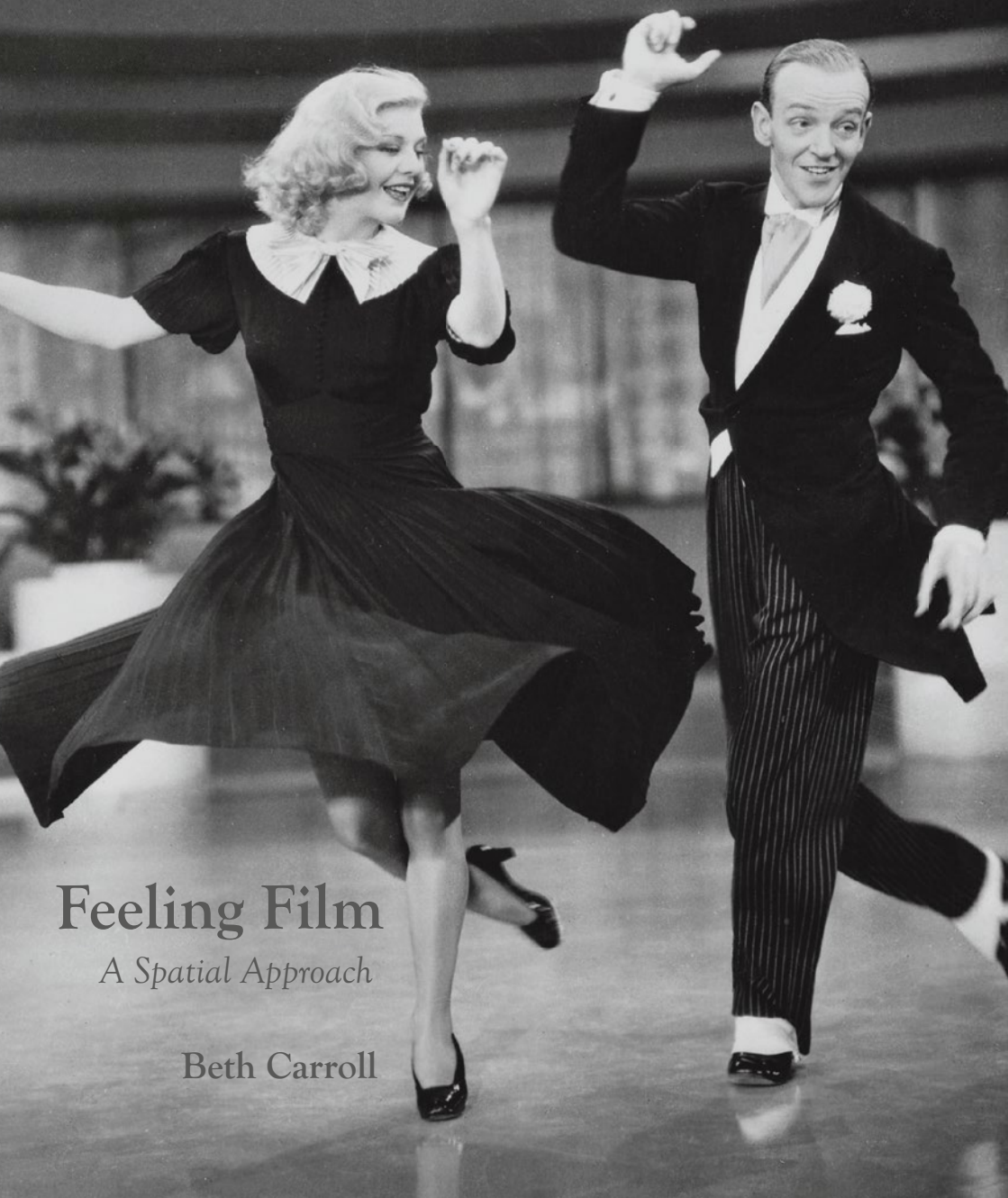




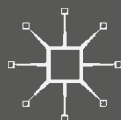
Feeling Film

A Spatial Approach

Beth Carroll

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN AUDIO-VISUAL CULTURE

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Palgrave Studies in Audio-Visual Culture

ISBN 978-1-137-53935-9

ISBN 978-1-137-53936-6 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-53936-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016959960

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

WEBSITE DETAILS

Supportive material for this book, such as the appendices and virtual reconstructions (VR 1, VR 2, VR 3) referred to throughout, can be found at: www.feelingfilm.weebly.com.

