CHAPTER

5 Disney's Dream: The *Rite of Spring* Sequence from 'Fantasia'

DISNEY HAD WANTED from the beginning to include some sort of legend of the creation, volcanoes and tidal waves and lumbering dinosaurs. He assigned his research assistants to discover some appropriate music, but all they could offer him was Haydn's *Creation*, which somehow didn't seem sufficiently epic. Disney presented the problem to Stokowksi, and Stokowski offered a bold solution.

'Why don't we do the *Sacre*' he said.

'Socker?' Disney asked. 'What's that?'[1]

> I will say nothing about the visual complement as I do not wish to criticize an unresisting imbecility; I will say and repeat, however, that the musical point of view of the film sponsored a dangerous misunderstanding.[2]

Stravinsky's damning words capture the tone of academic commentary, in so far as there has been any such thing, on the film that Walt Disney believed 'would signal a new dawn for the animated cartoon'.[3] Disney's hopes were pinned not only on the technical innovations that 'Fantasia' exploited (including unprecedentedly intensive use of the studio's multi-plane cameras, which allowed independent control of several layers of animation, and a multi-speaker sound system known as 'Fantasound'), but also on the prospect of bringing works of the high art tradition to mass audiences. 'Think of the numbers of people who will now be able to hear your music,' he told Stravinsky.[4] The composer was unimpressed: 'Well, the numbers of people who consume music . . . is of no interest to me. The mass adds nothing to art.' And Stravinsky's lofty attitude was replicated by many contemporary critics, for whom the cartoon treatment of the Western master-work tradition constituted (as Leonard Maltin puts it) a form of 'musical blasphemy'; on the other hand, Maltin continues, the masses stayed away, 'put off by the movie's highbrow connotations'.[5] When it was first released in 1940, then, 'Fantasia' fell between all the stools, and so was a commercial failure. This was fully reversed only 30 years later, in the aftermath of the Beatles' 'Yellow Submarine', when 'Fantasia' was re-released, now targeted to the new youth audience as 'the ultimate visual experience'.[6] To add a personal note, I recall queuing to see 'Fantasia' in the early 1970s, but being unable to get into the cinema.

Disney has been given little credit, by Stravinsky or anybody else, for including in 'Fantasia' as notorious a score as *The Rite of Spring*, the American première of which took place in 1924, only 14 years before Disney's decision to feature it.[7] Stravinsky's later account of his negotiations with Disney suggests that they were rather acrimonious. The request for the use of *The Rite*, he says, was 'accompanied by a gentle warning that if permission were withheld the music would be used anyway'[8] (which would have been legal since there was no American copyright for the work). And in 1960 there was a squabble in the pages of the *Saturday Review* regarding how much Stravinsky was paid (he said $5,000, Disney said $10,000), and also regarding Stravinsky's initial reactions to the film. When he was shown the first rough drawings for the *Rite* sequence in December 1939, Disney claimed, Stravinsky had 'said he was "excited" over the possibilities . . . and when shown the finished product [he] emerged from the projection visibly moved'. In reply, Stravinsky recalled that he had seen the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* sequence in negative (this makes sense, since it was the first sequence to be made), which had amused him, and he had said so. But, he continued, 'That I could have expressed approbation over the treatment of my own music seems to me highly improbable—though, of course,

[1] Otto Friedrich, *City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940's* (London, 1987), 35–6.

[2] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (London, 1962), 146.

[3] Leonard Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons*, rev. edn. (New York, 1987), 63.

[4] Stravinsky interviewed in *Musical Digest*, Hollywood, Sept. 1946; repr. in Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (London, 1979), 358. Claudia Widgery has pointed out the extent to which film was seen as 'an invaluable means of exposing the masses to good or new music' in the 1930s ('Kinetic and Temporal Interaction', 28). A few years later, Chuck Jones, who was director of cartoons at Warner Brothers Studios, referred specifically to the educational potential of the animated cartoon when he said that it can 'match, enhance, make credible the melodic fantasy of the composer. . . . I believe that the educational system will one day demand a library for its public schools of just such painless introductions to classic and semiclassic music' ('Music and the Animated Cartoon', 366).

[5] Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 63.

[6] Ibid. 347. Maltin adds: 'Animator Art Babbitt was asked by some young people who saw the film for the first time if he and his colleagues had used drugs when they made the film thirty years before. "Yes, I was on drugs," Babbitt replied, "Ex-Lax and Pepto-Bismol!".' According to the film credits, Babbitt worked on the 'Nutcracker Suite' and 'Pastoral' Symphony sequences.

[7] The contract between Walt Disney Enterprises and Stravinsky is dated 4 Jan. 1939, and followed on negotiations about the possible use of *The Firebird* for an animated cartoon; subsequently a contract was signed for *The Firebird*, together with *Renard* and *Fireworks*, though in the event none of these was used (Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 363–4).

[8] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 145.

I should hope I was polite.'[9] One might expect the composer to be more readily amused by the Mickey Mouse treatment Disney handed out to Dukas than by the juxtaposition of his own music with prehistoric animals; 'duller than Disney's dying dinosaurs' was Stravinsky's damningly alliterative description of Karajan's recording of 'Ritual Action of the Ancestors'.[10] Yet this hardly explains the rhetorical tone of his condemnation of 'Fantasia' as sponsoring a 'dangerous misunderstanding'. The danger, as I shall argue later in this chapter, was to the image of *The Rite* as absolute music that Stravinsky had been busily disseminating since the 1920s—an image which has certainly misrepresented the work as a historical phenomenon, and arguably as a musical one too.

Stravinsky's negative reaction was no doubt prompted also by what Disney and the conductor, Leopold Stokowski, had done to the music. When he saw the film, Stravinsky says, 'I remember someone offering me the score and, when I said I had my own, the someone saying, "But it is all changed". It was indeed.'[11] There were reorchestrations—most prominently, as Stravinsky says, the transposition to a higher octave of the horn glissandi in the 'Dance of the Earth' (the result is that they sound incongruously like the trumpeting of elephants). More significant, however, was the omission of some of the component pieces of *The Rite* and the reordering of the rest, as shown in Figure 5.1 (which also lists the cuts within pieces).[12] Stravinsky's explanation for this—that the most difficult pieces had been eliminated—is probably not fair; at all events, it overlooks the rationale for the reordering. In the first place, the general pattern is retained by which fast and loud movements alternate with slow and quiet ones; in effect, the Introduction to Part II replaces the 'Spring Rounds', while the 'Dance of the Earth' takes the place of the 'Sacrificial Dance' as the final climax. And secondly, the abbreviated repetition of the opening bassoon solo at the end

[9] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 146. Friedrich ascribes the comments about Stravinsky's reaction to an 'associate' of Disney, rather than to Disney himself, and adds one that really is beyond belief: 'Stravinsky . . . had even observed that the concept of the world's creation and prehistoric life were what he "really" had in mind when he wrote *Le Sacre*' (*City of Nets*, 37). This comment is perhaps the source of Ralph Stephenson's statement that the sequence 'was favourably received by the composer as a legitimate interpretation of his music' (*Animation in the Cinema* (London, 1967), 39).

[10] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary* (London, 1968), 88.

[11] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 145.

[12] In Fig. 5.1 and throughout, bold type refers to rehearsal numbers in the 1967 study score (Boosey and Hawkes 19441). This cannot of course be the same as the score on which the performance in 'Fantasia' was based, which could have been either the 1921 (so-called 'first') or 1929 ('revised') edition. The variance in texts of *The Rite* is notorious, but mainly concerns rhythmic notation and details of orchestration, and for this reason is ignored here. For further information see Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 526–33; van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and* The Rite of Spring, 39–56; and Louis Cyr, 'Writing *The Rite* Right', in Pasler (ed.), *Confronting Stravinsky*, 157–73.

gives the music an immediate, literal closure that is not present in Stravinsky's original score.

		Omissions
	Introduction to Part I	
13	Augurs of Spring	
37	Ritual of Abduction	
79	Introduction to Part II	**85** to **86**+2; **86**+5
91	Mystic Circles of the Young Girls	**94** (whole)
104	Glorification of the Chosen One	**112**+3 to **113**+3; **117** to **120** (whole)
121	Evocation of the Ancestors	**127**+2 to **127**+4 (replaced by timp roll)
129	Ritual Action of the Ancestors	
71+1	The Sage	
72	Dance of the Earth	
	Introduction to Part I (first 6 bars)	

Fig. 5.1 The music of the *Rite of Spring* sequence

A Close Reading

Two distinct traditions lie behind the visualizations of music in 'Fantasia'.[13] The first of these, of course, is the cartoon film with which the name 'Disney' was already synonymous in 1940. Most cartoons were shorts, with their characteristically compressed time-scales, but Disney had made the first animation feature, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', in 1938, while 'Pinocchio' was released in February 1940, a few months before 'Fantasia'. (The world première of 'Fantasia' took place on 13 November.)[14] I have no intention of offering a general history of cartoon music up to 1940; but one development during the 1930s is worth mentioning in this context: in his highly influential cartoon scores, Scott Bradley had been pioneering the reduction of mechanical sound effects to a minimum, instead creating the desired effect within the music.[15] In other words, there was a precedent, even

[13] 'Fantasia' is available on video releases Disney D211322 (PAL) and 1132 (NTSC); it should be noted that this is the original, 120-minute release, not the cut-down, 82-minute version which was made for general release. It is of course a stereo remix of the multitrack original, and for this reason the following analysis does not consider the potentially significant dimension of spatial positioning.

[14] For a Disney filmography see Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 357–70.

[15] Prendergast, *Film Music*, 187–9, quoting industry commentary of the time (1937). Bradley was music director at MGM from the 1930s to the 1950s, and Prendergast describes his work in

in mainstream cartoons, for the illustration of screen action through exclusively musical means. And this in turn links with another, highly relevant precedent for 'Fantasia': the production, particularly by Disney, of cartoons based on existing music (mandating, of course, the editing of the film to the music, rather than the other way round). As early as 1929, only a year after the introduction of synchronized sound, Disney produced 'The Skeleton Dance', the first of the 'Silly Symphonies', in which the animations were linked with music by Saint-Saëns and Grieg. Another example is 'The Band Concert' (1935), the first Mickey Mouse film in colour, which featured Mickey conducting the *William Tell* overture. There was, then, what might be called an in-house tradition leading up to 'Fantasia'. Indeed, the continuity is quite explicit, for the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* sequence, featuring Mickey in the title role, was originally intended as a stand-alone 'Silly Symphony'. The decision to make it part of a full-length feature was an afterthought prompted, paradoxically, by the unprecedentedly high cost of the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* sequence; the predictable result was that 'Fantasia' resulted in an even more unprecedented overspend.[16]

The second tradition to which I referred is a more experimental, and generally European, one, involving abstract, generally hand-painted images linked to music. The best-known practitioner was probably Oskar Fischinger, whose film 'Mozart Minuet' anticipated the Bach sequence of 'Fantasia' with its images of 'waves rising up in an endless procession'.[17] The link is more than accidental, and indeed it is sometimes stated that Fischinger was one of the animators of 'Fantasia'.[18] What actually happened is that Fischinger carried out preliminary work on the 'Toccata and Fugue' sequence at the Disney studios, but left after altercations about his abstract style. (Maltin cites a contemporary account of discussions in which one of the animators snapped, 'We don't want anything like that, do we?', with another replying 'Hell, no!'[19]) Despite this, Fischinger's general style was carried forward into the final version of the Bach sequence, and there are abstract elements in some of the others—most obviously the one featuring the Sound Track.

But in general the various sequences in 'Fantasia' are *either* abstract *or* representational (in a cartoon sense, of course), and there seems to have been little attempt to impose an overall visual unity upon the film as a whole; different teams worked on each sequence, and there was little overlap in the personnel. In the case of the *Rite of Spring* sequence, however, there were apparently separate directors for the various sections;[20] and possibly as a result of this, it includes both abstract and representational animation, together with much that lies in between these extremes. This makes it a particularly appropriate focus for analysis, for, as will become clear, the nature of the relationship between music and pictures in it varies a good deal, depending largely on the abstract or representational quality of the latter. In brief, the music tends towards primacy in the sections with relatively abstract visuals, whereas there tends to be a tension between music and narrative during the more representational visualizations. In both cases, however, there is an intimate relationship between music and pictures (and after all, the rationale of 'Fantasia' as a whole is musical, not narrative). In what follows, then, I shall discuss the relationship between music and narrative in the *Rite of Spring* sequence while at the same time working from the small to the large scale.

