

Main Theme — We now live in a radically decentered, postmodern world of unresolvable social positions and "antagonisms," and the modern American university (bureaucracy) and the professional regimes of academicized modern music research (history, theory, ethno) are out-of-touch and need to be reformulated according to the new realities.

∴ 1/2 the book = telling us theories of WHY the current world has changed, how society + language and identity are now decentered (Much reliance here on Laclau + Mouffe, but also Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Bakhtin, J. Butler, + a few others)

∴ The other 1/2 = demonstrating via staged diagnoses just how and why current music research is inadequate to the task of participating in the new world. (reviews of research: books + articles)
(+ reviews of institutional procedures, such as prof. organizing, university admin., publishing, tenure, class formats, etc.)

Added → a prescription for adequate musical research in the new age (involving ^{self-questioning} self-questioning, acknowledging of multiple meanings, and a repudiation of seemingly authoritative unitary analyses)

In an e-mail to me (20 Nov 04) KK singled out pp. 158-61 as a "key moment" of the book, integrating Laclau-Mouffe w/ Bakhtin.

— In fact these are nodal pages, a hub that radiates helpfully to many other central passages of the book. Here we are at the author's key assertions

158-61 3 CRUCIAL STEPS in constituting an image of a thorough decentering

158 Step 1 Cite Laclau-Mouffe (Hegemony and Socialist Strategy; Toward a Radical Democratic Politics [1985]) (→ obv. "politically aligned + committed, though KK does not thematize this)

↘ Concept of an emptied, incomplete self that does not exist in and for itself as a "full" + complete entity but rather as an empty signifier that is constantly challenged + "antagonized" by the "Other" that he or she encounters, (which keeps you from being a full Self)

∴ "the impossibility of their constitution" [as self-identical selves] and one's inability to be "fixed as full positivity"

Result → a huge network of "social antagonisms"

COMMENT Laclau + Mouffe's ideas merge Saussure's linguistics with Lacan + Žižek
Read p. 36 on Saussure

∴ Laclau + Mouffe → As words have no stable identity (decentered into relations), so too individual selves. (cf. Gadamer critique, 37?)

∴ All "essentialist" or unitary notions of identity are shattered.
We "are" only relationally to others, who are similarly unstable.

Read p. 55 — "contract essentialist models . . ."

Read p. 51, 6 up → "Laclau + Mouffe . . . identities as relational rather than referential." (Again, p. 37 → contra Gadamer, [Dahlhaus?])
(identity politics?)

159 **Step 2** Not only is the Self emptied + decentered into this relational status (unstable), so too is "social space" as a whole. (159) A non-hierarchical network of interests + "discursive communities." (159) — Moreover, this field of contradictory relationships is fundamentally ungraspable; "No single struggle provides the key to the others . . . no necessary connection" One cannot grasp any single principle to hold it conceptually in one's mind. (cf., e.g., the "free market," whose many interests and transactions are far too complex to be grasped → a kind of immensity beyond capture)

— In this sense "society" [as a graspable principle] does not exist (159) + is thus relatable to the "Lacanian Real." As the principle of capitalism is "present only in its effects," so too "society"

∴ "Society" as a whole is decentered, + individual factions or groups also exist only relationally to the network or field

(cf. p. 164 → "identity [incl. social identity] is defined relationally and negatively in the postmodern" → defined as lack)

(Same p. 166 → "identity . . . negatively and relationally")

The problem → each "faction" in the relational field is self-deceived, believes itself to be a stable identity, thus failing to grasp the "real" situation
— p. 161 → "Tower of Babel" → "each faction behaves as if it possessed an authoritative language"

(instead, KK urges us to step back from the factions — or any one of them — and to grasp + acknowledge the larger, decentered, dizzying picture)

KK E-mail to JH → "My hunch is that when we think about the politics of interpretation — to the extent that we think about it at all — most of us in the humanities are constrained by questionable and even obsolete models of society and social identity."

(i.e., take the decentered Laclau + Mouffe perspective)

The goal, as always in quasi-radical critiques, is to see things as they are in reality, not to fall into ideology, self-deception, and (of course) "false consciousness"

NB! p. 63 [READ] - Laclau's version of the ideological, the deceived, the false-consciousness:

"... the non-recognition of the precarious nature of any positivity ... " - any drive toward "closure" or "fixation of meaning"

from (Laclau, New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time [1990])

another pivotal spot in the book

Step 3

The Decentering (into instability) of our own LANGUAGE

- via Bakhtin + "heteroglossia", here stitched onto Laclau + Mouffe

Read 159, 10 up -> "... alienation from one's own language ..."

