

tion in form and content, and we have seen how montage, and intellectual montage especially, embodied this very opposition. But in addition to this conceptual opposition, montage aesthetics provided for a more strictly formal, even unideological “counterpoint.” Interestingly, though many writers since have seemed to assume otherwise, this is the counterpoint we find in the Soviet Statement on Sound cited above. To return to Peter Wollen’s formulation, that description seems fairly exclusively formal, and original montage theory, as well as subsequent developments, had ample provision for such formal application.

**Only a contrapuntal use** of sound in relation to the visual montage piece will afford a new potentiality of montage development and perfection.

**The first experimental work with sound must be directed along the line of its distinct nonsynchronization with the visual images.** And only such an attack will give the necessary palpability which will later lead to the creation of an **orchestral counterpoint** of visual and aural images

In his *Film Technique*, Pudovkin identifies “asynchronism” as the basic, presumably contrapuntal principle of sound film.

It is not generally recognized that the principal elements in sound film are the asynchronous and not the synchronous; moreover, that the synchronous use is in actual fact, only exceptionally correspondent to natural perception.<sup>42</sup>

“Natural perception” is a phrase with ideological implications. The “natural” way of seeing and hearing is different from and superior to the more dominant “naturalized” way, to the bourgeois constructs of perception. In addition to this ideological construct, though, Pudovkin is also referring to naturalized *film* perception, or in other words an ossified sort of viewing. Asynchronism, aside from revolutionary precept, is simply an alternative to conventional cinema.

Béla Balasz said that the “formal problems of sound montage, the acoustic and musical rules which govern the effect of sounds are purely musical and acoustic questions . . .” This kind of sound montage is separate from intellectual formulations. When Balasz says “the asynchronous use of sound is the most effective device of the sound film,” he is simply saying, in part, that a