

Royal Brown makes a similarly valuable point, with similar overemphasis.

For if, on the one level, the cultural mythification via the merger of the music and visuals into the narrative can blind and deafen the viewer/listener to the existence of the filmic images as such within history while creating a pseudohistory with which the viewer/listener is encouraged to identify, the film/music interaction can . . . aesthetically create the presence of a broader, noncultural mythology that roundly negates the entire patriarchal belief in a scientific empiricism that holds physical space, chronological/linear time, and history/causality as absolute truths.<sup>43</sup>

By assuming “entire patriarchal beliefs” Brown is invoking the absolutes he condemns, and in doing so he diminishes his argument. “Audiovisual dissonance is merely the inverse of convention, and thus pays homage to it, imprisoning us in a binary logic that has only remotely to do with how cinema works.”<sup>44</sup>

Must all be withering parallelism or revolutionary opposition? Staunch advocacy, as well as reading against the grain, are extremely important, but both have their dangers. Stuart Hall warns against the pendulum swing from naive assumptions of “necessary correspondence” to the equally totalizing “necessarily no correspondence,” reminding us that one isn’t any more helpful than the other, even if it is more fashionable.<sup>45</sup> Reading against the grain, with respect to film sound or family relations, should presuppose an awareness of the generating grain, as well as all the unexpected surfaces and depths that we don’t see.

My point is that there is much more to film music, and to meaning in general, than simply parallelism and perpendicularity. If the former is congruent, and the latter at a ninety-degree angle to that congruent line, then musical counterpoint shifts from concord to opposition and back again, and covers the entire intervening space as well. If we use musical counterpoint as a figure for the way sound and music function in film, we must consider this in-between territory. Meaning in music is multifarious and difficult to pin down. This being the case, simple parallels and oppositions become nearly impossible, and not even particularly desirable.

Parallel and perpendicular, tonal concord and counterpoint