We might start with the relationship between music and pictures which takes its name from Disney's cartoons: mickey-mousing. This refers to the kind of close synchronization between diegetic movement and sound-track that Disney developed in the 1930s (for instance, when Mickey takes a couple of steps forward and the music sounds with them), and its effect is, in a paradoxical way, to underline the arbitrariness of the link between the screen action and its musical correlate. The opening of the *Rite* sequence provides a number of comparable examples, though in a very different context. The sequence begins with a back-lit image of Stokowski conducting the bassoon solo, providing a transition from the outer world of Deems Taylor's introductory

some detail; see also Ingolf Dahl, 'Notes on Cartoon Music', originally published in *Film Music*, 8/3 (May–June 1949), repr. in Limbacher (ed.), *Film Music*, 183–9. Dahl, incidentally, was one of Stravinsky's closest professional associates throughout the 1940s, and collaborated with him in the *Musical Digest* interview cited in n. 4 above; for details of their relationship see Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 378–9.

[16] For the early history of 'Fantasia' see David R. Smith, *'The Sorcerer's Apprentice*: Birthplace of *Fantasia*', *Millimeter* (Feb. 1976), 18–67; Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 59–60; and Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 34–7. For the overexpenditure see Smith, *'Sorcerer's Apprentice'*; Jimmie Hicks, ' "Fantasia's Silver Anniversary" ', *Films in Review*, 16/9 (1965), 529–35, according to which 'Fantasia' cost $2 million and recouped its costs in 1963; and Joe Adamson, 'Chuck Jones Interviewed', in Gerald and Danny Peary (eds.), *The American Animated Cartoon: A Critical Anthology* (New York, 1980), 128–41: 138. Jones comments that 'To call Disney a businessman is about like calling Adolf Hitler a humanitarian. He was the *despair* of the business. He made *Fantasia* [1940] for $3 million when all he had in the studio was $2 million! He kept doing things nobody believed in.' It should be remembered, though, that 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' eventually grossed $8 million—'a titanic sum for a film made during the Depression', as Friedrich remarks (*City of Nets*, 34).

[17] Manvell and Huntley, *Technique of Film Music*, 182. Ch. 3 of Manvell and Huntley's book provides a useful general introduction to this tradition.

[18] See e.g. ibid. 182, and Dahl, 'Notes on Cartoon Music', 185.

[19] Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 60–1.

[20] John D. Ford, 'An Interview with John and Faith Hubley', in Peary and Peary (eds.), *The American Animated Cartoon*, 183–91: 184. John Hubley, who worked on the initial section, states that there was one overall director, but in fact two are listed in the credits (Bill Roberts and Paul Satterfield); Hubley is credited under 'Art direction', along with Maclaren Stewart and Dick Kelsey.

voice-over.[21] The image fades, and the screen becomes black. Gradually a distant galaxy appears, fragmenting into individual stars as it comes closer. Up to **4** there is no specific synchronization between pictures and music; the bassoon and cor anglais solos, together with their decentred accompaniments, convey a sense of desolation, but the link between the media is essentially no more than one of mood. But the effect of the string pizzicati at **4** is to announce something new: in the music they introduce the D clarinet melody, while in the film a cloud of luminescent gas passes across the screen, much closer to the 'camera' (as, for simplicity, I shall call the positioning of the implied viewer) than anything seen previously. It is not that there is any very specific affinity between the cloud of gas and the clarinet theme; the basis of their association is simply the fact that they appear together. Similarly, the D clarinet motif at **2**+2 is repeatedly linked with shooting stars, and what establishes the linkage is not so much the nature of the motif (though there is a certain similarity between its contour and the curving trajectory of the shooting stars) as the consistency of the association. On occasion, however, there is a clearly iconic relationship between the music and the image with which it is linked: at **5**, for instance, a small, burning star passes so close to the 'camera' that flames lick the 'camera' position, and these flames are tightly synchronized with flickering motifs in the clarinets.[22]

In all these cases, the melody–accompaniment relationship of the music corresponds to the figure–ground relationship of the visuals, and so the one articulates or clarifies the other. In particular, the gathering focus of the music, which reaches a polyphonic but highly co-ordinated climax at **11**, parallels the increasing sense of a narrative viewpoint that the film conveys; as the final shooting star plunges towards the earth and the picture dissolves into a view of shifting clouds with a distant landscape behind them, there is a definite sense that a story is beginning. There is a long pause before **12**, and the pictures from there to the end of the introduction (**13**, where 'The Augurs of Spring' begins) create the effect of a transition in exactly the same way that the music does. Clouds continue to move across the screen during the final, abbreviated repetition of the opening bassoon solo, but the string pizzicati, which anticipate one of the main ostinato patterns of 'The Augurs', are marked by small puffs of light, representing volcanic explosions scattered around the mountainous landscape. The explosions appear to take place in strict synchronization with the strings' sixteenth notes (though the effect of rhythmic precision disappears if you look at the film without the music), and they stop whenever the pizzicati stop. And then, as 'The Augurs' begins, there is a cut to a medium 'shot' of volcanoes erupting, with sheets of flame and ash co-ordinated with the musical accents.

Several things combine to create a strong effect of disjunction at **13**. For one thing, Stokowski does not observe Stravinsky's eighth note equals quarter note direction; he takes 'The Augurs' slower than that would suggest, which results in a sudden musical change of gear (the effect is as if a splice has been made in the recording).[23] Again, the pictures are more unambiguously representational from **13**, with the 'camera' being now, for the first time, at ground level. And throughout 'The Augurs' there is a tightness of synchronization between pictures and music that goes beyond anything that has come before (except for the tongues of flame after **6**, which find a close volcanic correlate in the four bars before **17**, where sheets of flame are tightly synchronized with the trumpets). But the sense of disjunction perhaps comes more than anything from the cut at **13**, the first perceptible cut in the entire film, but the first of many in 'The Augurs'. The result is to create a clear sense that everything up to this point has been a single introductory gesture; in this respect we can say that the pictures work in parallel with the music. From **13** on, however, the very closeness of their relationship creates a kind of tension between them; at times the music seems to intrude upon the pictures as a result of the constant synchronization between the two. The source of this tension lies in the anti-naturalistic patterns of activity that are forced upon the volcanoes by the musical rhythm—an artificiality that reaches its height at the bar before **22**, where the fortissimo chord prompts all the volcanoes to erupt at once in neat, vertical pillars of fire. They look more like orange gas jets than volcanoes. If the effect is rather silly, this is because we do not expect to see volcanoes being choreographed; there is a tension between the visualization of the music and our representational instincts. To put it another way, the extremely tight relationship of

[21] The text of the voice-over is as follows: 'When Igor Stravinsky wrote his ballet *The Rite of Spring*, his purpose was (in his own words) to express primitive life, and so Walt Disney and his fellow artists have taken him at his word. Instead of presenting the ballet in its original form, as a simple series of tribal dances, they have visualized it as a pageant—as the story of the growth of life on earth. It's a coldly accurate reproduction of what science thinks went on during the first few billion years of this planet's existence. So now imagine yourself out in space, billions and billions of years ago, looking down on this lonely, tormented little planet spinning through an empty sea of nothingness.' Later in this chapter I shall consider some of the issues this voice-over raises.

[22] The effect appears to have been heightened through reorchestration at this point.

[23] There is, incidentally, a very prominent splice at **29**+6. Although the 1967 score is consistent as regards the tempo at the beginning of 'The Augurs' (there is a quarter-note equals 50 indication at **12**, and a half-note equals 50 indication at **13**), Stravinsky subsequently specified a metronome marking of 56 for 'The Augurs' (Appendix to Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913* (London, 1969), 36), which would result in a perceived change of tempo, but in the opposite direction from Stokowski's.

music and pictures at a surface level results in a conflicted relationship at an underlying one.

By contrast, 70 years of cartoons have familiarized us with the idea that animals dance to music, even extinct ones.[24] It seems hardly necessary to document the kinesthetic associations that Disney's animators make between the swoop of the pterodactyls and the repetitions of the clarinet arpeggio after **87**, or the sudden flight of the archaeopteryx, which circles against the sky in time with the repetition of the first violins' phrase (after **93**). Again, at **97** the pizzicati in the lower strings bring out the balletic quality of the jogging dinosaurs (I could just as well have put it the other way round), while their heads go down to scoop the water in line with the falling fifths in the flute and solo cello at **97**+2 and **97**+4; at **98** the off-beat interjections of the low strings and bass clarinet convey the heavy tramp of the *Stegosaurus*. Or one might instance the way in which the animals stop and look up expectantly at the bars before **101** and **102**—an effect that reflects not only the change of instrumentation and the pauses in the music, but also Stravinsky's original choreographic directions for these passages (to which I shall return in the latter part of this chapter). All these are, in essence, typical examples of cartoon choreography; what makes them remarkable is only the skill with which the animators have succeeded in creating the effect that the music was composed for the animations, not the other way round. The most intensively choreographed passage, however, is the one that follows: the chase and fight between the *Tyrannosaurus rex* and the *Stegosaurus* which takes place during the 'Glorification of the Chosen One' and spills over into the 'Evocation of the Ancestors'. The patterning of both the music and the pictures is quite intricate throughout this passage, and so it is worth examining their relationship in some detail.

The animators do not, of course, overlook the most obvious suggestions of the music. At **102** the animals look up with increasing consternation, in loose synchronization with the horns' rising sevenths (the cutting rhythm quickens along with the music), while at **103**, which Stravinsky once referred to as an 'orchestral haemorrhage',[25] the 'camera' spins to the right, following the now terrified animals' gaze; on the last beat of the bar, at the climax of the 'haemorrhage', there is a cut to the *Tyrannosaurus* silhouetted against a sky riven with lightning. After a moment's shocked pause, the eleven ominous fortissimo chords begin. At first the *Tyrannosaurus* remains motionless, but on the fourth

[24] One might almost say 'particularly extinct ones'; almost the first animated cartoon, and certainly the first one to make a mass impact, was Winsor McCay's 'Gertie the Dinosaur' (Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 5).

[25] Stravinsky and Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, 86.

chord it begins to advance in time with the music. On the eighth chord there is a cut to the animals turning to flee, and from **104**, the beginning of the 'Glorification', there is an extended passage made up of juxtaposed pictures of the animals fleeing and the *Tyrannosaurus* pursuing them, with the predator's vicious snaps synchronized with the equally vicious opening figure of the 'Glorification'.[26] Throughout this passage and the fight that follows, both Stravinsky's score and Disney's visualization consist of contrasted and repeated blocks of varying lengths. Figure 5.2 provides an analytical overview, with each block being designated by a letter (a, b, c) and the larger groups that they form by a roman numeral; the arabic numbers following the letters and roman numerals indicate the number of beats, measured in eighth notes.[27] Finally, the vertical lines preceding some of the blocks indicate cuts

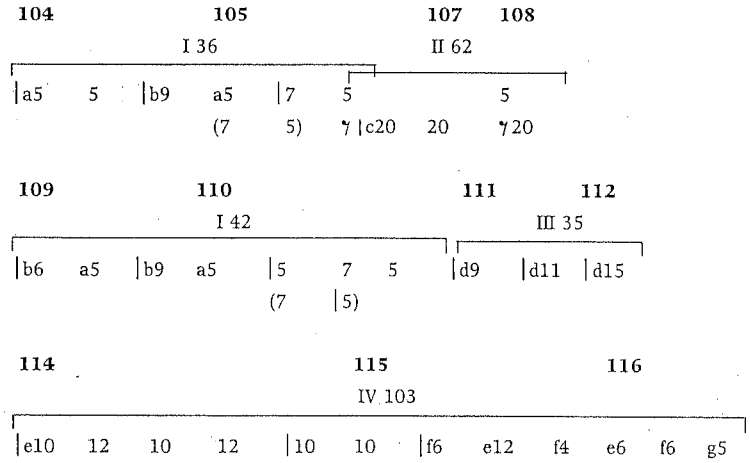

Fig. 5.2 Analytical overview of the fight sequence

[26] The *Tyrannosaurus* is today considered to have been a scavenger rather than a predator (its feeble front legs could not have been used for the kind of fighting Disney portrays); but 'Fantasia' was generally in line with scientific opinion at the time. Hicks records that Julian Huxley was hired to offer advice about protozoan life (' "Fantasia's" Silver Anniversary', 531), while Friedrich states that Chester Stock of Caltech also gave advice on the same subject, and that Disney even sent his technicians to Mount Wilson observatory to study the shapes of nebulae (*City of Nets*, 36). An exception was the depiction of the dinosaurs dying from drought. 'More likely they were frozen by the Ice Age,' said John Hubley. 'But Disney didn't want an Ice Age; he wanted a desert sequence' (Ford, 'Interview with John and Faith Hubley', 184).

