MICHAEL SPITZER

Tovey's Evolutionary Metaphors

I

Donald Francis Tovey (1875–1940) remains one of Britain's greatest writers on music. He influenced Kerman, Rosen and others, and perpetuated a practical, common-sense music criticism which refuses to date and is applicable to present critical concerns. In the late formalist stage of music analysis, Tovey's apparent dilettantism was an easy target, but in the light of the new musicology, his 'faultless descriptions' (Keller 1956, p. 49) and his lack of a 'systematic analytical theory' (Dunsby and Whittall 1982, p. 72) now look more like virtues than faults. But although he wrote for the ordinary listener, the accessibility of Tovey's writings is a myth. They involve contradictions that show him to be stranger than we might assume, and which, as I will argue below, originate in his attempt to accommodate the ideological debates of his time.

The essential contradictions in and for Tovey are as follows:

(1) he is committed to formalist abstraction, in which music is said to 'digest' its contents, but depends on metaphorical description;
(2) his evolutionary model of style, oriented towards the perfection of the classical style and the supremacy of Beethoven, is set firmly against teleological notions of artistic progress;
(3) he believes in musical unity but emphasises musical temporality as rooted in fragmentary and impressionistic experience;
(4) he rejects the reification of analysis in quasi-visual (synchronic) models, but anticipates the critical perspectives of philosophers as divergent as Adorno and Jankélévitch;
(5) despite his polemic against the analytical *coup d'oeil*, he uses spatial and visual metaphors constantly, even when modelling tonality;
(6) he campaigned against thematic analysis, even though 'themes' were the preserve of contemporaneous, popular writing about music (and correspond to empirical musical fact);
(7) his pro-German nationalism credited Germany's musical superiority to its openness to foreign influence (and was therefore, in part, non-essentialist), but praised now-forgotten figures such as William Beatton Moonie and Granville Bantock (whose orchestration he credits for being as 'natural' as Mozart's (p. 23));

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(8) as our contemporary, he writes that 'the finale [of Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 364] goes at sixty miles an hour, but in a comfortable car which reduces the exercise to sitting in a draught' (p.166); yet his remark that 'fifty years . . . have now passed since the death of Robert Schumann' (p. 285) wrong-foots us, and reminds us that he was a Victorian man of letters who, aged eighteen, played recitals with Joachim, and was twenty-two when Brahms died.

Tovey's theoretical positions include:

(1) a rhythmic perspective on tonal context, distinct from prolongational approaches, as in the useful distinction of being *on* a key or *in* a key;
(2) the conception of sonata form as a tonal drama, and as binary rather than ternary;
(3) a healthy suspicion of motive-spotting and ready-made formalisms;
(4) fugue as a texture rather than a form, and that formal analysis of Bach is anachronistic;
(5) a critique of teleological historiography, pressing for Mozart and Haydn to be estimated in themselves rather than as precursors to Beethoven;
(6) Beethoven as fundamentally classical and normal, not eccentric and romantic;
(7) the appeal to 'the naïve listener' as an index of the psychological reality of music analysis, an explanation of why tonal relationships are more audible than thematic ones, and of how tonal memory is dependent upon 'collateral evidence';
(8) a critical understanding of how writing about music is mediated by linguistic metaphors, and why a Darwinian evolutionary approach to the history of style, though problematic, is inescapable.

These positions remain vital (see Cross 2003, Huron 2003 and Jan 2003). Now that evolutionary theory is again current in musicology, Tovey (as partial Darwinian) deserves renewed consideration and contextualisation.

II

Tovey is best known for his six volumes of *Essays in Musical Analysis*, occasional essays and his editions of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavie*r and Beethoven's piano sonatas. Michael Tilmouth's edition of Tovey's writings as *The Classics of Music*, posthumously completed by David Kimbell and Roger Savage (Tilmouth was Tovey Professor of Music at the University of Edinburgh, where Tovey held the Reid Chair of Music from 1914 until his death in 1940), provides the opportunity to reflect on their 'continuing vitality', and presents a rounded picture of his thought and public influence.[1]

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The aim of the book is to collect Tovey's public utterances not previously published by Oxford University Press between 1931 and 1949. Part of its appeal is the range of idiom and genre – lectures, radio talks, printed essays and papers, programme notes, book reviews and articles – which show Tovey's diversity as composer, pianist, conductor, editor, educator, broadcaster and, most importantly, as a writer. These identites cannot be divorced: in particular, his performative identity informs the insight and authority of his criticism. As an edition of an edition, the book lays out three strata of commentary (Tovey, Tilmouth and Kimbell/Savage) with consummate diplomacy. All is systematic, erudite and lucid. Two indexes (names and 'musical ideas') are carefully constructed. The editors organise the material into six sections: (1) thirty-four essays in musical analysis not previously published; (2) Tovey's work as journalist, reviewer and obituarist; (3) fifteen articles on composers published in the 1929 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, including his important essay on Beethoven; (4) transcriptions of two lecture series (Eight Beethoven Lectures, 1922; Ten Cramb Lectures on 'Music in Being', 1925); (5) three of the five series of radio talks delivered on the BBC in the interwar years; (6) miscellaneous *Pieces on Several Occasions* (1899–1939). Each section is preceded by Tilmouth's concise note on the text; the later editors incorporate Tilmouth's surviving comments in an informative general introduction.

There are some choice plums. The essays in musical analysis range from bagatelles (on Bellini's 'Casta Diva', the Romance from Chopin's second piano concerto and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*) to substantial essays on Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The transcribed lecture series and broadcast talks convey something of Tovey's charisma as a speaker, and the Beethoven lectures fill some gaps in Tovey's posthumously published *Beethoven* (1944). The lectures on 'Music in Being' and the broadcast talks on 'Music and the Ordinary Listener' supplement Tovey's better-known Deneke Lecture ('Musical Form and Matter', 1934) and articulate his theoretical and aesthetic positions. An absolute gem is the paper on 'Permanent Musical Criteria' (1903), valuable both for its ideas (which indicate that Tovey's outlook was more-or-less settled by then) and for the hilarious transcript of the discussion, including the pencilled marginalia in his personal off-print.[2] Tovey's prose style, though, may have fuelled the criticism that his writing lacks a coherent intellectual framework. The projected *The Language of Music*, mooted since his undergraduate days, came to nothing (p. xxxiv). Did Tovey complete anything substantial? Tilmouth says that 'it became characteristic of him that, by the time he got down to work on one subject he was already embarking on another; with the result that, as his publisher's editor Hubert Foss observed, he had to have most of his books "made for him"' (p. xxxv).[3]

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III

Where, intellectually, did Tovey come from? More than any other major critic, Tovey also needs to have his theory 'made for him'. In 'Music and the Ordinary Listener' (pp. 604–26), defending the Hegelian circularity of his argument, Tovey states:

> When your arguments not only depend upon each other but comprise the universe, it is perfectly legitimate to argue in the circle that they depend upon each other because they make up the uniformity of nature, and that they prove the uniformity of nature because they all depend upon each other. This I learned taking essays to the Master of Balliol in 1896. (p. 607)

This 'Master of Balliol' was Edward Caird, a Christian Platonist specialising in Kant and Hegel who considered some of Tovey's undergraduate philosophy essays 'excellent' (Grierson 1952, p. 52). The editors note that Tovey was also influenced by the cult of Matthew Arnold at Oxford in the 1890s, and that he was fond of citing A. C. Bradley's lectures on poetry (1909). Tovey often alludes to poets, artists, critics, philosophers and even to Einstein (see the sly reference to Relativity, p. 600) who, once, played second violin to Tovey (see Grierson, p. 324). While all theorists need historical contextualisation, in Tovey's case this is acute (if only to counter the tendency to value him only when he anticipates or parallels Schenker). The best recent appreciations of Tovey place him in theoretical history as a forward-looking forerunner of modern tonal theory (see Wintle 1983), or retrospectively, as the culmination of Victorian music analysis (see Dale 2003). In both perspectives, though, Tovey appears as primitive or unfocused. I would argue that Tovey's radicalism comes into focus when he is appraised not as a theorist but as a critic,[4] and that his criticism will come alive only when its intellectual background is reconstructed. To adapt one of his most cherished Arnoldisms, if we are to appreciate Tovey 'as he really is', we need to understand him as an exponent of a distinctively English intellectual paradigm.

Tovey's eclectic world-view was shaped by the cross-currents of British Empiricism and German Idealism in Victorian intellectual culture. On the one hand, his habitual reference to 'musical facts', his disdain for analytical abstraction, and his popularising mission to educate the public demonstrate the 'common sense' basic to British liberal democracy: on the other, his repertory was primarily German, identified with the Brahms-Schumann-Joachim axis and its cult of Beethoven. This Anglo-German dialectic informed Tovey's education at Oxford. (Balliol, his college, was the centre of British neo-Hegelianism.[5]) In the belated British assimilation of German philosophy, the Oxford Hegelian movement of the 1870s was the last and most far-reaching of the three waves of Idealism which broke on the British Isles in the nineteenth century (see Davis 2004, pp. 177–84).[6] Britain's successive Idealist turns,

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however, are characterised by accommodations to the empiricist mainstream: Coleridge and William Hamilton sought to reconcile Kant and Hegel with Scottish Enlightenment philosophers such as Hume and Reid; the empiricism of later books such as Caird's *Hegel* (1883) is evident in their reader-friendliness, conceptual clarity, and polemical engagement with the professional empiricist scene; and F. H. Bradley's *The Principles of Logic* (1883) devotes a chapter to refuting 'The Theory of Association of Ideas' even though, by then, associationism (a main plank of empiricism) was supposed to be dead.