It is recommended that this be explored alongside the book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks need to go to Palgrave for their help and support. Thanks too should go to Michael Williams, Lucy Mazdon and Shelley Cobb, as well as the Film and English departments at the University of Southampton. Kevin Donnelly should be especially thanked for the constant belief and encouragement he has provided in both getting my research turning and this book published.

Thanks go to Emilio Audissino, Elena Caoduro, Zubair Jatoi, Alican Pamir and Daniel O'Brien who have been fantastic throughout, proving helpful words when needed. The students I have taught at Southampton should be thanked for the insightful comments.

My family and friends deserve a debt of gratitude for their timely distractions. Special thanks go to Brendan and Brigitte Carroll who have only ever once fallen asleep reading my material; this book is dedicated to you. Particular thanks go to Peter Girdwood for his constant reassurance and assistance.

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A New Methodological Approach

An aesthetic appreciation of film is often of secondary concern to the dominant theoretical strains running through the discipline. How the filmic elements of sound and image combine to engender a narrative that is comprehensible to the audience is frequently a guiding question that runs through academic works. What happens, however, when we make aesthetics the very object of study, when we explore the elements of film language not in the service of another goal but in their own right? The short answer is that a form of impasse is reached with the traditional and dominant theoretical methodologies no longer providing the tools necessary. Cognitivism, semiotics and narratology no longer suitably serve our purposes, for they all encourage a contextual reading of aesthetics that lead back to story and the role aesthetics play in constructing it. My desire to explore aesthetics in isolation comes down to an essential belief in the Gestalt rules of perception; that a form of perception happens before cognition and that this perception can involve an (un)conscious appreciation of aesthetics. When we watch a film we understand it on more than a narrative level, we simultaneously experience it on an aesthetic level. How we understand this aesthetic engagement is my primary concern.

The purpose of this book, whilst multifaceted, essentially comes down to a desire to explore a new methodological approach to the study of film aesthetics, or, as I shall also call them, ‘abstract aesthetics’, as they are removed from their narrative context. Discerning what such a methodology should look like took a considerable amount of time and many false

starts. Eventually it became clear that in order to explore the relationship between the different elements of film language a spatial approach was needed, for it enabled an understanding of the negotiated interactions between sound and image on a complex level. Space, and the different ways of reading its representation and changes, is the essential focus of this book and I argue that a spatial reading is best understood through the senses.

My desire to explore this new spatial methodology on a holistic level, paying attention to sound, image and their interactions, encouraged me to take the musical as the book's case study in order to demonstrate how such an approach might be applied at the level of genre. It quickly became apparent that attempting to formulate a spatial reading of films through the senses without restricting my corpus of films, would quickly become unwieldy. A generic case study, as a lens through which to explore this new methodology, would enable me the ability to highlight variations and important considerations in its construction. The choice of the musical is severalfold, but essentially comes down to my desire to demonstrate two things. Firstly, that the musical genre's aural focus provides us with exaggerated examples of the audio-visual relationship to explore (such as the long-standing debates regarding diegetic sound), and secondly, that the musical, often excluded from generic theorising, is not as dissimilar to other genres as at first it might appear; what I discuss in terms of the musical can, to either a greater or lesser extent, be applied to other genres.