[27] Where there is only an arabic number, the block is of the same type as the previous one; the (7 5) shows an alternative segmentation, depending whether the added quarter note is taken with the end of one block or the beginning of the next (it can be seen that the cuts follow a different

between shots that are co-ordinated with the beginning of that block, cuts that are not co-ordinated in this way being omitted.

We can make some general observations on the basis of this chart. For one thing, there is a contrast between the groups that are characterized by cuts at the beginnings of blocks (I and III) and those that are not (II and IV); these coincidences establish what might be termed audio-visual downbeats. The result is that groups I and III create the effect of being accented as compared with groups II and IV, giving rise to a kind of large-scale downbeat–afterbeat pattern; group II constitutes a kind of prolonged afterbeat following on the initial group I, while the more extended group IV follows on from the composite downbeat formed by the second group I and group III (that is to say, **109–12**). In this way the passage is pervaded by rhythmic expansion at a number of levels: just as each of the three 'd' blocks in group III is longer than the previous one, so group II is longer than the initial group I, and group IV is longer than the combination of the second group I and group III. On an even larger level, the passage from **109** to **116** forms a kind of extended consequent to the passage from **104** to **108**; in other words, the whole of the 'Glorification' falls into two halves, each beginning with the same material (group I), but with the second almost twice as long as the first (180 beats, versus 94). And it is worth observing that this two-part structure is more Disney's creation than Stravinsky's, for it depends both on the cutting of significant portions of the original score (as shown in Fig. 5.1) and on the large narrative structure of the sequence: **104–8** corresponds to the chase, while **109–16** corresponds to the fight between the *Tyrannosaurus* and the *Stegosaurus*.

Another significant correlation between musical and narrative structure can be observed at **114**, where the new pizzicato motif (which coincides with a sudden drop to the first 'piano' in the 'Glorification') corresponds to a new stage in the fight. After their initial, inconclusive engagement (at **111** and **112**), the *Tyrannosaurus* begins stalking the *Stegosaurus*, which at first backs away, and then both the fight and the music build up together, climaxing together at the 'Molto allargando' which, in Disney's version, leads straight into the 'Evocation'. A further observation is that the most musically repetitious part of this sequence, the six successive appearances of block 'e' from **114**, is enlivened by means of a relatively autonomous visual structure: this can be represented by the symmetrical pattern (x y z z y x), where 'x' refers to the normal positioning of the two combatants with the *Tyrannosaurus* on

segmentation on each occasion). This method of notation is adapted from van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and the* Rite of Spring; van den Toorn himself adapted it from Boulez's 'Stravinsky Remains' (trans. in Pierre Boulez, *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship* (Oxford, 1991), 55–110).

	104 a5	5	b9		**105** a5	7	5
	Tyr. attacks		animals flee (from front)		*Tyr.* snaps	animals flee	
Tyr. attacks			*Steg.* turns (from behind)	*Steg.* snaps	*Tyr.* snaps	they fight	
b6 **109**	a5		b9	a5 **110**	5	7	5

Fig. 5.3 Two parallel passages in the fight sequence

the right, 'z' to its reversal, and 'y' to the interpolated shots of the other animals watching.

But what might be seen as the most intricate interlacing of music and pictures occurs in the two 'I' groups. Figure 5.3 shows what is involved, and includes a summary of the visual content. The vertical alignment here is rather different from that in Figure 5.2: corresponding blocks appear in columns, and it can be seen that in each case the same musical materials appear in the same order, but with interpolations. The graphic representation, then, prioritizes the similarity between the two passages, and makes it possible to see how far visual similarity conforms with that of the music. On two occasions the same narrative action takes place at the corresponding musical point: the *Tyrannosaurus* attacks at **104** and **109**, while there are close-ups of it snapping at **105** and **110**+1. (There is a fairly general principle that whereas cuts between shots fall on the downbeats of the 'a' blocks, the dinosaurs' snaps are synchronized with the syncopated accents.) Elsewhere, however, the action is diametrically opposed: at **104**+2 (the 'b9' block) the animals are fleeing, and the 'camera' is in front of them; while at **109**+2 the *Stegosaurus* turns to fight, and we see it from behind. And there is a similar opposition of fleeing and fighting at **105**+1 and **110**+2 respectively.

What gives credibility to this reading is that the relationships are so definite: things are either the same, or exactly the opposite. But in a way it could hardly be otherwise. Just as the music is made up of contrasted blocks of varying durations (which is why it lends itself to this kind of graphic representation), so the visualization juxtaposes opposed images: the *Tyrannosaurus* attacking and the animals fleeing, or the *Tyrannosaurus* snapping at the *Stegosaurus* and then vice versa. Or one might reverse the direction of the argument and say that the patterning of the music resembles the film editing.[28] Either way, the combination of such music and film results in a very fertile context for the emergence of significant juxtapositions; it is perhaps not too cynical to suggest that almost *any* combination might produce perceptible and apparently intentional patterns, in much the same way that a kaleidoscope does. I am not suggesting, then, that Disney's animators carefully planned out this sequence along the lines of my analysis. What I *am* suggesting is that one of the attractions of *The Rite* as a subject for animation, and in particular one of the attractions of animating this passage in terms of a fight, is the way in which the music is constructed

[28] This bears upon the comparison I made in Ch. 4 between Cone's model of Stravinsky's music in terms of strata, a model that applies to much of *The Rite*, and the editing of music (especially rap) videos; see above, p. 159.

out of opposed blocks—a feature which *The Rite* shares with a great deal of Stravinsky's music.

Whereas Disney's interpretation of the 'Glorification' revolves around the patterning of musical and visual blocks, the linked volcano and tidal wave sequences (corresponding to 'The Augurs of Spring' and 'Ritual of Abduction') suggest a quite different approach: one based on relatively high-level metrical structure. The easiest way to explain this is by reference to the distinction that van den Toorn draws between what he calls 'Type I' and 'Type II' rhythmic materials in *The Rite*. Type I passages consist of the alternation of discrete blocks of different lengths; both the 'Glorification' and the 'Evocation' are examples. Type II passages, by contrast, have a steady overall metre but are made up of 'a superimposition of two or more motives that repeat according to periods, cycles, or spans that are not shared but vary independently of, or separately from, one another';[29] they often appear at points of climax, preceded by Type I passages. And van den Toorn's analytical application of these models revolves largely around demonstrating how each depends on an interplay between rhythmic irregularity (which is obvious in the shifting metric notation of Type I, but hidden in Type II) and metric regularity (which is explicitly notated in Type II, but hidden in Type I). Or, to put it another way, his analyses involve showing how the music is experienced in terms of different levels of rhythmic hierarchy being played off against one another. Following Andrew Imbrie,[30] van den Toorn proposes two contrasted types of listening strategy: 'radical' readings, based purely on surface rhythms, versus 'conservative' readings emphasizing underlying metrical continuity. Boulez's well-known analyses of *The Rite* are exclusively 'radical'; at the beginning of 'The Augurs', for instance, he follows the varying 'cells' created by the rhythmic accents, making no attempt to relate them to the notated 2/4 metre. Van den Toorn's point is that only by attempting to relate rhythm to metre, and by adjudicating between the contrary demands of each, can we do justice to the particular rhythmic dynamism that characterizes Stravinsky's music in general and *The Rite* in particular. To be sure, he says, the rhythms that Stravinsky pits against his underlying metres generally end up disrupting them, but 'it is only by pursuing a path of accommodation that insight can be gained into the nature of the disruption'.[31]

We have to adjust van den Toorn's terminology a little in order to apply it to 'The Augurs'. The opening, at **13**, does not look like Type I,

[29] Van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and the* Rite of Spring, 100.

[30] Andrew Imbrie, ' "Extra" Measures and Metrical Ambiguity in Beethoven', in Alan Tyson (ed.), *Beethoven Studies* (New York, 1973), 45–66.

[31] Van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and the* Rite of Spring, 113.

since it is notated in 2/4; but it could easily have been notated using a shifting metre instead of cross-metric accents, and the aural effect is comparable to that of more typical Type I passages, and this remains the case up to the end of **21**. By contrast, the latter part of 'The Augurs', from **28** to the end, is clearly Type II. There is no clean break between the one and the other; **22–7** constitute a transition between the two types. And what do Disney's animators make of all this? At first they cut with the downbeat of each new block (**14**, **14**+4, **15**, **16**, **18**); the only exception is three eighth notes before **17**, where a cut comes together with the trumpet figure (which, as I previously mentioned, is itself synchronized with the volcanic tongues of flame). But from there on there are several cuts synchronized with the beginning of melodic motifs (eighth notes after **19**, **19**+5, and **21**). There are also two cuts that coincide with the accents of the 'Augurs' chord (first eighth note of **19**+7, last eighth note of **20**+3); throughout the passage, however, these accents have received almost continual diegetic emphasis, in the form of eruptions and spurts of lava. All in all, then, the animation of the passage up to the end of **21** is predominantly 'radical'. And as such it can be contrasted with the 'conservative' interpretation that Stravinsky specified in his choreographic annotations, where he directed that 'the choreographic accents are the tonic accents of the measures, not those of the music'.[32] One can imagine Stravinsky laying against Disney the same charge that he laid (unfairly, as we shall see) against Nijinsky: 'He believed that the choreography should re-emphasize the musical beat and pattern through constant co-ordination. In effect, this restricted the dance to rhythmic duplication of the music and made of it an imitation.'[33]

The climactic chords at the end of **21** mark a major point of articulation both musically and visually; this is the point where the volcanoes all erupt at once, looking (as I said) like orange gas jets. It is also a point of articulation in narrative terms. From the beginning of 'The Augurs' up to here the film has depicted volcanic eruptions; now the focus becomes the flow of lava, with the remainder of 'The Augurs' following the lava down from the mountains to the sea. The sequence begins with a single extended shot that continues until **26**; at first the screen shows nothing but a featureless, red abstraction, but soon it is animated by calligraphic, fountain-like plumes that pick up the repetitive patterns of the music. Then, at **25**, the image coalesces into clouds, far below which a yellow crater can be seen. Up to here the music has consisted almost exclusively of one-bar repetitions grouped into four-bar phrases,

[32] Stravinsky, Appendix to *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913*, 36. The wording is that of Stravinsky's 1969 commentary, not the original annotations.

[33] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (London, 1960), 37.

but the flute melody at **25**—a genuine four-bar melody, not four repeated bars—strengthens the sense of emerging periodicity. At **26** there is a cut to a closer view of the crater, with ripples visible on the surface of the lava as it flows down the mountainside, and in essence the remainder of the sequence consists of parallel musical and narrative motions. As the music becomes increasingly periodic and its dynamic level and textural density grow, so the pictures follow the torrent of lava down; the climax is reached as molten rocks crash into the sea and the 'Ritual of Abduction' begins.

Although the overall pattern is clear enough, it is worth going into a little more detail about the relationship between the periodic structure of the music and the cutting of the film. The passage starting at **28** is a textbook example of van den Toorn's Type II, with eight-beat patterns in the flutes (which fragment into two-beat patterns as their sequence becomes increasingly random), three-beat patterns in the cellos and basses, two-beat patterns in the brass and violas, an approximation to one-beat patterns in the clarinets, and unmeasured trills in the bassoons. Figure 5.4 shows the cutting rhythm from here to the end of 'The Augurs'. The first two cuts (at **28** and **28**+4) correspond to the downbeats of the four-bar periodic structure[34]—what may conveniently be called hyperdownbeats—but as the trumpet tune becomes fragmented (from **28**+8) the periodicity becomes confused; all one can say is that until a beat before **31** the cuts at least fall on the metrical downbeats. From **31** to the end of 'The Augurs', however, the four-bar periodicity is secure (although it is initially complicated by the prominent off-beat horn and double bassoon at **31**). Accordingly there is a cut on the hyperdownbeat at **31**+4, but thereafter the increasingly prominent hyperdownbeats are consistently avoided; as can be seen from Figure 5.4, most of the shots consist of odd numbers of beats, and so are cut across the barline.

