminiscence, or how to navigate through memory, he emphasized two principles, association and order. Using places and images arranged in some order – what was later called a memory palace⁴ – one can effect an artificial memory consisting of mnemonic techniques that improve one's natural memory. Cicero and Augustine expanded on these ideas. The former included memory as one of the five parts of rhetoric, the latter as one of the three powers of the soul, along with understanding and will. In the Renaissance and later, the occult movements turned memory into a science, paving the way for the development of the scientific method.

In the arts, the notion of memory relates closely to that of narrativity. Typically, scholars and critics use this term to refer to that which characterizes narratives. In my article, "Narrative and Narrativity in Music" (Pasler 1989), I argue somewhat differently, following the example of the French semiotician A.J. Greimas. Even anti-narratives and non-narratives⁵ can have narrativity, if this means the presence of some organizing principle, some macrostructure and syntax that permits categorical understanding of a work's configuration and its semantics. Here, in response to recent musical developments, I wish to expand the definition of a work's narrativity to that mutually agreed upon quality, normally preexisting in the culture, that allows the composer to plug into the listener's mind, to engage his or her memory. Of course, this relies on what Lyotard (1984, 21) calls "know-how, knowing how to speak, and knowing how to hear," but it does not necessarily refer exclusively to a macrostructure or specific syntax. As for new narratives with which composers have been experimenting, this more general definition of narrativity permits discussion of multiple kinds of meaning and works that follow the logic of a kaleidoscope. Only those works that try to erase the role of memory, that refuse to mediate between the sounds they produce and any specific meaning, can be called works without narrativity. Because I have already discussed new forms of narrative in recent music, what interests me here are new forms of narrativity. How can composers engage their

listeners, call upon memory, and play with it without necessarily having recourse to overarching forms and syntax? What does it mean to use narrative devices such as story-telling without creating a narrative macrostructure? Answering these questions will help to define an emerging musical aesthetic that is rooted in postmodernism but beginning to go beyond conventional notions of it in important ways.

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It is one of the ironies of modernism that this aesthetic can embrace the ephemeral, the transitory, and the ever-new and at the same time, be persistently preoccupied with tradition and the past. In his new book, *Remaking the past*, Joseph Straus (1990, 2) defines the incorporation and reinterpretation of earlier music as the "mainstream of musical modernism." This practice links neoclassical composers like Stravinsky with progressive ones like Schoenberg. Borrowing from Harold Bloom, Straus speaks of the relationship between these composers and their predecessors as being fraught with the "anxiety of influence." This anxiety arises because all language is always the revision of preexistent language and analogously, "poetry lives always under the shadow of poetry" (Bloom 1976, 4). Poetic strength, as Bloom (1976, 6) defines it, involves the "usurpation" from one's predecessors and the "imposition" of one's own will on their accomplishments. Straus, like Bloom, calls works creative misreadings when composers deliberately appropriate elements associated with their predecessors ranging from specific quotations of certain pitch class sets, textures, or sections of music to triads and conventional forms. They do this to overcome and neutralize these forerunners, or, in Bloom's terms, "to clear imaginative space for themselves" (Bloom 1973, 5). From this perspective, quoting from the past is a way to assert one's own priority, power, and strength. An obsession with the past can reflect an obsession with one's own place in history, and vice-versa.

Like most contemporary theorists, Straus's focus is "musical construction." To illuminate deep structure, he uses pitch-class set theory. The thrust of his argument, however, goes further as he proposes a theory of the strategies composers use to treat borrowed material. Inspired by Bloom's categories of revision, Straus explores the ways composers rework their predecessors' music often to serve different aesthetic intentions, how they compress, fragment, neutralize, immobilize, generalize, and marginalize borrowed elements. It is these strategies, he asserts, more than any specific structures that "define a twentieth century common practice" (p. 17). On one level, Straus thus shares the preoccupations of modernist composers with coherence; but on another he recognizes that many twentieth-century works "are relational events as much as they are self-contained organic entities"⁶ – "our understanding of such pieces will be enriched if we can fully appreciate their clash of conflicting and historically distinct elements" (p. 16).

Boulez's first important work with text, *Le Visage Nuptial* (1946–47; 1951–52; 1988–89), is a good example of this influence anxiety. Boulez began this setting of René Char's love poetry when he was 21. A soprano and an alto are accompanied by a small instrumental ensemble in the 1946–47 version and by a chorus of sopranos and altos and a large orchestra in the 1951–52 one. The vocal writing

encompasses microtones, one between each conventionally notated semitone, and intonations ranging from spoken to sprechstimme to sung. For each of these performance indications, Boulez developed a special notation. Doubtless because of the difficulty of this work, these versions were never recorded.⁷

In the orchestral score published by Heugel in 1959, and especially in the recent revision performed at the Festival d'Automne in Paris on November 17, 1989, one can surmise Boulez's attitude toward his predecessors: make reference in order to overcome and surpass. In many ways, the work is a direct response to his teacher Olivier Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine*, written 1943–44 and first performed on April 21, 1945. In his notes on the 1983 recording,⁸ Messiaen recounts that Boulez was in the audience for the premiere along with virtually every other composer and cultural figure in Paris. The work was so successful that it was performed again almost immediately and 100 times all over the world by 1956. Whether it was the social success that the young Boulez coveted or the power of the aesthetic innovations or both, the work left a mark on Boulez's imagination as he began *Le Visage Nuptial* a year after the Messiaen premiere. As in *Trois Petites Liturgies*, wherein piano and Ondes Martenot play major roles, the first version of *Le Visage Nuptial* features piano and two Ondes Martenot, in addition to percussion, a soprano and an alto. In 1951–1952 Boulez deleted the piano and Ondes Martenot when he revised the work for full orchestra, soloists, and chorus.

In the orchestral version, the most obvious quotations come in the chorus, again one of only women as in the Messiaen work. The presence of a chorus is in itself a reference to the past, the early part of the century when, in response to public taste, composers wrote many large choral works. Echoes not only of Messiaen but also of Messiaen's predecessors, Debussy and Stravinsky, pervade both the 1959 score and the 1989 revision as if Boulez was trying to diffuse the immediate influence of his teacher by reference to the earlier composers.⁹ The chorus' unison singing, for example, recalls not only Messiaen's exclusive use of this technique throughout *Trois Petites Liturgies*, but also the texture of the women's chorus in "Sirènes" from Debussy's *Nocturnes*. But it is one section in the middle of the third poem that makes explicit reference, this time not to Messiaen but to Stravinsky. In it, the man of the poem describes the consummation of his love:

Timbre de la devise matinale, morte-saison de l'étoile précoce,
Je cours au terme de mon cintre, colisée fossoyé.
Assez baisé le crin nubile des céréales:
La cardeuse, l'opinate, nos confins la soumettent.
Assez maudit le havre des simulacres nuptiaux:
Je touche le fond d'un retour compact.¹⁰

Musically Boulez borrows here directly from Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, also the source for certain rhythmic vocabulary and intervallic contours in the first of the *Trois Petites Liturgies*, another work about ritual and love, albeit divine instead of sexual love. Like the Char poetry, *Les Noces*, as Boulez (1986, 351) puts it,¹¹ synthesizes violence and irony. It is almost as if the composer wishes to suggest analogues for the "nuptial images" the man is cursing not only with the reference

to the nuptial preparations in the opening of *Les Noces*, but also with the incorporation of Stravinsky's music, a possible emblem of his own musical preparation of which he may have felt he had had enough.

That which clues the listener into this similarity with the Stravinsky is the descending minor ninth. Boulez uses this interval throughout the song. But when (beginning in m. 141) it is followed by numerous reiterations of the same note as the chorus syllabically declaims the text in changing meters, this "doorbell of morning's motto," itself an image of echo, recalls not Messiaen's use of a similar passage in the bird song played by the piano in the opening of *Trois Petites Liturgies* (m. 6), but rather the augmented octave at two measures before r. n. 2 and what follows in the vocal lines of *Les Noces*, that is, when the bride-to-be laments "poor me, poor me" as her hair is being bound in preparation for the wedding ceremony. The rhythmical relationships of m. 141 in the Boulez also resemble those in the first measure of r.n. 2 of the Stravinsky.¹² So too do many of the ensuing phrases. Compare the examples in Figure 1.