As result of this I did not want to follow a traditional book structure of each chapter exploring specific filmic case studies, but rather each chapter studies the theoretical approaches and implications of spatial readings before providing brief analysis in order to demonstrate how such theories can be applied to different song sequences from the musical. As such, they are not meant to be complete examples of analysis, but rather suggestions of how it might be performed given different foci. At this point it is essential to restate that, whilst the musical as a genre has been taken as a case study, a spatial methodology should not be seen as unique to the genre. Though any genre's idiosyncrasies will have an effect on the methodology's nuances, it can be applied to film more generally. It is my hope that other theorists will be encouraged to explore how these peculiarities and features of other genres impact on spatial readings.

In order to realise this new spatial methodology, I utilise a range of new or underused theoretical approaches; one innovative approach includes the use of virtual reconstructions to explore and analyse spatial representa-

tion. Textual analysis, whilst important for illustrating how spatial analysis can be achieved, will play a supportive role to the exploration of spatial theories more widely. Although the spatial methodology discussed can be applied widely to Film Studies, genres often contain an amalgamation of characteristics that enable them to differentiate themselves. When utilising this methodology in a thorough manner, it is therefore necessary that it should be adapted and pay attention to the peculiarities of the different genres, in our case: the musical. Consequently, it is important to consider the musical's generic and theoretical context.

CONTEXT

Though the innovation of this book is its ability to synthesise theories of space into a methodological approach, it does not exist in isolation. Indeed, important to any holistic approach is the pooling of a range of ideas both directly and tangentially related to the topic at hand. The musical's theoretical and structural concerns need to be considered in the adoption of a spatial methodology and its subsequent emphasis. On what terms we consider genre and how it is applied to the musical is therefore of importance.

Rick Altman writes that for too long the history of the musical has been discussed and written about almost without issue, when in actuality such terms as 'musical' and 'history' are inherently problematic.¹ For Altman, the musical genre is 'a fascinating multi-media celebration constituting the world's most complex art form'.² The musical thus offers a fantastic opportunity to explore a spatial methodology that will permit the subsequent adaptation into other generic conventions. This is in large part possible due to the ambiguity of the genre. Indeed, Altman argues that there are several means of defining and creating a corpus of films that might be defined as members of the musical genre, and these vary depending upon their source: producer, consumer, and/or critic.³ In both form and content the musical can differ widely and yet to the producer and consumer categorisation can appear straightforward. 'The musical, according to the industry, is a film with music, that is, with music that emanates from what I will call the diegesis'.⁴ Such a definition illustrates the difficulties presented to the critic—one might also widen this term to our status as theorist—that may be omitted by the industry and/or consumer, for it provides neither, as Altman states, 'a method for dealing with its functioning or even justifying this particular delimitation of the genre'.⁵

Altman's issue with such definitions, whilst shared by other theorists of the genre, are often overlooked in theoretical discussions. Steven Cohan, despite deliberating over the genre's peculiarities in *The Sound of the Musicals*, makes no attempt at definition.⁶ The same is true of Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell's *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond* in which they concede that whilst Altman has added much to the understanding of the 'large-scale workings of the genre, [they] are lacking markedly in the specifics which give such distinction and pleasure'.⁷ This omission of genre debates should not be seen so much as a dismissal of the inherent problems, but as an unwillingness to contend with them. My assessment of the two such approaches is that they both provide fruitful avenues of discussion as they permit a variety of foci. It is important to synthesise the two; simultaneously assessing the difficulties characteristic of the genre but not making it the primary emphasis. As such, I want to provide a methodology for reading the musical genre that considers the peculiarities through a reading of its representation of space but does not make the peculiarities the main priority; after all this is not a book on the musical, but rather on spatial methodologies that uses the musical as a test case.

There has been limited discourse on the spatial idiosyncrasies of the musical genre beyond its relationship to diverse temporal structures. In this study I want to make a case for how space is represented through the symbiotic relationship between sound and image within the specific context of the musical number, thus discussing and acknowledging the characteristics of the genre that permits such structural delineation. My main approach for achieving this is through close analysis, referred to throughout the book as 'forensic analysis', of abstract aesthetics of the musical numbers. Academic discussion of space seen through the lens of abstract aesthetics has been unexplored in the study of the musical genre before this point.