Discredited ideas had to be actively rejected, and so survived within the new conceptual framework willy-nilly. The Hegelian John Henry Muirhead's assertion must be taken with a pinch of salt: 'In the early seventies, from which my philosophical memory dates, British thought may be said to have been in the full tide of revolt alike against the common-sense philosophy of Reid and Hamilton and the sensationalism of Mill and Spencer' (Muirhead 1924, p. 309). As a whole, though, Muirhead's message is conciliatory: he calls for a rapprochement between Idealism and the 'New Realism' (p. 321) represented by the logical atomism of Whitehead and Russell who wrote that 'in place of "unities" or "complexes", I prefer to speak of "facts"' (in Muirhead 1924, p. 373).

Cambridge logical positivism may have been a mutation of the empiricist tradition of Locke and Reid. Whether Tovey's 'facts' stem from Arnold's Oxford or from the Cambridge of Whitehead, Russell and Wittgenstein is a moot point. Positivism, though, persists in, and can explain, many of Tovey's most outlandish pronouncements – primarily, his repeated insistence that 'music, like the other arts, can be effectively illustrated only by itself' (p. 470):

> If you could listen to about a hundred lectures of about two and a half hours each, my plan would be to illustrate each of the various categories of music in such a way as to remove the obstacles which professional and amateur habits, both equally narrow, interpose between us and the view of music as it really is (p. 469).
>
> The whole thing will explain itself, and we have nothing to do but to get accustomed to the style (p. 490).
>
> I have been much distressed by my inability to describe tonality, because it is a firm article of my faith that nothing has an aesthetic value in music, or in any art, that does not eventually explain itself (p. 576).
>
> I have not yet tried to define tonality any more than I have attempted to define the taste of a peach (p. 614).

From the perspective of German Idealism, which holds that perception is mediated though concepts and ideas, Tovey's assumption that classical tonality 'explains itself' is heretical. His heresy is to believe that the listener somehow

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has direct, unmediated access to musical reality, that musical cognition is sensuous perception (requiring 'no more analysis than an educated palate recognizes the composition of a cocktail by the taste', p. 231), and that education consists in laying bare reality by clearing away received ideas.

Tovey's writing demonstrates that the distinctively British tradition of 'natural realism', probably derived from Reid, was still vital in the early twentieth century.[7] I will not resist the egregious temptation to associate the Reid Professor of Music with Reid's philosophical tradition (Tovey was neither a Scot nor a philosopher, and Thomas Reid (1710–96) was no relation of General John Reid (1721–1807), the founder of the Edinburgh Chair). Against the scepticism of Berkeley and Hume, Reid thought that we have immediate knowledge of external reality and perceive objects unmediated by ideas. Although it might be contended that our impressions of things are always referred to ideas (conceived as images constructed from previous impressions), introspection indicates that ideas are seldom objects of sensation. We may even become unaware of sensations: when the relation of objects and perceptions is desensitised as habit, sensation becomes an arbitrary 'sign'. Today, Reid's argument could be called semiotic. For example, when we perceive an object as 'hard', Reid states that:

> We are so accustomed to use the sensation as a sign, and to pass immediately to the hardness signified, that, as far as appears, it was never made an object of thought, either by the vulgar or by philosophers; nor has it a name in any language. There is no sensation more distinct, or more frequent; yet it is never attended to, but passes through the mind instantaneously, and serves only to introduce that quality in bodies, which, by a law of our constitution, it suggests. (Reid [1764] 1997 V.ii, pp. 55–6)

Reid does not dispute that ideas, images, or sensations exist, but they must be understood as mental operations (sensing, imagining, thinking) and explained as the sedimentations of habit formed by experience, not as (Kantian) transcendental categories. Perception does not involve reasoning. But perception can be acquired: experience shapes perception through the power of inference, memory and association, a process that becomes automatised as unconscious routine.[8] However, this begs the question of whether we can acquire the ability to perceive sensations (Reid left no aesthetic theory, *pace* Kivy 2004). The belief in the plasticity of sensation lies at the heart of the educational imperative of Victorian aesthetics. Tovey inherited this via Ruskin, Arnold and Grove's programme notes (see Bashford 2003).

Underlying this question is the problem of how aesthetic experience, epitomised in the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, might be accommodated within Materialism. Mill, the foremost empiricist philosopher of the mid-19th-century, held that poetic experience travelled along an alternative

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pathway inside associationism. His quarry was Hamilton's opposing theory – that art intimated an Idealist 'infinite' outside this system.[9] Is the 'perception of sensation' predicated on a reversal in the operations of routine (within associationism), or, on the contrary, is it a deconstruction of concepts (appealing to Idealism)? Is the enemy bad mental habit forged by mechanised, Philistine society (Tovey's 'obstacles which professional and amateur habits, both equally narrow, interpose between us and the view of music *as it really is*'), or an overly conceptual view of music (as in the Riemannian formalism popularised in Prout's text-books)?

For Tovey the Reidian/Hegelian, probably a bit of both. His hybrid notion of Beethoven's 'harmonic facts' (p. 419) strikes an empiricist attitude against the Idealist horizon: he hails Beethoven's 'power to allow the [harmonic] fact in question to be an underlying principle, and to expand itself with results something akin to infinity' (p. 422). This echoes Arnold's 'The Study of Poetry':

> Our religion has materialised itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. ([1888] 1898, pp. 1–2)

'The idea *is* the fact': Arnold's ecumenicism belies the ferocity of the defence of culture, criticism and poetry (and by extension philosophical Idealism and music) which pitted the persistence of Christian ethics against the assault of materialism – that is, Darwinian evolution, its cultural dominant.[10]

The scandal of evolutionism was that, by integrating humanism into a biological continuum, it largely denied cultural, aesthetic, ethical and religious absolutes. While the reaction of the aesthetic party might have been schematically negative, it was in practice vigorously dialectical. Criticism (in the tradition of Ruskin, E. S. Dallas, Arnold and Pater), ostensibly anti-Darwinian and the champion of humanism, adapted Darwin's concepts to its own purposes, and embraced the notions of adaptation, evolution, struggle, natural selection, the survival of the fittest and functional differentiation (Caird's *The Evolution of Religion* (1899) is an example).[11] The art-form in which Arnold, as pessimist poet, described the tooth-and-claw struggle for existence was enshrined by Arnold, as Christian critic, as the hope for the human species: 'In poetry, as a criticism of life, ... the spirit of our race will find ... its consolation and stay' (Arnold 1888, p. 5). In an audacious reversal, Arnold finds in poetry 'the instinct of self-preservation in humanity' (p. 55). Furthermore, Pater's aestheticism, anglicised *l'art pour l'art*, is replete with Darwinisms. In the conclusion of *The Renaissance*, a paean to experiential flux as biochemical interplay of artistic impressions, he writes that 'every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a

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solitary prisoner its dream of a world' (Pater [1873] 1919, p. 235). Atomism (of the isolated impression and the solitary *connoisseur*) is basic to his stylistic relativism – art history as a stream of individual and non-commensurable styles, jockeying, like Darwinian monads, for critical survival.

The struggle of Darwinian monads can be taken as a metaphor for the contest of micro- and macro-levels of the Victorian world, for the interplay of mental units in associationist psychology and that of political subjects in liberal culture. This splitting of theory and practice is denied in the liberal rhetoric of 'subjectively self-authorizing agency' (Thomas 2004, p. 44), in which political behaviour is thought to be grounded in the exercise of cultivated freedom. If liberal agency aestheticises society, it also democratises art. The Earl of Shaftesbury's Whiggish 'vision of universal human responsiveness to beauty' (Thomas, p. 42) was embodied in Victorian institutions such as Grove's Crystal Palace concerts (see Dale 2003, pp. 48–57).[12] Tovey's multiple careers (as pianist, composer, scholar and educator) exhibit the liberal ideal of socially-engaged 'many-sidedness' which Arnold identified with 'Hellenic' culture, in opposition to the 'Hebraic' (Arnold [1869] 1957, pp. 129–44).[13] Many-sidedness raises, again, the question of the integrity of the individual and the social.[14] Because Tovey multi-tasked to excess, his scattered, fragmentary creations are easier to square with liberal many-sidedness than with Idealist unity, as long as 'unity' is taken to mean formal completion rather than a quality of consciousness.

As the latter, though, Tovey's work converges with the opposition. At the moment when the humanities approached science, the new science of psychology began to think of the human subject as the arbiter of 'fact'. Evolutionary psychology, partially founded by Spencer's *The Principles of Psychology* (1855), explored the continuum between animal physiology and human consciousness, and came of age in William James's *The Principles of Psychology* ([1890] 1981) which confirmed the discipline's orientation to individual personal experience, in opposition to metaphysics and laboratory experiment.[15] James's complex notion of the 'stream of thought' is of great importance to his analysis of the perception of time and to his influential concept (borrowed from E. R. Clay) of the 'specious present'. To attempt to arrest the present moment is to find it melt in one's grasp. James presents the 'practically cognized present' as 'a duration with a bow and a stern ... a rearward and a forward-looking end'; we sail on the stream of consciousness, perched on a 'saddle-back ... from which we look in two directions into time' (1981, p. 574). The 'saddle-back' of the specious present, from which we experience temporal succession, is an imaginative fiction, 'from the outset a synthetic datum, not a simple one' (p. 574). Synthesis, for James, designates the vessel, not the stream, the individual who experiences.