Is there a rationale behind all this? Three positive answers can be given. The first is that initially the cutting reinforces the emergence of periodicity (hence the cuts at the hyperdownbeats following **28** and **31**), but once the periodicity is established, the cutting plays against it. To use Imbrie's terminology, the cutting at first favours a 'conservative' reading of the music, but then migrates to the surface, and so becomes 'radical'. In other words, it appears to be broadly compatible with the kind of listening strategy that van den Toorn describes. The second answer follows on from the first: the 'play' against the underlying periodicity to which I referred takes the form of a partially autonomous cutting structure. Figure 5.4 is arranged on two levels to bring out the

[34] The music does not completely fall into four-bar (eight-beat) periods owing to the three-beat pattern of the cellos and basses. But the dominant effect is as stated.

Fig. 5.4 Cutting rhythms in 'The Augurs of Spring'

(a b a c) pattern, where (a, b, c) represent different numbers of beats; as may be seen, there are two such patterns, one on each line of Figure 5.4, with the crossover between them resulting in the (7 6 7 6) pattern between **32** and **34**. (As in the analysis of the fight sequence, I am not claiming that this pattern was consciously put there by the animators, or that it is likely to be perceived as such by any viewer; I am simply pointing out that it is there.) As for the last answer, it is the simplest and probably the most salient: there is an overall quickening of the cutting rhythm as 'The Augurs' reaches its conclusion. Fragmentation helps to build climaxes in pictures, as in sound.

In musical terms 'Ritual of Abduction' is the sustained climax to which 'The Augurs' has built, and in terms of Disney's narrative it corresponds to the tidal wave to which the preceding eruptions give rise. Here, too, it is possible to invoke a technical analysis of the music in order to explain one of the most striking features of the visualization: the black, blank screen at **46**, following on the equally blank, white screen after **45**, coinciding with what van den Toorn calls a 'wildly irregular climactic stretch' of Stravinsky's score.[35] Van den Toorn's analysis of 'Ritual of Abduction' again revolves around 'conservative' and 'radical' readings: his assumption is that the listener will try to find some regular metrical unit in terms of which the music can be parsed, perhaps the initially notated 9/8, perhaps 6/8 or some other unit. And his argument is that no such superordinate unit can be found; there is no consistent metrical unit higher than the eighth-note—a pulse, or *tactus*, which van den Toorn describes as 'almost impossibly rapid'.[36] What is more, it is exactly at **46** that, according to van den Toorn, the irregular metres will *'force* listeners to make at least an attempt at the eighth-note'[37]—an attempt which, he implies, can be maintained, if at all, only with significant mental (and perhaps even physical) strain.

How does this relate to Disney's animation? From the beginning of 'Ritual of Abduction' there is constant, frenetic motion, with waves surging abstractly across the screen and spiralling plumes of spray. This motion accommodates, or appropriates, the rhythmic energy of the music, but (as can be seen if the film is watched without sound) there is no determinate realization of the rhythm or even the pulse. The only exception is at **40**, where the pictures are cut tightly with the music: scenes of billowing spray coupled with the horn phrases are intercut with images of lightning behind dark clouds synchronized with the

[35] Van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and* The Rite of Spring, 108.

[36] Ibid. 110. The *tactus* is the most salient level of rhythmic regularity in music, the pulse with which people most readily tap their feet, and it is normally in the range 40 to 160 MM (p. 64). The notated tempo of 'Ritual of Abduction' is dotted quarter-note equals 132, or eighth-note equals 396.

[37] Ibid. 64.

tremolando phrases in the second violins, and the lightning seems to flicker in an eighth-note pulse. At **45** the waves peak, together with the music's registral climax; the octave glissando in the violins is visualized as the cresting of water as it crashes over a cliff. Spray surges over the 'camera' position, resulting in visual 'white-out' as all eight horns play their rising fifth figure, triple fortissimo, 'pavillons en l'air'. And then, exactly at **46**, there is a cut to a black screen, with only a small orange-red patch at the top; it looks as if the shot had been taken through water, with the orange-red patch rippling gently, completely out of time with the music. This continues until **47**, where the 'camera' begins to pan down, so that occasional patches of volcanic orange pass up the screen, flickering in time with the *sforzando* chords at bars 5, 7, and 10 after **47**.[38] Even without the benefit of a technical analysis of the music, there is a distinct impression that the visualization has in some sense 'modulated' beyond any attempt to match the frenetic foreground rhythm of the music, and now responds only to middleground accentuation. Indeed, there is a rather similar effect in the music at the end of this passage, during the final four bars of 'Ritual of Abduction': the thirty-second-note tremolandi absorb and, so to speak, dissipate the still unresolved rhythmic energy of the musical foreground. Disney's pre-emptive translation of this effect creates the illusion that, in the end, it is Stravinsky's music that is reacting to the pictures, not the other way round.

In 'The Augurs' and 'Ritual of Abduction', then, it is possible to read Disney's visualization almost as if it were an element of the music, and I shall come back to the question of what this may mean in terms of the models of multimedia which I have put forward. When it comes to structure on an even larger scale, however, it is possible to see the visuals as contributing to a level of articulation that is not present in the music at all. Early critics like Henry Cope Colles said of the original production of *The Rite* that its incidents 'follow each other without much feeling for rational sequence or climax'.[39] Even van den Toorn, after demonstrating the coherence of its characteristic pitch structures, confesses that '*The Rite* does not readily submit to the imposition of an all-embracing plot'.[40] And if we are to share the opinions of Arthur Berger and of Stravinsky himself, then the problem of coherence will have been

[38] Perhaps it is these points, or the flickers of lightning after **40**, that Dick Kelsey had in mind when he turned his difficulties as an art director for *The Rite of Spring* sequence into verse: 'The Rite of Spring is a moody thing / So make it dark as night, / With lots of jets and black silhouettes / But be damn sure it's light' (Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 61).

[39] Henry Cope Colles, '"Le Sacre du Printemps" at Drury Lane', *The Times*, 26 July 1913 (unsigned); repr. in François Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky, Le Sacre du Printemps: Dossier de Presse* (Geneva, 1980), 67.

[40] Van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and* The Rite of Spring, 188.

exacerbated for Disney—if, that is, it represented a problem for him at all—by the nature of Stokowski's performance. According to Berger, Stokowski's 'racy, turbulent readings' of *The Rite* had the effect of 'dragging the form into confusion',[41] while Stravinsky had just one word for the performance in 'Fantasia': 'execrable'.[42]

So what did Disney and his animators do about this? In the first place, of course, they submitted *The Rite* to the imposition of an all-embracing plot: a unilinear, chronological narrative that follows the development of the earth from its early geological history to the extinction of the dinosaurs, and finally the more recent geological events that resulted in their traces being buried within the rocks. (At times the *Rite* sequence seems to adopt the conventions of the educational film, though under a thin disguise of fantasy, as when the passing aeons are symbolized by waves of darkness that traverse the screen during the depiction of early life in the ocean.[43]) At the same time, however, the unilinear plan is overlaid by a symmetrical one: space—geological events—life—geological events—space. The last of these corresponds to the abbreviated repetition of the opening bassoon solo which Disney added. The symmetry is also rendered unmistakable by the closely parallel construction of the two geological sections, in each case beginning with cataclysmic events on the land, followed by a descent to sea-level (in the first case following the lava, in the second the rocks) and turbulent marine scenes. Even the graphic appearance of the two sea sequences, respectively aligned with the 'Ritual of Abduction' and the later part of 'Dance of the Earth', is unmistakably similar. There is also consistent use of symmetry to provide visual closure to smaller narrative sections, best illustrated by the life sequence, since it has most subdivisions, all but the first being closed in this way.[44]

But that is not all. Figure 5.5 shows the alignment of the various individual numbers of *The Rite* with Disney's scenario, and adds two further parameters which contribute to the large-scale organization of this sequence from 'Fantasia'. The first of these is colour. ('B' in Fig. 5.5 stands for blue, while 'O' stands for a range of colours from red through orange—hence the 'O'—to yellow.) Maltin has observed that 'Right from the start [and that means the early 1930s] Disney was concerned with creative use of color, not just color itself'. He instances the 1934

[41] Arthur Berger, 'Music for the Ballet', in Minna Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre* (New York, 1949), 41–69: 53.

[42] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 146.

[43] At **80**, **81**, and **82**, in each case coinciding with the same musical passage.

[44] The sea-shore sequence that begins at **83** ends just before **90** with the same backdrop it began with; the sequence of animals at peace begins and ends with prominent yawns (**90+3**, **101+4**); the *Tyrannosaurus* sequence is framed by shots of the animals looking on (**102–3**, **125**); and the extinction sequence is framed by shots of the burning sun (**128**, **139**). The third and fourth of these coincide with formal divisions in the music, and the second with a thematic repetition.

Introduction to Part I	Emergence from space	B	F
	The earth in turmoil		
The Augurs of Spring	Volcanoes,	O	F
	lava flow	O	F
Ritual of Abduction	Tidal wave	O	L
	The pageant of life		
Introduction to Part II	Protozoa,	B	R
	sea-shore	O	—
Mystic Circles of the Young Girls	Animals at peace	—	R
Glorification of the Chosen One, Evocation of the Ancestors	Hunt and kill	B	L
Ritual Action of the Ancestors, The Sage	Extinction	O	R
	The earth in turmoil		
Dance of the Earth	Earthquake,	O	F
	sea	B	L
Introduction to Part I (abbreviated)	Return to space	—	—

Fig. 5.5 Large-scale structure in the *Rite of Spring* sequence

Silly Symphony 'The Flying Mouse', in which the colours parallel the expressive trajectory of the cartoon (an unlikely parallel with Roller and Schoenberg suggests itself at this point). But in 'Fantasia', and specifically in the *Rite* sequence, colour is used structurally. There are two aspects to this. The first can be seen from Figure 5.5: almost every section or subsection is dominated by either blue or the red-orange-yellow complex, and there is a discernible large-scale rhythm of alternation from section to section. (More precisely, single blue-dominated sections alternate with a variable number of sections dominated by red-orange-yellow, a procedure which is close to one of Stravinsky's characteristic modes of musical construction.[45]) This alternation cuts across the symmetrical patterning I described in the previous paragraph; one of the few striking distinctions between the graphics of the sea scenes in 'Ritual of Abduction' and 'Dance of the Earth' is that the former are weighted towards red, the latter to blue. As for the second aspect of the structural use of colour, this subsists simply in the compact, 'designer'

[45] e.g., the blocks at **111–12** designated in Fig. 5.2 as 'd9', 'd11', and 'd15' might be further broken down into two elements, a fixed one (x) and a variable one (y); the analysis would now read: x3 y6 x3 y8 x3 y12.

feel that the colour organization gives to the film; a very obvious parallel, discussed in the previous chapter, is provided by the music videos of Madonna and Mary Lambert.[46]

The other additional parameter shown in Figure 5.5 plays a perhaps even more fundamental role in the experience of 'Fantasia'. It is represented by the letters 'F' (for forwards) and 'L' and 'R' (for left and right, of course), and shows the prevailing motion of the film—a motion that sometimes appears to be created by camera movement, and sometimes diegetically. (There are no letters for backward motion because it is almost completely absent from the *Rite* sequence; panning up and down occur only at occasional moments, generally associated with the sun.) Again, the basic principle appears to be one of alternation; successive subsections have contrasted prevailing motions. But there is a major exception: the consistent and almost uninterrupted forward motion from the beginning of the *Rite* sequence to the end of 'The Augurs of Spring', a motion that only becomes fully evident for what it is if one watches the film without the music. The 'camera' position is initially constructed through the motion of the galaxy and other heavenly bodies towards the implied viewer (they move upwards and to the right). Since there is no such thing as absolute motion in space, it is pointless to ask whether this is constructed as camera or diegetic motion; but the distinction becomes salient as the scene changes to the earth's surface. During the volcano sequence the prevailing motion derives from the 'camera', while during the ensuing lava flow sequence it is diegetic (the lava constantly flows towards the 'camera', threatening at times to swamp it). Even on those occasions when the forward motion is interrupted, there is generally movement in another direction. As a result, the few genuinely static shots create a kind of tension; they seem to demand resolution, almost in the manner of a musical dissonance, as at **28**+4, where a static shot of a distant mountain is relieved after a few seconds as the river of lava appears at the bottom of the picture. (At this point one suddenly realizes that the trumpet tune at **28**+4 sounds distinctly like one of those broad melodies that nineteenth-century composers used to depict rivers.)