The popularity of the film musical has been in a state of flux for more than half a century. After the success of the Hollywood musical under the studio system however, with such stars as Judy Garland, Fred Astaire and Doris Day each producing several popular musicals a year, it is, in many ways, a surprise that this should be the case.⁸ It is important to concede that the musical's status as an all but sure box-office success in many respects declined alongside classical Hollywood.⁹ Despite this, the oft-held adage of the 1980s and 1990s that the 'musical is dead' seems to have been laid to rest. The musical genre has been experiencing a renaissance and a renewed popularity. Films such as *Les Misérables* (2012) and

Mamma Mia! (2008) have been exemplars of a genre that is growing in box-office success, and theorists have been keen to ride this trend into academic discourse.¹⁰ In recent years, discussions on the genre have become more wide ranging than ever before. Whereas previous theorising on the classical Hollywood musicals of old were largely restricted to topics of auteurism (c.f. work on Busby Berkeley by such theorists as Martin Rubin) and genre studies, epitomised by Rick Altman's *Film/Genre*, recent discourse on the musical has been eager to challenge established readings.¹¹ Such analyses promote re-readings of canonical texts through alternative theories such as camp or queer theory, an example of which would be Steven Cohan's work on the musical as holding a sub-cultural status in the gay community.¹² It is in this re-evaluating of canonical texts that analyses of the peculiarities of the genre are frequently omitted.

Running concurrently to this resurgence has been an increase in academic interest in Film Music and Sound Studies more generally. After Claudia Gorbman's seminal book on music in cinema, *Unheard Melodies*, which provided a catalyst for the sub-area within Film Studies, more and more theorists turned towards sound and music.¹³ Gorbman's book, however useful, took as its basis Literature Studies. Though effective, there were numerous shortcomings that needed to be addressed in subsequent theorising. One such example would be the issue of technology and its development over the decades. Work on stereo sound, surround sound and different sound systems could provide insight into how films could be read differently by audiences.¹⁴

The use of music and sound in films largely followed the same model of representation; that is, the study of how sound and music's function aids in the understanding of narrative development and its forms of representation. I want to move away from the dominance of narrative and, rather than analyse how the different elements of film language aid in representation, make them the subject of analysis themselves: elements of film language are analysed on an abstract aesthetic level. My disavowal of narrative primacy, in terms of methodological approaches to the study of the musical, permits a wider discourse that is not constrained by the overarching framework of representation that narrative has offered. Without narrative as the defining methodological approach it is important to outline how I will delimit the musical genre. In short, through necessity I contradict myself and take as my cue Marshall and Stilwell's definition: 'any film in which music is an integral part of the narrative'.¹⁵ Altman argues that it is the theorist not the consumer who struggles with a definition of the

genre; this is undoubtedly true in my case. I worry over what is and is not a musical and, at my most anarchic, whether we should consider the musical a genre at all. Though this is not the argument I want to make here, I do want to promote a broadening of the musical genre. A broadening that may well make even audiences question the clarity of the term and the genre. Despite this, in this book I take examples of musicals that make little challenge to audience's perceptions of the genre with a view to encouraging a gradual re-assessment of modes of reading musicals. This notwithstanding, the use of films, which would not traditionally be defined as musicals, as supportive material show how the methodology and findings could be applied more widely. The filmic examples will be used to demonstrate how the different methodological approaches used in the study of the space of musical numbers can be applied.

In the rest of this introduction I want to contextualise my approach to the study of musical numbers in relation to wider academic Film Studies discourse and argue that a forensic analysis of abstract aesthetics can offer an alternative reading of the genre. Furthermore, it is important to engage with the structural issues of the genre by justifying the specific study of musical numbers rather than whole musical films.

