



Commentary on Neumeyer's MTO 0.1 article

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[1] David's essay has a couple of "spikes" of its own at the end ([19–20]). Two things, somewhat distinct, struck me. 1) "I suppose it is no secret that [music theorists'] language or methods are not designed to facilitate judgments of value, but only to support them after they have been made. Perhaps the most far-reaching implication [of the essay] is that the link between the tools of technical musical criticism and the ideology of masterwork culture is not at all secure." If the first sentence is true, the second is also no secret at all. Surely it is axiomatic that one's direction at point of departure determines where one goes? Value judgements would seem to fall under the subject of aesthetics, and I wonder why DN didn't talk more about issues of aesthetics in the essay. (Or, for that matter, issues of cognition: how one sound is perceived to "mean" or be apt for some given dramatic event.)

[2] I also wonder why DN didn't raise the issue of opera composition; I hope it's not too banal to draw attention to the close genre-relation of film music and opera music: indeed, opera seems even better suited to a discussion of how music supports a desired "physical" mood, or how music interacts with drama. Perhaps you could comment, David?

[3] I agree with the final spike, "where's the real tinsel?" Indeed, it's not such a black-and-white, pop vs. masterwork culture, thing, as we all know. E.g., I may choose to study "pop" opera, e.g. *Madame Butterfly*; you may choose "masterwork" opera, e.g. *Salome*. Which is tinsel? obvious. Why? depends on your ideology. But we could also group *Salome* AND *Madame Butterfly* as "masterwork" compared to "Showboat", couldn't we?

[4] Therefore, could perhaps a finer delineation of types of cultures and ideologies than DN's binary one be drawn up? If not, why not?

[5] Thanks again for getting this stuff going. I found it most interesting, & hope others too will offer some reactions.

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