

contrapuntal alternative that I will suggest, I would like now to discuss a less problematic film-sound counterpoint. There is precedent for this more formal, less figurative counterpoint in the original theory. Though this alternative has not been the most frequently heard, many applications and discussions testify to its viability.

The following criticism of Dziga Vertov's montage aesthetic gives us some idea of how film actually works musically.

[Vertov] had failed already in the era of the silent films by showing hundreds of examples of most cunning artistry in turning: acrobatic masterpieces of poetic jigsaw, brilliant conjuring of filmic association, but never a rounded work, never a clear, proceeding line. His great efforts of strength in relation to detail did not leave him breath for the whole. His arabesques totally covered the ground plan, his fugues destroyed every melody.³⁹

This critic's objection is that in Vertov's films clear oppositions and resolutions are lost to poetic detail. The consequences relating to montage and meaning are clear. Vertov's films are extremely individual, even eccentric in their forms and expressions. In addition, the unclear line insures that the viewer's response, as well as the action that may follow it, are also heterogeneous and unpredictable. Vertov's films do not merely affirm or oppose.⁴⁰

This point will be pursued presently. What I wish to emphasize here is how this critic, decrying the obscuring of cinematic melody (narrative?) by elaborate fugue, rejects Vertov's superlative accomplishment, as suggested by the word "fugue," of a literal, formal cinematic counterpoint. To illustrate that accomplishment let us look once again more closely at the counterpoint analogy.

Roy Prendergast has said that "sound montage is, essentially, constructing films according to the rules of music."⁴¹ Prendergast is talking about montage here, and in its traditional figurative sense. In this way, I disagree. Film and music are different media, and they play by substantially different rules. The effective application of one discipline's conventions and terminologies to another requires substantial modification and transposition.

In terms of a cinematic transposition of the musical, however, Prendergast has a point. Revolutionary cinema validated opposi-