This almost continual forward motion serves to draw the viewer into the narrative of the film. But it does more than that. It gives a sense of large-scale continuity and direction to the entire opening sequence of the film, binding the Introduction to Part I together with 'The Augurs of Spring'. The sense of sustained motion even spills over into 'Ritual of Abduction', in spite of the change of direction shown in Figure 5.5. Smaller processes of intensification—the build-up of both the

[46] See above, pp. 162–3.

Introduction and 'The Augurs' towards their climaxes—are subsumed within this larger directed motion. A single filmic gesture is created which reaches from the opening space sequence right up to the dawn of life. There is nothing on quite this scale in the rest of the film—or, indeed, in Stravinsky's score.

The Rite in Context

At the beginning of this chapter I referred to the image of *The Rite* as absolute music that Stravinsky was at pains to disseminate in the decades after its composition. As is well known, the original staged production of *The Rite*, with sets by Nikolai Roerich and choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky, was a *succès de scandale* in Paris, while its London reception, though on the whole cordial, was by no means rapturous. It was the concert performance of the following year, conducted like the original production by Pierre Monteux, that gave *The Rite* immediate entry into the modernist canon; Emile Vuillermoz recorded that

> After the last chord there was delirium. The mass of spectators, in a fever of adoration, screamed the name of the author, and the entire audience began to look for him. An exaltation, never to be forgotten, reigned in the hall, and the applause went on until everyone was dizzy. . . . For Igor Stravinsky, the homage of unlimited adoration.[47]

Stravinsky himself called this 'a triumph such as *composers* rarely enjoy'.[48] But it was not until he saw the 1920 revival of *The Rite* with new choreography by Leonid Massine, he said, that he realized he preferred *The Rite* as a concert piece.[49] One might have deduced as much, though, from an interview that Stravinsky gave a few days before the first performance of the Massine version, in which he claimed that the pagan dances of the staged version were merely a 'point of departure (*pretexte*)' for the music. 'I wrote an architectural work,' he said, 'not a story-telling one. It was an error to approach it from the latter point of view instead of from the real meaning of the score' (the error, he implies, being Nijinsky's).[50] But the conclusion of this argument seems to be that there is no need for choreography at all; after all, if the meaning is all in the score, why stage the piece?

[47] Emile Vuillermoz, review published in *Comoedia*, 6 Apr. 1914; trans. in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 106–7.

[48] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 143. The italicizing of the word 'composers' is, I think, a dig at Diaghilev, for a few lines later Stravinsky observes that 'Diaghilev was always verdantly envious of any success of mine outside of his Ballet' (p. 144).

[49] Ibid. 144. Stravinsky gives the date as 1921, but the Massine version ran from 15 to 27 Dec. 1920 (Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 164).

[50] Michel Georges-Michel, 'Les deux *Sacre du Printemps*', *Comoedia*, 14 Dec. 1920; repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 53; trans. in Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, 24–6.

Van den Toorn takes his cue from Stravinsky. '*The Rite* was already very overtly "dance music",' he says, so that 'choreographic interpretations tended therefore to be redundant . . . and hence to degenerate into spectacle.' (The logical consequence of this statement appears to be that if music is good for dancing to, there is no point in dancing to it.) And if *The Rite* attained 'the kind of universal appeal it has now for so long enjoyed' only when it migrated from the theatre to the concert-hall, he continues, it was only conforming to the general rule: 'in modern times . . . music has succeeded as musical structure (i.e. as "music") or it has barely succeeded at all.'[51] Of course you might expect a music theorist to say that; the discipline of music theory is predicated on the assumption that music can be usefully understood as some kind of 'objective construction' (the phrase is Stravinsky's, and it again comes from the 1920 interview), and van den Toorn's analysis makes no further reference to stage productions of *The Rite*. But the same assumption was so universally shared during the decades after the First World War that it came to seem self-evident. What began as a neo-classical reaction against Romantic excess turned at first into an orthodoxy, and then, as it became transparent, an ideology. In seeking to reinterpret as absolute music what he had composed as a 'musical-choreographic work',[52] Stravinsky was reacting (and contributing) to an emerging aesthetic consensus that extended far beyond the domain of music.

The assumption of aesthetic autonomy is so deeply ingrained in the one article to have been published on 'Fantasia' in a serious academic journal as, in effect, to prejudge the conclusions that it reaches. The article is called ' "Fantasia" and the Psychology of Music', and it was published by Horace B. English, of Ohio State University, in 1942, just two years after the film was released.[53] The visualization of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is acceptable, English says, because Dukas conceived his music as the illustration of a story, and so 'No violence is done to the composer's intent. . . . [T]he screen is merely substituted for the stage.'[54] But it cannot be justified with the greater part of the music in 'Fantasia', which is abstract (and, though he does not specifically mention it, I have little doubt that English would have included *The Rite* in this category). The reason, English explains, is that human

[51] Van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and* The Rite of Spring, 17, 18.

[52] Stravinsky's term: Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 75.

[53] Horace B. English, ' "Fantasia" and the Psychology of Music', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 2 (1942–3), 27–31.

[54] Ibid. 28. A very similar argument was presented at the time of the film's first release by Franz Hoellering (untitled review in *The Nation*, 23 Nov. 1940, pp. 513–14). Hoellering adds a comment that sheds an interesting light on the cinema-going conventions of the period: 'the audience applauded exactly where it would have applauded if the score had been composed by a Hollywood musician. . . . [T]o have the Pastoral Symphony interrupted by applause for sugar-sweet centaurettes is painful' (p. 513).

psychology dictates that visual experiences inevitably dominate aural ones, and so Disney's attempts to use pictures to illustrate music are doomed to failure; they turn art music into background music. Worse than that, he continues, Disney's visualization intrudes upon listeners' freedom to interpret the music in their own way, setting itself up as *the* correct way to hear the music—whereas in reality 'There cannot be . . . any universally "correct" visual pattern for one of Bach's fugues or even for highly programmatic music.' Consequently, he concludes, 'To encourage people to look for and upon Mr Disney's or anyone else's images is to encourage them to do something in the presence of music besides respond to music, is to make them to that extent less musical.'[55]

Despite an appealing streak of common sense, English's article is an object lesson in how to get things wrong. The trouble begins at the beginning, with the confident distinction between programme and abstract music (and this is an issue to which I shall return in the Conclusion). As far as *The Rite* is concerned, however, English cannot really be blamed. Stravinsky had, after all, himself authorized the interpretation of his music as ' "music" ' (to borrow van den Toorn's pithy expression). Indeed, in his 1920 interview, Stravinsky had explained how his initial idea for *The Rite* had been a musical theme; because he was himself a Russian, he said, its 'strong and brutal manner' had suggested to him the scenario of pagan Slavic tribes—'But bear in mind', he added, 'that the idea came from the music and not the music from the idea.'[56] And all this had percolated into the American reception of *The Rite*. The day after the American première (a concert performance which took place on 31 January 1924), the *New York Times* ran a review by Olin Downes which made use of extensive quotations from the 1920 interview, including Stravinsky's account of the work's origins. Downes followed these quotations with a rather curious comment: 'That is the story, and we believe the sincere story, of the musical evolution of this extremely interesting and exciting creation.'[57] Why did Downes need to say he believed the story? Did he have reason to doubt the sincerity of Stravinsky's account of the genesis of *The Rite*? In fact, he might well have, for as Richard Taruskin bluntly puts it, 'there was hardly a word of truth in this, and Stravinsky knew it'.[58]

I have little to add to the story that Taruskin unfolds, and will do no more than briefly summarize it. In his autobiography, and again in *Expositions and Developments*, Stravinsky stated that *The Rite* began not as a thematic idea but as a dream in which he saw a sacrificial virgin dancing herself to death. In *Expositions and Developments* he specifically added that 'This vision was not accompanied by concrete musical ideas.'[59] And when he began to work in earnest on *The Rite*, the first thing he did was to enlist the aid of Roerich in developing the scenario. The two met and discussed the project—then known as 'The Great Sacrifice'—in 1910, for on 19 June Stravinsky wrote to Roerich asking him to forward the piece of paper on which he had written down the libretto and which he had accidentally left behind.[60] But the chronology and its significance emerge most clearly from a letter that Stravinsky wrote to Roerich a year later. 'Dear Nikolai Konstantinovitch', it reads, 'I feel it is imperative that we see each other to decide about every detail—especially every question of staging—concerning our child. I expect to start composing in the fall.'[61]

Although Roerich was a painter, his special qualification for this task was that he was an acknowledged expert on the pagan civilizations that occupied what later became Russia, and Taruskin has uncovered many of the sources on which Roerich based his scenario; they range from Herodotus to nineteenth-century scholarship. What emerges most forcefully from this is the scientific accuracy of the result; far from consisting, as Disney put it, of 'a simple series of tribal dances', Roerich's scenario might be described as a work of ethnography masquerading as fantasy. Indeed, much the same might be said about Stravinsky's music. Here again the process of revision has been at work. In *Memories and Commentaries* (1960), Stravinsky specifically stated that 'the opening bassoon melody in *Le Sacre du Printemps* is the only folk melody in that work'.[62] But Taruskin's researches have not only matched the sketches for *The Rite* against existing folk tunes; he has even found the sources from which Stravinsky took some of them, while there is evidence that Stravinsky may have collected others himself.[63] And what again emerges is the scientific accuracy of the result—not in terms of the literal reproduction of folk music, to be sure, but in the consistent association of folk-derived materials with the ritual contexts to which they authentically belonged. When Stravinsky claimed in *Expositions and Developments* that 'very little immediate tradition lies behind *Le Sacre du Printemps*',[64] then, he could hardly have been more economical with the truth.

[55] English, ' "Fantasia" ' 29, 30–1.

[56] Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, 24.

[57] Olin Downes, ' "Sacre du Printemps" Played', *New York Times*, 1 Feb. 1924; repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 95–6.

[58] Richard Taruskin, 'The *Rite* Revisited: The Idea and the Source of its Scenario', in Edmond Strainchamps and Maria Rika Maniates (eds.), *Music and Civilization: Essays in Honor of Paul Henry Lang* (New York, 1984), 183–202: 184.

[59] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 140.

[60] Stravinsky, Appendix to *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913*, 27–8.

[61] Ibid. 29.

[62] Stravinsky and Craft, *Memories and Commentaries*, 98.

[63] Richard Taruskin, 'Russian Folk Melodies in *The Rite of Spring*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 23 (1980), 501–43. Taruskin's article reproduces a photograph of Stravinsky taking down the song of a mendicant folk-singer in Ustilug in or around 1910 (p. 507).

[64] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 147. Admittedly this remark refers specifically to musical traditions, but even there Taruskin has demonstrated the intimate relationship

But the most relevant aspect of Stravinsky's revisionism for present purposes is what Taruskin calls the 'great and deliberate injustice' that Stravinsky did to Nijinsky.[65] At the time of the original production, Stravinsky was unstinting in his praise for Nijinsky's choreography; a fortnight after the first performance, he told an interviewer who had questioned the choreography that 'Nijinsky is an admirable artist. . . . His contribution to *Le Sacre du Printemps* was very important.'[66] And a few weeks after that he wrote to Maximilian Steinberg that 'Nijinsky's choreography was incomparable. With the exception of a few places, everything is as I wanted it. One must wait a long time before the public becomes accustomed to our language, but of the value of what we have done I am certain.'[67] (The collaborative 'we' speaks even louder than the laudatory vocabulary.) But by the time he wrote—if 'wrote' is the right word[68]—his so-called autobiography, in 1936, Stravinsky had begun to tell a different story. 'To be perfectly frank,' he said, 'the idea of working with Nijinsky filled me with misgiving. . . . His ignorance of the most elementary notions of music was flagrant. . . . When, in listening to music, he contemplated movements, it was always necessary to remind him that he must make them accord with the tempo, its divisions and values.'[69] And by the time *Expositions and Developments* was published, a quarter of a century later, the story had hardened up: ' "I will count to forty while you play," Nijinsky would say to me, "and we will see where we come out." He could not understand that though we might at some point come out together, this did not necessarily mean we had been together on the way.'[70]

The curious thing is that what Nijinsky was doing, as Stravinsky describes it, sounds very similar to what Stravinsky praised in Massine's 1920 choreography of *The Rite*. In the revisionary interview he gave before the first performance of Massine's version, Stravinsky explained it as follows:

> Here is a four-beat measure, then a five-beat one. Massine might have his dancers move in a rhythm of three times three, which corresponds and makes the exact same total. . . . And he keeps up this battle, this slowing down or precipitation, for two or even twenty measures, but he always comes out in accord with any section as a whole.[71]

