

broadly musical or specifically cinematic. One important reason for this is that whereas many musicians of various stripes have an investment in totalities and musical idealisms, quotation is almost unavoidably fragmented and even disruptive. Far from clarifying or covering its contexts, this repurposed music has had a consistent and decidedly disconcerting effect on a number of music cultural factions.

As we will see, the idealists have some justification, and we will not pretend that all of the effects of quotation are straightforwardly salutary. In passing through some of its complications, however, we will find that this is more than just a troubling trend with which we must come to terms. Rather it will be argued that the institution of musical quotation in film narrative is quite central in its resonance and relevance, and that it holds the possibility of real instruction and enjoyment.

It is possible to find these things when we take the trouble to investigate a quotation, when we trace it back to a source or consider its transformations in a narrative, or in the way that a spectator receives it. In doing this we will very often find that what has begun in fragmentation can lead us to a certain resolution and to an illumination of broad contexts and common experiences. Congreve's platitude and counterplatitude is emblematic of most any intertextual interchange, and even of our own attempts to relate our own particular experiences and partial knowledge to the broader settings around us. We are surrounded by fragments, removed from roots, troubled and tempted by echoes of plenitude, disconcerted by the possibility that these echoes are only an illusion, or a deception. Seeking reassurance, we may incline toward clichéd expressions and conceptual reductions, even filtering our experiences and perceptions through such selective lenses. Conversely, and in reaction, we may tend toward negation, seeking alternatives to and even denying the viability of conventional affirmative impulses.

These are precisely the contradictory impulses that motivate and characterize the main traditions not only of narrative film generally, but most particularly of film music. Harmony and dissonance, parallelism, and what has most commonly been called film musical counterpoint, together constitute both the prescribed practice and the most standard critique of classical film music.