Tovey addresses James's 'specious present' directly in his lecture on 'Musical Shapes' (*A Musician Talks*, 1941, Vol. 2, p. 54). Jamesian psychology

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also parallels Tovey's general attitude to time in form and tonality, in which musical temporality is judged by the senses and the constraints of memory in the guise of his Jamesian fiction – the 'naïve listener'. From the psychological (biological) standpoint of the ordinary listener, the stream of music (and Tovey's 'main stream' of music history) is always either coming into view or sinking back into the past, but is never captured as a coherent whole. While Tovey can convey powerfully the musical wholeness of a Beethoven sonata, this wholeness is glimpsed from a margin, from the fleeting perspective of a specious present. As critic of musical consciousness, Tovey, in this respect, out-Darwins the most frankly evolutionary of musicologists, his teacher Parry, 'to whom I owe all that I know of musical analysis' (p. 516). Many writers on music took up the challenge of interpreting Darwin and Spencer (including Robert Brown, John Cook, Joseph Goddard, Edmund Gurney, Daniel Reeves and William Wallace: see Zon 2000, pp. 116–78). Parry's shadow looms over them, as the foremost Victorian composer before Elgar and the author of influential Darwinian text-books on music history.

IV

As a many-sided composer-scholar whose writings were infused by the 'facts' of professional musical experience, Parry was Tovey's model (see Dibble 1992, p. 283–4). In Parry, stylistic change flows from musical material's evolutionary adaptation to social conditions and to 'habits of mind' (Parry 1911, p. 77).[16] 'Perfect unity of style' results from 'the perfect adaptation to conditions' (p. 7), an ideal he finds in the music of Beethoven, defined as a many-sided 'composite' style: 'the most complete definition of such composite style is like the familiar definition of liberty. It is that which affords the fullest exercise of all the instruments engaged which will not hinder or diminish the effect of one another' (p. 75). Beethoven appears here as the image of the Victorian Liberal. Parry's thesis is that musical evolution maximises the means of expression in accord with social conditions in order to engage listeners' faculties ('habits of mind'). He follows Spencer closely.[17] He opposes Darwin in thinking that evolution plateaus-out (rather than continuing indefinitely) and that there is 'equilibration' by which organisms achieve internal balance and harmony with their environment.

Yet Tovey has signficant intellectual differences from Parry. He rejects history, believing only in art-works ('we do not care a brass farthing for the history of it', p. 490), has no time for music's social or biographical foundations, and bolsters the autonomy of art-works by injecting a large dose of Platonist-Idealism. Parry's ternary model (society-music-mind), which maps music's social and cognitive fitness, is streamlined in Tovey as a binary scheme, music-mind. Shaving off the social and fortifying the formal, Tovey

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emphasises the dialectic of work and listener: adaptive fitness is reconceived as the psychological reality of organic compositions. Tovey's heart told him that perfect fitness (Spencerian 'equilibration') was achieved only by Beethoven. But his mind told him that each style should be judged on its own terms.[18]

Tovey never resolved the tension of Spencer and Darwin. The argument of his first significant historiographical criticism, the lecture on 'Permanent Musical Criteria' (pp. 664–86), is that these criteria are 'the independence of each work of art, and the possibility of many works on similar material' (p. 670). The former assumes that 'a work of art is a detached organism' (p. 669), and leads to Paterian stylistic relativism which denies 'progress'. The latter makes history, and progress, viable on the level of musical material, since 'forms' develop. Tovey measures the progressiveness of a style to the extent that it meets his formal ideal and enables organic detachment to come into existence. Completing his Hegelian circle, Tovey proposes six types of musical progress, exemplified by six composers. (1) Monteverdi is progressive only historically, since 'he never produced a work of art that can stand by its own consistency' (p. 675); (2) J. S. Bach 'shows a radical advance' because of the 'inner organic necessity of each work to differ from its predecessors' (p. 676); (3) C. P. E. Bach, only historically progressive, is more advanced than Monteverdi because his experimental forms are free-standing; (4) Haydn achieves mastery only gradually in his career; (5) in Beethoven, 'progress seems to start out in all directions and all of them lead to truth' and represents 'an enormous increase in the range of thought' (p. 677). (6) Wagner is a meta-progressive, since his musical development recapitulates the former types. Tovey's notorious blind spot, the seventeenth century, allows him to interpret music history from Monteverdi to Beethoven as a Spencerian process of increasing differentiation and integration.[19]

Two decades later, Tovey's Cramb Lectures (1925, pp. 469–566) confirm the persistence of the Darwin-Spencer dilemma. The organicist metaphor is cogently explained as evolution, and forms are explained as 'biological facts' (p. 535):

> The living organism of a certain ultra-microscopic and at present unknown constitution will, for certain extremely abstruse and hidden reasons of adaptation to environment, of original nature and of billions of years of ancestral experience, take a human or a canine or a fishlike shape according to its experience and its inner nature;

therefore:

> Every individual work of art [similarly] builds its own form, and supposing there are 500 first movements of sonatas in the world (and I do not think there are any more), if No. 501 takes that shape, it is not because the other 500 have done so; it is because No. 501 is digesting its own material in its own way, and it happens to be very much the same way as the other 500 – in that way the artist is concentrated upon the individual work of art and he can deal only with what he has himself thoroughly experienced. (p. 545)

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On the one hand, teleology is denied: 'Works of art are to be taken as things in themselves and not merely as parts of an evolutionary process' (p. 474). (Nearly seventy years before Webster (1991), Tovey tried to kill the habit of treating Haydn and Mozart as stepping stones to Beethoven.) The need for historical justification is a sign of aesthetic weakness: 'the times at which evolutionary processes are illuminative of the real purport of an individual work are only such times when the work is so imperfect as not to explain itself without some external evidence' (p. 482). On the other hand, against this relativism, Tovey bases his value-judgments in immediate perception and memory.[20] Sonata-form music allows the naïve listener to hear 'the actual facts of the form' (p. 535) and he suggests to his audience that they let their 'consciousness travel along the music from point to point' (p. 536) from the perspective of the 'naïve listener' (p. 538). The optimum psychological reality of the Classical style – the way it marks formal junctures for consciousness – is, for Tovey, its Spencerian perfection and its empirical fact for the naïve listener. Although he asserts the unity of the classical sonata, the spotlight is on moment-to-moment unpredictability within it.[21] It is surprising, therefore, that Tovey was so insistent on the contingency of history. (The subtext of his famous essay, 'Main Stream of Music', is the doubt that 'history has a mind at all': 1949, p. 347). Tovey often titillates his audience with contingencies, as in the important essay on Haydn: 'if Haydn's career had ended there [with the Op. 20 quartets], nobody could have guessed which of some half-dozen different lines he would have followed up' (1949, p. 49).[22]
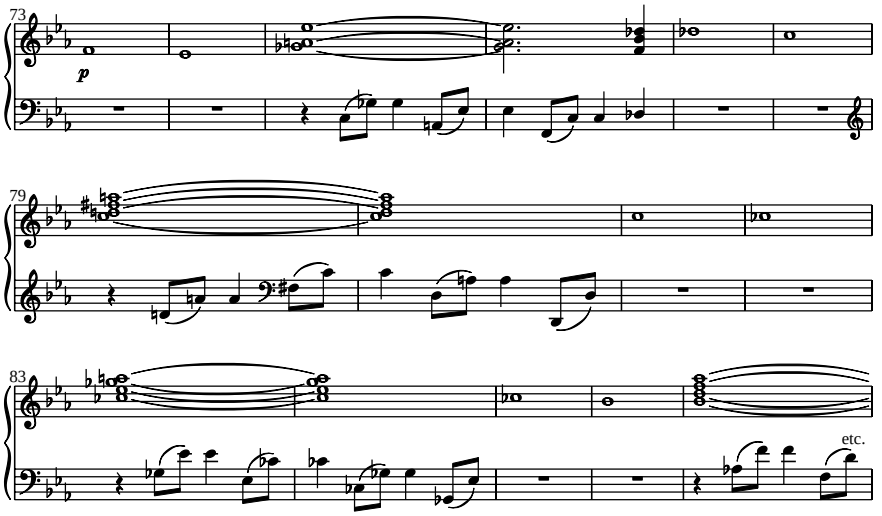
Concerning musical syntax, Tovey's rejection of teleology leads him to rebuke Stanford's composition treatise (1911) for being preoccupied with 'the logical evolution of themes', and for its 'merely melodic connections of ideas: a stress which, under the guise of a criterion of "logical development", has made a sad nonsense of most English criticism and much English composition for the last thirty years' (p. 298). Tovey's counter-example is Domenico Scarlatti, 'incapable of anything remotely resembling the logical evolution of themes' (p. 298).[23] His corrective to 'logical development' is 'dramatic fitness' and the unpredictability of tonal drama.[24] A vivid example is the discussion of Beethoven's 'Les Adieux' Sonata, which typifies his trick of plunging readers and listeners into the thick of the musical action, interrogating expectations at every turn and wrong-footing them with counter-factuals. In bars 73–87, Beethoven pegs his development on a descending scale, many steps of which are unaccompanied or harmonically ambiguous (Ex. 1).