Soprano solo

f

Pauvre, pauv - re d'moi pauvre en - core une fois!

chorus

f p

On tresse on tresse - re la tresse à nas - ta - sie, on tres - se - ra

Example 1. Igor Stravinsky, *Les Noces*, beginning at two measures before rehearsal number 2.

chorus

f sub.

Tim - bre de la de - vi - se ma - ti - na - le

Example 2. Pierre Boulez, *Le Visage nuptial*, Third Movement, mm. 140–141.

chorus

mf

As - sez bri - sé le crin nu - bi - le de cé - ré - a - les

Example 3. Pierre Boulez, *Le Visage Nuptial*, Third Movement, mm. 147–148.

Figure 1

Likewise, the analogous sections both begin with tempo changes and subito forte after a diminuendo at the end of the previous phrase. The soloists in m. 140 of *Le Visage Nuptial* enter in the same range as those in *Les Noces* (but on E flat rather than F sharp); then the sopranos and altos in the chorus continue in both pieces, the only significant difference being in how the soloists and the chorus split the phrase. The responsorial alternation of soloists and chorus, and the chorus' unison singing in this section, also echo those of *Les Noces*.

In the orchestra, Boulez uses extended trills just before and during climaxes as Messiaen does in the second song of *Trois Petites Liturgies* (r.n. 9 to the end); but the texture and sound of these trills, particularly when coupled with tremoli and short ostinati in other parts, recall Debussy's and especially Stravinsky's use of these gestures more than Messiaen's. As the man of the poem encourages himself to go forward in the pursuit of his love, his body trembling, Boulez creates a series of five such musical climaxes, each followed by a dramatic change of tempo, dynamics, and, especially in the piccolos, a drop in register. These mirror the sexual ebbs and flows suggested in the poem. In the first, mm. 48–50, they accompany the chorus shrieking fortissimo on a high E flat as they express the man's hope soon to be realized, "I dream of floating on the shade of her Presence [J'évoque la nage sur l'ombre de sa Présence]." Another section of strident trills and short ostinati at m. 69 accompanies the second climax at m. 71 and the highest notes of the piece as the man tells himself, "Descent, do not change your mind" and then speaks of "lapidated departures." A third climax gathers momentum with the percussion's pulsating triple-sixteenth note patterns and the two measures of trills and tremoli in the full orchestra just before the fortissimo chord in m. 105 as the chorus completes the phrase, "Nativity, guide the unsubmissive, let them find their foundation,/A believable kernel of fresh morrow [Nativité, guidez les insoumis, qu'ils découvrent leur base,/L'amande croyable au lendemain neuf]." This intensity reaches its apex at m. 113. When the piccolos reach again up to the high E flat at m. 148, and as the man is "cursing the haven of nuptial images" in mm. 153–155, Boulez builds his fourth climax with a very Stravinskian block-like texture of trills and tremoli in the winds, xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, harps, and strings. At the same time the singers reiterate the minor ninth borrowed from *Les Noces*, E flat-D, to close this section as it began. (See Figure 2.)

The fifth and final climax of this song begins to build in m. 178 after the man "feels the obscure plantation awakening," and as he utters four parallel phrases in his final drive to "the plateau." Here a similar combination of harp ostinati, string and wind tremoli and trills, as in the beginning of *Petrushka*, accompanies "I will not see your body with its swarms of hunger dry up, cluttered with thorns [Je ne verrai pas tes flancs, ces essaims de faim, se dessécher, s'emplir de ronces]" in mm. 178–180 and "I will not see the approach of buffoons disturb the coming dawn [Je ne verrai pas l'approche des beledins inquiéter le jour renaissant]" in mm. 186–188. In the latter example, there are also three different but overlapping arpeggio ostinati in the second violins *divisi*, like those in r.n. 2 of Debussy's "Sirènes." (See Figure 3.) Tremoli and trills throughout the orchestra, including the percussion, then punctuate the moment the sopranos sing, "Illusions, we have climbed to the plateau [Chimères, nous sommes montés au plateau]" in mm. 195–196. Such quotations of orchestral textures (which do not recur in the last two

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Figure 3 Pierre Boulez, *Le Visage Nuptial*, Third Movement, mm. 186–187.

songs) thus function as musical analogues to the “illusions” which the man embraces, then abandons.

At the end of this poem, with “nothing fierce [having] survived,” the woman is left “breathing [respire],” as if depleted, while the man is “standing erect [se tient debout],” his energy still vital. After a long fermata pause, Boulez likewise reasserts this virility in the last four measures of the song with another rapid crescendo to a tutti fortissimo. It is in the next two songs, however, that he demonstrates the strength of his imaginative power. There he eschews further quotation of Stravinsky in order to experiment with and expand on a radically new treatment of chorus and orchestra inspired by the third part of Messiaen’s *Trois Petites Liturgies*. In the Messiaen work, the chorus alternates between speaking and singing their lines. Addressing God, they sing; describing the “time of man and of the planet” (such as in r.n. 1 and 10) or God present in man (r.n. 3 and 12), they speak. Messiaen reinforces these changes by alternating between triple and duple accompanimental patterns as well as between different material in the piano and celesta. He also reserves the maracas for the spoken lines only, while having the strings provide continuity throughout the piece.

The chorus in the third song of the Boulez work also alternates between the two techniques, although for no apparent reason. In “Evadné” and “Post-Scriptum,” the fourth and fifth songs of *Le Visage Nuptial*, however, Boulez accentuates even more blatantly than Messiaen the juxtapositions that in the third song he had otherwise buried within a continuous texture. For these last songs, he asks that the singers be placed on a different level than that of the orchestra. In the fourth one, which recounts the consummation of their love in the past tense and expresses how their “hunger and restraint were reconciled [Aviditéet contrainte s’étaient réconciliées],” five altos, alternating with five sopranos, dispassionately declaim the entire poem without any determined pitches and in absolutely regular sixteenth notes as in the spoken sections of the Messiaen. When declaimed by the sopranos, the full orchestra accompanies; when declaimed by the altos, silence or minimal percussion accompanies. The percussion is the only element that bridges the sections. In “Post-Scriptum,” the juxtapositions are even more stark, as the man of the poem begins to leave the woman, “I was born at your feet, but you have lost me [A vos pieds je suis né, mais vous m’avez perdu].” The orchestra here consists of only two groups, the percussion and the strings. The strings, playing divisi with up to twelve to sixteen different lines per part, accompany the sung lines; the percussion, the spoken ones.

The last line of the cycle, “Leave me, let me wait unspeaking [Ecartez-vous de moi qui patiente sans bouche],” is very significant. One can imagine Boulez himself thinking such an idea as he finally turns away from his musical predecessors. In his hands, this line becomes a refrain—what was the first and seventh line of the original poem he reiterates again in the middle and at the end of the work, just as Schumann for similar reasons added “Ich grolle nicht” to the middle and end of Heine’s poem in the *Dichterliebe*. Also the recurrence of this line constitutes an occasion for special treatment, a display of Boulez’s creative imagination. In the first appearance, the soloists and altos sing it mezzo piano, dividing its phrases among themselves; in the second, the altos speak it with “half-voice” in the low register; in the third, the soloists and the sopranos sing it

fortissimo and passionately at the same time as the altos simultaneously speak it in a "broken, violent" manner. In the last instance, the five altos utter it "with their breath," "almost without articulation, without any timbre." At this point, pitch and durational changes in the orchestra also nearly freeze. For seven measures, the strings maintain a trill on one chord, pianissimo. The only instruments punctuating the syllables of the almost inaudible chorus at the end of the work are the percussion.

The change in the percussion's function from being part of the orchestral texture in the first three poems to becoming the sole accompaniment to the voice in parts of the last two poems marks an important development for Boulez. While the singers and orchestra are tainted with purposive references to the past, the percussion represents the exotic, the unusual, and is not used in a way that makes quotation evident.¹³ Boulez's placement of this group center stage but far to the back in the 1989 performance suggests that the composer considered these instruments a central force in his work, but also one still working in the background. In some ways, one might say that the percussion represents Boulez's own voice at the time, still in its formative stage. Like him, they come forward and ask to be treated on equal terms with the more conventional forces, the strings and the voices. Viewed from this perspective, the work not only reflects a composer trying to come to terms with the music of his predecessors (which he did by incorporating some of their most original vocal, instrumental, and rhythmic innovations and then leaving them aside); but, more important, it also shows him beginning to "clear imaginative space" for the expression of his own individuality and the assertion of his own historical importance.