My aims with this book are to explore the representation of space in musical numbers through a forensic analysis of abstract aesthetics. It therefore differs from other studies of the musical that focus on narrative and analyse a film's aesthetics in order to aid readings of camp, gender, Marxism and heterosexuality, amongst other approaches. I do not look at aesthetics in the service of narrative, but rather as an end in themselves and within the context of space. I therefore, call them 'abstract'.

This study does not exist in a vacuum. It is worth noting, however, that this study does not fit neatly into a single collection of work on a particular topic. As I will subsequently show, an array of diverse theories and theorists have been utilised, expanded upon and synthesised. As a consequence of the large range of theories used, I want to deal specifically with both the bigger, more influential theories utilised, and the less well known. My intention being that the reader will be given an understanding of how this work fits within theories that they may be well versed in, and a brief introduction into why the lesser-known theories will be important. Though I am in danger of fatiguing my reader with a cataloguing of the various theoretical strands of interest to this study, there is an element of necessity. This book is outlining a methodology; what that might look like and the tools that are needed in its development and implementation are

essential to our discussion; so too are the type of discourses that a spatial methodology springs fourth from and engages with. We can be like the proverbial plaster, however, and make it as swift as possible.

GENRE/THE MUSICAL

The musical is undoubtedly one of the archetypal genres of Hollywood cinema. Although I was determined not to restrict my analysis to Hollywood musicals in order to demonstrate the value of a spatial methodology to film more broadly, the main body of theoretical work on musicals in the western world has. Genre theory itself is problematic due to its polyvalent nature; its very definition is not without issue.

As previously mentioned, Rick Altman has a prolific body of work, on both genre theory more widely and the musical more specifically, and his work provides a useful overview. There are a variety of approaches to genre that Altman outlines. In his book *Film/Genre* he synthesises a large body of work on the subject and simplifies the general findings into four different definitions of genre; namely, 'genre as blueprint', 'genre as structure', 'genre as label' and 'genre as contract'.¹⁶ Part of the longevity of genre studies is due to its amorphous nature, or perhaps more accurately, its ability to be manipulated to meet the ends of the theorists utilising it. Altman describes it as 'only slightly short of magical in its versatility [...] because of its ability to perform multiple operations simultaneously'.¹⁷ This is arguably, however, where film genre differs from its literary counterpart. The breadth of the 'production-distribution-consumption process', as Altman dubs it, is not seen in Literary Studies to the same degree.¹⁸ This breadth, however, is not without difficulty. Each time theorists choose to use genre theory, in terms of the musical Jane Feuer or Steven Cohan provide a useful example, restrictions must be made upon it. This may take the guise of restricting the work to a particular director's oeuvre, the canon, a particular filmic period, or creating further sub-units within a genre, such as those found in the musical (i.e. the 'back-stage' or the 'integrated' musical). Problems thus ensue as each time an approach is selected an alternative may counteract the findings. Of importance, however, is understanding genre theory as a contention between production and consumption categories, whether the latter be by audiences or theorists.

Whilst I am not aiming to promote one approach of genre studies over another—this debate may safely be left to other more inclined theorists—I will, however, primarily make use of the 'genre as structure' approach

that details a framework that forms individual films. This is not through any desire to endorse structure over other approaches, indeed I will adapt and utilise some aspects of a structural approach to genre over others included in the rubric, but rather it better suits a more abstract aesthetic-based focus. Furthermore, I strongly believe that the versatility of a spatial methodology is illustrated by these taxonomies however useful or not you might think them. In short, a spatial reading can be conducted at either the macro- or micro-level; for instance, it may be applied to a director's oeuvre, a national cinema, an historical period or a generic sub-category of film. Choice and adaptability is what it offers. The emphasis on genre that I take in this book is just one possibility.