And curiouser still (as Alice might have put it), evidence is now available that the kind of mechanical counting Nijinsky had been doing was exactly what Stravinsky had told him to do. This evidence takes the shape of the four-hand piano score which Stravinsky marked up for Nijinsky and which contains a host of remarkably detailed choreographic indications. Stravinsky gave the score to Misia Sert on the day after the first performance,[72] and only recovered it in 1967, when it was auctioned in London. Stravinsky's own transcriptions of some of the annotations were included in the Appendix to the facsimile publication of the sketches for *The Rite*, and they include many points where Nijinsky was instructed to count individual beats: 'From the beginning to here, 136 eighths', writes Stravinsky at **111** (the 'Glorification' is especially rich in such annotations), while at **43–4**, in 'Ritual of Abduction', he asks for 'trampling with each eighth. Do not attempt to count the measures.'[73]

What the choreographic annotations make quite clear is the wild inaccuracy of the statement, in Stravinsky's supposed autobiography, that 'In composing the *Sacre* I had imagined . . . a series of rhythmic mass movements of the greatest simplicity which would have an instantaneous effect on the audience, with no superfluous details or complications such as would suggest effort.'[74] On the contrary, the annotations demand the most staggeringly complex realizations, with minutely specified rhythms or metres cutting across anything that is audible in the orchestra; as Stravinsky himself wrote in his 1967 commentary on the annotations, 'The dance is almost always in counterpoint to the music.'[75] Indeed, he expressed his astonishment that he 'could have envisaged synchronization of music and choreography to such a degree, and expected any choreographer to realize it in 1913'. He went on to declare that 'this account of the choreography supersedes all others, including those testaments of my own faulty memory now permanently on exhibit elsewhere'. And elsewhere, less publicly, Stravinsky seems to have explicitly withdrawn his criticisms of Nijinsky's choreography, declaring it 'the finest embodiment of *Le Sacre*'.[76] On 24 June 1970 he actually wrote a letter to the editor of *The*

between Stravinsky's achievement and the context from which it emerged ('Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; or, Stravinsky's "Angle" ', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 38 (1985), 72–142).

[65] Taruskin, '*The Rite* Revisited', 184.

[66] Interview in *Gil Blas*, 14 June 1913; trans. in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 511.

[67] Letter of 3 July, trans. in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 102.

[68] Stravinsky's *An Autobiography* (London, 1975 [1936]) was 'largely ghostwritten by the Diaghilev acolyte Walter Nouvel' (Taruskin, 'Russian Folk Melodies', 502).

[69] Stravinsky, *Autobiography*, 40–1.

[70] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 143.

[71] Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, 24.

[72] For a discussion of the circumstances surrounding this gift, see Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 514–22.

[73] Stravinsky, Appendix to *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913*, 41, 37.

[74] Stravinsky, *Autobiography*, 48.

[75] Stravinsky, Appendix to *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913*, 35.

[76] From a conversation with Yury Grigorovich mentioned by Taruskin ('*The Rite* Revisited', 184 n. 4), who cites as his source Vera Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky* (New York, 1979), 272. In addition, Vera

Nation suggesting that some American ballet company should produce *The Rite* with Nijinsky's original choreography. 'I would come to see that myself,' he added.[77]

What are these annotations like? I have already mentioned that at the beginning of 'The Augurs' Stravinsky directed that the choreographic accents should be on the metrical downbeats and not the rhythmic accents. This, I suggested, corresponds to van den Toorn's 'conservative' reading. (Up to **18**, Stravinsky explains in his commentary, the dancers have been 'bobbing up and down in one place'; this is the passage where, in 1960, Stravinsky had claimed he imagined 'a row of almost motionless dancers'.[78]) After **28**, however, Stravinsky specifies cross-metres: there are to be eight bars of 3/4 (against the notated 2/4), then two bars of 2/4, followed by three further bars of 3/4 and fifteen of 2/4.[79] Now this is the passage which I earlier described as a textbook example of van den Toorn's Type II, and the 3/4 metre Stravinsky asks of the dancers corresponds with the three-beat pattern in the cellos and basses. In effect, then, the alternations between 2/4 and 3/4 mean that the dance line is migrating from one part of the rhythmic hierarchy to another—in a rather similar way, incidentally, to the trumpet melody from **28**+4, whose phrases are two, three, or four bars long and thus align themselves in varying ways with the regularly repeating elements of the texture. And Stravinsky asks for another kind of changing pattern when he directs that the choreographic accents fall on the metric downbeats at **34**, but on the second beat of each bar when the music repeats almost literally at **35**.

Stravinsky and Robert Kraft report that Stravinsky wrote a marginal note in Irina Vershinina's monograph on his early ballets, 'saying that criticism of Nijinsky's choreography had always been "unjust" ' (*Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 511).

[77] The letter is reprinted in Stravinsky and Craft, *Themes and Conclusions* (London, 1972), 218. Not the least interesting aspect of this letter is the way in which it slips from saying that the recovery of the choreographic annotations 'makes possible the recreation of the ballet as it was conceived' to advocating the revival of 'the Nijinsky original'; the clear implication is that, contrary to the complaints Stravinsky had made during the intervening years, Nijinsky's choreography was a reasonably accurate reflection of what Stravinsky had specified. It is on this basis that I more or less equate the two in what follows.

[78] Stravinsky and Craft, *Memories and Commentaries*, 37; 'Nijinsky made of this piece a big jumping match,' he complains. In *Expositions and Commentaries*, he gave a more vivid impression of what it was like when he described it as a 'group of knock-kneed and long-braided Lolitas jumping up and down' (p. 143). Stravinsky's rather telegraphic annotations gain visual depth when read in conjunction with two illustrated commentaries: Pasler, 'Music and Spectacle in *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*', and Millicent Hodson, 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method: Visual Sources from Roerich for *Le Sacre du Printemps*', *Dance Research Journal*, 18 (1986–7), 7–15. Hodson's *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace: Reconstruction Score of the Original Choreography* for Le Sacre du Printemps (Stuyvesant, NY), originally announced for publication in Winter 1993, was still not available at the time this book went to press.

[79] Stravinsky, Appendix to *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913*, 36. Although Stravinsky explains that he has related the annotations to the rehearsal numbers in the orchestral score (p. 35), I am not clear exactly which bars he is speaking of at this point.

In 'Ritual of Abduction', too, it is possible to see some relationship between Stravinsky's choreographic annotations and the kind of rhythmic analysis that van den Toorn offers. As I explained, the focus of van den Toorn's analysis is the way in which the music refuses to be subsumed under any higher-level metrical structure than the 'impossibly rapid' eighth-note *tactus*. This links nicely with Stravinsky's direction about 'trampling with each eighth' which I have already quoted, except that the direction comes at **43–4**, a little ahead of van den Toorn's (and Disney's) point of breakdown, which is **46**. At that point (or to be precise, at **46**+1), Stravinsky directs that the dancers form into three separate groups, which implies some kind of choreographic counterpoint, and in the following bars he specifies a number of accents; these presumably fall on the downbeats, so bringing out the changing metres and conforming, in a different way, with the wholly 'radical' interpretation that van den Toorn offers of this passage. And there are later passages in the choreography which have even more complicated annotations than this. I shall outline just a few representative examples. After **53** (in the 'Spring Rounds', which Disney omitted), Stravinsky divides the dancers into five groups, writing in a separate stave for each; the individual rhythms are too complicated to describe, he says, but 'the projected phrasing of all except one of the five groups is largely independent of the musical meters'.[80] The one rhythm which *does* correspond to the music is a syncopated pattern in 4/4, consisting of one eighth-note, three quarter-notes, and another eighth-note: this is the rhythm of the bass at **53**. From **54**+1, Stravinsky directs that this rhythm should continue to receive the main choreographic emphasis—but the rhythm has now disappeared from the music. (Here, then, the dancing corresponds not to what is in the music, but to what *was* in the music and is no longer.) Finally, as an unambiguous example of choreographic autonomy, at the bar before **138** (in the 'Ritual Action'), Stravinsky initially directed that the women should dance in 29/4, but replaced this with what he calls a two-part 'canon of choreographic rhythm not underlined in the music'.[81]

In his letter to *The Nation*, Stravinsky called the recovered choreographic score of *The Rite* 'much more valuable than any commentary', on the grounds that it 'changes and deepens the interpretation of the music (especially in matters of phrasing)'.[82] The idea that the choreography might 'change' the interpretation of the music of course gives the lie to Stravinsky's insistence in the 1920 interview that the 'real meaning' of *The Rite*, as he put it, was all there in the score. In this way, it rescues the staging from redundancy, and by implication admits

[80] Ibid. 38. [81] Ibid. 42. [82] Stravinsky and Craft, *Themes and Conclusions*, 218.

that the regimen of musical autonomy has limits. It also raises the question of how far different visualizations may be compatible with one another: how much overlap should we expect there to be between alternative interpretations of the same score? To be more specific, what parallels, if any, can we find between the choreographic realization Stravinsky envisaged and the *Rite* sequence of 'Fantasia'?

Specific correspondences can, of course, be found; they always can. For instance, Stravinsky directs that the dancers all fall to the floor in the last bar of 'The Augurs', and it is just at this point that we see molten rocks cascading catastrophically into the sea. Again, at 'The Sage' (before **72**), Stravinsky directs that 'Everyone stands still', while at the bar before **72** (the harmonics chord) he writes, 'They all change posture';[83] these correspond respectively to Disney's eclipse sequence, with the infinitely slow movement of the moon against the face of the sun, and a cut to the lifeless landscape following the great extinction. And at the bars before **101** and **102** Stravinsky directs the dancers to stop and start again, just as Disney's dinosaurs do, while the circular motion of the dinosaurs scooping up water after **97** coincides with Stravinsky's specification of a 'bell-swinging movement'.[84] We might also draw parallels of a different kind between 'Fantasia' and Nijinsky's conception of *The Rite* as embodying 'the soul of nature expressed by movement to music. It is the life of the stones and trees. There are no human beings in it.'[85] It is this conception that led Nijinsky to aim at a style of dance which an unkind critic described as a series of 'slow, uncouth movements in which the dancers were so seemingly obsessed by the earth that they appeared unable to stand upright'[86]—and that, of course, would not be a bad description of Disney's dinosaurs. Like Nijinsky, both Roerich and Stravinsky emphasized the role of stones and rocks in *The Rite* (Stravinsky referred to its 'lapidary rhythms', and once called it a 'stone sculpture'[87]), which ties in with the geological emphasis of Disney's visualization. Finally, Disney's earthquake sequence provides about the most literal interpretation possible for 'The Dance of the Earth'.

[83] Stravinsky, Appendix to *The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911–1913*, 40. [84] Ibid. 41.

[85] Interview with Nijinsky in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 Feb. 1913; repr. in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 95.

[86] Cyril E. Beaumont, *Complete Book of Ballets* (London, 1937); quoted in Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works*, 2nd edn. (London, 1979), 215. Jacques Rivière expressed the same conception more favourably: 'Rather than glide over things in his flight the dancer comes down on them with the full weight of his body, he accounts for every one with his heavy and complete attack' (Jacques Rivière, 'Le Sacre du Printemps', *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 7 (1 Nov. 1913); repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 38–48; trans. taken from Hodson, 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method', 9. Part of Rivière's article is trans. in Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, 22–3).

[87] Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 77, 92, and Pasler, 'Music and Spectacle', 71.

At this more general level, one basic difference between the original staging and 'Fantasia' might be put forward: Disney provides an explicit narrative—what I previously referred to as an 'all-embracing plot'—whereas Stravinsky (or rather Stravinsky/Roerich) does not. Indeed, Stravinsky said in his 1920 interview that 'There is no plot and no need to look for one. . . . *Le Sacre du Printemps* is a spectacle of pagan Russia . . . that rules out a subject.'[88] But this is a suspiciously defensive—if not self-contradictory—formulation; and conversely, if Deems Taylor's voice-over in 'Fantasia' describes the *Rite* sequence as 'the story of the growth of life on earth', it also refers to it as a 'pageant'[89]—a perhaps more accurate term that is not far removed from Stravinsky's 'spectacle'. And in reality there is not much difference between the two scenarios in this respect. In each case there is a slender narrative thread; the main difference is that the Stravinsky/Roerich scenario is circular and mythical, whereas Disney's is unilinear and historical. But even this distinction is undermined by the symmetry of the end of the 'Fantasia' sequence, with its withdrawal back into space. And the eclipse, which begins at 'The Sage' but is only completed with the return of the opening bassoon solo, also introduces an element of non-linear chronology; together with the other shots of the sun, it carries a mythical resonance that strikingly anticipates '2001: A Space Odyssey'. Perhaps, then, one could say that Disney's visualization of *The Rite* explores the affective properties of primitivism in a manner that is parallel, rather than opposed, to the original scenario. In fact, as much is suggested by the correspondences between 'Fantasia' and the emotionally loaded images contained in an interview that appeared on the day of the first performance of *The Rite*, in which Stravinsky spoke of 'the obscure and immense sensation of which all things are conscious when Nature renews its forms', 'the musical material [which] itself swells, enlarges, expands', and the 'sacred terror of the midday sun'.[90] Admittedly, all these characterizations refer specifically to the

[88] Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, 26. [89] See above, n. 21.