The end of *Le Visage Nuptial* suggests another latent message as well. This comes from the gender connotations that become associated with the voices and percussion. Here gender refers not only to the sexuality of the man and woman of the poem, but also to the masculine and feminine forces, including their manifestations within the composer himself.¹⁴ Boulez may not have intended this association, even though, as Joan Peyser (1976, 33) points out, he began the work in the midst of a passionate love affair. Nevertheless, the score supports two observations.

First, as the altos and the percussion eventually take over in the last two songs, it seems that Boulez associates the male of the poem with them. Throughout these songs, Boulez treats the sopranos and altos in increasingly different ways. In "Evadné," they never sing together but rather alternate groups of lines. The sopranos declaim much longer ones than the altos, but the altos begin and end the song. In "Post-Scriptum," the altos become more important than the sopranos. Boulez makes this point by changing which group initiates phrases. Whereas the soprano soloist begins the opening refrain, followed by the five altos and then the alto soloist, the alto soloist enters first when the refrain returns in mm. 37–40, the midpoint of this song. Afterwards, it is the five sopranos and soprano soloist who complete the phrase. In the end, only the alto soloist and alto chorus deliver the text, the soprano soloist having dropped out after m. 50 and the soprano chorus after m. 55. The association of the sopranos with the woman and the altos with the man begins at the end of the third poem, when the soprano sings of the "woman breathing" and the alto of the "man standing erect," and culminates in the last one when Boulez asks the altos to sing in a "low tessitura" (mm. 18–25).

and a "violent" manner (mm. 37–46). The altos, moreover, are uniquely responsible for the repetitions of the man's refrain, "Leave me," that Boulez adds to the poem and the only spoken lines in the last song.

If one can assume that in this piece Boulez intends the male to control the tempo of the love-making, the way he uses the percussion also suggests an association of these instruments with the male. In the third song, where its role is greatest, the percussion provides a rhythmical breathing, alternating measures of activity with those of total silence, as the sexual tension being described builds before and during each of the five climaxes. For example, from m. 32 to the first climax at mm. 48–50, the pattern of alternation is at intervals of approximately one measure percussion/one measure of silence, then two of both, and finally three measures of both. Later the two may alternate as rapidly as within measures or almost every measure for extended periods, such as from mm. 160–176.

In the last two poems, the percussion gradually goes hand in hand with the altos. Only in the beginning of the fourth poem are the altos accompanied by more than bare silence or minimal percussion. By contrast, all the long sections of the sopranos' declamation have the accompaniment of the full orchestra. In the fifth song, the percussion plays only when the altos speak the refrain, echoing the association Messiaen built in the last part of *Trois Petites Liturgies* between spoken verses, percussion, and the "time of man." The sole presence of the altos and the percussion at the end of the work thus not only asserts Boulez's triumph over the traditional orchestral and choral forces esteemed by his predecessors, but, when read as representing male forces, it also hints at notions of conquest and male superiority.

Second, one can read Boulez's reduction of the female voices to rhythmic breathing in the final measures of the work as a determination to control and even conquer the beauty of the female voices, perhaps the feminine force itself, as the man of the poem conquers the woman. In several instances earlier in the work, Boulez makes it clear he intends to control not only the notes and how the singers produce pitches and timbres, but also when they breathe. In the middle of the third poem's first climax (m. 49), for example, he instructs the singers not to breathe in the middle of the phrases where certain rests are indicated. The importance he attaches to breathing may derive from the final line of the third poem that heralds and in some ways explains the work's musical conclusion. Just as the man of the poem has the woman in a submissive state, only "breathing," her energy consumed by the end of this poem, so too Boulez leaves the women singers in the work's final measures "almost inarticulate," "without the slightest timbre," their vocal power reduced to a "whisper." When Char writes, "Here is the dead sand, here is the body saved," it is arguably Boulez who feels saved, the male forces having prevailed and "the intimate undoing of the irreparable" to follow in future works.

It is no accident that this confrontation with the female/feminine forces parallels Boulez's confrontation with his predecessors. Andreas Huyssen (1986, 53) sees it as a problem characteristic of modernism that people persistently gender as feminine that which they may wish to devalue. In the case of *Le Visage Nuptial*, Boulez treats these two representations of the other as passive forces to be used as he wished and to which he was unwilling to surrender strength.

Especially in the last two songs, he asserts his authority over both by increasingly differentiating and distancing the representations of his own ego from those of the ever-different other. The voice of his own creativity he opposes to those of his predecessors; the percussion alone to the full orchestra, as ultimately represented by the strings; the altos to the sopranos, at the same time as the male and the female forces they come to signify. Both kinds of encounters are characterized by violence, domination, and irony; stated baldly, both end with the submission of the other and the resurrection/triumph of the idealized self.

Le Visage Nuptial launched a challenge for Boulez: how to continue what he initiated in this work? The composer's response, as he describes it (Boulez 1975, 86–87), was to begin exploring instrumentation, about which he soon “became passionate.”¹⁵ In the early 1950s, he wrote many instrumental works, including an unfinished one for percussion, and set two more cycles of Char's poetry. In the second, *Le Marteau sans maître* (1952–54; 1957), Boulez revisited the relationship of voice to ensemble, this time using the vibraphone, xylophone, and percussion in major roles. As Stockhausen's analysis of the *Le Marteau* has shown, (1960, 40–47), the female voice in this work eventually retreats from leading the instruments with her syllabic declamation of the text to becoming part of the instrumental texture, only humming with her mouth closed, uttering no text at all. In the final section of the last piece, the flute takes the musical lead, accompanied by the gong, and the instruments thereby succeed in overcoming the voice. The female human voice, bearer of nostalgic references to the past in *Le Visage Nuptial*, gives way to Boulez's authorial voice, the voice of his own future.¹⁶

What led Boulez to revise *Le Visage Nuptial* in 1989 cannot be fully explained by his confession that he “cannot separate himself from material while it's still alive for him.”¹⁷ Although he has revised many works, his return to this one after nearly a forty-year pause seems to relate to the aesthetic conditions of the late 1980s. In recent years, as sensuous beauty has returned to be a viable aesthetic option, composers in France have shown renewed interest in the female voice, even in bel canto singing. Boulez's return to a work with female chorus should be understood in this context, especially because we now have the women's lines stripped of their original *sprechstimme*.

Its revival, however, goes beyond responding to current public taste; in many ways, it reasserts Boulez's belief in his original achievement, deletes some of Messiaen's influence, and clarifies his message. The revisions alter the character of some of the singing, stripping it of some of its novelty, while enhancing the role of the orchestra. At the end of the third song (m. 211–214), for example, Boulez rewrites what was unison unpitched singing as richly harmonized, slightly contrapuntal lines, thereby eliminating a technique inspired by his predecessors. (He also harmonizes the opening solo of the fifth song and changes some of the vocal lines in this song.) Then in the section citing *Les Noces*, his conducting of the new score overwhelms the voices so that the reference that comes in m. 140 is not audible until its reiteration in m. 147. In the fourth song, he almost completely alters the work, deleting the juxtapositions inspired by *Trois Petites Liturgies*. The singers now modulate their pitch, the alto accompaniment changes from silence or minimal percussion to a full orchestral texture, thereby eliminating the abrupt juxtapositions with the soprano sections characteristic of the 1959 score, and there are interludes between the texted lines. Boulez adds

string and other instrumental parts to the beginning and end and lengthens the opening to mirror the ending; the result is a continuous and more apparently organic form.

Boulez also increases the force and presence of the percussion. The revised third song begins with a huge brass and percussion gesture even before the voices start, radically changing the original opening in which the singers spoke the first line of text unaccompanied. Elsewhere too, when the singers had unaccompanied lines, such as m. 70, Boulez adds percussion. He also reinforces each of the climaxes in this song, adds several measures of interlude between sections (such as after the climax of m. 113), and completes the song with an additional measure of loud, aggressive percussion after the text in m. 210, leaving it difficult for the listener not to grasp his point.¹⁸

I see the work as exemplifying an approach to memory to which Boulez now wishes to draw attention. In a text written on June 27, 1988 (for a special issue on "Memory and Creation" published by *Inharmoniques*, a journal on whose editorial board he sits), Boulez asks, "Memory or amnesia?"