One argument frequently levelled at 'genre films'—a term often used disparagingly—is that there is little variation amongst the films. Genres often have common themes, plots and structures—aspects that make them identifiable to the viewer and aid in the creation of expectations. A consequence of this is their repetitive nature. Altman describes how 'both intratextually and intertextually, the genre film uses the same material over and over again'.¹⁹ The result is, unavoidably, that plots lose their importance. The ending becomes not something that is anticipated, but rather known from the beginning. 'Genre films', as Altman states, therefore 'depend on the *cumulative* effect of the film's often repeated situations, themes and icons'.²⁰ An important aspect of this study is the disavowal of the importance of narrative readings and the promotion of abstract aesthetics. Genre theory thus becomes key to the promotion of this way of reading films. By removing the narrative emphasis I am neatly sidestepping the historical concerns and changes that genre theory tries to contend with; however valid such an approach is. As such, I am going to differ from much of the literature on the musical by not utilising a genre theory approach in my readings of musical numbers. Whilst this may at first appear problematic to a study of the musical, I hope it has the opposite effect. As this study seeks to convey an original methodology and discourse, analysing the musical without the overarching genre theory framework provides a more open means of viewing such films. The musical number can then be compared to other instances in films outside of the genre's framework; such as scenes within horror or action films, and indeed widened to films that have music as an essential part of the narrative. After all, if the example of Bollywood cinema is taken, the concept of genre and the musical is complicated. Genre theory is, however, not discarded; it informs the understanding of the musical without

restricting analysis and it is important that subsequent work on space in film complicate this further.

Altman is an unusual theorist in that he very early took the musical as a case study in the exploration of genre.²¹ Though the musical is archetypal, it is not unproblematic. If one looks at introductory film theory texts that shed light on genre for students new to Film Studies, it is clear that dealing with the musical as an example of genre does not have a high level of importance.²² As has been previously demonstrated, the musical does not fit easily into conventional generic categorisation.²³ Thus, the argument to remove genre theory's framework is further supported.

Steven Cohan has stated that (in reference to classical Hollywood): 'In promoting an upcoming musical, a studio's theatrical trailers often focused more on the film's musical spectacle [...] than its story.'²⁴ The emphasis on spectacle rather than narrative adds further claim to an abstract aesthetic. Altman too claims that narrative is not the primary concern of the musical: 'Whereas the traditional approach to narrative assumes that the structure grows out of *plot*, the dual-focus structure of the American film musical derives from *character*.'²⁵ Altman is a key theorist for developing and rethinking the musical as a theoretical trope; his own understanding on the subject having changed over time.²⁶

Cohan describes how the 'tradition of spectacle'—an idea that may be traced alongside Tom Gunning's 'cinema of attractions'—affects the musical: 'any attempt to account for its form as a mode of potent cultural representation needs to consider the significance that numbers bear whether analysed along, in sequence, or as elements in a larger formal structure that includes but is not dominated by narrative'.²⁷ This study can, therefore, be seen as my exploration into the creation of space within the 'spectacle'. This 'tradition of spectacle' is perhaps more important for the formation of an understanding of the musical than narrative. Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell state that the musical has arguably remained popular for 'the spectacle, the music, the enjoyable predictability of the outcome weighted against the pleasure of the varied details'.²⁸ This emphasis on the variation of details rather than the overarching structure is a key aspect of genre, and the musical largely holds true to this.

Understanding the musical as 'different' is a trope found within the literature on the genre. The musical, despite being an often overlooked genre within genre theory, does have both a core and ever-growing number of theorists dedicated to unlocking its secrets. The more established theorists include Rick Altman with his seminal book *The American Film*

