

past the simplistic modernist dualisms and crude materialist dialectic that have prevailed, and which to some degree continue in film music theory. I hope to find a more complex and satisfying alternative to familiar and too frequent oversimplifications.

In this way, through revising and replacing the dominant similes of classical music, I will come to an effective way to deal with the third way that serious music has interacted with film and film culture: in the actual uses of the music in films. The last chapters will demonstrate ways that direct music and film criticism, as well as complicating but enriching film-music analogies, help us to understand and enjoy this underconsidered part of film music practice.

#### THE TWO AVANT-GARDES

If Theodor Adorno represents one pole of modernist thought, advocating as well its corresponding artistic strategy, then the Soviet film artists are at the other end. The way Peter Wollen characterizes these two alternatives in his influential essay "The Two Avant-Gardes" is useful to this discussion. Wollen suggests that avant-garde art in the twentieth century split into two streams: the aesthetic and the political. Their ways and means were dramatically different: where one sought to remove itself from objectionable realities, the other moved to change that reality.<sup>1</sup>

Although Wollen states that the aesthetic avant-garde was derived from earlier experiments in painting, I wish to carefully place modern music, in the sense Adorno uses the term, in the same category.<sup>2</sup> "The suppression of the signified altogether, an art of pure signifiers detached from meaning as much as from reference" seems to me to describe the Schoenbergian severity that Adorno defends as much as it does the visual abstractions to which Wollen refers.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike its counterpart, the political wing of the avant-garde was most concerned with content and its application in a social sphere. All formal experimentation was to be in the service of progressive social ends. Instead of the strategic inaccessibility of the aesthetes, the political artist's aim was to communicate, and