... also destabilizes my language ... "

(Read also p. 64 -> on professional languages; Schinker; etc.)

IN SOM, all melts into decentred instability of shifting relationality

① Decentered + ungraspable self (not fully unitary, stable, "full positivity" - defined only negatively + relationally)

② Decentered society into a charged field of social antagonisms

③ Decentered language (not really "ours"), producing alienation

Full-blown postmodernism

CRUX OF THE PROBLEM - AND THE QUESTION:

p. 160, 8 up, leading to: "How can musical research adapt to situations that are permanently unstable, where no final resolution exists?"

→ That's what this book is all about!

KK: Prescription (Solution)

- 1) Do not occupy any preformatted or preconstituted position → do not become a mere representative of any established faction that claims to speak and write with certainty or authority. Stop striving for an authoritative discourse
 - disciplinary roles
 - methodological roles (archivist; Schenkerian;
 - identity-politics roles (feminist; Af-Am scholarship)
- 2) Instead, avoid "ideology" by opening your eyes to the world as it really is; the postmodern Laclau-Mouffe world of individual negations existing only relationally to other individual negations → only horizontally, laterally — not vertically —

E.g. 3 CREDO PASSAGES FROM CHAPTER 2 (ANTIMETHOD)

- ① P. 50, MIDDLE
- ② P. 55, 2nd fl up
- ③ P. 42, 6 down

+ 2 MORE

solution

- [④ P. 16t, 8 up: "All we can do, ..."]
⑤ p. 10, middle?

(cf. JH: postmodernism → value as "webball" to break up any settled formations — once things begin to settle, be taken for granted, be comfortable → webball-break!)

(all this amidst a discussion of the errors of the concepts of "work" and "autonomy" 41, 44-45, etc.)

- 3) As a writer, stage the act of your own decenteredness (conflictedness) by "placing one's own authority in doubt" (e-mail to JH 20 Nov 04)

— ∴ Bohlman agonizes over the impossibility of dealing adequately with Koranic recitation (because to aestheticize it as music — much less to study it as music — is to change its essence) Solution, p. 16t (how different from, say, Cook's free-wheeling "musical meaning")

— ∴ Koskoff "stages the conflict" (165) within herself in her study of the Lubavitchers in Brooklyn — 3 perspectives

— ∴ Lewin (phenomenology) keeps interrogating his own premises (167, 2 down) — can't be assimilated "to the routine genres of music theory" (167, 10 up) (cf. Gottfried Weber, Mehrdeutigkeit in Mozart's Dissonanz + etc.)

I.e. — Develop a self-reflexive, non-authoritarian discourse that is adequate to the actual decentered conditions of the modern world,

Then again implied — the long march of all this through the disciplines and through the institutions

Much reliance on current critical analyses of the modern university

— (Not surprising → p. 64) → Louis Althusser on "ideological state apparatuses"

— Much more central to KK:

Bill Readings, The University in Ruins [1996]

lots of quotations from this (a main leitmotif)

— Long odyssey of the historically changing central "unifying ideas" of the university in its history

pp. 18-19

Ancient Univ → "theodicy"

Modern Univ → "Reason" [Kant]

Bildung (Culture) [Humboldt]

"Excellence" ["bleached of any particular content"]

p. 21

NOW

including (implicit)

"professionalization" (2)

corporatism ("customers" p. 21)

efficiency

20

Other ideas

Centrality of postulate of TEXTUALITY

(Read p. 37 underlined spots) (top of 38)
Similarly → p. 40, 41 + Enclousim, p. 42 (already read)

Not to embrace textuality is to use art ideologically (44)
("reassuring images of selfhood," p. 44)

∴ (JH) a kind of hermeneutics of suspicion (a see-through-it claim) but with a slightly wistful, even "humanistic" drawing back from a full withering blast;

"Ah yes! It was a beautiful dream... but I'm afraid that we've now awakened!"

(Less strident, more "friendly" + "self-questioning" than, say, Jenkins, Street, or Klumpenhouwer...)
(Is this "radical postmodernism with a smile"?) Almost lapsing back here + there to liberal humanism?

CREDO → p. 10

Bermuda Triangle of Autonomy (avoid this area!) pp. 45-46!

Theory + History as Möbius Strip, running into each other 88-89
(Agawu + Kerman as mirror images on opposite sides)

Hayden White's tropes

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------|--|
| 67 | Larry Kramer | — Romance (unity — lost! — regained) |
| 71 | Kay Kaufman Shelanay | — Comedy (reconciles, harmonizes) |
| 74-75 | Manuel Peña | — Tragedy |
| 76 | Nicholas Cooke | — Satire (Irony) (WP reception history of 9th) |