Tovey comments as follows:

> The developed art of music is so firmly based on harmony, that those who are brought up within earshot of modern European music, whether they are musical or not, cannot help interpreting even an unaccompanied melody by some kind of subconscious guess at the harmonies it implies. Consequently,

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Ex. 1 Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 81a in E♭, first movement, bars 73–87



> when in bars 1–4 of Ex. 11 [bars 73–6] Beethoven has established the key of B flat minor, the mind unquestioningly accepts the unaccompanied 'Lebewohl' of bars 5 and 6 as being plainly in that key. But the hearer's mind is not Beethoven's. In Beethoven's mind, the C in bar 6 is unharmonized, and may mean anything he chooses to make it. Suppose, for instance, that it is part of a diminished seventh – in that case it might just as well be in G as in B flat minor. So he makes this mysterious plunge into G. After this, the next unaccompanied bars, 9 and 10, sound like C, B, in G major. What if he takes the B as dominant of E? He does so – spells the chord in a very puzzling way (owing to his mind being already in the context two bars ahead), and treats the next unaccompanied note as if it implied that chord in a new meaning, and thus reaches the dominant of E flat – the principal key. A moment of wistful suspense here seems to imply that the development is already over, and that the first subject is now to return as at the outset. But Beethoven has more subtleties in store. (p. 32)

First written in 1900, this was paraphrased in *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas* (1931, pp. 188–97). The second, more formal version uses the word 'expectations' for the first time and gives a hypothetical tonal model of bars 75–84. This formalisation invites comparison with the priority of 'expectation' in Leonard Meyer (1956), one of Tovey's successors as theorist of multiple possibilities,[25] though Tovey remained committed to the metaphor of the musical work as a human individual with a human 'consciousness' and Meyer tended more to formal abstraction. From the neo-Darwinian perspective, the pertinent unit for evolutionary musicology has mutated from phenotype (Tovey) to genotype (Meyer), reflecting Mendel's genetic turn (see Ridley 2000, pp. 38–53).

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Tovey's conception of the work as an organic individual is not homogeneous. His plural anthropomorphisms float indeterminately, commensurate with Walton's analogy of the musical work as a human zoo: 'full of life, but discrete bits of life, each in its own separate cage – not a working ecological system' (1994, p. 52). In Tovey's 'Les Adieux' essay, the agent is variously 'Beethoven', 'Ex. 4' (which 'bursts in'), 'a soft chord', 'the "Lebewohl"', 'the development' (which is 'really over'), 'the deepest chords of friendship's feeling', and, finally, the reader: 'we have returned'; the reprise rounds off the cycle of tropes and identifies the listener with, and internalise him or her in, the music (see pp. 32–3). How do these 'mini-anthropomorphisms' constitute the unity of the work's individual persona? More like a genetic soup than a tree of hierarchical part/whole relationships? In Tovey's words, the Sonata organises 'materials of emotion and contrast characteristic of a deep friendship' (p. 26): as a programme of evolving 'human character' (p. 25), it communicates a consciousness (ventriloquised by Tovey). Yet the music's fictive persona, its individual consciousness, is not the same as the listener's perception of the work as a transitory datum. The parts do not seem to fit the whole. The permeability of level and promiscuity of reference of Tovey's metaphors ensures that they shadow the formal tensions of his aesthetics of the whole and the psychology of the moment, the stream of 'dramatic fitness' that opposes associationism – 'the heresy that music is built up of small figures' (p. 612).[26]

Tovey's inveterate campaign against motivic analysis appears to oppose him to Gurney's *The Power of Sound* ([1880] 1966), the most significant text in nineteenth-century British musical aesthetics. Yet Gurney's position is similarly complex and elusive (see Budd 2001, pp. 52–75). Despite his neglect of tonality in favour of melody, Gurney handed down to Tovey an ethos of foreground analysis, scepticism of abstraction and the conviction that musical facts reside in 'bits' and 'parts' rather than in 'architectonic' design. Influenced by the evolutionary psychologist James Sully, Gurney proposed that 'the smaller bits ... are in Music of quite exceptional independent value, as being often the only things which an ordinary person can at all carry away from an elaborate work .... The attention is focused on each part as it comes' (1966, p. 214). A composer's skill is evident at the micrological level in the 'cogency of sequence' (p. 204) – the origin of Tovey's 'dramatic fitness'.

Gurney conceives 'links of relationship' (p. 217) as 'compact melodic organisms' (p. 218) which engender one another non-teleologically, and marvels at Beethoven's 'extraordinary manner in which one bit of form acted in his mind as a germ for new but related forms' (p. 217). While he criticises Sully's *Sensation and Intuition* (1874) for venturing that 'the beauties of musical form' are no more than the associationist sum of their parts (p. 219), Gurney cannot explain how this chain of 'bits' connects with Beethoven's 'large organic structure' (p. 217). In his chapter on 'Association' (pp. 113–26),

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he attempts to ground art music in Darwin's theory of musical expression and tries to have it both ways, arguing that complex music evolved from primitive expression yet becomes incommensurable with it:

> it is just this characteristic of *fused and indescribable emotion* [in art music] which seems explicable on Mr. Darwin's view: for a pleasure which was associated with the most excited passions, would have correspondingly large opportunities not only for increase but for differentiation. As the power of differentiation is a most marked characteristic of *physical* life, in contrast to inanimate existence, so we may conceive that in proportion to the amount of *emotional* life with which an experience has been charged would be its liability to be differentiated and transmuted as the nervous basis of association developed; so that those primary experiences in connection with which the sense of vitality in past ages reached its highest point might prove susceptible, like primary physical organisms, of transformation into something unrecognisably high and remote from their original nature. (p. 120)

The source of Gurney's 'unrecognisably high and remote' is, surprisingly, Schopenhauer. Gurney idealises an 'inner life' of music, driven by 'the succession of intensity and relaxation' in line with the 'ever-changing adjustment of the will' (p. 348): 'these affinities are ... of the most absolutely general kind; and whatever their importance may be, they seem to me to lie in a region where thought and language struggle in vain to penetrate' (p. 348).[27] One of Gurney's most powerful lessons (*contra* Sully) is that technical analysis is descriptive rather than explanatory and affords neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for aesthetic beauty. Gurney thereby consigns music, as his modern apologist Edward T. Cone says, 'beyond analysis'.[28] Nevertheless, Gurney's hermeticism is compromised by his Darwinian agenda (his scepticism is skewered by his empiricism) unless we accept that evolution of degree can engender difference in kind. Underlying this question is the debate about when the materialist chain flickers into life, and when life becomes self-conscious. Within this debate, James, for example, ridicules Spencer's 'evolutionary afflatus' – the attempt to explain the 'dawn of consciousness' from 'original chaos' (James 1981, p. 149) by postulating an irruption of a new nature through his principle of 'nascence'. Since 'if evolution is to work smoothly, consciousness in some shape must have been present at the very origin of things' (p. 150), James reasons that the task of evolutionary psychology is to square generative continuity ('an infinite number of degrees of consciousness') with qualitative difference.

Tovey confronts us, on many critical levels, with the discontinuity of momentary impression and unitary ideal, of the listeners' consciousness of perceptual data and their empathic divination of music's 'consciousness' and, ultimately, with the discontinuity of materiality and life. (Evolutionary continuity, the regulative idea, is only surface.) The gap between fact and idea is the

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space of a bleakly materialist Reidian semiotics. In Tovey, the signifier is the musical work experienced as fact and the signified is the pressing reality of musical survival. Writing in an age when musical extinction was a real possibility, survival depended for Tovey on revival.[29] While conceding that 'in every period of art only a small fraction of what is produced is destined to survive', Tovey had little faith in contemporary criticism, which 'has been as helpless as an actuary when it has tried to select individual works for immortality' (1941, vol. 1, pp. 1–2). Setting neglected classic music before the public carried more dignity and urgency for Tovey than did his roles as critic or scholar.[30] Tovey adheres to Arnold's 'touchstones' (classics). According to Arnold, the criterion of poetic excellence is not a theory or a value, but 'a concrete example' ([1888] 1898, p. 20), the 'lines and expressions of the great masters' which we apply 'as a touchstone to other poetry' (p. 17), displaying 'the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity' (p. 48) and '*the instinct of self-preservation in humanity*' (p. 55, my emphasis). Self-preservation also informs Tovey's Cramb lectures, in which he defines 'the word "classical" in the loosest possible form as the composer whose works *have a permanent survival-value*' (p. 546).[31]

V

Metaphor is common in the history of science. Darwin's *The Descent of Man* uses metaphor (especially in Chapter 3, 'Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and the Lower Animals') to analogise or 'parallel' biological and other sorts of evolution, including the development of language, and in organic classification, competition, adaptation, extinction, hybridisation, and the pleasure of novelty or fashion (see Darwin 1909, pp. 128–40).[32] The situation of music is more complex. Although Darwin's language/species parallel gave evolutionary musicology its opening, music spins dialectically between its articulate language character and its tendency towards expressive immediacy. When Darwin turns to the origins of music (1909, pp. 861–73), he treats music as a mode of emotional or sexual arousal. Leaving aside his debate with Spencer regarding the priority of music or language, they agree on a notion of *latency*. Citing Spencer's remark that 'music arouses dormant sentiments' (p. 870), Darwin argues that musical sensations inspire 'mental reversions to the emotions and thoughts of a long-past age' (p. 871). Long before Freud, evolutionary psychologists seized on aesthetics in general, and music in particular, as a return of the repressed; a throwback to a prior evolutionary stage. And yet the birth of consciousness, and the outbreak of metaphor, evolve and devolve in opposite directions.