[90] Igor Stravinsky, 'Ce que j'ai voulu exprimer dans *Le Sacre du Printemps*', *Montjoie!*, 29 May 1913; repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 13–15; trans. in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 524–6. In his autobiography, Stravinsky made out that this article altogether misrepresented what he had said; but his own contemporary corrections to a Russian translation of the interview give the lie to this, for they are very minor. The content of the article was of course embarrassing for the absolutist Stravinsky of the 1920s, while the title (which, to be fair, was presumably not Stravinsky's) clearly became an object of infuriation; an account of the whole affair may be found in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 522–6. The reference to the 'sacred terror of the midday sun' sounds like a regression to the original conception of *The Rite* as the depiction of a midsummer ritual. As Taruskin demonstrates in '*The Rite* Revisited', this would have been more accurate historically, and the sacrificial rites on which Roerich based his scenario were in honour of the Slavic sun god Yarilo (whose name actually appeared in the programme booklet for the first performance). All this, which Disney could not possibly have known, would fit even better with the iconography of the sun in 'Fantasia', especially during the extinction sequence.

Introduction to Part I, whereas the passages with which they resonate are scattered through Disney's *Rite* sequence; but the affinity of tone is unmistakable. Seen this way, Disney's visualization of the music as the story of life becomes an alternative metaphor to that of the pagan celebration of spring.

The obvious way to conceive of the relationship between the music and its two visualizations is in terms of differential elaboration; the kinetic and affective content of the music forms a kind of substrate, which each visualization elaborates in a different manner. (Seen this way, the two visualizations are complementary to one another.) But this picture is of course incomplete, because it overlooks the *musical* elaboration and its relationship to each visualization. And it is in this relationship that the most characteristic aspect of *The Rite* as a work of multimedia is to be found. We can begin with Stravinsky's observation, which I have already quoted, that in his choreographic annotations to *The Rite* 'the dance is almost always in counterpoint with the music'—a statement that is, at first sight, entirely compatible with his statement in *Memories and Commentaries* that 'Choreography, as I conceive it, must realize its own form, one independent of the musical form though measured to the musical unit.'[91]

But we need to be careful about the word 'counterpoint'. The choreography that Stravinsky notated is contrapuntal in something closer to the musical sense of that term than the film-critical one; it refers to difference, to be sure, but within a strong framework of similarity. This is obvious when the dancers oppose the rhythmic accents of the music by duplicating its metrical downbeats, or when they duplicate one particular layer or another in a polyrhythmic texture. In each case the musical framework remains intact, and the dancing underlines one musical element or another in very much the same way as orchestration does. But it is also true when the choreographic metre is different from any that is present in the music, as after **54**, or where the dance incorporates its own autonomous structure, as in the canon around **138**. In such cases the dance constitutes a differential elaboration within the framework of the music's higher-level rhythmic (which is also to say, formal) structure; it functions more like an additional contrapuntal element than an orchestrational emphasis. And it is worth pointing out that Stravinsky intended this kind of elaboration during some of the passages of the score that seem uncharacteristically placid and regular, as after **95**, where the regular powers-of-two phrasing was to be cross-cut by three separate groups dancing contrapuntally in 5/4. It is perhaps significant that this passage falls within what, in *Expositions and Developments*, Stravinsky described as the weakest section of *The Rite*. The suggestion is that what was good in the context of a 'musical-choreographic work' was not so good as absolute music.

I referred to such contrapuntal choreography as an 'additional' element. But that is, in a way, misleading; if there is one thing to be learned from the genesis of *The Rite*, it is that the choreography, along with other aspects of the staging, constituted an integral part of the compositional process. ('The music and the ballet were composed together,' wrote Nijinksy; 'they were born at the same time.'[92]) And if the dance was composed according to the same rhythmic principles as the rest of the music—which is in essence what I have been arguing—then the choreography becomes structurally indistinguishable from any other musical element; when Jann Pasler says that in *The Rite* dance is 'another dimension of the music', we should take her words quite literally.[93] It follows from this that to speak of the relationship between 'music' and 'dance' in *The Rite* is also misleading to the extent that it suggests a relationship between two distinct things; depending on the level to which we refer, there is either only one thing (because music and dance together constitute a single hierarchy), or else an indefinite number, since any element of the music may relate directly to any element of the choreography. In this way, Nijinsky's statement that 'I put all of my energy into choreographing the dance according to the idea and the spirit of the music, in such a manner that the ballet does not appear to be stuck onto the music'[94] should be understood as implying not the dominance of music over dance, but the interlacing of both within the 'musical-choreographic work' that Stravinsky spoke of. And the impact of the original production of *The Rite* seems to bear out what Nijinsky said. There was, to be sure, the usual disagreement between critics: while Cocteau thought that the dance stuck too close to the rhythm ('The fault lay in the parallelism of the music and the movements, in their lack of *play*, of counterpoint'), Vuillermoz complained that Nijinsky overemphasized the metre at the expense of rhythm.[95] But many observers seem to have shared the views of Colles, who said that it approached 'a real fusion of music and dancing. . . . The combination of the two elements of music and dancing does actually produce a new compound result, expressible in terms of rhythm—much as

[91] Stravinsky and Craft, *Memories and Commentaries*, 37. This statement is more than a little reminiscent of Eisler's pronouncements regarding the relationship between music and film—pronouncements which, as we saw in Ch. 2, are hardly borne out in his own films.

[92] Interview published in *Hojas Musicales de la Publicidad*, Madrid, 26 June 1917; trans. in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 512.

[93] Jann Pasler, 'The Choreography for *The Rite of Spring*: Stravinsky's Visualization of Music', *Dance Magazine*, 55 (1981), 66–9: 68.

[94] 1917 interview (see n. 92), in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 512.

[95] Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky and the Theatre*, 18, 22.

the combination of oxygen and hydrogen produces a totally different compound, water.'[96]

If the mention of 'fusion' already suggests an overall relationship of conformance between the media in the staged version of *The Rite*, the impression becomes even stronger in the 'Fantasia' sequence, where the visuals are again incorporated within the structural hierarchy of the music. Much of this is implicit in what I have already said about 'Fantasia': at the bottom of the hierarchy, the visual motions of stars, seas, and volcanic eruptions are appropriated by the audible rhythms of the score, as for instance when the eighth-note pulse of the music animates the volcanic explosions after **21**—an effect which, as I said, evaporates if the film is watched without the music. Further up the hierarchy, at intermediate levels, cutting rhythms act in much the same way as the 'contrapuntal' choreography of Stravinsky's annotations, aligning themselves with metrical or hypermetrical patterns or, on occasion, playing against them. (The cutting does not, incidentally, play against the powers-of-two phrasing after **95**, as Stravinsky's choreography did; instead, it underlines the very regularity of the music, which is aligned with tranquil scenes of dinosaurs feeding and their babies playing.) But the visuals of 'Fantasia' also do something that the choreography of *The Rite* does not, and that is to extend the hierarchy upwards beyond the highest level present in the music; I am referring, of course, to the constant motion of 'camera' or diegesis that runs through the opening three sequences of the film (space, volcanic eruptions, and lava flow), binding the music of the Introduction to Part I to that of 'The Augurs', and spilling over into 'Ritual of Abduction'. The result of all this is that music and visualization stack up into a single hierarchy whose highest level is visual. And in this way, what might be called the background model of the *Rite* sequence from 'Fantasia' is an unambiguous conformance.

That both the Stravinsky/Nijinsky *Rite* and Disney's visualization of it should approach an ideal of conformance is not really surprising. The first emerged out of the 'cultural synaesthesia', as I called it,[97] of turn-of-the-century Russia; while the second achieved its greatest success during the days of flower power, when ideas of cosmic harmony and synaesthetic fusion (in the form of the ubiquitous light show) enjoyed a brief revival. But if the argument of the previous chapters is correct, the principle of differential elaboration between media means that conformance can never be more than partial; that is what I meant by referring to it as a 'background' model. Within the overall framework of a single, stacked hierarchy, then, we can detect elements of contest as well as complementation in both the original *Rite* and the 'Fantasia' version. In the case of the Stravinsky/Nijinsky *Rite*, the contest largely takes the form of a collision between stage action and historically sedimented expectations, and follows as a direct consequence from Stravinsky's and Nijinsky's attempt to organize music and dance according to the same principles. Classical ballet has its own hierarchy based on a lexicon of established 'positions' and more or less codified rules for their combination; it is predicated on a relationship of complementation between music and dance, with each medium elaborating according to its own principles a shared kinetic content that is normally located at a middleground level. But Stravinsky's and Nijinsky's attempt to force music and dance into a direct, multi-level relationship meant totally disrupting the traditional hierarchy of ballet; in Millicent Hodson's words, it meant 'finding a new idiom for each dance rather than rearranging academic steps'.[98] (No wonder, then, that the dancers 'hated all this . . . why [they asked] were they trained as artists of the Imperial Ballet and graduates of the Academy? For this?'[99]) Of contemporary commentators, it was Jacques Rivière who perhaps expressed this most succinctly: 'by breaking up this movement,' he says (he is drawing a comparison with the 'liquid and continuous movement' of Fokine's choreography), 'by leading it back to the simple gesture, Nijinsky restored expression to the dance.' Less generous critics simply did not recognize Nijinsky's choreography as dance; for Alfred Kalisch it consisted of gestures that were 'stiff and angular and have been rejected by previous authorities because of their lack of charm and expressiveness', while according to Colles the general impression was that of children at play.[100]

[96] *The Times*, 12 July 1913; repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 63–4. The tone of this review is strikingly different from that of 26 July (see above, p. 192), which reported that 'the incidents on the stage had been roughly fitted together and made to synchronize with the music because they happened to illustrate ideas conceived in a similar mood'; as neither review is signed, one suspects that one, at least, of Lesure's attributions may be incorrect. Colles—if it was Colles—went on to say that 'even the colours of the dresses are to some extent reflected in the orchestration—as, for instance, in the first scene, when a group of maidens in vivid scarlet huddled together to the accompaniment of closely-written chords on the trumpets'. Messiaen would have shared this synaesthetic perception, but not Rimbaud, Kandinsky, or Schoenberg.

[97] See Ch. 1, p. 49.

[98] Hodson, 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method', 9.

[99] Marie Rambert, paraphrased in a letter from Lincoln Kirstein to Robert Craft, 21 Oct. 1973, in Stravinsky and Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 513.

[100] Alfred Kalisch, *The World*, 25 July 1913, and Henry Cope Colles (but see n. 96 above), *The Times*, 26 July 1913; repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 66, 67. Effects of contest also left their trace in both the vocabulary and the contradictory assertions of critics about the relative primacy of dance and music: for Christopher St-John, 'Nijinsky's choreographic innovations forced [the music] into the background' (*Time and Tide*, 17 June 1921; repr. in Lesure, *Igor Stravinsky*, 68), whereas according to Emile Vuillermoz, 'Stravinsky's work will always dominate any choreography. . . . You will try in vain to flee from the tyranny of this rhythm. It will bend you under its iron will' (in Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, 31).