It appears that in the middle of a period burdened with more and more memory, forgetting becomes absolutely urgent. And yet not only do we not forget, but we display all the possible libraries of all the Alexandrias: the reference should take part in the invention, serve as the source of the only innovation still possible. Now that the time of avant-gardes, of exploration, has passed for good, that of perpetual return, of the amalgam and the citation will come. The ideal or imaginary library provides us with an overabundance of models; our only problem is choice and what form to use. (p. 8)¹⁹

Indeed, as Boulez (1988, 8) puts it, "this is all very tiresome, whether it means permanently consulting the cultural library or taking refuge in some intangible period." Then how to forget? What to forget? *Le Visage Nuptial* is one answer to these questions. The work recognizes the existence of history, of predecessors who also wrote for voices and orchestra. (For the premiere of the 1989 revision, Boulez even programmed the work after works by Stravinsky and Messiaen, perhaps so that audiences would have these composers' music in their ears as they listened to his work.) But *Le Visage Nuptial* is not exactly modeled on the past. Boulez uses the voice but eventually disenfranchises it, eliminating its pitch and its character as it disintegrates into breath. The memory such a work embraces is one in which Boulez (1988, 11) continues to find value today: "a deforming, faithless memory that retains from its source what is directly useful and perishable." "Absolute authenticity," is still his credo; no libraries except those "which appear only when he seeks them" or those "on fire that are perpetually reborn from their ashes in an always unpredictable, elusive form."

Boulez may see his refusal to bow to the pressures of contemporary postmodernism as courageous.²⁰ Yet, given what he writes, the composer underestimates the positive role that memory can play in a work. Approached differently, memory may serve a variety of purposes, leading composers to as yet unexplored ways of connecting with their listeners and creating musical meaning. Appealing to a listener's memory is not necessarily a "perpetual return," and for those whose use of memory implies only a return to the past, I question whether their ultimate purpose is not more properly speaking a modernist one, albeit in a new guise.

In his introduction to the essays collected in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, Hal Foster (1983, xii) defines two kinds of postmodernism: a postmodernism of reaction and one of resistance. Although his book concentrates on the latter, his concept of the former is equally enlightening, even when it comes to musical developments in the last two decades:

The postmodernism of reaction is far better known: though not monolithic, it is singular in its repudiation of modernism. This repudiation, voiced most shrilly perhaps by neoconservatives but echoed everywhere, is strategic: as Habermas cogently argues, the neoconservatives sever the cultural from the social, then blame the practices of the one (modernism) for the ills of the other (modernization). With cause and effect thus confounded, "adversary" culture is denounced even as the economic and political status quo is affirmed—indeed, a new "affirmative" culture is proposed. . . . Modernism is reduced to a style . . . and condemned, or excised entirely as a cultural mistake; pre-and post-modernist are then elided, and the humanist tradition preserved.

In music, we all know about the nostalgia that has gripped composers in recent years, resulting in neo-romantic works, a festival dedicated to presenting such works at New York's Lincoln Center, the sudden popularity of writing operas and symphonies again, of construing one's ideas in tonal terms. Whether composers believe they are recovering musical "truth" or not, the time of "terminal prestige"²¹ and aesthetic distancing is ending: many of those returning to romantic sentiment, narrative curve, or simple melody wish to entice audiences back to the concert hall. To the extent that these developments are a true "about face,"²² they represent a postmodernism of reaction, a return to pre-modernist musical thinking. David del Tredici might argue in terms similar to these,²³ but in most cases, the situation is more complicated.

Quotation in a modernist sense, as we have seen, often implies a desire to overcome and surpass one's predecessors through cutting off the borrowed element from its original context and containing it.²⁴ But when the choice is Mahler and Beethoven, as has so often been the case in recent years, something else seems to be going on. In the third movement of his *Sinfonia* (1968), for example, Berio incorporates the scherzo of Mahler's Second Symphony, superimposed with excerpts from Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss, Ravel, Debussy, Webern, and Stockhausen. On the one hand, as Michael Hicks (1982, 209) points out, these quotations serve to illustrate the text Berio sets, Beckett's *The Unnamable*, a story in which the writer "despairs of ever being able to decisively separate himself from [his characters] and becomes a prisoner of his art: he can do nothing but quote." On the other hand, the quotations function in the music and text "as aspects of the total identity of the narrator."²⁵ In other words, the composer sees his predecessors as the various voices of his own memory, or perhaps as invocations of those memories.²⁶

It is with this latter purpose in mind that many composers seem now to be quoting, even those as radical as John Cage and John Zorn. In many of his recent works based on mesostics, Cage incorporates long excerpts from the writings of Satie, Duchamp, and especially Joyce, predecessors with whom he most identifies. Of them, he writes, "It is possible to imagine that the artists whose work we live with constitute not a vocabulary but an alphabet by means of which we spell our lives." (Cage 1983b, 53)²⁷ In much of Zorn's music, the collage of jazz, swing, pop, reggae, film and TV soundtracks, and a recurrent Japanese voice create a

kind of musical microcosm of the composer's sound world.²⁸ As Jon Pareles (1990) writes, Zorn wants to "evoke a present that is choppy and unpredictable, but not amnesiac; there are still memories, and hopes, of pleasure and romance." That audiences come to performances of works built of such musical allusions to the past and present, Hicks (1982, 217) posits, "is evidence of their own search for identity."²⁹

This is not the place for a full-scale analysis of the function of quotation in modernist or postmodernist work. I would like merely to observe that many of those composers now incorporating other people's music tend not to diffuse the power of their sources nor try to subjugate them through distortion or commentary; rather, they seem to accept each source on its own terms, revel in the association with this music, and delight in the coexistence they have tried to create. It is no accident in recent music we hear little of Bach, who, for many modernists, has embodied pure music free of personality. Mahler is in some ways a more ideal model—his music is eclectic, never stylistically pure, and full of musical quotations.

The choice of Beethoven as an even more popular predecessor to quote is particularly suggestive. The heroic spirit and strength of Beethoven has almost universal appeal among classical music audiences.³⁰ Composers may be attracted to this and wish to tap into his musical power. Those like George Rochberg, much of whose Third Quartet sounds like Beethoven (and Mahler), think they are "abandoning the notion of 'originality,' in which the personal style of the artist and his ego are the supreme values."³¹ But are not such works still composer-centered, many of them still power-driven and perhaps promoting heroism of another kind, glory through association? If a postmodernism of reaction has had influence on the musical world, it may be in its encouragement of the romantic hero (often just another version of the modernist hero).

Foster's postmodernism of resistance (1983, xii), by contrast, "is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms, with a critique of origins rather than a return to them. In short, it seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and political affiliations." Susan McClary (1988) puts in this camp some minimalist composers, Philip Glass more than Steve Reich or John Adams (another composer who quotes Beethoven³²), Laurie Anderson, and other "downtown" composers. Their works address the "master narratives" of tonality, narrative structure, Western hegemony, and male dominance, sometimes by making puns or ironic commentary on them, sometimes by deconstructing their inherently contradictory meanings. Unfortunately, as McClary points out, the oppositional stance of this kind of postmodernism has begun to wane, especially as critics find much of it becoming sterile language games.

Both of these postmodernisms imply that presentation is more important than representation, that the subject of a work is less important than how it is treated.³³ The distortion of source material and extreme speed made possible by computer manipulations, possibly expected by a generation raised on television, may indeed contribute to the preeminence of style over subject and the disruption of the signifier's capacity to signify in some computer music. Still, although it may be true in certain literature, I do not see the "death of the subject" taking place in most music, neither for composers nor audiences. To the contrary,

the "subject(s)" of a composition and its "meaning" have in some ways never been more important. I was drawn to contemplating Boulez's *Le Visage Nuptial* after rereading Susan McClary's analysis of Bach's music (McClary 1987) as reflecting the struggle between Bach's need for self-expression and his desire to reconcile various influences. The striking juxtaposition of the singers on both sides of front stage with the percussion in the center back stage dramatized for me their musical differences, one occasionally referencing the past, the other rigorously new and original, and led me to hear the musical relationship between the two as the structural conflict just discussed.

