

Narration, Program, and Narrative

I HAVE DISCUSSED TWO very separately motivated rejections of musical subordination in the classical Hollywood score, as well as of the musical parallelism that in many ways preceded its development. That subordination was seen, at least in part, to exist in the trite and vulgar appropriation of source music, and of the standard repertoire in particular. Although negative reactions are not wholly invalid, I have suggested that the polar responses of aesthetic music critics and the Soviet montage artists respectively also contain inadequacies. Isolation and plain opposition can be as unhelpful and even crude as that which they are meant to counter. By following up the musical implications of counterpoint I have proposed a solution which lies, in a kind of over-tonally dialectical synthesis, in between the extremes.

In this synthesis, collisions between image and music often and most effectively turn on points of reference and association. Previous rejections and ignorings notwithstanding, because of the way it multiplies these points, source music is a particularly interesting and important montage element. In this chapter I will propose a context, through a second film-music analogy, that will help clarify the ways that classical music works in films. This context resides as well in a second film-music synthesis, the product of the collision between the aesthetic and the political avant-garde.

Suspensions concerning the use of source music in film actually descend from a much older tradition, even more dependent on a premusical source. In his 1946 book, *Music and Society*, Wilfred Mellers noted that pre-Purcellian English music did not generally suffer from hierarchical divisions, that it was open to and participated in by all. He states that in this early period “intense human