When Tovey chides Hadow for his metaphorical excess, sniping at 'his use of analogies between music and other arts [which] seem dangerously near to a mannerism without definite meaning' (pp. 283–4), he is outrageous: his own metaphors frequently evoke the absurdity of Edward Lear's 'Dong with the

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Luminous Nose', often with miraculous results (see his comments on Rossini's *Tancredi* overture (p. 186) and Schubert's Overture 'In the Italian Style' (p. 189)). Occasionally, Tovey's prose is performative and enacts the syntactical processes it describes. For example, a retrograde in the *Hammerklavier* fugue is conveyed, in prose, palindromically:

> A leap and a trill, two short runs and a steady flow may surely be suspected of having a connection with a theme that begins with a steady flow, breaks up into two short runs and ends with a trill and a leap. (p. 64)

and an epigrammatic scherzo is treated epigrammatically:

> The Scherzo of that sonata [Beethoven's Op. 26] is just exactly one of Schumann's twice-two-is-four epigrams, [with a little point like the antithesis 'a is to b as c is to d': 'if this is my submediant and leads to the dominant, this is my supertonic and leads to the tonic'] – one of those neat epigrams leaving you in doubt as to what the key is initially, but establishing it by perfectly clear antithesis. (p. 418)

Metaphor in Tovey can induce the explosive condensation of meaning which Freud associates with jokes (Freud [1905] 1991, pp. 50–66). Tovey sees Beethoven's harmonic effects as:

> the results of great compression of thought. When the simple but active mind of the Irish peasant combines two unrelated ideas in one expression, the offspring is known as 'bull'. Great poets can overawe us into taking mixed metaphors seriously. No one laughs at Shakespeare for making Hamlet talk of 'taking arms against a sea of troubles', nor at the wrathful Milton for describing the clergy as 'blind mouths'. (1944, pp. 52–3)

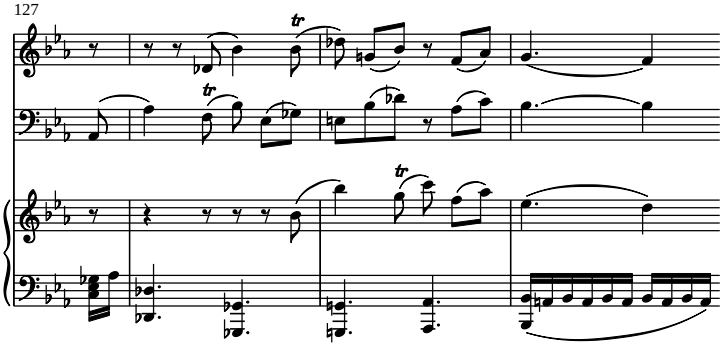
Tovey's example is the elliptical retransition in the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Trio, Op. 70 No. 2 (Ex. 2):

> What has happened in this suavely Mozartian utterance of Beethoven's is that he has compressed into two bars what could not have been said in less than four if the bass had not taken upon itself to move faster than the treble and so give a more than double meaning to the melody. (p. 53)

Tovey uses metaphorical language to express intrinsically *musical* metaphors, which, for this formalist thinker, took priority. (Strange that Tilmouth notes that Tovey, the profuse, articulate writer, 'distrusted words about music' (p. xxxv) as 'the merest hints of what a real study of the music ought to reveal' (p. xxxvii)). His formalism is most evident when he attacks the hermeneutic fallacies of programme music, using his favourite metaphors of 'digestion' and 'precipitation'. Music 'digests its environment' (p. 596), including text, libretto, biography and history; a 'composer's mind ought to be like a saturated solution of something that will crystallize round any foreign body that is dropped into it' (p. 708). After they have served their purpose, the 'circumstances' of a work of

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Ex. 2 Beethoven, Trio in E flat for Violin, Cello and Piano, Op. 70 No. 2, bars 127–130



art disappear and the outcome of musical composition is absolute. In the rich broth of Tovey's culinary metaphors (ice-cream, cake, cocktails, fruit salads), the musical organism feeds on its material environment, so that the absolute is an 'emergent' property (see, for example, Hatten 2005, pp. 1–5).

This returns us to Gurney's discontinuity of music's material (programmatic?) and ideal (absolute?) dimensions, and, furthermore, to the tensions of German and English solutions to the problem. Are music and meaning different aspects of the same thing; and is language the handmaiden of music, as educational, propaedeutic, or semiotic index? A. C. Bradley, Tovey's guide in these matters, explained that the 'form' and 'subject' of a poem, while 'separately conceivable' (Bradley [1909] 1962, p. 17), were in reality 'one thing from different points of view' (p. 15), 'different forms of the same thing' (p. 6). However, in 'steal[ing] a great many arguments ... from Professor Bradley to show how the problems of musical declamation may become the problems of absolute music' (p. 545), Tovey draws Bradley's arguments back to empiricism. Language now functions as a stimulus for musical meaning, as in Davidson's 'causal' theory of metaphor: the meaning of a metaphorical utterance resides in its reception and use, in so far as it stimulates or causes new perceptions to arise (see Davidson 1978, p. 47). Tovey's programme notes fire a stream of metaphorical electrons at the listener in order to illuminate music 'as it really is': his metaphors are a vehicle of Reidian 'natural realism', helping us 'perceive our sensations'.[33]

Natural realism has a Darwinian stamp. Inspired by evolutionary psychology, on the cusp of ethnomusicology, Gurney (1882), Myers (1905), and Wallace (1914) hypothesised the existence of a primeval, universal and dormant 'musical faculty', with the implication that music education should awake this faculty in the wider public.[34] Parry's historiography modelled this awakening as a swing from design 'in the direction of expression again' (1896, p. 14); Tovey engineered such awakenings on the formal level, rubbing

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metaphors to produce sparks of illumination, and thus accessed the British psychological tradition (from which Freud developed his theory of the unconscious).[35] According to Dallas:

> The poet's words, the artist's touches, are electric; and we feel those words, and the shock of those touches, going through us in a way we cannot define. Art is poetical in proportion as it has this power of appealing to what I may call the absent mind, as distinct from the present mind, on which falls the greater glare of consciousness, and to which alone science appeals. (Dallas 1866, quoted in Davis 2004, p. 192).

Arnold echoes these sentiments in a striking couplet from his poem, 'The Buried Life':

> A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
> And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
> (quoted in Davis, p. 192).

Unlike Freud, British psychologists celebrated the unconscious as a positive creative force, rather than policing it as 'an agency of repression, created by consciousness's denial of dangerous material' (Davis, p. 190). Creative upsurge, through which the particularity of experience is recuperated and disclosed, anticipates Adorno's *Durchbruch* (breakthrough in mimesis) and mirrors the German hermeneutics of the 'moment' (see Hoeckner 2002). The difference concerns the status of detail. The 'semiotics of detail', shared by Adornian critique and Heideggerian 'clearing', is distinct from the uniquely British merger of anti-intellectualism, biological foundationalism and educational populism. The latter, epitomised in the concert programme note, was 'a uniquely British phenomenon for most of the nineteenth century' (see Bashford 2003, pp. 133–4), which, exemplifying the 'semiotics of detail', gathers many strands of Tovey's music criticism, in particular the function of musical quotation.

In a letter to Edward Speyer (1902), on his 'Analytical Notes' for the Meiningen Orchestra, Tovey wrote that 'analysis on this scale has *absolutely no use* except for its musical quotations' (p. xxxvii). If quotation is synecdoche, part/whole relations (metaphors, metonyms, allegories) obtain between local thematic 'bits' and inferences of overarching tonality, between the 'specious present' and the musical stream, between the plural ontologies of Tovey's perspectivism and a unified consciousness or cultural community, between the metaphors of language and those of music, and (broadly speaking) between British empiricism and German idealism. At each level, a discrete fact signifies an unmediated unconscious ideal. It also refers to the disjunct articulation of associationist semiotics and to the pointillist biological ontology of cries, impulses and gestures. Tovey's heterogeneous critical registers address the spectrum of audience competence.[36] This expediency gives his writing vitality, and sparks off illusions of seeing.[37] His note on the 'Casta Diva' from Bellini's

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Norma emphasises a vivid detail which, by association, encompasses the absent whole. It seizes an isolated cadence as a metonym for the opera, and opera in general: 'At my first glance at the miniature score I had the good luck to open the page containing the following magnificent cadence, which richly earns a pardon for all the operatic sins that *bel canto* may have committed' (p. 79). Similarly, Tovey sometimes interrupts his informal comments with a technical factoid. Writing about Bach's Cantata BWV 51, he suddenly becomes specific: 'The writing, both for the voice and trumpet, is very brilliant and takes the singer to the high C, a thing that only happens twice elsewhere in Bach's extant works' (p. 5). This creates a flash of realism: like the high C, this musicological observation is a quasi-painterly 'highlight'.