For our understanding of recent music to be complete, however, we cannot confine ourselves to the study of pieces as the embodiment of pure structure, whether specific to that piece or reflecting universal "Ideas." We may be born with certain intuitions about structure and the organization of surface patterns, as Gestalt theorists and contemporary scholars like Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff have suggested. And these may reflect the inherent organization of the mind, giving it the capacity to comprehend large-scale narrativity. Yet even as such generative theories help composers to understand what Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983, 301) refer to as "the facts of hearing," they overshadow other kinds of memory which the composer may call on and the listener may bring to a work. It was my memory of other recent concerts of music written for female voices by Boulez's French contemporaries that colored my hearing of *Le Visage Nuptial* and oriented my understanding of it to begin with.

Postmodernist works of reaction or resistance, like modernist ones, depend on the "experienced" perceiver's knowledge and understanding of the "cultural libraries" to which Boulez refers, the images, gestures, and conventions of the past repertoires being revived and commented on. Increasingly today, I find what might be called another kind of postmodernism arising in music, poetry, and the visual arts, a far less elitist one that dramatically expands the notion of postmodernist as bricoleur. To find it, we must look beyond the concert halls, beyond traditional media and the university, beyond what McClary (1989, 72) calls the "boy's club of modernism."

It is difficult to find one word to describe what from one perspective is a third kind of postmodernism and from another is something that projects beyond the modernist/postmodernist dialectic. What I see emerging involves an emancipation of the realm of memory, what John Cage might have called an "interpenetration" of different domains, and an exploration of what Pauline Oliveros calls "relationships," connections the perceiver may come to understand not primarily within the work itself or through the work's relationship to a precursor work, style, or genre, but rather through his/her own memory. Like other postmodernist aesthetics, this one is based on engaging the listener's participation, often in an interactive process. It also encourages a mirroring effect³⁴ that may lead to greater self-awareness and self-knowledge. The works at issue here, however, are not only texts about other texts; neither is the image they reflect merely the creator's or perceiver's cultural knowledge or cultivated tastes. In response to their sounds, images, words, and gestures, postmodernists with this perspective expect the perceiver to recall experiences, and not only those of an aesthetic nature. Through calling on experiences of all kinds (including the personal and the social) and suggesting links between memories recorded in different,

apparently unrelated categories, their works constitute occasions for us to come to understand the disparate parts of our lives as fundamentally related. In other words, those espousing this new aesthetic, as they enact their priestly function as artists, elicit the magical power of memory not to criticize, educate, or elevate morally, but to empower us to create our own memory palaces. Through the recognition of similar experiences, we can discover our connectedness to others and through the individual shape we each give to these memory palaces, we can find meaning in our lives.

Architecture has been the dominant artform used to discuss postmodernism. In architectural terms, the materials of the memory palaces suggested by this third kind of postmodernism resemble those used by Frank Gehry (oddly ordinary materials such as corrugated metals, raw plywood, chain-link fencing, telephone poles, and cardboard) as opposed to those suggesting historical allusions or playful pretentiousness such as in the works of Robert Venturi or Michael Graves;³⁵ they tend to be common ones filled with signifying potential instead of idealized ones pointing to abstractions. In music, likewise, sampling elements or using sounds that are fun to identify and do not depend on elite knowledge (such as those from daily life) is an easy way to engage listeners. Because they understand these materials with what they already know, listeners can entertain the meaning suggested by the order and interplay of the elements as well as what is stimulated in their own memory. Thus, if Aristotle was right, calling on memory stimulates higher thought processes. Perhaps for this reason, works exemplifying this third postmodernism proceed with sincerity rather than irony, something which distinguishes them from works by postmodernists of resistance.

In many ways, the quintessential postmodern memory palace is not a building, but a certain kind of city.³⁶ David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* begins with a discussion of Jonathan Raban's *Soft City*, a portrayal of London in the 1970s as a labyrinth, an encyclopedia, a theater "where fact and imagination simply *have* to fuse."

For better or worse, [the city] invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live with. You, too. Decide who you are, and the city will again assume a fixed form around you. Decide what it is, and your identity will be revealed, like a map fixed around you by triangulation. . . . The city as we imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics.³⁷

Such a city is not tightly defined, rationally ordered, the result of pre-compositional planning. Los Angeles is the geographer Edward Soja's image of the postmodernist city. To describe it, Soja (1989, 222) uses Borges' image of an aleph, "the only place on earth where all places are—seen from every angle, each standing clear, without confusion or blending." The analogy with an aleph suggests the difficulty of trying to contain the city's globalism, extraordinary heterogeneity, and fragmentation in any one image.

The experience of such a city also resembles that of a postmodernist work. Seemingly limitless in size, constantly in motion, and traversed on crisscrossing freeways, Los Angeles contrasts markedly with more "modernist" cities like midtown Manhattan or Washington, D.C. with their grid layouts. Not that all postmodernist works are episodic, like Los Angeles—"then and then" structures

that are continually in flux—nor all modernist ones, like New York, configurational structures that can be grasped as a whole, at least in the imagination.³⁸ In fact, as I have shown (Pasler 1989, 244–246), many modernist works are nonlinear, episodic anti-narratives. And without necessarily embracing overall narrative structure, postmodern works often incorporate stories, especially those with personal or relative meaning. There tends to be a difference in the perspectives of postmodern and modern works, however, that mirrors the difference in the experiences of these two kinds of cities. Italo Calvino juxtaposes these perspectives in his novel, *Invisible Cities*. Marco Polo, the explorer, recounts his travels from one city to the next as through a maze of ever-changing variety, while Kublai Khan, the emperor who listens, maintains the distance of an all-encompassing gaze and tries to “discern . . . the tracery of a pattern.”³⁹ The postmodernist perspective more closely resembles that of Polo, because the memories evoked by postmodern works are embedded in the perceiver’s ever-changing experiences, not the creator’s control.

In his seminal article, “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” Frederic Jameson pushes this notion further. He uses the idea of people living in cities to explain how our minds might represent “the coordination of existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality.” This he calls “cognitive mapping.” A map is a description of what is perceived to exist, not a diagram of what could or should be.⁴⁰ If modernist work at its most alienating, like the modernist city, is “a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves,” then could not postmodernist work, like “disalienation in the traditional city,” attempt “the practical reconquest of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories” (Jameson 1984, 89–92)? This sounds like a new kind of narrativity and those espousing an aesthetic of emancipation, interpenetration, and relationships try to do just this: they call on us to “cognitively map” our own diverse experiences onto the ensemble of elements which constitutes the work, to create memory palaces therewith, and thereby to imagine an interactive relationship with this apparently “endless, formless ruin” over which Calvino’s Khan despaired, perhaps even to feel a collective identity through it.

Of course, there may not be a perfect embodiment of what I am calling a new aesthetic based on the emancipation of memory, interpenetration, and relationships; nevertheless, the spirit underlying this aesthetic permeates some composers’ works increasingly as memory of all kinds becomes important in the conception of recent music. For years John Cage created artistic situations that invite listeners to bring their own meaning to his works. In his 1988–89 Norton lectures at Harvard (Cage 1990, 338), he describes his work as coming “from ideas but is not about them but somehow brings them [sic] new ideas or other ideas into existence.” By its openness and indeterminacy, he has tried to insure his audience’s participation.

As he grew older, Cage was increasingly interested in memory. He admitted his works are “highly suggestive” and that he “wants[s] that suggestion to oh be in a spirit [he] agree[s] with” (Cage 1990, 16). In the opening of “Composition in

Retrospect" (1981–82), the first "method" mesostic, he writes: My/mEmory/of whaT/ Happened/is nOt/what happeneD//i aM struck/by thE/facT/tHat what happened/is mOre conventional/than what i remembereD." Later, in the section on "Imitation," he continues: "the past must be Invented/the future Must be/revlsed /doing boTh/mAkes/whaT/the present Is/discOverY/Never stops//what ques-tions/will Make the past/allve/in anoTher/wAy." A treatise on his composition, this lecture suggests why memory becomes his "method" in the works that follow, and why the past is the subject of their "imitation." The text of the "devotion" mesostic, which describes a piano teacher who "loves the past" and the "classics she's sO devoted to," explains the tone of reverence and sincerity that permeates his last works (Cage 1983a, 123–24, 145, 147–48).

