

Fall 2006 Seminar  
Professor Jairo Moreno

## **Difference**

### 1. Seminar description

We will study difference as a specific logic of relation, considering its constitutive function in two general domains:

- a) Temporality and Being: Pertaining to questions of time/space and Being/becoming/being in their relation to egologism, ipseity, ontopology, presence.
- b) The political: Pertaining to general issues emerging from relational logics that are fundamental for thinking the political and specifically making a distinction between its ontic register and its ontology. The constellation of notions we will consider includes: collectivity, hospitality, monolingualism, mourning, otherness, populism, utopianism, singularity, and universality/particularity.

We will approach these domains apart from sonic considerations. The majority of the readings come from critical theory, Continental philosophy, and philosophy of politics (not political philosophy). The first five weeks will consider the Being of difference and models addressing its constitution. The remainder of the seminar will focus on the question of the political.

### 2. Seminar goals:

Although the seminar is non-disciplinary, from a music studies perspective, it is intended to provide resources to engage musicological work (broadly conceived). There is a vast body of writing in music studies invoking difference as a central principle, anywhere from embodiment, liveness, and the often unexamined phenomenologies that subtend them to cultural and post-colonial studies influenced scholarship (e.g., transculturation, inter-culturation, and hybridity, or the trinity of identity/diversity politics – gender/sexuality, nation, and race/ethnicity). The structure of the class is such that it encourages investigation on music as a politics or in a politics ‘beyond difference,’ as it is currently understood and practiced. Finally, we will read with an ear on ethical questions raised by the very antagonistic nature of difference.

Seminar participants will, for their final projects, articulate our study of difference to either critiques of existing music scholarship or the production of new forms of scholarship.

Readings include: Balibar, Deleuze, Derrida, Fukuyama, Grossberg, Grosz, Hardt/Negri, Heidegger, Jackson, Laclau, Nancy, Rancière, West.

3. Seminar protocol:

- a) Avoid monopolizing discussion (either by speaking too often at the expense of others' chances to do so or by always wanting to force the class to take discussions repeatedly to your particular and always already absolutely correct perspective)
- ) Try to present your critical comments in a constructive way

4. Projects:

There will be two projects:

- a) A mid-semester short project. A keywords type of glossary in which you will define a set of concepts that you find particularly central to your understanding of difference. You will provide a brief introduction outlining your criteria for your choices. This project will be between 2000-2500 words (8-10 pages, double space, 12-point font), not including notes or bibliography.
- b) A final project with a project of your choice. This could take the form of a critique of existing work or original research. (There is plenty of writing on difference that we will not address, let alone read.) This project will be between 3500-4500 words (14-18 pages, double space, 12-point font), not including notes or bibliography.