Musical, Jane Feuer with *The Hollywood Musical*, and K. J. Donnelly with *British Film Music and Film Musicals*, amongst others.²⁹ Much of the work of Rick Altman and Jane Feuer in particular, though varying in their emphasis, may be generally defined as attempts to understand the musical on a structural level. Altman argues that the musical follows a different temporal structure from other genres, one based upon a dual focus narrative that works upon simultaneity rather than a linear time frame.³⁰ A key aspect of Altman's work is the theory of the 'audio-dissolve', which may be defined as the moment when there is a change in emphasis behind what is driving the scene, specifically in terms of sound.³¹ He gives the example of Fred Astaire in *Top Hat* (1935) and the moment when Astaire's walking, rather than being driven by the character's motivations, becomes driven by the non-diegetic music; he begins to walk and eventually sing and dance in time to the music. What occurs is, therefore, a moment when the narrative (here seen as the character's motivations as described by the diegesis) fades into the background and what was once (apparently) non-diegetic—a better term may be Claudia Gorbman's 'meta-diegetic'—music is heard by the character who begins to dance in line with its time signature.³² The notion of the audio-dissolve is important, whilst it is not unproblematic—I take issue with the notion on various levels—it does provide a good springboard for not only delineating the musical number from that which surrounds it, but also understanding its interplay between image and sound. The audio-dissolve is a liminal space where the interplay between sound and image is ambiguous.

Jane Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical* argues for a musical that is complex: that tries to deny its artificiality by making the song numbers appear spontaneous (often casting the characters as amateurs), however, they are often performed under a form of proscenium arch, making them appear more like consummate performers.³³ Feuer's exploration into the amateur/professional dichotomy is important for understanding the use of space between spectator and performer and this will be effectively combined with Adrienne McLean's work on Rita Hayworth to create a new reading that is found in the Chapter 4.³⁴ Though not the emphasis of her book—it being more an exploration into Rita Hayworth's career and star persona more widely—McLean does suggest that Hayworth was able to control her own representation within musical numbers. This control often saw her star image subverted due to the emphasis on being a consummate performer. It is this use of the multiple versions of a star—star, character, performer, amateur, etc.—within the musical numbers that

relate it so well with Feuer's work and allows a synthesis of the two that has as yet not been approached by scholars. I will use it to understand how the space between the audience and performer is constructed, negotiated and, potentially, even controlled.

The musical does have a constantly growing body of work developing with many theorists attempting to provide new readings on a range of different films (both long theorised and new). Whilst this growing trend is to be encouraged and delivers much valuable theorising on the musical, it at times proves to be of limited use to our current discussion. One such example is Steven Cohan's edited collection, *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*, which sees a range of topics debated including: gender politics by Patricia Mellencamp, feminism by Lucie Arbuthnot and Gail Seneca, sexual difference by Steven Cohan, and camp by Jack Babuscio.³⁵ These ideas are important and a book such as Cohan's is significant for developing these ideas, however, their use in the understanding of abstract aesthetics of space (audio, visual and audio-visual) is minimal as they privilege narrative.

Consequently, this study clearly demonstrates my desire to move away from what may be dubbed the 'traditional' discourse on the musical genre—one based upon narrative and semiotics—and towards a reading that focuses on space: its creation and representation. Understanding space, and its different 'realms' is, however, not without issue.

SPACE

Space benefits from being a subject that has been theorised in a variety of different ways, using a range of different approaches. There are, what one might call, the 'grand theories of space', such as those written by the French theorist Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*.³⁶ Lefebvre's argument may be simplified as follows: every culture produces a unique space in its own way. Space, therefore, is a social product that affects practices and perception. It is thus intrinsically linked to politics as the space may be used to aid capitalism and the ruling classes. Lefebvre's theories are far ranging, seminal, influential, and ultimately of little use to me at this point. Though they affect the wider understanding of space, their ability to translate to abstract aesthetic representations of space is minimal. Lefebvre is not the only theorist who deals with political and cultural space. Others include, but are not limited to: Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault and Edward W. Said.³⁷ As with Lefebvre, these

theorists provide background but are of little actual use here due to their focus on social understanding rather than the aesthetic construction and representation of space. These approaches will become increasingly useful as the spatial methodology develops with time and theoretical discussions. Space should be understood as a palimpsest and the work of Lefebvre et al. will add to the understanding of these different layers.