Cage's goal, as expressed at the end of this lecture, is to bring "the play of intelligent anarChy/into a world Environment/that workS so well everyone lives as he needs."⁴¹ To accomplish this, he adopts certain materials and structure. Complicated chance operations gave him a "discipline" that could "sober and quiet the minD/so that It/iS/in aCcOrd/wIth/what haPpens/the worLd/around It/opeN/rathEr than//closeD."⁴² But besides "noises" and "empty words," he comes to incorporate explicitly signifying materials. These are elements from his own memory in works like "James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet" and standard opera arias in the *Europeras* 1 and 2. The narrative aspects of music which he once underplayed or reduced to those of "Zen stories"—specific references, the voice and rhetorical devices of story-telling, as well as clearly defined beginnings and endings—he begins to engage more overtly.⁴³ With these materials and techniques, Cage entices audiences to bring their own associations to the work's anarchical "play," the sometimes surprising order and manner in which the chance operations place them. There he hopes audiences will experience their coexistence. The result can be an intelligently anarchic memory palace, a "musIrcus/maNy/Things going on/at thE same time/a theatRe of differences together/not a single Plan"⁴⁴ that encourages a certain approach to life.⁴⁵ In the last line of both "Composition in Retrospect" and "James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet," Cage sums up the feeling to which he hopes this process will lead his readers/listeners: "I welcome whatever happenS next."

Even as Cage preached the merits of nonintention, however, "intelligent" control and choice play important roles in determining the final shape of these works. Aiming to communicate a message not only about music but also about the world and its future, he carefully selected and edited the texts that served as source material, especially in the mesostics. Through conscious reiteration and variation of words and ideas, Cage questioned, elicited, played with, and created various musical relationships that mirrored the linguistic, philosophical, political, or cosmic implications of his materials. The result is not just texts that can be read in multiple ways, but compositional shape, a playful shape that communicates both "anarchy" and "accord".⁴⁶

A different and in some ways more representative example of this aesthetic of emancipation, interpenetration, and relationships is the recent work of Pauline Oliveros. To enjoy its playfulness, the audience need not possess specialised knowledge about other artists nor the ability to recognize eighteenth- and nineteenth-century operas. Instead what it expects listeners to start with is

knowledge and experience of the human body. Works like the *Sonic Meditations* and *Deep Listening* pieces invite audiences to listen to and acknowledge all they may hear, beginning with their own breath. They are recipes, catalysts for invention and increased awareness of self and other through the medium of sound.

In her recent work, *DreamHorseSpiel* (1990), she intends "to cue listeners into their own experience"⁴⁷ in a much broader and more socially defined sense than in the meditation pieces. This work consists of a poem, prerecorded short stories, referential sounds and images, and simple tunes. The text began as an image, *Dream Horse*, and was conceived as a Hörspiel [radio play], commissioned by Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln, one of the largest public radio stations in Europe.⁴⁸ To the names of horse-related things ("horseshoe," "saw horse," "sea horse," "horse manure"), she added dreams and experiences about horses she collected from a variety of people speaking and singing in their own languages, including German, French, and Spanish. There are also clichés involving horses, such as "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink" and "proud as a horse," as well as humorous truisms like "ride the horse in the direction it's going!" and "why kick a dead horse?" In performance, she mixed in horse sounds (snorting, drinking water, walking, trotting, chewing).

This work is about memory and the relationship between perception and thought. For the composer, the horse calls to mind the period before the industrial revolution, before machines took its place, before "the change to an information society"; when it was a daily companion, a work animal, as well as a source of food; when his presence was important. The work traces what the horse has left behind in the memories and dreams of the work's listeners. Almost no word, image, or sound is without allusion to something the listener has or could have seen or heard—visual images like "horse face," "horse tail," and "horse lips," experiences like "horse ride" and the film, "They shoot horses, don't they," smells like "horse shit," as well as associated images like "horse carriage," "horse whip," and tunes in different languages like "She'll be riding six white horses when she comes." It is easy to remember and to empathize with what these evoke, as it is with the process of dreaming herein captured, the suspense of storytelling, and the earnest simplemindedness of clichés and children's music. Listening to this work is like performing it; both involve an interactive process, calling on memory and the imagination to respond to the constantly changing material at hand.

What makes this a work consists in the relationships both performers and listeners make of it in real time. In its first performance, the trumpet call (from a prerecorded tape of the beginning of a horse race) recurred again and again, as if to announce new beginnings throughout the work. Many of the horse sounds—trotting, drinking water, etc.—also came back, interspersed in the text. One sequence, for example, consisted of the words, "horse carriage," the sound of horseshoes being thrown, that of horses walking on pavement then rhythmically trotting, and finally the expression, "proud as a horse," that together recall a time and place in which horses played an important role in society. As material was repeated, in complete or only partial segments, it became associated with the images and sounds of its new context. This often resulted in unusual juxtapositions of tone, spirit, and meaning. Evoking sense impressions recorded in memory thus became a way of stimulating thought.

The constant changes, non-hierarchical order of events, and wide variety in modes of communication make one continually reevaluate where one is in such a piece. Yet what creates this effect is not just the materials themselves, but also how the performers approach time and space in the work. Through the use of technology—digital delay, artificial reverberation, etc.—the composer ensures that performers and audiences alike will experience the past, present, and future simultaneously. As soon as sounds are uttered, the performers know they will return transformed by the technology. At any one moment then, what a performer experiences is something very non-linear, that is, what the performer is doing is affected by the past, what there is already, the unexpected return of the past in the present, and the future, the knowledge that whatever one produces will have to interact with whatever comes next.

The work has a regular pulse. Text entries occur every eight seconds, in part to allow the delay processors to affect the sound. This pulse “actually regulates the breathing. The audience will unconsciously begin to breathe more slowly, more deeply,” Oliveros explains. The regular pulse of text entries puts the listener in a constant state of readiness as well as wondering which performer, which speaker, what kind of mode will return next.

The digital delay process also enables the composer to create multiple spaces, to “allow the work to go into or become any space, outdoors or indoors, small, large, cavernous, cathedral, closet.” In other words, by delaying the sound or extending it from a millisecond to eight full seconds, the composer can use the experience of sound to communicate different kinds of space, those associated with the memory of different kinds of places. Sometimes she also uses this technique to replicate the sound of acoustic instruments, aiming to create replicas that make it “very, very difficult to tell which was the original sound and which the delayed sound.” Her ideal is “mirrors,” not being aware of the technology, “getting the reflection instantaneously” and hardly being able to tell the difference between “what you just did and what is coming back to you.” Echo is the key to the form of such works, “as in a Bach invention,” she points out. “The shape comes in the way you use the materials and the sources you’re working with;” “the form [of my music] is more statistical,” “a form of consensus,” or the sense one has of the whole when one has reached the end of the piece.

Pauline Oliveros’ art is one of presence; “experience” has replaced “experiment” as a way of describing what recent avant-garde work like hers has become. “It’s being aware in the moment and being able to reflect upon it, being able to reflect on what has happened rather than theorizing. Dealing with what is,” she points out, rather than setting up a thesis in advance and projecting into the future. If there is a frontier in music, she says “it’s relationships, and collaboration, and an aesthetic arena that is developed in performance.”

Oliveros’ work-in-progress, *Nzinga*, takes the exploration of memory and the process of collaboration one step further. Like Steve Reich in *Different Trains* (1988), commissioned for the Kronos Quartet, Oliveros is exploring the role music can play in stimulating collective memory.⁴⁹ Both incorporate the participation of people from other cultures, whether in taped recordings or live interaction; both use analogy to emphasize cultural differences more than similarities; both are what Reich calls documentaries as well as musical realities. Reich’s point is that his own experience of riding trains back and forth between

New York and Los Angeles from 1939 to 1942 was, though apparently analogous, actually quite different from that of the Jews who traveled across Europe to reach concentration camps during the same period. Recorded personal reminiscences and train sounds provide not only engaging subject matter but also certain speech rhythms that he incorporates into the string quartet melodies. *Nzinga*, a play with music and pageantry by Lone, involves performers, instruments, and prerecorded material, music, ritual, and dance from three cultures—Angola, Portugal, and Salvador (Bahia, Brazil)—all linked by the character of Nzinga Mbandi. She was a seventeenth century androgynous Angolan queen who had to dress as a king to rule and succeeded in holding colonial powers from her country for the forty years of her reign. The Portuguese eventually transported her people to Brazil where they too had to adapt various disguises in order to survive. Forbidden to fight, Angolan slaves developed the kicking games of the Capoeira as disguised forms of self defense. Today people still dance various forms of the Capoeira and sing chants to Nzinga, invoking her protective, redemptive role. The Oliveros work will reflect the three hundred years of cultural interaction. It will use video to break through the past to the present and suggest relationships between the past, present, and future. With the help of local collaborators, Oliveros hopes to premiere the work in Angola, Portugal, and Salvador.

