Some Issues in Analysis

FORM and CONTENT

Two working definitions making use of spatial metaphor:

- **Form**: the definition of tonal space
- **Content**: the furnishing of tonal space

To gain understanding of musical processes which define and furnish tonal space is one (but not the only) purpose of analysis. Keeping A.B Marx, ‘externalisation of content’ as an underlying thought consider the three fundamental form building processes: recurrence, contrast variation. These functions of musical material define form.

TONALITY

Almost impossible to define.

Tovey

- Tonality is a thing which you can no more describe except by metaphors and comparisons than you can describe the taste of a peach, or the precise difference between venison and mutton or beef that has been kept too long.¹ (*The Integrity of Music*) 47

Spatial metaphor of perspective:

- *Key, key relations and tonality*. […] When it is possible to say that a piece or passage of music is in a certain key, the statement is aesthetically equivalent to saying that the perspective of a picture is related to a certain vanishing point. ‘Tonality’ is the art or system of such key perspective; and ‘key relations’ are facts concerning areas of the whole composition which are large enough to have a key of their own. […] The tonic is the horizon, or vanishing point, of any piece of music that can be said to have the harmonic perspective we call key. (*Essays Vol.1*) 3-4.
Binary Forms:

- **Simple Binary – Symmetrical or Asymmetrical.** Most common form in dance movements of the Baroque and Early Classical period. Staple form of dance movements (e.g. Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Bourrée, Minuet, Jig etc.) to be found in the Baroque Suite (orchestral, ‘cello, keyboard etc.)

- A movement in Binary form contains two parts, each usually repeated. The first generally modulates from the tonic to a related key, ordinarily the dominant if the tonic is major, the relative major (less often the dominant minor) if the tonic is minor. In short Binary movements there is often no modulation, the first part merely ending with a half (imperfect) cadence. The second part reverses this motion, progressing back to the tonic either directly or via one or more additional keys. Binary form is thus an archetypal example of open tonal structure at the large scale, in which motion away from the tonic in one part requires a complimentary return to the tonic in the second. (HDM, 95).

Symmetrical Binary.

**Example: attrib J.S.Bach, Minuet in G.** No modulation. First model ends with perfect cadence. Second model references V at bar 4.

- Though certain examples of overt contrast between parts 1 and 2 of a binary form exist, the relationship of the two parts is usually quite close: the thematic material, like the harmony, may be said to be complementary rather than contrasting. Typically, the two parts parallel each other thematically, beginning and ending alike except for the difference in key. Even when new material is introduced after the double bar, it generally continues the style of the preceding part or serves as a brief transition to part 2 proper. Hence the appropriate symbolisation for most Binary forms is AA1, not AB; an alternative appropriate terminology might be **Statement and Restatement.**

Examples:

- **Handel, Minuet in G:** No modulation; extended second model ending with cadential rhyming termination.

- **Handel, Gavotte in G:** Modulation to V; extended second model as above.
• **Handel, Impertinence (Bourrée):** No modulation; Minor key; contrapuntal imitation between upper and lower voices; first model ends on V (phrygian cadence). Extended second model.

Rounded Binary:

• In the early eighteenth century composers began to introduce a coordinated return of the main theme and the tonic key within part 2 of Binary forms, producing a rounded or recapitulating Binary form.

• Rounded Binary form is common in late Baroque dance and Sonata movements and is found in most Minuets, Scherzos and Trios of later Classical symphonies and other instrumental works. *Equally important it serves as the principal structural basis for the emerging Sonata form, part 1 becoming the repeated exposition, first half of part 2 the development, and the second half of part 2 the recap.* (HDM 96).


• Although almost always to be found in the Suite, the Allemande is not a true dance form; rather a quietly flowing movement in 4/4 time and moderate tempo. It usually begins with an upbeat of a single semiquaver, or, more rarely of three semiquavers (cf. the Handel example). The texture is often more consistently polyphonic than in the other movements, except the Jig. (adapted from R.O.Morris, *The Structure of Music* (London: OUP, 1934).

• 1st Model (Statement): 13 bars ➔ V

• 2nd Model (Restatement): digression through related keys ➔ I

• Stylistic cohesion achieved through continuity of texture between two models.

• Rhyming Terminations: cadence in V at close of first model (11-13) restated at close of first model (32-35) expanded by one bar (33 interpolated).

• Continuous texture woven from motivic material found in first bar freely developed (e.g., augmentation and inversion). Cf. Style brisé.
• Second model develops through continuous expansion (by augmentation, sequence etc..) of material from the first model resulting in an asymmetrical movement in which the second model is extended.

• Synthesis of binary and ternary led to ‘end weighting’ of second model. Restatement of opening material serves as structural basis for emerging Sonata form.

**Coda: Two concluding examples**


NB. HDM – Harvard Dictionary of Music