Different approaches to space may be found in different disciplines. In Anthropology there is the theory of proxemics that, even within its original discipline, remains little known. Unlike the 'grand theories of space', proxemics is, however, exceedingly useful for an understanding of abstract space. Proxemics was a term coined by the social anthropologist Edward T. Hall to describe the spatial, and indeed temporal, relations between people. He believed they can be read as a form of communication and he devised a form of notation that this study utilises. Edward T. Hall's work is not without the caveat of it being culturally specific; however with sensible application it proves to be very revealing. Hall's work, examples of which include: *The Silent Language* and 'A System for the Notation of Proxemic Behaviour', provides actual methods of recording and analysing space.³⁸ The usefulness of these methods is demonstrated in subsequent chapters.

Hall's work complements the work by theorists such as Mark Baldassare who argues that humans have a spatial behaviour that has important communicative values, both for observers and participants.³⁹ Although these theories are not without ambivalence, especially within the social sciences where it is claimed they lack sociological relevance, they provide interesting models of spatial understanding.⁴⁰ Through the use of proxemics, I am able to explore the spatial interactions between characters and their surroundings, and indeed, between characters and spectators (both internal and external) and, furthermore, record the data in new ways enabling further analysis. What proxemics offers, therefore, is an understanding of space on multiple levels.

Though it is true that many of the theories of space I employ are synthesised and adapted from other disciplines, Film Studies does have a small body of work on the subject that is of use. C. S. Tashiro's *Pretty Pictures: Production Design and the History Film* works to isolate set design from its narrative function in order to 'understand the image's impact beyond the story'.⁴¹ Set design's function has long been associated with the narrative (c.f. Léon Barsacq). Tashiro's ability to separate the narrative, whilst remaining sympathetic to it, therefore provides a good model for me to

work with.⁴² He looks at space on a more abstract aesthetic level, creating a taxonomy of different types of space, such as ‘Delimited space’ that is either ‘framed’ or ‘window’. Framed, he describes, is the ‘movement of images *towards* (centripetal) centre of frame’; Window, on the other hand, is movement ‘*away* (centrifugal) from centre’.⁴³ Tashiro’s taxonomy and analysis of space has not had the impact it deserves. Its flaws notwithstanding, its emphasis away from the traditional Film Studies’ focus of narrative, has meant that it has gone largely unnoticed despite being used by such theorists as David Bordwell.⁴⁴ Tashiro’s ideas and the way in which they disavow narrative will be of use.

David Bordwell explores space in terms of set design and mise-en-scène in his book *Figures Traced in Light: On Cinematic Staging*. He argues that ‘deep or shallow, cinematic staging relies on a perspectival projection of space’.⁴⁵ The book takes as case studies a series of unrelated films; they vary in genre, period, director, style and studio. This broad range of case studies has inherently influenced my belief that a breadth of films can be explored through a single methodology. Like Bordwell, I am taking unrelated films (other than their ability to be placed along the musical genre’s spectrum), and seeking to understand their musical numbers’ representation of space in order to provide examples of how theories of space may be applied; with further work it is hoped that the methods can be extrapolated. In *Figures Traced in Light*, Bordwell breaks down average shot lengths and shows how they have changed over time. This, he argues, is an intrinsic part of a film’s style and thus is important to a reading of film. Style, he argues, ‘is the tangible texture of the film, the perceptual surface as we watch and listen, and that surface is our point of departure in moving to plot, theme, feeling—everything else that matters to us’.⁴⁶ Bordwell’s use of terms such as ‘tangible texture’ and ‘perceptual surface’ are important features when discussing film’s space, and are related to the theory of the haptic. I hope to further Bordwell’s close analysis by looking beyond average shot lengths (though useful) to camera position and movement as well as sound levels.

HAPTICS

The theory of haptics is a marginal concept in Film Studies, though one that has the potential to uncover innovative and valuable readings and approaches to film. It is better known in the neurosciences and sciences more generally where there are studies into the senses.⁴⁷ Although