Nzinga is an aesthetic model for intercultural cooperation. Its emphasis on cultural differences rather than similarities comes from Oliveros' belief that different cultural forms are like parts of "a map of human consciousness," with "each one emphasizing a different aspect of this map, or a variation." This work promises to be a stunning example of the cognitive mapping Jameson longs for, an "aesthetic arena" which will mirror a possible relationship between individuals and cultures, ourselves and the world we inhabit. "The fundamental thing is for me to listen," Oliveros points out, "and not go in with my idea of how things have to go." Such an aesthetic is quite different from that of another politically committed composer, Frederic Rzewski, who, in his variations on "The People United Will Never Be Defeated" (1975), maintains his modernist language and virtuoso technique. Moreover it does not take a colonialist approach to the music of other cultures as do recent works by Paul Simon or Jon Hassell's *Fourth World: Possible Music*. Nor is this aesthetic necessarily committed to what Susan McClary might call a space of cultural struggles, even though the spirit of *Nzinga* is one of resistance to conquest. Oliveros explains, "It has to do with inter-dependence, meaning interaction. Not as someone who is controlling the way things are going to go, it is cooperating to make a story or make a presentation. Each performer or collaborator has a stake in it, is aware of one another in a way that it can develop, can happen. There is an enrichment process."

With the promise of such works, it is clear that the "time of avant-gardes, of exploration" has certainly not "passed for good." What has changed is the purpose and locus of exploration. With the slowly increasing acceptance of women in the musical world has come a different message, not one of heroic conquest, but one of cooperation and community. It is no longer the pseudo-scientific search for the fundamentals of the medium that interests many explorers, but inquiry into what makes people connect to and through music. The composer's orientation toward the listener's experience is critical in this inquiry, as are the expectations a composer may have of listeners'

interactive participation, the positive value of memory and contemplation of the past, as well as the celebration of personal and cultural diversity.

In music, it is difficult to consider modernism and postmodernism as mutually exclusive and oppositional in every way. The purposes pursued by modernists earlier in the century and the forms modernism took are no longer those to which many of today's creative artists can subscribe. Some question the extent to which music, presumably the most "abstract" and "autonomous" art, can or should help people escape their surroundings. Others argue whether difficult music can or has ever enriched anyone's moral fiber. Modernist values may now seem wanting and empty, yet most composers are reluctant to give up what lies at the very basis of the aesthetic: substantial control over the work itself.

Frederic Jameson and others have argued that there can be no more "works," only what postmodernists call "texts." The possibility of creating unique pieces that reflect one coherent, consistent voice is evaporating as it becomes clear to these postmodernists that artistic creations can only serve as pretexts for what the reader/listener may bring to the work and create of it. The belief these postmodernists have in the heterogeneity of any work's meanings has become a priori as has the idea that no work can be a closed system. What I have described as works involving an emancipation of memory, an interpenetration of different domains, and an exploration of relationships may very well sound like "texts" in this sense. Like other postmodernist works, they certainly depend on the meaning brought to them by the listener. Each performance of works like Pauline Oliveros' *Sonic Meditations* and *DreamHorseSpiel*, furthermore, is unique and very much depends on audience participation. As I have shown, however, these performances are hardly without structure; Oliveros herself thinks of her pieces as "works," often having a "statistical" form. Cage too used structural devices such as repetition and variation, ideas he said he learned from Schoenberg, to insure structural coherence (see Cage 1983a, 124, Cage 1990, 421, and Pasler 1991a). His intent was as visionary as that of many modernists: to teach through music and embody a way to a better future.

My use of "memory palaces" to describe what such works evoke is an attempt to define their structure, one resembling not the idealist "spatial forms" of high modernism, but a non-traditional and open kind of form in whose construction the listener plays an important role. This idea brings attention to the importance of memory and to the order and associations—the thought—composers elicit through it. It uses the past to suggest meaning in the present, a meaning that may provide models for understanding the future. This is very much lodged in the synchronic connections, the "inter-referentiality,"⁵⁰ that the spatial dimension of these palaces reveal. A musical memory palace, as I describe it here, places the listener not in a despairing mode, like the dancer in "Blue Meteorite," nor in the alienated and distanced mode of most modernist works, but in an active one. It remains to be seen what new memory palaces composers will stimulate listeners to construct from their own experiences, and what effect these structures will have on people's lives.⁵¹

Notes

N.B. For the most part, the translation of the Char poetry comes from Matthews (1956, 74–83). This translation also appears in the appendix of Peyser (1976, pp. 268–277).

1. As the reader will soon see, when it comes to music, I do not entirely agree with other aspects of Jameson's argument about postmodernism (the role of memory, the breakdown of the signifier, the replacement of works by texts, etc.).
2. While what I am referring to shares important aspects with Jonathan Kramer's notion of "vertical time" (Kramer 1981), it is actually closer to Ken Gaburo's definition of composition as an ecosystem wherein a sense of the whole, a sense of place, is defined by what is connected and what effects the connections. Gaburo presented these ideas to my seminar on postmodernism in music at UC San Diego, April 12, 1990.
3. I am grateful to Stevan Key for pointing me to this book, which he says he has found on the bookshelves of many composers on the West coast in recent years.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4, 34ff, 46–47, 71–72. It is Augustine who explains *loci* as "the fields and spacious palaces of memory where are the treasures of innumerable images, brought into it from things of all sorts perceived by the senses." (p. 46). George Johnson (1991, xiii) defines a memory palace more generally as "a structure for arranging knowledge."
5. In my article (Pasler 1989, 244 and 246), I define anti-narratives as "works which rely on the listener's expectation of narrative, but frustrate it through continual interruption of a work's temporal processes and proceed by change without narrative transformation;" non-narratives are "works that may use elements of narrative but without allowing them to function as they would in a narrative."
6. Bloom (1973, 7, 8) writes of poetic influence or "poetic misprision" as "necessarily the study of the life-cycle of the poet-as-poet" and the "intra-poetic relationships" as "parallels of family romance," though without the Freudian overtones.
7. Leduc is planning to publish the 1989 revision, and it is this version that Erato recorded in 1990: WE 2292-45494-2.
8. United Musicians International Productions, UM 6507.
9. I am grateful to Charlie Kronengold for urging me to give more attention to the complexities of Messiaen's influence on this work.
10. Doorbell of the mornings's motto, dead season of the precocious star,
I come to the end of my arch, a grave-dug coliseum.
Enough of sucking the nubile horsehair of grain:
The carder, the obstinate carder is subject to our confines.
Enough of cursing the haven of nuptial images:
I am touching bottom for a compact return.

This stanza of the poem, as Charlie Kronengold pointed out to me, has a similar relationship to the poetic tradition as Boulez's music has to its predecessors. It borrows from the troubadours the tradition of the aubade, which Drabble (1985, 49) defines as a "dawn song, usually describing the

regret of two lovers at their imminent separation." By reducing the "morning's motto," the morning star, to only a reverberation, an echo, a "doorbell," Char divests the "precocious star" from its mythic and poetic history and its association with Lucifer. Char thus also treats the past as a "simulacrum," merely an image of what it was. I am grateful to Charlie for reading this article and offering many valuable suggestions.