The true complexion of Tovey's music criticism seems to me quasi-visual and sourced in the art criticism of Ruskin, the master of synecdoche, and his synaesthetic writing about non-linguistic art forms.[38] In *Modern Painters* (Ruskin [1843–73] 1989), Ruskin fixes on a detail in a painting and weaves a literary tapestry around it, bringing the images vividly to life for the reader – a rhetorical device of *ekphrasis* and *hypotyposis*.[39] Ruskin's brilliance is to embed his selection of detail within the symbolic economy of a painting.[40] In his account of Tintoretto's *Crucifixion*, Ruskin marvels at encapsulation of agony in its background detail: the 'ass feeding on the remnants of withered palm-leaves' is an example 'of the elevation into dignity and meaning of the smallest accessory circumstances' (p. 262). These accessory details, or 'circumstances', played a dual role, shielding imagination from the sublimity of reality ('to give the imagination rest', p. 354), and exercised imagination by rendering these details symbolic of psychological and moral reality (i.e., the significance of the palm-leaves). The dialectic of 'shielding' and 'symbolising' reflects Ruskin's view of the relationship of perception and knowledge, in the Reidian tradition addressed in the early chapters of *Modern Painters*. Educating the senses takes the Reidian form of stripping away false concepts.[41] A quite a different kind of knowledge is implied in Ruskin's praise of 'talkative facts', when 'the lines in a crag ... mark its stratification, and how it has been washed and rounded by water' (p. 34). This is the 'natural' knowledge of experience, of the time and space around a detail, through which a detail in a painting 'talks' to a spectator. Bullen, on Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, detects a 'synecdochic method' (1992, p. 56) informing Ruskin's intellectual argument and art criticism. This trope has a modernist complexion: fragments and ruins are epitomised in Ruskin's view of the crumbling city of Venice as a synecdoche of Western decline.[42] Similarly, the cadence in 'Casta Diva' symbolises, for Tovey, the ruin of *ottocento* opera, and a single melody from the Brahms Clarinet Trio is imagined as the sole relic of an extinct author.[43]

Ruskin's campaign against the architectonic, his attraction to detail as a kind of painterly 'specious present', the investment of detail with the signification of the whole, and the mediation of this process in the education of the senses,

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resonate in Tovey.[44] Painting, one of many metaphors considered by Zon (2000) in his survey of nineteenth-century British writings on music, predominates in Tovey. Theoretically, though, he uses Ruskin as a stick to beat Pater, castigated for subjective impressionism, the pretence that we judge music by 'sitting in its presence feeling our pulses and noting our symptoms', since this discounts the 'enormous amount of "brute knowledge" [which bears] upon our contemplation of works of art' (p. 479).[45] Yet, since Ruskin's fault was to view art through the prism of Turner, Pater's perspectivism (his facility of according each style its appropriate critical standpoint) was also Tovey's ideal. In this respect, Tovey used Pater to set Ruskin 'in motion'.

In Tovey, to be inside a musical work is to be inside a picture: the work 'is around you like a panorama, like a picture painted on a round wall' (p. 485). But to be 'within the proper point of view of a work' entails a flexibility of outlook. Tovey demonstrates this with a thought experiment which flickers (like Wittgenstein's rabbit/duck) between Mozart and Beethoven. If 'you are in Beethoven's point of view', then 'Mozart is to you a humble, rather formal and innovative person, with serious limitations which simply prevented him from writing like Beethoven' (p. 485). Conversely, 'if you were to take the Mozart point of view . . . you would find that Beethoven was extravagant, unintelligible, exaggerated, and full of pose and limelight'. The solution is to take 'the really intelligent view . . . based upon the contents of the work itself' (p. 486).[46] Tovey is most overtly 'visual' in his conceptualisation of tonal space ('a sense of key is to one's musical appreciation of harmony very much what a sense of perspective is to one's sense of sight', p. 423). His radio lecture, 'Music and the Ordinary Listener' (1937, pp. 604–26), defines 'tonality as the perspective of harmony', its 'sense of orientation' (pp. 613–14). If the tonic is 'the spectator's point of view', the dominant is 'the vanishing point', but 'a step towards the dominant is a step forward'. Here Tovey sets the painterly metaphor in motion: 'The listener is not rooted to the spot like the spectator of a picture' but 'shift[s] his viewpoint to other keys' through modulation (p. 616).[47] If perspectival mobility is intrinsic to the chain of fifths, it is also basic to Tovey's distinction of being *on* and *in* a key, as in his analysis of the finale of Mozart's Clarinet Trio (K. 498) in which he explains how a cadence ostensibly in the tonic E♭ turns out to be the dominant of a passage in A♭. Tovey, as folk psychologist, but transforming his lecture room into a laboratory, turns to his guinea-pigs and asks:

> does anybody feel that we are going to stay there? Do you think that the proper thing to do from this base is to go back to your opening? Oh dear no! (*musical illustration*). [We get what we expected, and the tune returns concluding in A♭] (bars 150–3). You feel that the modulation [bars 140–44] is only local. It is, no doubt, from a certain point of view, in the dominant, but from the point of view of the whole movement it is only on the dominant of A flat. (pp. 434–5; all annotation as in the book, with square brackets showing editorial interventions)

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This holism conflicts with Tovey's associationist approach to tonality (as in his perplexing conviction that 'no two keys are related to each other through a third tonic', p. 622).[48] Tovey's insistence that 'no listener is required to see further ahead than the immediate juxtapositions as he hears them' (p. 622) can be explained as tonal metaphor. Condensation (an essential condition of metaphor) is effected through a suspension of links and transitions: 'one key shines through another' (p. 622) by means of 'immediate juxtaposition of these keys without any weakening explanatory links' (p. 430). The recapitulation of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E♭, Op. 7, is approached via D minor, with no dominant mediation: it asserts 'not the relation between the keys, but simply their enormous distance apart' (p. 432). If 'the laws of a good remote modulation . . . closely resemble those of a good metaphor', then 'you must not afterwards explain it away' through the 'long-drawn-out similes' of dominants (p. 438). That would be to weaken some of Beethoven's most dramatic contrasts. Paradoxically, then, the associationism of Tovey's moment-to-moment progressions is reinforced by the abrogation of functional links: tonal myopia turns out to be another expression of the Darwinian struggle of blind and brute creatures.

The most radical level of perspectivism concerns the number of music's many modalities. Music divulges different qualities when composed, played, recalled in tranquillity, read, written about, or analysed. These qualities expand in a universe of incommensurable particulars, by analogy with the logical atomism of language games described by the Cambridge philosophers contemporaneous with Tovey. The issue, again, is whether and how these particulars cohere. For Tovey, there is both good and bad perspectivism. The bad sort is the 'turn-of-the-weathercock criticism that is based on little experience at all' (p. 478), by which he means fashionable journalism whose cardinal sin is snap judgment. Against this stands the collective 'public', whose 'greatest privilege' is 'that of reserving judgement and taking one's time' (p. 652). A truism of pragmatist aesthetics, according to Dewey, is that experience is a collective, rather than private affair (Shusterman 2000, pp. 25–33), a society which weaves these many strands together.

VI

As an evolutionary thinker, Tovey successfully adapted himself to his evolving aesthetic and scientific critical landscape (long before C. P. Snow defined the 'two cultures'). Tovey's 'synecdochic method' anticipates our present fixation on analytical detail and the 'moment'. An old polemical exchange between Charles Rosen and Lawrence Kramer on the subject of critical 'detail' is relevant here.[49] Observing that 'nothing in life is insignificant: anything can be made fascinating if one looks at it hard enough', Rosen says that Kramer is

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unable 'to distinguish insignificant details from more important ones', and that the former 'will not bear the weight Kramer gives [them]' (Rosen 1994, p. 76). Kramer responds by unmasking Rosen's 'nostalgically' normative 'ideology of music's transcendental apartness' (p. 74). Rosen counters with a defence of tradition which virtually paraphrases Tovey. Contending that Kramer himself seeks to 'prescribe the way music can be listened to', Rosen argues that:

> music of the past adapts only too well to new social and cultural conditions and was designed so to adapt; it carries along into a later time some but not all of the values of the society for which it was created, and therefore no cultural or historical interpretation can take permanent possession of it. (p. 76)

Tovey said that a '"genuine" work of art carries enough of its environment with it to explain itself to future and foreign civilizations' (1941, p. 9).

Analytical detail and synecdochic argument can be authorised only by authentic, wide-ranging musical experience. Tovey has the edge over the present critical scene in that his intellectual interests (literary, artistic, scientific and philosophical) are as broad as those of 'postmodern knowledge', but are balanced by a broader foundation of professional musical activity (composing, performing, conducting, editing, teaching and writing). In so far as his texts model musical experience in line with James's and Myers's individualistic psychology, Tovey anticipates the scientism of contemporary musicology (which has yet to make the leap from meme-like schemata to a model of musical consciousness, from the 'genotype' to the 'phenotype'). To dismiss Tovey as 'historicist' would be hasty, and would be to ignore Lodge's provocative thesis that the Victorian realist novel is a better 'record of human consciousness' than any scientific theory, and that it is 'arguably man's most successful effort to describe the experience of human beings moving through space and time' (2002, p. 10).