In 'Fantasia', by contrast, the issue of contest revolves around the distinction between the near-abstract representations of outer space, volcanic eruptions, and tidal waves on the one hand—some of which bear the marks of their own painterly status in perceptible brush strokes or blobs of paint—and, on the other, the conventional cartoon-style representations of animal life and of some of the geological sequences (particularly the earthquakes during the first part of the 'Dance of the Earth'). In each case image and music are co-ordinated by the same means; the rhythm created by a cartoon dinosaur's neck as it scoops water is no different from that of a semi-abstract plume of spray. And yet the perceptual effect is distinctly different. I referred to the visual motions of the stars and other semi-abstract images being appropriated by the audible rhythms of the score, but I could equally well have put it the other way round; if the images take on the rhythmic properties of the sounds, then equally the sounds take on the connotations of the images. (Disney presents the Introduction to Part I as a kind of updated, creaking music of the spheres that carries with it a sense of cosmic emptiness—which gives it a quite different quality from the imagery of Nature in terms of which Stravinsky described this passage.) One might borrow Lawrence Marks's term once more and say that image and music sop up one another's qualities; there is a reciprocal transfer of attributes between them. But this is not the case—or at any rate it is much less the case—with the dinosaur scenes. There the dinosaurs sop up the kinetic and affective qualities of the music—the panic of the 'orchestral haemorrhage' at **103**, the horror of the eleven fortissimo chords that follow—but there is much less in the way of reciprocation. To hear the 'Glorification' as dinosaur music is to hear it as background music, and one has the impression that the primeval terror of the fight was already there, and just as explicitly, in the music even before Walt Disney made it visible.

Technically we might say that the diegesis is so complete in the cartoon-style sections that the visual hierarchy becomes virtually impregnable; the two media retain their distinct identities, and so relate to one another only as elements co-ordinated within a common, high-level compositional framework. (My analysis of the fight sequence illustrated this, revolving as it did around the varying juxtaposition of two essentially separate hierarchies, that of the pictures and that of the music.) But to say no more than this is to miss a crucial point. To hear the 'Glorification' as background music is to hear it as dominated by the diegesis, and to hear it as dominated by the diegesis is incompatible with hearing *The Rite* as one of the key works of the modernist canon. There is, in other words, another, historically based collision: between a style of graphic representation that, in 70 years, has become so familiar as to appear transparent and the cultural values that channel, if indeed they do not determine, our responses. And for this reason it is hard not to sympathize with Horace English after all when, for a moment, he puts aside his essentializing objections to the animation of absolute music and says that 'most of the satisfying moments in *Fantasia* were those wherein representative visual form gave way to unstructured movement of color or abstract design'.[101] To be sure, the visualization of *The Rite* as dinosaur music has not provoked the almost universal disgust occasioned by the 'My Little Pony' interpretation of the 'Pastoral' Symphony, which Ernest Lindgren described as 'so destructive of my feelings about this music that that for a long time I feared I should never be able to efface Disney's images from my mind, and my enjoyment of it would be permanently marred'.[102] Lindgren continues by saying that 'The use of classical music for sound films is entirely to be deplored'. But this seems to me the wrong conclusion. The success of a multimedia complex depends on all the media involved, not just one; the problem with Disney's 'Pastoral' sequence surely lies in the pictures, not in the music.

But even if one can end up having a certain sympathy with English's feelings about dinosaurs and centaurettes, his diagnosis is still wrong. He begins his analysis, as I said, by distinguishing between programme music and absolute music, and saying that animation may be justifiable for the first but certainly not for the second. But it should by now be obvious that the line between *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and *The Rite of Spring* is not so easy to draw as it might once have appeared (except in that Dukas did not subsequently attempt to argue that *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* was absolute music after all). In fact, the situation is hardly more straightforward in the case of the 'Pastoral' Symphony; scholars have been arguing for the last century, and will perhaps continue to do so for the next millennium, as to what Beethoven might have meant when he described it as 'an expression of feeling rather than a description'.[103] All this, however, begs the question of how relevant the composer's intentions are in any case. And here it is useful to draw a comparison with Chopin's First Ballade, Op. 23, which Karol Berger has

[101] English, ' "Fantasia" ', 30. At this point English adds an acid footnote: 'And it is interesting to note that many of these were removed when the film was cut for second-run theaters' (he is talking about the 82-minute version mentioned in n. 13 above).

[102] Ernest Lindgren, *The Art of the Film* (London, 1948), 140. In view of the international success of Mattel's 'My Little Pony' during the 1980s, there is prescience in Robert Herring's observation that 'the foals, both in drawing and conception, belong to . . . the world of the stuffed-toy department' ('Four Films', *Life and Letters Today*, 31/52 (Dec. 1941), 211–18: 214). By contrast, 'When Disney saw the final version of what his animators had done to the "Pastoral" Symphony, he was impressed. "Gee, this'll *make* Beethoven," he said' (Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 35).

[103] Letter of 28 Mar. 1809 to Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig; no. 204 in Emily Anderson (ed. and trans.), *The Letters of Beethoven* (London, 1961), i. 220.

interpreted in the light of the contemporary intellectual history. As Berger puts it, 'The narrative that provided the community Chopin identified with most closely, the Polish emigration in Paris in the 1830s and 40s, with their sense of who they were was the story of "Exodus", its fundamental structure of past enslavement, present exile and future rebirth.'[104] More specifically, they looked forward to the coming European conflagration in which, they believed, Poland would regain its unity. And Berger sees this narrative structure as homologous with that of the music: 'both', he says, 'are future- or end-orientated, and in both the envisaged ending is fiery and tragic.'[105] Of course, it is relevant to this interpretation to know that Chopin shared such hopes, and Berger duly provides evidence of this. But he adds that it 'should not be taken as a "private programme" which Chopin actually had in mind while composing but subsequently chose to suppress'.[106] On the contrary, the meaning Berger is talking about is a public one, and it is rooted in the expressive potential of the music.

At this point Berger quotes a passage from George Sand that purportedly expresses Chopin's views on musical meaning:

> [M]usic is a human expression and human manifestation. . . . It is man in the presence of the emotions he experiences, translating them by the feeling he has of them, without trying to reproduce their causes by the sound. Music would not know how to represent these causes; it should not attempt to do it. . . . When Beethoven unchains the storm, he does not strive to paint the pallid glimmer of lightning and to make us hear the crash of thunder. He renders the shiver, the feeling of wonder, the terror of nature of which man is aware and which he shares in experiencing it. The symphonies of Mozart are masterpieces of feeling which every moved mind interprets as it pleases without risking losing its way in a formal opposition with the nature of the subject.[107]

And Berger adds his own gloss on this passage:

> The intentional objects (or 'causes', as Sand calls them) of the expressive gestures enacted in instrumental music may, and should, remain unspecified by the composer. The gestures have sufficient generality to allow for a number of such objects or causes, though the range of possible causes is never unlimited. The listeners or critics, in so far as they want the music to be more than a purely formal game and want to make a connection between the music's significance and their own deep concerns, will propose appropriate causes, that is, the intentional objects that fall within the range of the possible ones. . . . But they will remember that the causes or objects they propose, even if plausible, are no more than exemplifications chosen from a number of possibilities.[108]

[104] Karol Berger, 'Chopin's Ballade Op. 23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals', in John Rink and Jim Samson (eds.), *Chopin Studies* 2 (Cambridge, 1994), 72–83: 76–7.
[105] Ibid. 77. [106] Ibid. 80. [107] Ibid. 78. [108] Ibid. 80.

What is being proposed here is, of course, a version of the approach to musical meaning in terms of 'affordance' that I set out in Chapter 2; Berger's talk of 'exemplification' might have come straight out of Cone.[109] And this, as I see it, provides the definitive answer to English's critique. It is not a question of the meaning the composer intended, but the meaning the music will afford. And if the kind of meanings that can be articulated by words or pictures are 'no more than exemplifications chosen from a number of possibilities', then *of course* (to repeat English's words) 'There cannot be . . . any universally "right" visual pattern for one of Bach's fugues' or for any other piece of music. The obvious response becomes: whoever said there was?

English puts this forward as an objection to 'Fantasia' because he sees it as Disney's purpose to determine listeners' perceptions to music through channelling their responses; he sees the film as supplying specific intentional objects, and so precluding the aesthetic participation of those who watch it (that is what he means by saying that it makes them 'less musical'[110]). In other words, he sees 'Fantasia' as providing a ready-made, pre-digested interpretation. And as such he sees it as open to the charges of prescriptiveness and authoritarianism that can be levelled against all manifestations of institutionalized music appreciation. Though English does not cite them, this interpretation might gain credibility from the introductory remarks that Deems Taylor makes at the beginning of 'Fantasia', which say (specifically with reference to the Bach sequence) that it provides 'a picture of the various abstract images that might pass through your mind if you sat in a concert-hall listening to this music'—a position that can slip all too easily into a specification of the images that *should* pass through your mind. This kind of slippage probably seemed particularly threatening at the time when English was writing, for it ties in with the more general tendencies that commentators have noted in the Disney productions of the period. In the cartoons of the mid- to late 1930s, says Robert Sklar, such as 'The Band Concert', the fantasy that had once been a Disney trait disappeared; 'there is one right way to imagine (as elsewhere there is one right way to behave). The borders to fantasy are closed now. The time has come to lay aside one's own imagination, and together all shall dream Disney's dream.'[111]

[109] See above, p. 96. Berger compares what he calls the 'Chopin/Sand theory' with Hanslick, but the resonances with Schopenhauer are at least as strong (see pp. 90, 92).
[110] See above, p. 198.
[111] Robert Sklar, 'The Making of Cultural Myths—Walt Disney', in Peary and Peary (eds.), *American Animated Cartoon*, 65. One might perhaps relate this to the odd change in register in Deems Taylor's voice-over at the beginning of the *Rite* sequence, when the description of the representation of the growth of life as 'coldly accurate' is immediately followed by the instruction: 'Now imagine yourself out in space. . . .' The combination of fact and fantasy, of course, creates yet another connection with the original scenario for *The Rite*.

Yet there is something fundamentally wrong-headed about this kind of critique of 'Fantasia', involving as it does a false identification of the images on the screen and the experience of those who watch them. 'Fantasia', in short, is not a pre-digested interpretation of anything; it is a film. The problem is that, for English, film is a medium in which visual image inevitably dominates sound; and so he counterposes this with a demand that music should dominate image—a demand which, predictably, is transformed by stages into the effective demand that there be no images at all. What is lacking from his discussion is any conception of a genre which begins with music, but in which the relationships between sound and image are not fixed and immutable but variable and contextual, and in which dominance is only one of a range of possibilities. This genre has never acquired a name of its own, but the analogy with music video suggests that we might call it 'music film'. And if we see 'Fantasia' as possessing such a generic identity, then we shall be less likely to think of it as an arbitrary, and probably misguided, exercise in music appreciation, and more likely to think of it as I have suggested we see all multimedia: not as the projection through ancillary media of an originary meaning, but as the construction of a fundamentally new experience, one whose limits are set not by Stravinsky nor even by Disney (and certainly not by English), but by anybody who watches—and listens to—'Fantasia'.

CHAPTER 6

Reading Film and Rereading Opera: From *Armide* to 'Aria'

THE *ARMIDE* SEQUENCE from 'Aria' is based on the opera of that name by Jean-Baptiste Lully, first staged in 1686, and it is located at the intersection of two dimensions of intertextuality. What might be called the horizontal dimension concerns the collaborative nature of 'Aria'.[1] All films are collaborations between directors, actors, technicians, and producers (the list could be extended indefinitely); but 'Aria' is something more, for it consists of ten loosely linked sequences by ten different directors. Apart from Jean-Luc Godard, who directed the sequence based on *Armide*, the list includes Robert Altman, Derek Jarman, and Ken Russell. Each sequence is based on a different opera—sometimes just one number, sometimes excerpts from several—and in addition to Lully the composers include Rameau, Wagner, Verdi (no less than three sequences are based on Verdi operas), and Korngold. Each sequence is more or less self-contained, however, and in this chapter I shall be concerned exclusively with Godard's visualization of *Armide*. The more relevant dimension of intertextuality, then, is the vertical one, extending back in time from Godard to Lully and his librettist, Philippe Quinault. Indeed, it extends further back still, to the sixteenth-century Italian writer Torquato Tasso, whose epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* appeared in 1581. This story of the Saracen sorceress Armida ('Armide' in French) who fell in love with her enemy, the Christian knight Rinaldo (Renaud), has formed the basis of almost a hundred dramatic compositions, beginning with a cantata by Monteverdi (which was written in 1626 but has not survived) and continuing into the present century with Dvořák's opera *Armida* (1904).[2]

Underlying the variations and elaborations introduced by each version is the same basic story, which is set at the time of the First Crusade. Armida/Armide captures the valiant Rinaldo/Renaud, attempts to kill him but instead finds herself falling in love with him, and takes him to

[1] 'Aria' is available on Vision Video VVD 546 (PAL), Lightyear Entertainment/Virgin Vision 54058-3 (NTSC).

[2] Tim Carter, 'Armida', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (London, 1992), i. 196–7.