11. This essay, "Style ou idée – éloge ou de l'amnésie," was originally published in *Musique en jeu* (1971).
12. If the language sung is French, the analogy is even clearer because of the necessity for dividing one of the eighth notes into sixteenth notes in the middle of the line to accommodate an extra syllable.
13. There are three kinds of percussion Boulez uses in this work: wood (including maracas, fouet, claves, guiro, woodblock), skin (bongos, snare drum, bass drum, tambourine, provençal drum, military drum), and metal (cymbals, tam-tams, gongs, triangle, iron blocks). He also uses xylophone, celesta, glockenspiel, and vibraphone.
14. Stevan Key suggests that the work concerns the struggle of the composer to dominate the feminine within himself and that, as in primitive cultures, he garners power to do this by taking on, incorporating into his body of which the piece is an extension, the most significant male figure in the culture, in this case Stravinsky. I am grateful to Stevan for reading this article and urging me to push my feminist reading a bit further.
15. His association with the Domaine Musical concerts beginning in 1949 brought him into close contact with performers specializing in contemporary music and in that context he became sensitized to "all the problems and resources of instrumentation" (Boulez 1975, 87).
16. Lest one think that Boulez's confrontation with the past ended with *Le Visage Nuptial*, one need only consult the philosophy underlying the statutes and programs of the Domaine Musical he helped organize. This organization, known for its defense of the avant-garde in Paris of the 1950s and 1960s, was founded with the idea that old and new should coexist on all programs. They believed that new works might find "their origins, their roots, their justifications" in very old works. (See Claude Rostand, "Un jeune compositeur," *La Nef* [November 1957], p. 90). Arguing for the simultaneous presence of the old and the new in music was a powerful tool for suggesting mutual legitimacy and was a common practice in concert series in France since the beginning of the century.
17. Boulez, *Par volonté et par hasard*, p. 63.
18. When questioned on the nature of Boulez's revisions, Boulez's colleague, Jean-Baptiste Barrière, explained that Boulez claims not to have redone the work, but only to have expanded, elaborated and developed one of its original themes. (Letter to the author, March 4, 1991). When Leduc publishes the revised score, it will be possible to do a complete study of these changes.
19. "Il semble qu'au milieu d'un temps chargé de plus en plus de mémoire, oublier devienne l'urgence absolue. Et pourtant non seulement on n'oublie pas, mais on arbore en panoplie toutes les bibliothèques possibles de toutes les Alexandries: la référence devrait faire partie de l'invention, être la source du seul renouveau encore possible. Le temps des avant-gardes, de l'exploration,

étant définitivement passé, viendrait celui du perpétuel retour, de l'amalgame et de la citation. La bibliothèque idéale ou imaginaire nous fournit une pléthore de modèles, il nous reste l'embarras du choix et la forme de l'exploitation."

20. For further evidence of such a feeling, Susan McClary (personal communication, May 1991) suggests that the reader consult a conversation between Boulez and Michel Foucault (1985), wherein Boulez defends the world of high modernism and rejects postmodernist concerns as a "super-market aesthetic."
21. I borrow this expression from McClary 1989.
22. I am here playing with the title of a recent work by Jonathan Kramer, *About Face*, in which the composer explores not only "multiple personality," but also notions of return in his own compositional language and personal life. Unlike that of many others, his return is from a more simplified, modal style characterizing works in the 1980s to a dissonant one reflecting "nostalgia for the age of modernism" (from notes about the work by the composer).
23. See also Rochberg 1984.
24. It can also be driven by what Leonard Meyer (1967, 192) calls "ideological nostalgia" though perhaps less so during the twentieth century. For the modernist, Meyer argues that the past is a "repository of countless potentially absorbing problems and possibilities," artistic and compositional problems more than ideological ones (p. 193).
25. Hicks 1982, 223. See Raili Elovaara, *The Problem of Identity in Samuel Beckett's Prose* (Helsinki: Suomalainen, n.d.).
26. The composer David Felder has been interested in a variation of this idea: how composers can take advantage of the physical memory players can retain of works performed by them or otherwise written for their instruments. He wishes to call on such memory, for example, of Debussy's *Rhapsodie* for clarinet or Paganini's *Violin Concerto* in his recent works for the clarinet or violin.
27. In his introduction to "James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet," Cage (1983, 53) goes on to say that he did not follow this idea in his text, but then on the same page he admits, "The effect for me of Duchamp's work was to so change my way of seeing that I became in my way a Duchamp unto myself. I could find as he did for himself the space and time of my own experience." This mesostic was given its American premiere by Cage and 15 of his friends at the Second Acustica International Sound Art Festival, New York, April 29, 1990.
28. In his seminar paper on John Zorn's music, Mark Applebaum suggests that Carl Stalling's influence on Zorn was great. Zorn himself describes the "constantly changing kaleidoscope of styles, forms, melodies, quotations, and of course the 'Mickey Mousing'" of Stalling's music as "broken into shards." (Liner notes to the 1990 Warner Brothers release of Carl Stalling's music).
29. Jochen Schulte-Sasse (1989, 100) argues that "quotations serve as signs of recognition; they mediate between our desire for identity, for containment of our ego-boundaries, and for our desire for dissolution, for transgression of our ego-boundaries."

30. Today Beethoven represents our most common model of musical genius. In France particularly, when the press wishes to praise a composer in the highest terms, it is often to Beethoven that comparison is made, whether the music resembles Beethoven's or not. William S. Newman (1983) examines the origins of this phenomenon in his "The Beethoven Mystique in Romantic Art, Literature, and Music."
31. George Rochberg, notes to the Concord String Quartet recording of his Third Quartet, Nonesuch H71283.
32. In the last movement, "On the dominant divide," of his *Grand Pianola Music*. My thanks to Richard McQuillan for pointing this out.
33. For this reason, postmodernism as an artistic style is sometimes compared with mannerism.
34. David Harvey (1989, 336) describes postmodernism as "the mirror of mirrors." He uses such an expression to explain an attitude which "came of age in the midst of this climate of voodoo economics, of political image construction and deployment, and of new social class formation."
35. See Jencks (1984) and Jameson (1991, 107-121). Also cf. Gehry's house in Santa Monica and the new Santa Monica Museum he designed in Los Angeles with the hotels designed by Graves at Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida and in La Jolla, California.
36. Yates (1966, 297-298) discusses Campanella's City of the Sun as a Renaissance memory palace. The *Città del Sole* is a description of a Utopia, an ideal city based on an astral religion. Such a city, it was thought, could be used as a way of "knowing everything 'using the world as a book.'" Louis Marin (1984, 10) also writes about utopia as "space organized as a text and discourse constructed as a space."
37. Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*, pp. 9-10, cited in Harvey (1989, 5).
38. Paul Ricoeur (1984) contrasts episodic and configurational structure in chapters 2 and 3 of his *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1.
39. Calvino 1974, 6. In a recent seminar paper, Tim Labor argues that the level of distance the author takes from the work and the patterns traced by the chapters would make the novel in effect more modernist than postmodernist.
40. In addition, Marin (1984, 211) proposes that city maps represent "the production of discourse about the city."
41. This is an excerpt from the "circumstances" section of "Composition in Retrospect," p. 151, of which, in his introduction to I-VI (p. 5), Cage says *Europerras* 1 and 2 were "illustrative."
42. This is the first stanza of the "discipline" mesostic in his "Composition in Retrospect," p. 129.
43. Cf. the short "Zen stories" Marjorie Perloff (1981, 310-313) cites from Cage's *Silence* (pp. 6, 95, 271) with the long citations and imaginary stories in "James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet."
44. This is the opening of the first stanza of the "interpenetration" mesostic in "Composition in Retrospect," p. 141.
45. Perloff (1981, 316) calls this aspect of Cage a "new didacticism."
46. Cf. the analysis of Cage's lectures in Pasler (1991a) and the analysis of Cage's *Roaratorio* in Perloff (1988).
47. All references to Oliveros in these paragraphs come from my interview,

- Pasler 1991b, commissioned by the American Women Composers, Inc.
48. 1990 was also the year of the horse in China, a fact acknowledged by the calligraphy for horse on the shirts of the performers at its premiere on April 28, 1990 at the Second Acustica International Sound Art Festival in New York.
 49. I use this term in the sense developed by George Lipsitz (1990).
 50. The anthropologist Michael M.J. Fischer defines "inter-referentiality" as one of the key elements of the postmodern sensibility, the others being "bifocality or reciprocity of perspectives, juxtaposition of multiple realities, intertextuality, and comparisons of family resemblances." Cited in Lipsitz 1990, 149.
 51. I would like to thank the students in my postmodernism and hermeneutics seminars in 1990 and 1991 at the University of California, San Diego: Mark Applebaum, Eric Dries, Steve Elster, Stevan Key, Erik Knutzen, Keith Kothman, Charlie Kronengold, Tim Labor, Rafael Linan, Richard McQuillan, Dave Meckler, Margaret Murray, Mary Oliver, Frank Pecquet, Linda Swedensky, and Carol Vernallis. Their insights, commitment to the inquiry, and music were an inspiration; I dedicate this work to them.

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