Fiction and consciousness also converge in Damasio's notion of the 'autobiographical self' as a kind of literary production, weaving and integrating memories and metaphors into a narrative of self-awareness (1999, pp. 172–6). Dennett says that 'our fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definition is not spinning webs or building dams, but telling stories' (1991, p. 418). For Davis, the only possible Archimedean viewpoint for surveying the incredible diversity of Victorian culture is the individual consciousness of the great novelist: constantly shuttling between 'consciousness and unconsciousness, working at both the macro- and microscopic levels of life' (Davis, p. 196), George Eliot's 'dexterity of combination' achieves in fiction something impossible in theory – 'salvation by translation: religion translated into science or ethics or poetry, ethics translated into politics, poetry translated into philosophy, mind translated into brain or heart into mind' (p. 195). 'Salvation by translation' is Tovey's essential technique. The novelist's model of

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consciousness enables Tovey to weave together many metaphors (the painterly, poetic, biological and philosophical) to become a hallmark of English-language music criticism. Armed with a piano and a story, the expert lecturer takes his or her audience into the consciousness of the composer, so that speaker and listener might imagine a Beethoven.

Tovey provides access to a rich Victorian culture still somewhat neglected in musicology, and incepts the new axis of evolutionary musicology committed to consciousness rather than psychology. Attention to the 'consciousness model' will help Anglo-American music criticism to cure its inferiority complex towards Austro-German, French and Italian theory. That Tovey translated this model for music squares with Gerhard's (2002) audacious proposal that Britain, and not Austro-Germany, invented the Classical style, and that its formal aesthetic flowed from the Scottish Enlightenment. Although hyperbolic, the idea that the Classical style is 'English' resonates with Kerman's argument that Tovey constructed the Anglo-American image of Beethoven (1977, p. 191). If Germans can claim Shakespeare (via Schlegel's translations) as their own, we can take pride in Beethoven as an English composer.

NOTES

1. *Donald Francis Tovey*, *The Classics of Music: Talks, Essays, and Other Writings Previously Uncollected*, edited by Michael Tilmouth; edition completed by David Kimbell and Roger Savage (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). li + 821 pp. £71.00. ISBN 0-19-816214-6 (hb).

2. Thomas Lea Southgate (Vice-President): 'But music is a progressive art; its finality has not yet been reached – I doubt if it ever will be reached. When we come to the perfect work of art [*Oh dear!*] it will have to be judged according to the standard of its own day' (p. 682). Heathcote Statham, organist, submits his pennyworth, and Tovey scribbles: '*I was too much astounded to say anything to any purpose. I felt like a man with a lighted pipe in a crowded compartment which he thought was 'Smoking' but which really is 'Ladies only'*' (p. 684). (All formatting here is as it appears in the book.) Tovey's humorous asides are part of what makes him such an engaging presence.

3. Regrettably, Tilmouth was unable to complete the second part of his planned introduction which would have explored 'the sources and nature of Tovey's thought about music' (p. vi). Kimbell and Savage surmise that Tilmouth's essay 'was to concern itself especially with the roots of Tovey's ideas on music in the classical philosophy he studied as an undergraduate at Oxford under Sir Edward Caird of Balliol' (p. vii).

4. He is surprisingly less technical than his English precursors and contemporaries such as Ebenezer Prout (1835–1909), Stewart Macpherson (1865–1941) or Charles Williams (1855–1923).

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5. Many Idealist philosophers, including the Platonist Benjamin Jowett (1817–93), the Hegelian Thomas Hill Green (1836–82) and Edward Caird (1835–1908), were attached to Balliol. F. H. Bradley (1846–1924), the foremost British philosopher of the late nineteenth century, and the main champion of the Idealist revival, held a fellowship at Merton.

6. The first was the publication of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817), and the second the dissemination of William Hamilton's philosophical writings (1788–1856).

7. Eric Clarke's recent (2005) adaptation of Gibsonian ecological perception suggests that natural realism is perhaps *the* distinctive tendency of Anglo-American writing about music, the one which opens up the most clear blue water with continental Europe.

8. In James Van Cleve's words, 'Eventually the transition from sign to thing signified becomes so automatic that it is no longer a matter of inference or reasoning: When the sign is presented, I spontaneously conceive of and believe in the thing signified. When the transition has thus become a matter of habit or custom, I am said to have *acquired perception* of the thing signified' (2004, p. 126).

9. Mill sought to destroy what he took to be a metaphysical mystification of experience in his massive *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* of 1865 (see Davis, pp. 179–80).

10. Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) was perhaps the most decisive publication in the intellectual history of nineteenth-century Britain. Darwin's thought overlapped considerably with the ideas of Herbert Spencer. Both draw on the social and economic theories of Malthus and Bentham, debts subsequently repaid in the form of Social Darwinism and the invention of functionalist sociology).

11. *Mimesis*, survival by imitating an enemy, is a biological device, as Adorno recognised (see Paddison 1997, p. 140).

12. The 'retreat' of German and French aesthetics into 'inwardness' after 1848 (Paddison 2002, pp. 325–9) was not shared by aesthetics in Britain, perhaps because of its synergy between art and politics.

13. According to John Locke, 'human liberty resides in our ability to suspend impulses and desires and instead to "examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others"' (Thomas 2004, p. 38).

14. 'The emphasis in Caird's teaching was always on the ideal unity of all thought and experience' (Muirhead 1924, p. 310).

15. Whereas 'Most [psychology] books start with sensations, as the simplest mental facts, and proceed synthetically, constructing each higher stage from those below it' (p. 219), James contends that 'every thought is part of a personal consciousness' (p. 220), that 'thought is in constant change' (p. 224), and that the changing nature of thought is itself an object of consciousness: 'Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous' (p. 231).

16. Anyone consulting volume three of the old *Oxford History of Music* (on the

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seventeenth century) in Durham University Library will find a cautionary note by Arthur Hutchings (1906–89, Professor of Music at Durham 1947–68) pasted in after the table of contents:

> Members of the Music School are asked to read this book with extreme caution. No volume in O.H.M. so badly needs replacing. Parry is not entirely to blame, for history is useless without interpretation, and that means opinion. The trouble is that opinion suppresses evidence and magnifies other evidence. Almost every sentence in this first paragraph is utterly untrue, the first sentence wildly so.

This is Parry's offending sentence:

> The change in the character and methods of musical art at the end of the sixteenth century was so decisive and abrupt that it would be easy to be misled into thinking that the laws by which progress or regress invariably proceeds were abrogated, and that a new departure leading to developments of the most comprehensive description was achieved through sheer speculation. (Parry 1902, p. 1)

Like the warning on a poison-bottle, Hutchings's caveat reveals how toxic evolutionism had become for musicology in the 1960s. (By telling contrast, the 1920s Leeds Public Libraries series of *What to Read* handyman pamphlets, which featured digests on many subjects such as English economic history, citizenship and zoology, entitled its musical contribution *What to Read on the Evolution of Music*, written by Ernest Newman (1928): in the public mind, evolution was the most interesting thing about music history.) Hutchings probably took exception to Parry's mysterious 'laws [of] progress or regress', flagged by chapter titles such as 'Antecedents', 'Initiatives', 'Links between the Old Art and the New' and 'Diffusion of New Principles'. Yet Parry's emphasis on the web of musical culture as the product of the collective labour of generations corrects the preoccupation with genius of composer-led histories. Parry's *The Evolution of The Art of Music* (1896) and *Style in Musical Art* (1911), underneath their deductive abstraction, reveal a sophisticated conceptual model of musical material's dialectic between mind and society, internalised as a struggle between 'expression and design' (see Dibble 1999). The latter would anticipate Adorno's dialectic of *mimesis* and *ratio*, were Parry's 'expression' not biologically so stamped by the Darwinian life impulse. Parry's book on style came out the same year as Guido Adler's better-known *Der Stil in der Musik* (1911). Whereas Adler's history is driven by the spirit of Goethe and Hegel, Parry is influenced by the evolutionary spin on the origin-of-language debate, outlined in Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) and Spencer's *The Philosophy of Style* (1882).

17. A statement such as 'the test of style is the consistent adaptation of the materials of art or literature to the conditions of presentment' (1911, p. 88) echoes Spencer's argument that: 'in deciding how practically to carry out the principles of artistic composition, we may derive help by bearing in mind a fact already pointed out – the fitness of certain verbal arrangements for certain kinds of thought. The constant variety in the mode of presenting ideas which the theory demands will in a great degree result from a skilful adaptation of the former to the latter' (Spencer 1882, p. 19).

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18. He chided Ruskin for his fixation on Turner, which in his view exhibited the 'fundamental error of judging one school of art by the criteria of another' (p. 478).

19. Spencer's most famous definition of evolution is 'a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; through continuous differentiations and integrations' (Spencer 1862, p. 216).

20. Tovey's musical memory was 'prodigious' (see Grierson, p. 174). Memory gradually preoccupied Tovey and became the theme of his BBC talks on 'Musical Art-Forms' (1935, pp. 583–603). He argued that the form of music not written in 'the big binary forms' (i.e. sonata form), even the first Kyrie of Bach's Mass in B minor, is heard only 'subconsciously'. Art-forms differ essentially 'in the demands they make upon the memory' (p. 600): he states that 'the strain on the listener's memory in sixteenth-century music is nil' (p. 595), but admitted that he cannot quote any music by Lassus or Palestrina.

21. Throw-away endings typify Tovey's own writing. The frequent foreshortenings and impressionistic skating of surfaces in the essays convey the haste of a critic who thinks on the hoof: his comment on Mozart's speed of production (p. 161) betrays his own work ethic. His published writings have the imprint of his basic idiom, 'holding forth at the piano' (p. 568), which allowed the adept lecturer to create the illusion that he was thinking in the real time of music. The transcribed keyboard talks (pp. 570–626) delivered on BBC Radio convey Tovey's genius for ventriloquising the classics of music, for insinuating himself into the compositional workshop and leading his audience to them.

22. He concludes his essay on Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E flat, 'Les Adieux', by conjecturing that 'if Beethoven had left this finale unfinished at the point where the recapitulation ends, it would have been a matter of extreme difficulty, if not utterly impossible, to guess what kind of coda would fit the rest of the structure and sentiment' (p. 42). The essay on Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor, K. 466, ends with the counter-factual example of Mozart's alternative theme for the finale: 'Now that the Concerto is over, let us devote a moment's thought to the really glorious opening of the finale which Mozart first intended, and had sketched in its place in the autograph' (p. 162). Tovey finds this hypothetical theme to be the 'most attractive theme in the Concerto, and one of the wittiest Mozart ever wrote', but Mozart 'calmly broke it off, and started the present finale on the same music paper' (p. 163).

23. Historically, Tovey finds Scarlatti to be as 'isolated as a dew-pond' (1949, p. 345).

24. Tovey's attitude to history and time is epitomised in his notion of 'dramatic fitness' within the individual work. Dramatic conflict, the crux of Tovey's formal theory, parallels Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* ([1904] 1981). Bradley's 'Hegel's Theory of Tragedy' ([1909] 1962, p. 83), in a collection often cited by Tovey, defines dramatic conflict as the central fact in Shakespeare, and criticises Hegel for his 'enthusiasm for the affirmative' (p. 83) which distorts the reality that 'the sense of reconciliation is imperfect' (p. 79). Tovey contends that 'absolute' instrumental sonatas are far more 'dramatic' than operas or stage music (pp. 475, 533, 573). The radical implication of this is that such music is more

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dramatic than Shakespearean drama because it is more concentrated: absolute music alone adequately expresses the Darwinian struggle of the world. In this *Durchbruch* of metaphysics into biology, Tovey parallels Nietzsche.

25. Indebted to Darwinian philosophers such as Dewey and George Herbert Mead, Meyer progressed evolutionary music psychology more rigorously than did Tovey (see Cumming 1991, pp. 180–8).

26. See also Tovey's comments in *A Musician Talks*: 'Melodies are not built up out of figures. They are large musical objects which are divisible into figures'; 'The figure may stand for an idea to much the same extent as a single word; and figures may develop from one idea to another, not by mechanism, but by associations and contexts which explain themselves with a cogency quite unattainable by arbitrary mechanisms' (1941, Vol. 2, p. 49).

27. The last sentence of Gurney's pivotal fourteenth chapter seems to exile music to the Platonic/Kantian hermeticism which Schopenhauer claimed for music, safe from all metaphorical negotiations (see Goehr 1996).

28. Cone wrote the preface to the 1966 edition of Gurney.

29. Few Haydn symphonies were in the orchestral repertory: as late as 1928 he wrote that 'so little is Haydn known that a complete set of the Paris symphonies in score is not to be had for love or money. Even the London symphonies are far from hackneyed. I have not heard more than ten of the twelve myself' (p. 109).

30. The brief essay, 'Haydn's Symphony in B flat, Opus X No. 2' (1939), found on a single sheet in the Tovey Archive of the Reid Library, vents his vexation that musicology wastes its time on fripperies, such as resolving the disputed authorship of composers' juvenilia, while the priority is to 'fill up the biggest lacuna that yet remains in our public representation of the main stream of music. As long as some forty splendid symphonies of Haydn's middle period remain inaccessible except to researchers in libraries, I feel nothing but irritation when archaic works are enthusiastically welcomed, always with the aid of some title or anecdote' (p. 792). Tovey's late advocacy of Haydn is perhaps the singular exception to the surprising lack of evolution in his thought throughout his career – a static quality which is evinced even on the page, giving the peculiar impression that, though the words might move, the argument doesn't. Tilmouth's volume ends with the revelation that, asked about nine months before he died who his favourite composer was, '[Tovey] became serious and concentrated on what he was going to say: and said – "The older I grow, and especially recently, I feel more and more it is Haydn!"' (p. 793). One might imagine that his favourite had always been Beethoven, but since Tovey wrote very little on Haydn, his championship may have been more ethical than aesthetic.

31. Years earlier, at the conclusion of the apprentice Tovey's Musical Association lecture, Southgate shrewdly kicked off the discussion by pricking the critic's Achilles heel: 'But what I have been trying to get at is,' asks Southgate, 'what is this particular *touchstone* of criticism, this inestimably useful revelation which will enable us to put our hands on a work, and say, "Now that is a real work of

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art"?' (p. 681). Tovey didn't have an answer then or indeed later, and of course there *was* no answer, because touchstones defer aesthetic criteria to a pragmatics of experience, embodied in the person of the critic.

32. See Alter for a discussion of Darwin's analogical method with respect to the 'linguistic image' (1999, pp. 99–105) and the general discussion of the linguistic analogy in Victorian ethnology (1999, pp. 37–41).

33. Reid's 'acquired perception' has the most obvious musical outcome in the culture of the nineteenth-century British programme note, and 'its undisputed educational function as an aid to music appreciation' (Bashford 2003, p. 127). But experts and professionals can also acquire perceptions: experience in rhetoric and theatre can *teach* a composer to write more dramatic absolute music, just as Tovey always maintained that the experience of writing his opera, *The Bride of Dionysus*, taught him to be a better instrumental composer.

34. Darwin writes: 'We see that the musical faculties, which are not wholly deficient in any race, are capable of prompt and high development' (1909, p. 868).

35. This British scene is succinctly summarized by Davis (2004, pp. 188–96), unfolding the steps from Hamilton's notion of 'unconscious association', his pupil E. S. Dallas's celebration of the pleasure principle intrinsic to literary criticism in his 1866 *The Gay Science*, James Sully's work on 'sudden memory' and his theory that dreams reverse evolution, to Frederic Myers' concepts of the 'subliminal self' and the 'subliminal uprush'.

36. The experiential discontinuity of programme notes is apparent in the thin tissue of prose that surrounds isolated musical quotations. This format reflects the duality of listening in early twentieth-century Britain. Programme notes, although frequently circulated in advance (and therefore pre-digested), were, ideally, designed to be read during a concert.

37. See also the sudden claim, in the midst of Tovey's 'Les Adieux' analysis, that 'An actual majority of Beethoven's finales state their principal theme three times' (p. 38).

38. Tovey was aware that music criticism lagged behind literary criticism ('we must get a notion of musical form that is not inferior to a well-read critic's notion of dramatic and literary form', p. 537). The Grovesian programme note was in this respect much more primitive than the prestigious genre of writing about painting, of which Ruskin was the past master.

39. For example, Turner 'indicates the reflection of a buoy ... with three black strokes', in his *West Cowes, Isle of Wight* (p. 148).

40. 'The principal object in the foreground of Turner's *Building of Carthage* is a group of children sailing boats'. Ruskin commends 'the exquisite choice of this incident, as expressive of the ruling passion which was to be the source of future greatness, in preference to the tumult of busy stonemasons or arming soldiers' (p. 17).

41. In the chapter 'That the truth of nature is not to be discerned by the uneducated senses' (pp. 28–31), he contends that people 'are apt to fall in some degree into the

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error of painting what exists, rather than what they can see' (p. 30), and that they must be taught how to see.

42. Drawing a piece from one of the archivolts in St. Marks, Ruskin writes that 'our decision of the respective merits of modern and of Byzantine architecture may be allowed to rest on this fragment of St. Mark's alone' (quoted in Bullen 1992, p. 56).

43. 'I am convinced that if such a theme [the finale's second subject] came to us as the only extant quotation from a lost author, we should instantly conclude that he must have been a very great one' (p. 81).

44. Gerhard (2002, pp. 101–23) shows the remarkable persistence of the (baroque) music-as-painting metaphor well into the early nineteenth century, albeit only in Britain (see also Spitzer 2006). The reasons were economic: the spatial object-character of painting lent itself to a culture of commodification, facilitating the entry of music-theoretical concepts of 'line' and 'colour', 'design' and 'form', even 'unity in variety', into the public discourse.

45. In this respect, Tovey observes that Ruskin's impressions are based 'on an intimate knowledge of literally thousands of works of art' (p. 478).

46. Another word for 'point of view' is style, and sometimes, as in Tovey's conjecture that Mozart had not three stylistic periods, nor nineteen, but 'six hundred and twenty-six' – as many as Köchel numbers (p. 146), perspectivism becomes rampant.

47. In an earlier thought experiment, demonstrated in the third of his 1922 Beethoven lectures, 'Tonality and Key-Relationships' (pp. 422–32), Tovey points out that 'if you dwell very long upon a single chord, it does not seem to be a tonic but it conveys the impression that it is going to be the dominant of something' since 'the whole drift of harmony is from one dominant resolving into another' (pp. 430–1).

48. Dale (2003, p. 192) notes the tonal myopia of Tovey's theory, for instance, in his hearing of the second group of Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 28, as coloured by the mediant (iii), whereas this iii (F sharp minor) is really vi of V.

49. A response to Rosen's review, 'Music à la Mode', *New York Review of Books* (23 June, 1994), 41/xii, pp. 55–62. Kramer's letter, with Rosen's reply, appeared in the issue of 22 September, Vol. 41/xv, pp. 74–6.

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